REHABILITATING FEMALE EX-PRISONERS IN ZIMBABWE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM A FEMINIST PASTORAL CARE PERSPECTIVE

By

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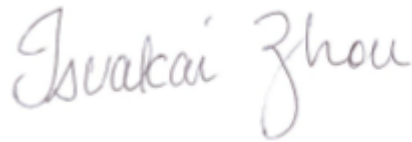
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Pietermaritzburg August 2013

DECLARATION

As required by University regulations, I hereby state unambiguously that this work has not been presented at any other University or any other institution of higher learning other than the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and that unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text it is my original work.
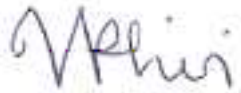

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30 September 2012

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all female ex-prisoners and prisoners worldwide for your endurance of imprisonment and for finding your way back to your respective communities to start a new life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dorothea Munch, Ivan Strandvik and Aage Stalheim. Thank you for your encouragement and support financially and in kind during the years of my study and I am grateful that some of you have travelled all the way from Europe to witness the great day of my graduation. To Hlenga Sibisi my friend, the thesis has been printed and bound through your financial support for this purpose, thank you very much.

Last but not least, I extend my vote of thanks to the members of my family who have endured all these years without my support, physically and spiritually. I want them to know that I often prayed for them. To my aunt Mrs Elita Shoko, without your having brought me up, I would not have reached this goal. You are a great widow. Thank you also my mother, all my relatives and my home congregation of Chiedza. Your prayers have been answered through this achievement.

ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS

The study is a critical analysis from a feminist pastoral care perspective in rehabilitating female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. The central research question that the study focused on is: "In what ways can the understanding of the praxis of feminist pastoral care facilitate the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners for their integration into the Zimbabwean society?"

This empirical qualitative study was facilitated through feminist methods to excavate the lived experiences and perceptions of female ex-prisoners and prisoners, which were analysed through three theories. These theories were: feminist theological anthropology which provided the view male and female as equals before God; feminist cultural hermeneutics which assisted in recognising that culture and religion have a significant influence in shaping women's identity and experiences, especially in the African context and in particular Zimbabwe; and feminist pastoral care which highlighted that all human beings are entitled to care and dignity and that in view of the pervasive gender injustice, it is essential for women to receive nurturing or support, liberation and empowerment during the pastoral care-giving process.

Field research was undertaken to collect the narratives of female ex-prisoners and prisoners so as to get a fuller picture of their perceptions and experiences. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty-eight female ex-prisoners and prisoners. The research findings highlighted central themes that emerged about how the participants perceived themselves, society and God. This data thus represented the subjective reality of the women. Their objective reality was ascertained by examining the gendered identity of women in Zimbabwe, and how this identity has been shaped by patriarchal aspects of religion and culture. The impact of these constructed identities on the lives of women in Zimbabwe is most evident in the areas of education, employment, health, access to resources and family life.

The purpose of this study was to identify the rehabilitation needs of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, an examination of the current theories of rehabilitation was conducted, followed by a critical gendered analysis thereof, employing the three theories

underpinning this study. The theories of rehabilitation revealed wide gender disparities and to address this, an African feminist pastoral care theory of rehabilitation was proposed. Using this proposed theory, current rehabilitation programmes, with special focus on those working with African women prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, while also making reference to those in South Africa, were then interrogated.

Following on from this, a gender-sensitive programme of rehabilitation was put forward, which took into account first, the subjective experiences of the female ex- prisoners and prisoners of this study; second, the objective reality of Zimbabwean women's daily lives; and third, the main features of current faith-based programmes and where these fall short in terms of the proposed African feminist pastoral care theory of rehabilitation.

The rehabilitation programme that emerged from this process is of potential use to faith-based organisations and chaplains working with African women inmates and released prisoners.

Key Themes: *Christianity, Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Empowerment, Female Prisoners, Female Ex-Prisoners, Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics, Feminist Pastoral Care, Feminist Theological Anthropology, Feminist Theology, Gender, Liberation, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, Religio-Cultural Identity Formation, Patriarchy, Shona Culture, Stigmatisation, Zimbabwe.*

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD   : Asset Based Community Development

ACHPR   : Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights

AIDS   : Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

BEAM   : Basic Educational Assistance Module

CEDAW   : Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against
                Women

CIRCLE   : The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

ESAP   : Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

HIV   : Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IMF   : International Monetary Fund

LDC   : Less Developed Nation

NGO   : Non-Governmental Organization

NICRO   : National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of
                Offenders

OJDP   : Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention

"O" level   : Ordinary Level Certificate

PF   : Prison Fellowship

PFI   : Prison Fellowship International

PFSA   : Prison Fellowship South Africa

PFZ   : Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe

SADC   : Southern African Development Community

UK   : United Kingdom

UNAIDS   : United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS UN United Nations

USA   : United States of America

ZACRO   : Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the
                  Offender

ZANU [PF]   : Zimbabwe African National Union [Patriotic Front]

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

In this dissertation, entitled "Rehabilitating Female Ex-Prisoners in Zimbabwe: A Critical Analysis From a Feminist Pastoral Care Perspective", there are some words and phrases that need to be explained for clarity purposes and these are: empowerment, feminism, feminist pastoral care, Imago Dei, patriarchy, pastoral care, practical theology, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Empowerment: Emmanuel Lartey (1997:33) defines empowerment as a pre-existing strength to be built upon. In this study which is within the realm of pastoral care, empowerment involves bringing to the forefront and building up hidden or marginalised strengths and resources of individuals and communities.

Feminism: L. Peacore (2008:322) defines feminism as a theory that is expressed in different ways, "but [that] from its origins has featured the striving for liberation from all forms of oppression while advocating the full humanity of every person". In this study it features in the three theories underpinning the thesis—namely feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and feminist pastoral care— in order to critically analyse the experiences of female prisoners and ex-prisoners.

Feminist pastoral care: According to William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle (1964:4) there are four functions of traditional pastoral care: providing healing through careful listening and respectful talking as well as through encouraging prayerful openness to God; sustaining and nurturing individuals by providing them with support and comfort in particular physical support such as food; guiding people in making reasonable and responsible choices in life; and promoting reconciliation by healing broken relationships between individuals and groups. Feminist pastoral care includes these four aspects of traditional pastoral care, but also specifically seeks to liberate the entire community from all forms of oppression and to promote gender justice in all aspects of life. It also empowers people by enabling the care-seeker to identify and use his/her own resources to participate in life in a fuller and more meaningful way. This study will use Zoë Bennett Moore's understanding where she asserts that: "Feminist pastoral care addresses issues of poverty, justice and egalitarian social structures, and participates in ecumenical

issues of violence against women and children" (2003:3). Feminist pastoral care looks critically at existing Christian beliefs and doctrines, as well as the historical and contemporary role of the Bible in the liberation and oppression of women. This is important, since for many Christian counsellors, the Bible is the final authority (Magezi 2007:130).

Patriarchy: This study will use Susan Rakoczy's definition of patriarchy as an "ideology, a way of thinking, feeling and organizing human life which legally, politically, socially and religiously enforces male dominance and power" (2004:18). Thus patriarchy exists not only within the household, but is systemic in that it pervades all the public structures that underpin the subornation of women. This definition then encapsulates also how the structures of culture and religion have shaped the identity of women in Zimbabwe.

Practical Theology: According to E. Farley (in Rodney Hunter 1990:936), practical theology can be defined as: "[a]n area or discipline of theology whose subject matter is Christian practice and which brings to bear theological criteria on contemporary situations and realms of individual and social action."

Reintegration: Amanda Dissel (2008:156) explains that reintegration is "the process by which a person is reintroduced into the community with the aim of living in a law-abiding manner. Reintegration also refers to active and full community participation by ex-offenders. Preparation for reintegration can occur in prison."

Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation is a process "that targets the attitudes, thought processes and other matters that are linked to the offender's criminal behaviour, in order to reduce the likelihood of him or her becoming involved in crime again in the future" (Dissel 2008:156). In other words rehabilitation is closely linked to reintegration.

The definition of rehabilitation of the UK Association of Chief Officers of Probation combines the needs of the individual with the protection of the community as shown below. They define rehabilitation as:

> A systematic and evidence based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It

encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families and significant others in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations (Morgan and Owers 2001:12)

POLITICAL MAP OF ZIMBABWE

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction

While the percentage of female prisoners in Zimbabwe (and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa) is low (3.3% in 2005), according to the International Centre for Prison Studies, the effects of imprisonment are generally more severe for women than they are for men. This is due to various issues linked to societal constructions of gender. These effects are felt in the social arena (e.g., stigmatisation leading to rejection by society); in the emotional arena (e.g., low self-esteem; rejection by the family); in the practical sense (e.g., failure to find employment; the inability to afford schooling for children); and in the spiritual arena (e.g., a sense of guilt at having sinned against God, resulting in punishment). Difficulties confront all female ex-prisoners, but in the Zimbabwean context, these are intensified by both religio-cultural factors and by the broader socio-economic situation.

Given the above, the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe presents a particular challenge, namely that women prisoners and ex-prisoners face not only the "normal" rehabilitation difficulties, but also those linked to their gender identity. Amanda Dissel (2008:156) defines rehabilitation as:

> [A] programme that targets the attitudes, thought processes and other matters that are linked to the offender's criminal behaviour, in order to reduce the likelihood of him or her becoming involved in crime again in the future.

Rehabilitation is closely linked to reintegration, which is a process of returning an individual to his or her society following imprisonment. Dissel (2008) further emphasises the need for full and active participation in the community, as a law- abiding citizen. This process of rehabilitation can begin while still in prison. In order to rehabilitate female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, these women need to be psychologically empowered and healed, as well as to be brought back into their communities as productive members of society.

Various theories of rehabilitation underpin the different approaches to this process, but none are able to address the specific needs of Zimbabwean female ex-prisoners because of differences in context in which the theories are formulated. Therefore, in view of this reality, this study examined various existing rehabilitation programmes and found them lacking in applicability to the situation of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. This study aims to propose an approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care stance, together with suggestions toward a programme for its achievement which is applicable in the Zimbabwean context.

1.1. Brief background to the study

In this section a preliminary general overview is presented of: first, international policies on female prisoners and their rehabilitation; second, the country of Zimbabwe, particularly concerning gender, as the setting for the study; and third, the Zimbabwean prison system and current programmes providing rehabilitation for female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe.

1.1.1. International policies on female prisoners and their rehabilitation

Zimbabwe is a signatory to the requirements on rehabilitation set out by the United Nations. In 1955, the United Nations adopted the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which outlined basic conditions to which prisoners

worldwide are entitled. Since then, the two further guidelines that emerged from the United Nations are the 1988 Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and the 1990 Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners. Together these statements "set down minimum standards for matters such as prisoner classification and discipline, contact with the outside world, health care, complaints, work and recreation, religion and culture" (Bastick and Townhead 2008:2).

However, these statements did not deal in any depth with issues related to women's imprisonment. The United Nations has attempted to respond to this gap and two main statements stand out in this regard. First, in 1980 the Sixth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders adopted a resolution dealing

specifically with the needs of women prisoners. This resolution recommended that women's particular problems must be appropriately dealt with, that alternatives to imprisonment should be promoted for women as for men, and that governmental and non-governmental organisations should work together to achieve these goals. Second in 2000, the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century, was adopted by the United Nations, with the commitment to combat "any disparate impact of programmes and policies on women and men; [and] to the development of action-oriented policy recommendations based on the special needs of women as prisoners and offenders" (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008:4-5). In 2008, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime brought out a Handbook for prison managers and policymakers on women and imprisonment, which focuses mainly on "female prisoners and guidance on the components of a gender-sensitive approach to prison management, taking into account the typical background of female prisoners and their special needs as women in prison" (2008:1).

Despite this, Tirelo Modie-Moroka and Marie-Antoinette Sossou (2001:12) note that women's services in prison continue to be neglected for two reasons: their small numbers compared to male prisoners and their short imprisonment terms due to the nature of their offenses. Rachel Taylor (2004:10) confirms that:

> In terms of rehabilitation, educational or vocational training, counselling or drug/alcohol dependency programmes, women's prisons are disadvantaged compared to men's establishments. This is due in part to lack of funding and in part to lack of programmes designed or adapted specifically for women.

Thus, women's gender-specific needs are often neglected or ignored. These gender-specific needs are outlined by Megan Bastick and Laurel Townhead (2008:1) as follows:

> Women's offending and imprisonment are closely related to women's poverty. Women are particularly vulnerable to being detained because of their inability to pay fines for petty offenses and/or to pay bail. …Women offenders typically come from economically and socially disadvantaged segments of society. Typically, they are young, unemployed, have low levels of education and have dependent children. Many have histories of alcohol and substance abuse. A high proportion of women offenders have experienced violence or sexual abuse. At the same time, there tends to be greater stigma attached to women's imprisonment than men's and may be ostracized by their families and communities.

Focusing now on the African context, the situation as regards to prisoners, and in particular women prisoners, is generally adverse, as has been observed by Nana Adae-Amoakoh (2012) in her study of African prisons:

> Until the 1990s, little attention was drawn to the fact that African prisons were decrepit, failing institutions perpetuating a plethora of human rights atrocities. Outside the reach of NGOs, academic study, and significant government interest, prisons were predominantly overcrowded places of incarceration. Although some rehabilitative processes were taking place, they were mostly ineffective. …The penal systems currently in place were largely inherited from colonial powers… and this legislative framework as well as the infrastructure remains significantly unaltered.

Lisa Vetten (2008:136-139) summarizes the problematic prison conditions in Africa as far as women prisoners are concerned as being: overcrowding, a lack of provision for women's needs related to menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth and poor visitation rights and access to children and family, among other issues.

According to Makubetse Sekhonyane (2005:1) from the mid-1990s, attention was drawn to the situation of African prisons and attempts were made to address the dire problems. The 1996 Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa was adopted by forty African countries and highlighted the following priorities:

> [To] improve prison conditions
> [To] nominate a special Rapporteur on Prison Conditions in Africa
> [To] sensitize African Union members to respect international standards pertaining to prisons
> [To] set up a framework for cooperation with NGOs and other relevant stakeholders to ensure a follow-up on the declaration.

In 2002, a follow-up meeting attended by 34 countries resulted in the Ouagadougou Declaration on Accelerating Prison and Penal Reform in Africa and Ougadougou Plan of Action, which focussed on:

> Reducing the prison population
> Making African prisons more self-reliant
> Promoting the reintegration of ex-offenders into society
> Encouraging best penal practice.

Among others, the Ouagadougou Plan of Action recommended a reduction in prison populations by implementing restorative justice and decriminalizing some offences. Yet, as Sekhonyane (2005:3) has observed:

> [M]any governments in Africa are still battling to comply with international standards due to the lack of adequate legislation, poor resources, training, lack of personnel, and insufficient budgets.

According to Adae-Amoakoh (2012) in Africa, women make up only between 1% and 6 % of the prison population and their specific needs are seldom taken into account. The disempowerment of women "is deep and widespread in Africa, but women are particularly marginalised in the substandard environments of prisons run by predominantly male administrators" (Adae-Amoakoh 2012). It is not surprising therefore that most African women prisoners are poor and uneducated, as indicated by common crimes that led to their being incarcerated, such as theft, fraud, abortion, the selling of dagga and infanticide. Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:17) note that in their study on female prisoners in Botswana:

> The profile of the women…is of young, single, or married mothers or women with few marketable job skills; school drop-outs who live below the poverty level and are mothers of dependent children and who are unemployed most of the time.

They also confirmed that women's crimes often mirror their socio-economic, political and domestic situations and that gendered power-relations which favour men at the expense of women as well as the expectations of society that women are the caregivers of children and the entire family, are "push factors in women's criminality" (Modie-Moroka and Sossou 2001:11). The overview of women's imprisonment in Africa by Lisa Vetten (2008) gives a broad picture of this situation and provides important detail using studies conducted in South Africa, Uganda and Botswana.

As noted by Jeremy Sarkin (2008), women prisoners are often excluded from accessing vocational and recreational programmes. In addition, as pointed out by Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:14) "service programmes for men are more capacity-building than those for women", with vast differences in their respective "availability, sustainability and suitability." In Botswana, as in Zimbabwe, skills development programmes focus on mat making, sewing, knitting, cleaning, vegetable gardening, literacy education and religious activities. Although these programmes make a contribution, they do not lead to any formal certification. In addition, Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:14) have convincingly argued that:

Homebound skills cannot empower women who will have to perform multiple roles, including breadwinning, upon release and it is likely that such programmes, far from "rehabilitating," could actually reduce the women's aspirations and self-esteem and ability to achieve economic and emotional sustainability.

Fortunately, the plight of female prisoners is being addressed in the move for regional penal reform as mentioned above. However, as noted by Adae-Amoakoh (2012) "direct references to addressing women's issues are vague" and ineffective since they do not recognize the gendered nature of women's identity and experiences. "Structural impediments" linked to patriarchy that contribute to "driving people to a life of crime and keeping them captive in a criminal subculture" are generally ignored by prison programmes aimed at rehabilitation.

1.1.2. Gender in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in Southern Africa and shares boundaries with Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana. Its capital city is Harare. According to the estimated statistics of the United Nations in 2009-2010, the population numbered about 12,644,000. The country faces severe socio-economic problems. For example, 25% of children are described as orphaned, while life expectancy according to the 2005-2010 estimates from the United Nations is 44.3 years for females and 43.4 for males. Poor urban households stood at 61% in 2003, while poor rural households were at 71% of the total (Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa 2010). These socio-economic conditions are particularly acute for women, due to the overarching system of patriarchy.

Erin McCandless (2012:64-65) says that because Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society women encounter discrimination from different angles. Furthermore the constitution does not protect them from discrimination, neither does it assure their civil, political, economic and social rights (Sam Moyo, J. Makumbe and B. Raftopoulos 2000). The chauvinistic ideology has been ingrained in psychologically and physically violent ways. African feminists such as Mercy Amba Oduyoye have presented the patriarchal attitudes of African males not as a timeless pre-colonial condition, but as one rooted in social history, in particular in culture and in religion. Indeed, "biblical interpretation and Christian

theology in Africa have had the effect of sacralizing the marginalization of women's experience, even in African traditional religions" (Oduyoye 1995:175) .The gendered identity of women in Zimbabwe has thus been shaped by the dual forces of culture and the Christian religion.

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, women who had been involved in the war of liberation had high expectations that the gender imbalance upheld by traditional patterns and by colonial thinking would be addressed (Campbell 2003:282). Despite having fought side-by-side with men during the liberation war, at its close, African Zimbabwean males called on these same women combatants to return to their families to carry out their traditional roles as mothers and wives (Campbell 2003:284). This brought feelings of bitterness on the side of the marginalised women.

Although various laws were passed from the early 1980s onwards which were supposed to enhance women's rights, in effect these did not have the desired impact. This was due to the continued implementation of patriarchal-biased customary law alongside and often in opposition to the new laws, as well as due to the deep structurally-engrained notions of patriarchy at all levels of society.

From 1980 to 1989, the Zimbabwean government implemented the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) promoted by the IMF and the World Bank, involving the privatisation of corporations, the liberalisation of the economy and the cutting of expenditure on social welfare (Campbell 2003:287). More recently, Zimbabwe's economic policies dealing with resource redistribution, in particular land, combined with the resultant economic sanctions imposed on the country, have dramatically worsened the situation, leading to rampant inflation and food insecurity (Campbell 2003:80; Thornycroft 2011). As John Middleton and Joseph Miller (2008:337) note, food and tobacco exports fell drastically and there was little credit available for new emerging farmers, with the government's policy of printing money to meet budgetary requirements leading to the world's worst inflation rate in recent post-World War II history. Many Zimbabweans have been forced to seek employment in other countries to the extent that "[i]n June 2006, the United Nations recommended classifying Zimbabwe as a Less Developed Nation (LDC), [although]… the Government of Zimbabwe has rejected the label, claiming instead that the current economic crisis is a temporary situation caused by

droughts and Western economic sanctions" (Middleton and Miller 2008:337).

Women were particularly hard hit by these socio-economic developments. According to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Status Report (2010:5), the feminisation of poverty in Zimbabwe is manifested through the growing levels of poverty among female-headed households, which according to the World Bank (2005), stood at 38% in 2005. Liberalising the food processing and textile industry, sectors that employed mainly women, led to their eventual near-collapse, causing a drastic decline in women's employment. In addition, food insecurity has increased due to drought and decreased productivity, and as a result, child malnutrition and mortality rates have soared. This has placed a heavy burden on women as mothers, as have the cuts in spending on health care and education, brought about first by the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy and second by a shrinking national budget (United Nations Millenium Development Goals Status Report 2010:5).

Concerning gender and education, in secondary schools, the rate of completion for boys is higher than for girls. In 2009, at lower secondary school level, 49% of scholars were girls, but at upper secondary school level, this number dropped to 35%. Meanwhile at universities, 40% of students were female students, but at the decision-making level only 18.55% of parliamentarians were women (Millennium Development Goals Status Report 2010:48).

The Millennium Development Goals Status Report (2010:19) also states that:

> Zimbabwean society is strongly patriarchal and is thus [hierarchically] socialised and conditioned to the subordination of women to men and to their confinement to traditional and multiple gender roles that are inclusive of care work.

This is of special significance in the era of HIV and AIDS, since women are burdened by having to care for their sick family members and in addition are highly vulnerable to infection themselves, mainly due to their inability to negotiate for safer sex (Pascah Mungwini 2008:204).

According to the Millennium Development Goals Status Report (2010:5), although Zimbabwe is applauded for its high rate of literacy - women being 80% literate and men 90% - education in Zimbabwe has been unable to significantly impact the problems

faced by women from all angles. In terms of unemployment, in 2003[11] this stood at 70% for females and 56% for males. Men remain mostly dominant in the largest employment sectors, namely agriculture and the informal market (2010:5).

Many rural women who depend on farming to produce food cannot access land due to customary laws (Gaidzamwa 1995; Jacobs 1988 cited in Goebel 2002:461). Meanwhile, urban women have to depend on the income they can get from informal trade in products such as cooked food or beer, and from doing domestic work such as ironing clothes or by engaging in cross-border trade or becoming sex workers in order to survive (Seidman 1984:425).

This brief outline provides the background to the study, namely the situation in Zimbabwe as regards gender. Issues of gender also fundamentally shape the whole lives (including the criminal activity) of the women who are the focus of this study. Female ex-prisoners, upon release, face this same socio-economic situation, and hence their rehabilitation has to take this reality into account. What then is the context of the women within the general prison setting in Zimbabwe?

1.1.3. Female prisoners and their rehabilitation in Zimbabwe

The Prison Service in Zimbabwe, in a 1995 document, defines prison as a place of punishment. The first Zimbabwean prisons were established in the early 1890s by the settler government. By 1910, nine prison institutions had been established. Prisons were originally administered by District Magistrates who would then submit monthly returns or reports on their prisons to the Ministry of Justice. The Magistrates were also responsible for the staffing of prisons (Zimbabwe Prison Service 1995).

Presently, the Prison Service is headed by the Commissioner of Prisons, and falls under the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. All issues concerning policy and direction of the Zimbabwe Prison Service emanate from the Prisons National Headquarters (in Harare) and are passed on to the forty-six prisons through four Regional Headquarters, namely Mashonaland, Matabeleland, Midlands/Masvingo and Manicaland. The mission Statement of the Department states:

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[1] Neither the United Nations nor the World Bank has published more recent statistics than these.

As part of the Criminal Justice system the Zimbabwe Prison Service is responsible for the protection of society from criminal elements through the incarceration and rehabilitation of the offenders for their successful re-integration into society whilst exercising reasonable safe, secure and humane control (Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs nd).

Among the forty-six prison institutions in Zimbabwe, Chikurubi Female Prison, located in Harare, is the main prison for women only (International Centre for Prison Studies nd). The approach of the State of Zimbabwe in dealing with offenders over the years continues to be generally based on theories of punishment, the most dominant being the following:

i) Punitive or retributive: This is based on reflecting society's feeling of disapproval of the criminal conduct. In its extreme form it can be along the lines of "an eye for an eye."

ii) Preventative: This is based on the belief that an offender cannot harm society any further for as long as she or he is in prison. The offender is prevented from engaging in further criminal activity by being locked away.

iii) Deterrent: This is based on the belief that punishment must be unpleasant and painful in order to deter would-be-offenders. It justifies the existence of prisons and the use of long sentences by the law courts.

iv) Reformative: This approach is opposed to punishment that seeks revenge, but looks at the offender as not only a criminal but as a patient in need of treatment (Zimbabwe Prison Service 1995).

Many countries use a combination of all or some of the theories above as a basis for dealing with offenders. It is noteworthy that, at an international level, only since the 1980s have rehabilitation programmes been designed that are specifically directed at women prisoners (Mental Health Coordinating Council nd) and that on the African continent such programmes remain barely existent. While Vetten (2008:240) acknowledges that due to overcrowding, there is often a shortage of space and resources for recreational and training facilities, she notes that "it would appear that women are offered fewer programmes, with that which is offered tending to reinforce gender norms." This was the case in studies undertaken in South Africa and Uganda referred to by Vetten. What then is the situation in Zimbabwean prisons as regards rehabilitation, particularly that of women?

The Zimbabwe Prison Service (1995) points out that society needs to be protected from criminals both in the short term by their incarceration and in the long term by their

rehabilitation and reintegration as law-abiding citizens following their release from prison. The Prison Service offers offenders the opportunity to participate in the following activities and programmes for their rehabilitation. These include:

Metalwork (for men)
Welding (for men)
Motor mechanics (for men)
Sign writing (for men)
Tailoring (for women and men)
Book binding (for men)
Spray painting (for men)
Upholstery (for men)
Stone and wood carving (for men)
Carpentry (for men)
Building (for men)
Knitting (for women)
Academic education (for men and women)
Typing (for women)
Bible study and counselling (for men and women)
Various farming activities (for men and women).

It is clear that women remain confined to traditional gendered roles in their rehabilitation, which does not sufficiently empower them economically. Despite this, offenders are purposefully occupied and in the process they learn some skills or gain knowledge which can be used after release. In some cases, offenders write examinations or are trade tested and receive certificates for their achievement. Meanwhile, the Prison Service and other government departments also reap benefits from the rehabilitation programmes in the form of services, goods or food commodities produced by the inmates (Zimbabwe Prison Service 1995).

Generally, avenues of communication exist between the Zimbabwe Prison Service and other organisations that are stakeholders in the affairs of offenders. The organisations include Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Association for Crime Rehabilitation of the Offender, church organisations, human rights organisations and other agencies of the criminal justice system (Zimbabwe Prison Service 1995).

1.2. Motivation for undertaking the study

1.2.1. Personal motivation

The researcher comes to this study as an African Shona female person in the Lutheran ecclesial tradition, who has worked as a chaplain at Chikurubi Female prison in Zimbabwe from 2003 to 2006. Having grown up in the Shona culture, she has experienced how girls and boys undergo intense socialisation that produces and codes gender differences as natural. Gendered divisions of labour, access to economic and cultural resources, identities, roles, marriage, child bearing, and hierarchies of privileges (McFadden 1996; Zinanga 1996 cited in Goebel 2005:33) were profoundly evident in her early life, and also in both her experience in the church and in the prison system. Scholars such as Susan Rakoczy (2004:165-174) and Isabel Apawo Phiri (2002:40-44) have confirmed that gender injustice exists among other African communities, and similarly, it has significant impacts on Shona women's lives (Sophia Chirongoma 2006:178). While women in general are subjected to such gender injustice, it is more acutely felt by females who have been in prison (Modie-Moroka and Sossou 2001:15). It is through the researcher's personal experience of this gender imbalance, combined with her academic enlightenment on the issue that her deep commitment to the pastoral care of African women who have served sentences in prison for one reason or another has emerged. It is this commitment that has compelled her to reflect from a feminist pastoral care perspective on the experiences of female ex-prisoners in terms of their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

Having worked at Chikurubi Female Prison and interacted with some of the prison chaplains, it was observed that many female prisoners exhibited fear of being reintegrated into society after their release because of the uncertainty that awaited them. This is a common feeling of all prisoners about to be released, but it carries special weight for African female prisoners because of the patriarchal expectations of women within the African culture. As Rachel Taylor (2004 cited in Vivian Saleh-Hanna and Chris Affor et al. (2008:238) has explained:

> While the shame of imprisonment is felt by men and women alike across the continent, women and their children bear the brunt of a jail sentence – many studies the world over have shown the psychological, social, and economic costs associated with the incarceration of women who not only carry the main responsibility of parenting but also of subsistence living for their

(extended) families.

The dominant question asked by the female prisoners was: "Everyone says that prisons are for men, how am I going to explain my being imprisoned?" The inability of the researcher to provide them with a satisfactory answer ultimately what led her to undertake this study.

1.2.2. Academic motivation

Given the above question posed by female prisoners, the available sources were examined for potential answers, but it was found that this area had been largely neglected by scholars. The work of Sithembiso Ngubane (2007) is the closest example to this study. While Ngubane's study proposes that educational programmes be provided in prisons as a way of rehabilitating prisoners, it fails to differentiate between the needs of male and female prisoners. The intention behind this work will be to go beyond Ngubane's perspectives and give critical reflections on the specific experiences of female ex-prisoners. This particular focus is necessitated by the deep and wide gender imbalances experienced in Zimbabwean society.[2] These gender imbalances are felt in all aspects of life: social, psychological, economic and educational. This necessitates an exploration of the factors underpinning this imbalance. The constructed gender identity that defines women (and men) in a particular way leads to specific expectations and practices in daily life that disadvantage women and favour men. Gender identity is constructed through religio-cultural factors, and to understand this identity, it is necessary to examine those factors which led to its formation.

Throughout this entire thesis runs an awareness that gender identity impacts most acutely upon female ex-prisoners. In general the cultural norms and gender stereotypes do not see women as capable of committing crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008:22). Hence, once labelled as a criminal, women are completely lost to shame and hence "women in prison experience an unparalleled sense of isolation" (Mary Dodge and Mark R. Pogrebin 2000:43). As observed by Padel and Stevenson (1988:192), many female ex-prisoners have to start afresh to make new relationships as their relatives do not want to identify with them. The female prisoners fear stigmatisation and

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[2] § 1.1. above

discrimination, coupled with economic challenges that are also culturally and gender based. It is this complex relationship between gender and culture that must be attended to if a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for female former prison inmates is to be achieved.

Furthermore this study will examine current rehabilitation theories[3] in chapter six and will suggest that rehabilitation programmes currently in place in Zimbabwe are found to be lacking from the African women's perspective as they do not address the issue of gender as experienced in the Zimbabwean context. James McGuire (2002:250) states that "ideal rehabilitation" is achieved through applying educational strategies and giving social support that addresses problems which are linked to an individual's needs. This view sees rehabilitation as constituting awareness building of the structural oppression of women because in most cases the woman in prison is not aware of the complex patriarchal forces that oppress her. The female prisoner thinks she is in prison because she has committed a crime. She does not critically engage with the gender and cultural fetters that have placed her into this cycle of bondage. Moreover, effective rehabilitation requires that the patriarchal context in which the female ex-prisoners will find themselves upon release needs to be taken into account in all phases of the rehabilitation and reintegration process. This study will use the definition of patriarchy as proposed by Rakoczy (2004:18) which states that it is an "ideology, a way of thinking, feeling and organizing human life which legally, politically, socially and religiously enforces male dominance and power." This definition is appropriate because it goes beyond the household to embrace the public structure which upholds the subordination of women.

The current work brings new knowledge in that it incorporates socio-religious, cultural and gendered perspectives, within a feminist pastoral care context. The process of rehabilitation and reintegration is a pastoral or spiritual responsibility, as has been confirmed in recent work on pastoral care (Ramsay 2004:3). Such pastoral care works toward the empowerment of ex-prisoners, who have been excluded, dehumanised, marginalized, and disenfranchised (2004:82) so that they can be restored to their communities with dignity and the future with hope. The academic motivation behind this

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[3] The self-determination theory of needs, the good lives theory, transformative theory, deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime, social learning theory and the healthy institutional environments theory will be examined.

study is then to propose first an approach to rehabilitation that is based on an African feminist pastoral care paradigm, and second to suggest a programme of rehabilitation, based on this same paradigm, while taking from the existing rehabilitation theories and programmes, in particular faith-based programmes, what is deemed to be useful and effective.

Existing literature helped to set the research focus for this study. The question of rehabilitation was drawn together with feminist theological theories and methods, as analysed through the lens of the experiences of female ex-prisoners who are linked with Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe, ZACRO/Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender, and the Chikurubi Female Prison. The proposed African feminist pastoral care approach and method of rehabilitation that emerged from this process is a unique contribution for further study in the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners.

1.3. Problem statement and objectives of the study

The research question for this study is as follows:

> In what ways can the understanding and praxis of feminist pastoral care facilitate the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners for their integration into society?

The process of answering this question generates other key research questions linked to the following issues: how women's identities are constructed by their culture and religious traditions, which influence the way they are treated by society; how Zimbabwean women internalise society's perception of gender; the understanding of the rehabilitation needs of women; the empowerment of female ex-prisoners through a rehabilitation programme that is gender sensitive; and the application of a proposed approach and methodology based on African feminist pastoral care. As a result, the following sub-questions seek to address the above concerns:

> How do the religio-cultural traditions of the women in the sample of this study construct the identities of women and what impact does this have on their lives in terms of education, employment, access to resources, health and family life?

> What do women in the sample have to say about themselves, the society in which they are required to be integrated and God?

How are the theories and methodologies of feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care applicable in this study?

Can a contextual approach and methodology be drawn from these three theories specifically to address the concerns of African women?

How do theories of rehabilitation interface with the proposed approach to African feminist pastoral care?

How do the programmes of rehabilitation interface with the proposed new approach African feminist pastoral care?

Can a new programme be forged that is underpinned by the proposed African feminist pastoral care paradigm?

What theological lessons does this study identify which can be used for the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners?

With these questions in mind, this study will seek to meet the following objectives:

To provide a gendered analysis of the cultural and religious construction of the identity of the women in this study;

To explore and analyse the way the female ex-prisoners of this study perceive themselves, their society and God;

To reflect on and analyse feminist theories and methodologies of theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and pastoral care in relation to the empowerment of female ex-prisoners;

To propose a new approach of rehabilitation for female prisoners and ex-prisoners from an African feminist pastoral care stance;

To assess rehabilitation theories and examine how they can interface with feminist pastoral care methodologies in relation to the experiences of female ex-prisoners, thereby creating an African feminist pastoral care approach of rehabilitation;

To examine current programmes of rehabilitation in Zimbabwe;

To suggest the construction of a gender sensitive programme for the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in the Zimbabwean context based on the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation.

1.4. Theoretical framework

In this study, the critical analysis of the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners is undertaken through the lenses of feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and feminist pastoral care. These theories were selected because they allow for a gendered and coherent understanding of the private and public experiences of female ex-prisoners

from which will be suggested an approach to rehabilitation which could assist in their eventual integration into society.

The three theories will therefore clarify the reasons for the female ex-prisoners' perceptions, and will enable the researcher to critique this way of thinking. These theories are discussed in detail in chapter two and are employed in analysing the material chapters four and five.

1.5. Literature review

Through libraries and online resources, as well as journal articles, the works of local, regional and international scholars were explored. In addition, the resources referred to by governmental and non-governmental organisations, among others, were examined. This study has utilized existing literature, first to construct the theoretical framework; second, to gain a deeper understanding of the wider context of women in Zimbabwe, especially in regard to issues around gender; third, to interpret the perceptions of the participants in this study from a pastoral care perspective; and fourth, to ascertain the current thinking and praxis in the field of rehabilitation, in particular women's rehabilitation with a special focus on the southern African setting.

Information was collected from secondary sources on the three theories underpinning this study namely, feminist theological anthropology: Ruether (1983), Odoyuye (1986, 2001), Rakoczy (2004) and Gonzalez (2007); cultural hermeneutics: Kanyoro (1992, 1997, 2002), Dube (2001), Kwok Pui-Lan and Oduyoye (2001); and feminist pastoral care: DeMarinis (1993), Young (1991), Lester (2003) and Miller-McLemore (2000).

As regards the context of women in Zimbabwe, the following studies on general African cultural and religious thinking on gender were used: Bourdillon (1976), Seidman (1984), Jeater (1993), Schmit (1996), Phiri (2004), Rakoczy (2004), Oduyoye and Kanyoro (2006), Middleton and Miller (2008), and on the present social, cultural, economic and political context of women in Zimbabwe: Weiss (1986), Riphenburg (1997), Chitsike (2000), Moyo (2001), Goebel (2002), Kawewe (2002), Campbell (2003), Kambarami (2006), Matizha (2006), Mungwini (2008) and Madhuku (2010). In addition, information was gathered from the documents of United Nations and from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development in Zimbabwe.

In examining the perceptions on self, society and God of the participants in this study, literature from the field of pastoral care was employed: Pattison (1989), Mbiti (1990), Ackermann (1996), Buckenham (1996), Phiri (1997), Louw (1998), Wootton (2000), McNish (2003), Muller (2005), Magezi and Louw (2006), Kubai (2006), Landman (2008), Msomi (2008) and Norsdstokke (2009).

Information on rehabilitation theories and approaches from various scholars was also consulted: Ross and Ross (1990), Chesney-Lind (1997), Bloom and Covington (1998), Morgan and Owers (2001), Hollin (2002), McGuire (2002), Maruna and Ward (2007), Andrews and Bonta (1998) and Dissel (2008).

The literature search also encompassed the relatively few studies that have already been done in engaging with rehabilitation issues in the African context, particularly those pertaining to women prisoners and ex-prisoners: Padel and Stevenson (1988), Coetzee et al. (1995), Reader (1997), Garwe (1998), Gumada (2001), Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001), MacGuire (2002), Lewis (2003), Gifford (2003), Taylor (2004), Sekhonyane (2005), Hoffman (2005), Ngubane (2007), Zondi (2009), Dissel (2008), Sarkin (2008), Vetten (2008), Howard (2009) and Adae-Amoakoh (2012). In addition, documentation from governmental and non-governmental organizations was also consulted: the South African Government, Department of Correctional Services' White Paper on Corrections (2004), Kairos Prison Ministry, Prison Fellowship South Africa, Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Prison Services, the United Nations, Prison Fellowship International, Project Phoenix and the Zimbabwe Association of Crime and Rehabilitation of the Offender Penal Reform International. The literature on women's imprisonment and reintegration into society helped to locate this research in the wider field of rehabilitation.

1.6. Methodology of the study

This study incorporates perspectives on feminist theology and pastoral care. Therefore the process of gathering data employed feminist methodology. The design of this study will

utilise fieldwork methodology in order to collect narratives on the perception and experiences of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners. The details of the research methodology include: the participants and their identification, selection of the research sites and the procedures for gaining access to these sites, the methods of data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. These matters are explained in chapter three of this study.

1.7. Chapter summary and outline of chapters

Chapter one described the importance of this study for the Zimbabwean and wider African contexts. By outlining personal and academic motivations for engaging in this research, a stimulus has been presented for the need to develop a new approach based on African feminist pastoral care. Second, the statement of the problem and the objectives of this study were described. Third, the research methodology was briefly outlined: both the fieldwork aspects and the theoretical basis. Finally, the chapter outlines highlighting the issues to be covered in each chapter are presented below.

Chapter two will discuss feminist theories in general. The focus is on feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care, the theories which undergird proposals made by the researcher for the rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. The use of feminist theory is to seek an understanding of the situation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners with a view to devising context-appropriate strategies by which they may be integrated back into society.

In **chapter three** the research methodology of the study will be outlined. This covers the process of the fieldwork, which involves the production of data via the research instruments, namely the interview, observation and a literature review. It also includes a presentation of the way this data is analysed so that it becomes useful for the study as a whole. Finally, chapter three will present the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter four will examine the African cultural and religious construction of women's identities with a special focus on the ethnic group represented in the sample of this study. The objective will be to examine the cultural and religious context of female ex-prisoners,

and the impact thereof on their lived experience. Since the study location is in Harare, the focus will be on the dominant Shona culture, to which the majority of the participants adhere. In order to achieve this objective, this chapter will be divided into four sections. First, the ways in which the identities of women are constructed by religion and society in general are discussed. Second, the ways in which Shona culture has constructed the identities of women in the Zimbabwean context are critically examined. Third, the way in which Christian tradition has shaped the identity of African women is presented. Finally, the implications of the above constructions of women in relation to women's lived experiences in Zimbabwe are indicated in terms of their education, employment, health, access to resources and family life.

The aim of **chapter five** will be to present the field research findings on how female ex-prisoners perceive themselves, their society and God. This is done by identifying major themes which emerged from the study. As each theme is discussed, the voices of female ex-prisoners from the sample will be woven in, in order to understand their experiences and aspirations. This is important because through their voices the women themselves identify what would enhance, transform or promote them in order to (upon release) allow them to participate meaningfully in building the community and bringing about life-enhancing relationships (Oduyoye 2001:16).

Chapter six will focus its attention on a gendered analysis of theories of rehabilitation. The question that this chapter will grapple with is: what are the rehabilitation theories that one needs to bear in mind in order to analyse the experiences of female ex-prisoners and to what extent are they gendered? Using a gendered perspective and a proposed definition - from the stance of the three theories underpinning this study - of what rehabilitation in fact is, six theories of rehabilitation will be critically discussed. These are: a) self determination theory of needs, b) the good lives theory, c) transformative theory, d) deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime, e) social learning theory and f) healthy institutional environments theory. The strengths and weaknesses of each theory are then identified and the most useful aspects are applied to the context and perceptions of Zimbabwean female prisoners and ex-prisoners to identify six features of an African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation. Using these features, the chapter will then outline and analyse the various rehabilitation programmes being run in Zimbabwe,

while also making reference to those in South Africa. The voices of the women who participated in this study are drawn upon to highlight their preferences for rehabilitation programmes which are in line with their self perceived needs.

In **chapter seven** five main factors of the current rehabilitation programmes of faith-based organisations will be identified. In reponse to these factors, an outline for a rehabilitation programme based on the African feminist pastoral care rehabilitation approach will be put forward. The two final sections on the one hand identify signposts that point to possible ways forward arising from the study, and on the other hand outline broader issues to be explored under a proposed African feminist pastoral care approach.

Chapter eight will form the conclusion of the study. This chapter will be divided into two sections: first, an overview of the whole study is provided including what it has sought to achieve. In the second and final section, the contributions that this research has sought to make to the field of practical theology are outlined and suggestions for future research with regard to the pastoral care of African women prisoners and ex-prisoners will be made.

CHAPTER TWO

FEMINIST THEOLOGY: IN SEARCH OF THEORIES AND METHODS FOR ANALYSING THE PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE PRISONERS AND EX-PRISONERS

2.0. Introduction

The previous chapter provided a general overview of this study, where it was stated that the present study will be underpinned by three interdisciplinary theories that will undergird the discourse on rehabilitation programmes for female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. The task of the present chapter is to discuss these theories and their application to this study in some detail.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, feminism, feminist theories and feminist theology will be discussed in order to locate the study within broader feminist scholarship. In the second section, feminist theological anthropology will be discussed, which will later be used in chapter five as a way of interrogating the prisoners and ex-prisoners' perceptions of being human and created in God's image. The third section aims at exploring feminist pastoral care, which will also serve in chapter five to critique the perceptions of female ex-prisoners. In the fourth section, African feminist cultural hermeneutics is outlined. This will be employed in chapters four and five to analyse how African culture has influenced the life experiences and the perceptions of self and society by female prisoners and ex-prisoners.

As mentioned above, before exploring the three theories that underpin this study, a brief overview will be presented of the key issues in feminism and feminist theology, from which these theories evolved.

2.1. Feminism, feminist theory and feminist theology

Feminist theology has its origins in the feminist movement. Rosemary Reuther (cited in Susan Parsons 2002:3) defines feminism as:

> A critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant (rationality and power) and femaleness with those that define women as inferior and auxiliary (intuition and passivity).

Reuther further states that feminism embodies the notion that women are people that are not second-class citizens. She continues that feminism strives to expose the veiled and open discrimination of women through social hierarchies and the intrinsic ideologies that sustain them. Rakoczy (2004:11) defines feminism as being based upon the conviction of the full humanity of women as well as being engaged in reconstructing human society, including religious institutions, to reflect women's equality with men. Helen Egnell (2006:28) understands feminism as an analysis of society that acknowledges that men as a group have more economic, political, religious and cultural power than women as a group, and explains that feminism seeks to find the mechanisms behind such situations in order to change them. In this regard, she sees feminism as a question of power relations and views it not only as a theory but as a programme of action. Therefore, any programme on the rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners must take cognisance of the fact that female prisoners and ex-prisoners as a group belong to the disadvantaged group of women. This is because first, they are women and second, they are offenders and ex-offenders, which results in a double discrimination. Such a programme also needs to take into account that the situation of double oppression of this group of women requires wider action to seek social justice by redressing their situation.

Within the feminist movement, according to Serene Jones (2000:3), academic feminist theory emerged in the 1970s within North American universities. It refers to itself as a kind of political practice, a form of oppositional political action, one with unique tools. Why the need for feminist theory? Feminist theory seeks to understand how gender constructions inform our most basic thought processes. Feminist theory is distinct from other theoretical perspectives in that it is women-centred and interdisciplinary and it actively promotes ways to achieve social justice. Accordingly, there are three core questions that inform feminist theory: (i) What about women? (ii) Why is the social world as it is? (iii) How can we change and improve the social world so as to make it a more just place for women and men? Serene Jones (2000: 3-4) mirrors the above questions, explaining first, that feminists' priority goal is the liberation of women; second, that feminists seek to identify different ways in which women's oppression has structured their

lives; and third, that feminists imagine and seek to create a future option without oppression. Three themes common to feminist theory are the "emphasis on women's experience, the identification of oppression, and the emancipator purpose of feminist theory" (Osmond and Thorne 1993:592).[4] Feminist theorists have also begun to recognise and critique the differences among women, as a result of how class and ethnicity intersect with gender. In sum, feminist theory is most concerned with giving a voice to women and highlighting the various ways women have contributed to society.

In order to more fully contextualize the emergence of feminist theology, a brief outline of the evolution of feminism will be presented. According to Clifford (2001:11), Hubertine Auclert coined the term 'feminism' in 1882 to name the struggle for political rights of North American and European women; this struggle has become known as the "first wave feminism", which lasted from the 1880s through to the 1920s (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004:52). In the same context (i.e., Europe and North America), so-called "second wave feminism" emerged in the 1960s. It was during this period of feminist thinking that feminist theology developed (Phiri 2004:16). As a further development, "third wave feminism" came to the fore during the late 1970s. While the first two waves of feminism had focused entirely on the perspectives of Western women (in North America and Europe), which were presumed to be the "norm", the third wave responded to women's experiences elsewhere (Rakoczy 2004:13). It was thus recognized that African American and Hispanic women (although they may also live in North America), had very different experiences from those who had shaped the first two waves of feminism (i.e., white, middle class women). The African American/African Caribbean and Hispanic women were subjected to a greater degree of oppression due to their racial and economic status, and hence needed to develop a feminism which responded to their situation. Similarly, Latin American, Asian and African women began to establish their own feminist agendas, in regard to their particular situations, beginning during the 1970s, the 1980s and the 1990s respectively (Parratt 2004). Of interest to this study is the development of African women's theologies during the third wave of feminism, which will

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[4] Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, (New York: Routledge, 2002); Judith Kegan Gardiner, *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stranbury, editors, *Writing on the Body: Female Embondiment and Feminist Theory,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

be discussed in detail below.

Having provided a brief outline of the development of feminism, with its three waves, the emergence of feminist theology in the 1960s, and its development alongside feminism in the decades that followed will now be discussed.

In line with feminist theory, feminist theology is about doing Christian theology from a women's perspective (Peacore 2008:317). Feminist theology helps scholars better understand how cultural constructions of gender have affected the development of Christian thought and practice. Silvia Schroer and Sophia Bietenhard (2003:2) assert that feminist theology is about transformation. For them, transformation involves a process of change that is critical, experiential, dialogical, contextual and liberating. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1998:78) asserts that "a feminist critical interpretation [of all aspects of life] for liberation insists on the hermeneutical priority of feminist struggles in [this process of interpretation]." Rakoczy (2004:5) further explains that feminist theology is "one of the family members of liberation theology", as a critical, questioning and praxis-based approach that sides with the poor and oppressed. Rakoczy (2004:9) adds:

> Today we speak of liberation theologies in Africa, Asia, among African Americans in North America, those of the Dalit people of India and by women around the world. Two aspects of liberation theology are especially compatible with women's concerns: the preference given to those who are poor and on the margins—as women are in society and church—and the universal love of God for people, including women.

Feminist theology, like all liberation theologies, critically analyses the larger dominant system (in this case, male domination) in order to understand inequality (in this case gender inequality). This links feminist theology to Egnell's definition of feminism as outlined above.

It is important to take note of Ruether's explanation that when defining feminist theology as the promotion of the full humanity of women, it is not a question of privileging women over men, but of including women in the places where previously they have been excluded and of transforming those places by their inclusion. Ruether (1996:205-206) adds that feminist theology is also a theology that nurtures hope for the liberation of humanity into a just and egalitarian society in which the lives of both men and women are more happily experienced.

Feminist theologians have indentified androcentrism and patriarchy as two concepts which embody first the ideology and second the structure of male domination. Androcentrism considers the male as normative (and hence, the female as somehow deviant from this norm), while patriarchy, according to Ruether (1996:205-206), refers to "systems of legal, social, economic, and political relations that validate and enforce the dominance of males in the family and by extension in society at large." As a result, feminist theology takes the feminist critique and reconstruction of gender paradigms into the theological realm. Feminist theologians question patterns of theology that justify male dominance and female subordination. They give examples of the exclusive male language for God, the view that males are more like God than females, the notion that only males can represent God as leaders in church and society, and the thinking that women are created by God to be subordinate to males and thus sin by rejecting this subordination. Feminist theologians question in particular the biblical interpretations that girls and women are created by God to be subordinate to boys and men. They reject this subordination of women to men and declare that sexism is a sin just like classism and racism (Johnson 1992:18). It is out of this complex situation that feminist theologians reconstruct the gender paradigm in order to include women as full and equal members of humanity.

Feminist theology approaches the construction of theological teaching through the experience of women, be it viewed in terms of oppression or in terms of the positive aspects of women's lives such as nurturing and support. In this understanding, feminist theology is advocacy by women in an effort to have their voices included as equal partners with male voices in theological reflection, which historically has not been the case. Genova (1987:105) emphasizes that not only is such nurturing and support essential in developing feminist resistance, but also for intervening, in disrupting, and obstructing of the workings of the patriarchal regime.

As noted above, feminist theology mirrored the development of feminism. Hence, during the third wave feminism when feminist thought became more responsive to local contexts, feminist theology also took on a more contextualized slant. While there are various streams of feminist theology, such as those emanating from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the US, this section will only focus on African women's theology, in

particular that developed by the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter, the Circle).

The Circle is a group of women scholars who have come together since 1989 to critically highlight (predominantly from a Christian position) the issues facing women on the African continent Phiri 1997:15-18) and Kanyoro (2001:170-71), one of the former General Coordinators of the Circle asserts that:

> The importance of the Circle's theology is that we want to contribute something new to theology by bringing in the voices of women in Africa. Actions, such as returning to our villages to do theological work with our communities make our task exciting. We do not stop at simply asking for some issues from our communities as subjects for research as has been done in the past. We stay with the issues, slowly discovering with communities what the word of God or our culture is sending us to do. We examine these with feminist hermeneutical keys and then we engage ourselves practically in some form of change.

The extensive work conducted by the Circle looks critically at sexism which has its origins in African culture and the African religions (including the Christian and Islamic traditions). The Circle also finds positive resources for women's emancipation within the African culture and traditions. The issues covered include on the one hand traditional practices linked to polygamy, sexuality and reproduction, women's work roles, and family life. On the other hand, the Circle also upholds the Christian traditions of the equality of all persons as God's creation and in God's image (Kanyoro 2001:171-174). In addition, Jesus is seen as a liberator who sides with poor and the oppressed, including women (Odoyuye 1986:107). Furthermore, as Phiri (2004:20) highlights:

> African women's theologies are a critical, academic study of the causes of women's oppression, particularly a struggle against societal, cultural and religious patriarchy… committed to the eradication of all forms of oppression against women through a critique of the social and religious dimensions both in African culture and religions. African women's theologies take women's experiences as a starting point, focusing on the oppressive areas of life caused by injustices such as patriarchy, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and globalization.

Phiri is correct that the struggle has not yet come to an end. African women theologians have continued to journey alongside feminist theologians globally in challenging those ideologies which enduringly diminish women's presence in all spheres of life.

Having clarified what the agenda of feminism, feminist theory and feminist theology is, the focus will now shift to the three theoretical frameworks which underpin this study, namely: feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and feminist pastoral care. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the three theories that form the framework for my study.

Figure 1: Theories underpinning this study

2.2. Feminist theological anthropology

Feminist theological anthropology is best understood when analysed using its academic roots. The first root is anthropology, which *The Macmillan Encyclopedia* (1999:57) defines as the scientific study of the human in terms of physical and social aspects. James Birx (2006: xlvii) defines it as the study of human beings in a scientific inquiry and logical presentation. Anthropology thus falls under the discipline of social science. However, for the purpose of this study, it is the social aspect which is of more concern, with its focus on cultures and societies as regards their social structure and patterns of behaviour. Anthropology is thus seen as the systematic approach to the study of human society and culture.

The second root of feminist theological anthropology is theology. According to Kristen

Kvam (1996:10), theological anthropology differs from the study of humanity in anthropology as a social-scientific discipline. The term 'theological' places stress on the fact that this field of study explores the religious considerations of what it means to be God's human creatures. Christian theological anthropology, like its social-science counterpart, thus understands humanity in a systematic way. Its approach is dualistic in nature. On the one hand, humanity is viewed as historically having become fallen, distorted and sinful; while on the other, in its authentic, original form, humanity is viewed as being created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) and being "united with God" (Ruether 1983:93).

Having clarified anthropology and theology, the third root of feminist theological anthropology, 'feminism', will now be examined. First, it becomes important to point out that a feminist is someone who acknowledges the patriarchal nature of the structure of society, including the church, and who seeks to change this structure. As mentioned above, the development of feminist theology, wherein feminist theological anthropology is located, took place in the second wave of the feminist movement that began in the 1960s (Ruether 2002:7).

The feminist theologians Oduyoye and Kanyoro (2006: 4) agree that historically, Christian thinking has led to some very damaging and oppressive understandings of women. It is this kind of thinking which underpins the androcentric (i.e., male-focused) and patriarchal (i.e., male-dominated) socio-cultural and religious lived reality of most of humanity. In this regard, Ruether (1983:94) mentions a patriarchal anthropology which has linked women with the emotional and bodily aspects and men with the rational and spiritual features of the human being.

According to Sherry Ortner (1996), dual anthropology (i.e., contrasting male and female) has been the material condition under which women have long lived and which remains their dominant experience. Much as this dualism can be critiqued, i t is inappropriate to speak theologically of a single anthropology while ignoring the real and painful differences which gender imposes on people's lives. According to Rakoczy (2004:32-35), the notion of women as created in the image of God, has been a controversial issue throughout the history of Christianity. The early church fathers, Augustine and Aquinas asserted that only man is created in the image of God. For

Augustine, woman is the image of God only when she is joined to her husband.

Aquinas viewed woman's role in reproduction as the core reason for woman's creation. Rakoczy (2004:48) explains that the traditional dualist model of anthropology is totally inadequate. Men and women are "different but equal", as polar opposites, and each has characteristics from which the other is excluded. The language of complementarity is used and male and female characteristics are paired: activity/passivity, reason/intuition, will/emotion, etc. Women's characteristics are always the passive and deemed as less important.

This position has served to cover up a materially unjust and sinful condition for women. This is so because women are said to be equal but to have different roles from men: the latter being leaders, heads of the households and priests (Parsons 2000:12). Ruether (1991:286) writes that feminist theological anthropology must continue to draw its attention to the way in which such thinking and its implementation militates against the achievement of true lived equality for women and men.

As regards the physical aspect of the female body, Ruether (1983:94) argues that creation in the image of God means that a woman's sexual being is also formed in God's image, and thus, she concludes that devaluing womanhood and female sexuality is a sin. Embodiment is then no longer something lesser, but becomes a way of celebrating human sexuality as a reflection of the image of God. Linked to this, Ruether (1983:93) provides a concise pathway for moving from theological anthropology to feminist theological anthropology, which is opposed to patriarchal anthropology:

> There appears to be an ambiguity in the way *imago Dei*/sin has been correlated with maleness and femaleness. On the one hand, deeply rooted in Christian thought, is an affirmation of the equivalence of maleness and femaleness in the image of God. This has never been denied but it has tended to become obscured by a second tendency to correlate femaleness with the lower part of human nature in a hierarchical scheme of mind over body, reason over passions. Since this lower part of the self is seen as the source of sin - the falling away of the body from its original unity with the mind and hence into sin and death - femaleness also becomes linked with the sin-prone part of the self.

Ruether (cited in Gonzalez 2007:127) concludes that a Christian anthropology cannot simultaneously support the stance that male and female both fully reflect the divine

image, while also taking the position that women are associated with the "devalued aspects" of humanity.

Michelle Gonzalez (2007:125) asserts that feminist theological anthropology argues that humanity was not only created in the image of God, but that the same God created that image as male and female. This argument refutes the classical patriarchal theological anthropology which has historically viewed men as fully reflecting God's image while women were considered to reflect the image of God (*imago Dei*) inadequately. This patriarchal view is based on a sexist interpretation of the creation stories of Genesis 2 and 3, which have been used as a source to blame women for the existence of sin in the world. Feminist theologians have used Genesis 1:27 (which records that men and women were created equally in the image of God) to claim the full humanity of women. In addition, feminist Hebrew biblical scholars have interpreted the second creation story in other ways, as demonstrated by Miranda N. Pillay (2009:89), who highlights that the differences in the depiction of the creation of women could be explained

> by suggesting that the first human being was created a hermaphrodite, incorporating within it the two sexes - "male and female, He created them."

This would then repudiate claims of male superiority over females based on this passage.

It is within the framework of the above interpretation of the Genesis stories that Oduyoye (2001), an African feminist theologian, is empowered to declare that feminist theological anthropology is a fundamental step in the effort to create a more egalitarian understanding of human relationships. The *imago Dei* in all of humanity is the basis of her theology. Oduyoye (cited in Gonzalez 2007:125), emphasizes "justice, caring, sharing and compassion, even in a hostile world, as the expression of the divine image all human beings are expected to reflect," which finds its most tangible manifestation in the person of Jesus.

The theory of feminist theological anthropology thus contributes to the struggle against destructive gender constructs (Oduyoye 2001). The reason for employing this theory as one of the three theories underpinning this study is its significance in recognizing that humanity consists of males and females as being equally created in the *imago Dei*. This has an impact on three parts of this present study: first, it will link to the religio-culturally

constructed identity of women in the context of this study, which is outlined in chapter four. This linkage is due to the fact that the *imago Dei* is understood overwhelmingly from a patriarchal anthropological perspective rather than from a feminist theological understanding, an understanding which in turn shapes these women's religious identities in that they are considered inherently inferior in the eyes of the (largely male) church leaders who uphold such thinking and who transmit this view to the general population.

Second, it will have implications for chapter five, which deals with the perceptions of female ex-prisoners of self, society and God. Hence, in this chapter, the women's voices will reveal how while the dominant discourse on *imago Dei* has shaped their perceptions of self and society, it has not affected to the same degree their perceptions of God. What will be revealed and analysed, using feminist theological anthropology, is the women's transcendence of their oppressive perceptions of self and society, in attaining a liberating perception of God. This perception resonates well with feminist (as opposed to patriarchal) theological anthropology.

Third, the *imago Dei* concept will contribute to the proposal of a feminist pastoral care definition of rehabilitation from an African viewpoint, to be outlined in chapter six. Through the lens of this definition of what rehabilitation entails, current theories of rehabilitation will be critiqued and in the same chapter, six features of a new approach will be proposed. In turn, these six features will be used to critique current programmes and ultimately, in chapter seven a new rehabilitation programme will also be put forward.

Rakoczy (2004:42) says that an anthropology which is uplifting of the dignity and equality of women involves an acknowledgment that woman is truly *imago Dei* and mirrors God's perfection as much as man does. By misinterpreting scripture in a way that posits sin with women, female ex-prisoners in this study are doubly blamed, first as former criminals and second as fallen Eves of the creation story (Gonzalez 2007:125). Oduyoye (2001:72) adds that since Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God, then his human nature must reflect God also. The example of true compassion, true justice, and true love for all, especially for the poor and marginalised, embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, must serve as the role model for all of humankind. Through the proposed African feminist pastoral care understanding of rehabilitation, such an understanding of *imago Dei* will be brought to the forefront.

2.3. Feminist pastoral care

Similar to feminist theological anthropology, feminist pastoral care is best understood by first locating it within the discipline of practical theology, where the broad field of pastoral care and counselling is situated. The understanding of pastoral care provided by Eide et al. (2009) is useful to this present study. First, Eide et al., (2009:5) state that:

> Pastoral care is an expression of God's love for the world and therefore an integral part of the life of the Christian community. Through the functions of healing, sustaining, empowering, reconciling and guiding, the overall aim is to restore what is broken in the lives of individuals, families and groups in the name of Jesus Christ.

Second, pastoral counselling,

> [I]s a more specialized type of pastoral care offered in response to individuals, families and groups who are experiencing pain in their lives and are willing to seek pastoral help in order to deal with it (Eide et al. 2009:5).

This section of the study employs 'pastoral care' as a blanket term, which includes the pastoral counselling aspect as well as that of pastoral care. The discipline of pastoral care in its broad understanding has been developed in particular in the latter part of the twentieth century. Clebsch and Jaekle (1964) identified four basic functions of Christian pastoral care: (i) healing, (ii) guiding, (iii) sustaining, and (iv) reconciling. Clinebell (1984:43) added nurturing to these four functions and Lartey (1997:37-42) included two further functions: liberating and empowering. The particular forms that pastoral care and counselling have taken in various times and places have been shaped by the context in which they were employed.

Within practical theology from an African perspective, there is a need for a contextual approach to pastoral care. Peter Lechion Kimilike (2009:32) explains that such an approach perceives reality as a single unit, and not a duality of the visible/material and invisible/spiritual. Hence, as regards the African concept of reality, including the reality to which pastoral care is responding has first a holistic approach which understands the interconnectedness of the universe. It goes on to understand that there exists a network of relations between God, humanity, and the world. As a result, the actions of human beings affect the whole universe. Second, linked to the interconnectedness is the feature of community as a fundamental aspect of African life and thought. Through the structure of

relationships in the human community the meaning and understanding of the life of an individual and even of non-living objects is obtained and sustained. African corporate mentality is built on this feature of community (Kimilike 2008:33). The life-enhancing aspects of this African approach to reality are part of African culture and contribute to this view of African pastoral care.

As regards feminist pastoral care, this emerged within the second wave of feminist theology. It appears that African women's theology of the third wave has not overtly developed its own distinctive model of African women's pastoral care because the focus of the majority of its scholars has been more on biblical studies and the role of women in the church. Since there is presently no defined theory of African feminist pastoral care, current practices of feminist pastoral care which have emerged from feminist theology in general, must be examined. What then is feminist pastoral care?

Feminist pastoral care embraces all aspects of traditional pastoral care and counselling, including: healing, sustaining, empowering, reconciling, guiding and restoring broken lives through counselling. Additionally, feminist pastoral care incorporates the essential features of nurturing and liberating. This means that through feminist pastoral care those individuals who are estranged from their families and society at large are accepted, loved and embedded in compassionate care. What is important is that such care-giving is expected to lead to socio-political action. As Dube (2009:78) states, participants in feminist pastoral care "are empowered to find God in themselves and their situation of alienation." According to Carrie Doehring (2006:8), Christian liberation theologies, which include feminist theologies "often use the norm of valuing the voices of people who are marginalized in a social system." This perspective will be essential in chapter seven where these aspects will be taken into account in formulating an approach to African feminist pastoral care.

As mentioned above, African women theologians such as Odoyuye (1995) and Kanyoro (2006) have emphasized the need for exposing the patriarchal nature of women's oppression in Africa. Feminist pastoral care also takes note of this situation, working for women's empowerment. Hence, feminist pastoral care highlights the fact that individuals have their own resources which they can draw upon to liberate and heal themselves.

Feminist pastoral care acknowledges the oppression experienced - specifically by women - and emphasizes the need for liberation and gender justice in all spheres of life. Thus pastoral theory is feminist when it analyses and assesses issues with the hope of instituting justice for both women and men (DeMarinis 1993:3). As Young (1990:106) maintains, "feminist pastoral care recognizes the dignity of all human beings. Male and female are considered as equals." Feminist pastoral care focuses on justice to the marginalized; it gives attention to the human basic needs such as food and shelter, and emotional and spiritual nurture. Feminist pastoral care is analytical towards patriarchal power structures in society and the church. It thus takes an active role in addressing situations in the real world; hence, it becomes a useful working theory and methodology (DeMarinis 1993:147).

The aim of feminist pastoral care entails aspects of the liberation of the community from various forms of oppression. It strives to work toward gender justice in both the socio-economic and political spheres. This setting enhances transformation and community building. It is life-giving and it is built on human relationships (Oduyoye 2001:16). It will be argued that if a women-sensitive rehabilitation programme is to be designed, it must take seriously the contributions of feminist scholars in the area of pastoral care.

The application of feminist pastoral care theory to this study will be discussed further in chapter six. By using the perceptions of female prisoners and ex-prisoners of self, society and God, which are raised in chapter five, these perceptions will be examined in chapter six as a means of stressing the gender-sensitive and contexualised requirements of the rehabilitation process. As with the feminist theological anthropology theory discussed above, feminist pastoral care will contribute to the formulation of a definition of rehabilitation which subsequently will be used to critique current theories of rehabilitation. In addition, feminist pastoral care will contribute to a proposed African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation, emerging from which, suggestions for an African feminist pastoral care programme of rehabilitation will be put forward in chapter seven.

Since this study is located on the African continent within African women's theologies, it becomes necessary to engage further with these theologies.

2.4. African feminist cultural hermeneutics

African feminist cultural hermeneutics is associated with the emergence of the third wave of the feminist movement in the late 1970s. This form of feminism emphasised the importance of context with regard to how women experience patriarchy. The articulation of African specific forms of gender based oppression took place within the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, which gave birth to African women's theologies in 1989. African feminist cultural hermeneutics became the central distinguishing mark of African women's theologies in their contribution to the global feminist discourse. The two African women theologians who have been championed as the originators of African feminist cultural hermeneutics are Musimbi Kanyoro and Mercy Amba Oduyoye. African feminist cultural hermeneutics was built on a dialogue with already existing theories, as explained by Gerald West (2001) who observes that, "in sum, African feminist hermeneutics shares elements with both inculturation and liberation hermeneutics."

According to Mark Chan (2008:379, hermeneutics means to express, explain, translate or interpret. Theological hermeneutics entails either bringing Christian doctrines to bear on the challenge of understanding both the biblical text and the human condition, or demonstrating the impact of biblical interpretation on the Christian theology. In addition, as pointed out by Justin Ukpong (1995), African inculturation hermeneutics arose out of the need to fill the gap between African social and cultural concerns and Western Christianity. Ukpong (1995:4) goes further to state that in response to this gap, African inculturation hermeneutics focussed on:

> The African socio-cultural context and the questions that arise there from…
> [so that] biblical interpretation… seeks to make the African… context the
> subject of interpretation. Thus, each aspect of biblical interpretation is
> consciously informed by the world view of, and the life experience within
> that culture.

Since the Bible has meaning for African socio-cultural contexts, "the gospel message serves as a critique of culture and/or the cultural perspective enlarges and enriches the understanding of the text" (Ukpong 1995:6).

As noted above by West (2001), African feminist hermeneutics builds both on African inculturation hermeneutics and on liberation hermeneutics. The latter originated in South

America in the 1970s in response to perceived socio-economic and political injustices. A brief explanation is provided by Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973:307):

> The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith, based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be verified by the practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors. Liberation from every form of exploitation, the possibility of a more human and more dignified life, the creation of a new [humanity], all pass through this struggle.

In the words of Elsa Tamez (1982:41-55), a well-known feminist biblical scholar, Latin American liberation hermeneutics engages in an essentially political re-reading of the Scriptures, so that the exodus event (Exodus 14) for example becomes a liberation from political servitude and Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-53) becomes a call to restructure the hierarchical socio-political order "in which there are rich and poor, mighty and lowly" (Tamez 1982:68).

Such a liberationist understanding now leads to a discussion of feminist hermeneutics, and then to African feminist cultural hermeneutics more specifically. As noted by Letty M. Russell (1974:20), feminist theology is, "by definition, liberation theology because it is concerned with the liberation of all people to become full participants in human society." With regard to hermeneutics, feminists point out that since its compilation, the Bible has been used by men to support the continued oppression of women in church and society. The response of feminist scholars has been that scripture is to be interpreted in more than one way (Isherwood and McEwan 2001:102). Feminist scholarship not only finds women and their concerns within the texts but also locates the power struggles behind the texts and in the broader environment (Rakoczy 2004:154). Accordingly, a liberating hermeneutics for women involves approaching the text with suspicion. Women are thus committed to reading scripture with a new vision of hermeneutics, looking specifically for the patterns of oppression which are the consequences of the patriarchal world view of the biblical authors and of the (male) interpreters of the Bible (Schüssler Fiorenza 1998:226). In addition to the patriarchal bias of the authors and the interpreters of the biblical texts, many cultures add a further dimension of implicit and explicit male domination when reading the Bible in their contexts. Clifford notes that Western feminist

thinking has tended to ignore the special influence of cultural attitudes about gender that privilege men over women (Clifford 2001:64). It is here that African women theologians have made an important contribution.

As noted by West (2001) African feminist hermeneutics has taken elements of the religio-cultural emphasis of inculturation hermeneutics and the racial-economic-political focus of liberation hermeneutics. Because of the predominance of the former (the religio-cultural emphasis) in African feminist hermeneutics it can be argued that much of this work is really a form of inculturation hermeneutics. However, African feminist hermeneutics usually shares the attitude of suspicion towards the biblical text of African liberation hermeneutics. Most importantly, African feminist hermeneutics, as with African liberation hermeneutics, insists on a related structured and systematic analysis of both the African context and the biblical text, its distinctive feature being its focus on gender and the systemic nature of patriarchy (West 2001:6).

Oduyoye (2001:15) explains that African feminist cultural hermeneutics is an important mechanism developed by African women theologians in order to analyse their culture, religion and heritage similar to Ukpong's (1995:6) emphasis on the way the Bible can be used to critique African socio-cultural contexts. For Kanyoro (2002:9), such cultural hermeneutics involves an analysis and interpretation of the ways in which culture conditions how people understand reality in a particular context. For example, Phiri and Nadar (2006:5-20) employ African feminist cultural hermeneutics as a tool with which culture - as practiced within biblical times, and as it exists in present-day Africa - can be interrogated. Rakoczy (2004:166) further asserts that African feminist cultural hermeneutics helps women to read the Bible in dialogue with their own cultural understanding and become critical of the connections between them. In her attempt to describe African cultures, Kanyoro (2002:13) sees these as a double-edged sword which can be used both as a creed for community identity and as the justification for oppression and injustice especially towards women. Elaborating further on the dual nature of women's experience of culture, Kanyoro (2002:15) argues that:

> Women in Africa are custodians of cultural practices. For generations women have guarded cultural prescriptions strictly governed by the fear of breaking taboos… harmful traditional practices are passed on as cultural values and therefore are not discussed, challenged, or changed.

Additionally, Oduyoye (2001:15) argues that since African women's cultural heritage is multi-layered, their cultural hermeneutics also has to be multi-dimensional so that it can analyse the different aspects of culture. This requires women's experience of culture to be addressed holistically and contextually. In an endeavour to analyse culture it is also important to guard against any form of stereotype that may lead to passing judgment on a culture without applying any form of cultural analysis.

Two main aspects of feminist cultural hermeneutics as understood in an African context are now outlined in more detail: the role of culture and that of the Bible in the construction of the place of African women in church and society.

First, as regard the role of culture, according to Dube (2001:104), cultural hermeneutics assists scholars in Africa in developing a vision for mature cultural dialogue. When talking of the patriarchal oppression of women, scholars are not trying to point fingers at anyone but instead are highlighting the need for a collective solidarity from both women and men since cultural matters cannot be dealt with in isolation. Dube (2001:108) goes further to assert that, "there is need to work on the history of culture and the structures that maintain it. We need to establish how women explain their cultural practices and then discover the source [i.e. patriarchal thinking] of such explanations."

Teresa Okure (1993:76) rightly points out that African women do not as a cultural rule, start with methodology. When engaging with theology their starting point is not method but life and life concerns. Kanyoro (1997:386) notes that in both the private and public spheres of life, the roles and images of African women are socially and culturally defined. African culture is full of practices that dehumanize women through taboos regarding leadership, relationships, widowhood, marriages, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, and lack of access to and control of family resources and sometimes natural resources, for example the right to land. This will be seen in the context of the Shona people of Zimbabwe as will be discussed in chapter four. It must here be understood that culture has been used to silence women in Africa. Philomena Njera Mwaura (2003:80) states that although there are aspects of African culture that may be liberating to women, others weaken them. These negative aspects are embraced by women and most men without considering their harmful nature. Furthermore, scripture as well as misogynist Christian traditions have often reinforced negative aspects of African culture

and further legitimized them.

As noted by Oduyoye (2001:18), women are developing cultural hermeneutics in order to assert their ownership of Africa's religio-culture which, despite the ways it has been harnessed as a patriarchal tool, embodies a resource with which the will of God and the full meaning of women's humanity can be understood. As pointed out by Kanyoro (1996:151) African feminist cultural hermeneutics is interested not only in critiquing oppressive cultural practices, but also in how these practices can be transformed. Transformation in this case will mean doing away with those practices which prevent women from living a full life, while retaining and affirming those practices that are life giving. This is a hermeneutical issue according to Kanyoro (2002:9). On the one hand, feminist cultural hermeneutics criticizes all oppressive and dehumanizing cultural beliefs and practices targeted at African women. On the other, it identifies elements in African culture and religions which are life giving and affirms them because they give African women their identity (Oduyoye 2001:13). Consequently, feminist cultural hermeneutics can make a valuable contribution towards the development of greater gender equity and can be the basis for African women's liberation since this theory challenges church and society on their silence in the face of the suffering of women in the name of culture (Oduyoye 1986:124).

Having discussed the issue of culture as it pertains to African feminist cultural hermeneutics the interpretation of the Bible in this regard will be examined.

As observed by Kanyoro and Njoroge (1996:150), African feminist cultural hermeneutics takes both culture and the Christian gospel seriously. The employment of the Bible in upholding cultural practices means that feminist cultural hermeneutics is required to provide both a mechanism for examining the biblical texts and their interpretation from a cultural perspective, as well as a means by which these texts, their interpretation and the cultures which they underpin, can be critiqued (Oduyoye 2001:18). Kanyoro (1997:364) also asserts that "the culture of the reader in Africa has more influence on the way the biblical text is understood and used in communities than the historical facts about the text." As a result, African women theologians such as Oduyoye and Kanyoro (Oduyoye 1986, 1995; Oduyoye and Kanyoro 1992) have demonstrated the importance not only of reading the Bible from women's perspectives, but also of the specific African

cultural experiences grounded in African life and religious practices that shape such readings. African women theologians have recognized that although the Bible is the Word of God, it has an explicit patriarchal bias and the worldview of its authors is often androcentric. Not only was the Bible written in a patriarchal cultural milieu, but the (mainly male) theologians who interpret it have also tended to make women invisible and to present them negatively. Nevertheless, the Bible is also a tool of empowerment as Phiri (1997:55) argues:

> The Bible provides to most African women church-goers a reason for being. It is affirming, offering them liberation from social and cultural stigmatisation and oppression through a relationship with Jesus, whose liberating message they find in the Bible.

In other words, Phiri recognizes that the same Bible, read from women's perspectives can facilitate the liberation of women (and men) in church and society. Furthermore, Kanyoro (1997), points out that for women to find justice and peace through the texts of the Bible, they have to first try and recover both the participation of biblical women in the text itself and the 'presence' of contemporary women in their interpretation of this text.

In this present study African feminist cultural hermeneutics has been used in two sections. First, in chapter four, which focuses on the religio-cultural gendered construction of the identity of women in the Shona culture, African feminist cultural hermeneutics will be used as a tool to analyse the ways in which culture and the interpretation of the Bible shape this identity. Since this hermeneutical approach operates at the intersection between the gospel and culture, it provides a useful tool for understanding how religio-cultural identity is constructed.

Second, feminist cultural hermeneutics has been employed in chapter five, which deals with a feminist analysis of female prisoners and ex-prisoners' perceptions of self, society and God. Here, African feminist cultural hermeneutical theory will be used as Kanyoro (2002:57) states, to analyse women's voices in order for them to be heard: she emphasises that unless women's voices are heard their oppression will continue through existing power imbalances. Kanyoro (2002:58) further argues that African women need to begin to write their own stories that have long been written by male African males. In terms of perceptions, this hermeneutical stance does not shape women's reflection on their

inner being, social identity, or God (since they have never been exposed to hermeneutical studies). What it does however, is to allow for an analysis of these perceptions by scrutinizing the cultures and religious beliefs which shape them. This is most pertinent when it comes to the women's perceptions of society and their role therein, because African feminist cultural hermeneutics focuses specifically on the ways in which society (including its aspects of culture and religion) shape all aspects of identity and existence. Feminist cultural hermeneutics is also employed in chapter six which deals with a gendered analysis of theories of rehabilitation, where it will be employed to provide a framework for critically examining the patriarchal systems that undergird the oppression of female prisoners and ex-prisoners.

2.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, three feminist theories have been discussed, namely feminist theological anthropology, feminist pastoral care and feminist cultural hermeneutics. The objective of this chapter was to present the three theories that will undergird the study as a whole and which provide clarity on the situation faced by women prisoners and ex-prisoners. First, it was highlighted that feminist theological anthropology is located within the second wave of the feminist movement. Its purpose is to assist scholars of theology to understand that the classical theological anthropology is harmful to the humanity of women, while the discourse of feminist theological anthropology embraces humankind as created in the image of God, regardless of gender. Second, feminist pastoral care within the field of feminist theology is also located in the second wave of feminism. A contribution it makes to the discourse of pastoral care and counselling is its emphasis that by virtue of their humanity, each person (male or female) is entitled to care and dignity. Given the systemic gender-injustice faced by women, feminist pastoral care further stresses the need for the nurture, liberation and empowerment of women. Finally, African feminist cultural hermeneutics is located in the third wave of the feminist movement through the discourse of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Its special impact on global feminist theological discourse as well as on this present study is its acknowledgement of the overwhelming influence of culture and religion in shaping women's identity and experience, especially in the African context. The next chapter will outline the methodology utilised in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, the rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe from a feminist pastoral care perspective is the focus of this present study. Its ultimate aim is to propose an approach to and a programme of rehabilitation for female prisoners and ex-prisoners. This process is based on a fieldwork investigation (presented in chapter five) of the perceptions and experiences of female prisoners and ex-prisoners, analysed through the application of three feminist theories, namely, feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care (as discussed above in chapter two). Furthermore, the voices that emerged from the fieldwork (dealing with perceptions and experiences), will be employed in an examination of current rehabilitation theories and programmes (in chapters six and seven) as well as the broader context of women in Zimbabwe (in chapter four).[5]

According to Paul Oliver (2010:47-48), "methodology in its wider sense incorporates the terms and concepts which are the basis in the formulation of a research design leading to the overall strategy for the research." The principal purpose of a research design is to produce objective data, which reveal the subject matter "as it really is" (VanderCreek et al. 2008:43). According to Babbie and Mouton (2004), the research design process includes the plan and structured framework of how the researcher aims to carry out the research process, with the goal of solving the research problem or finding answers to the issues being studied.

This current chapter will present the outline of the research methodology employed in the thesis specifically in terms of the fieldwork undertaken. It will define and justify both the use of qualitative research by the study and the engagement with feminist research

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[5]This latter aspect (concerning rehabilitation theories and programmes on the one hand and the Zimbabwean context on the other hand) was not strictly part of the fieldwork (i.e., it does not fall within the discussion on research methodology) since the data collected during the fieldwork process was merely used to illustrate the documentary sources employed in those sections.

methodologies; describe the selection and identity of the research participants; provide the procedures employed for data collection; explain the methods of data analysis used; indicate the limitations of the study; and present the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research process.

3.1. The qualitative research method

This present study employed the qualitative research method as the basis of its research methodology. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005:70) note that qualitative research methods provide the opportunity for a broader understanding of the issues at hand, through holding natural conversations with participants in the study and through hearing and understanding their narratives. The qualitative research in this study supplied comprehensive information on each individual's perception of their own experiences and contexts. This information was then analysed in order to draw conclusions for the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:70) point out that qualitative research enables the researcher to get an "inside picture" of the world of the participants, as it is understood and experienced by them; in other words, their perceptions and experiences. As Morash (2006:238) also notes:

> Participants in qualitative research have some voice and can shape discussion to pursue a new topic or provide detailed descriptions and explanations of circumstances, events, and self.

In order to design a rehabilitation approach and programme that will be appropriate to the needs of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners who are the subject of this study, such an "inside picture" is essential.

Under the terms of this study, qualitative research allows for the discovery and description of how contexts are gendered. The experiences and outcomes of prisoners' and ex-prisoners' relations with their families, communities and criminal justice agencies are affected by gender. The detailed kinds of descriptions enabled through qualitative research allow for a fuller understanding of these gendered contexts and their effects on individuals. Hence, the contribution of qualitative research to this study will be to show how people's gendered identities affect all aspects of life, including their involvement in criminal activity and the repercussions thereof both for victims and

offenders (Morash 2006:238).

In view of the fact that this study focuses on pastoral care-giving to female prisoners and ex-prisoners, it is noteworthy that qualitative research from the pastoral perspective calls upon empathic listening skills in order to hear the lived experiences of the participants in the study. Rather than deal with other types of documents, particularly written documents, qualitative research investigates the "living human document."6 Hence, as VanderCreek et al. (2008:7) states:

> In numerous ways the utilisation of qualitative research methodology provides the pastoral caregiver with a natural bridge from the practice of ministry to the understanding and meanings of that ministry to persons.

In this study, qualitative research has been employed with female prisoners and ex-prisoners as participants who are marginalised in many ways, in order to elicit the knowledge and experiences of these women and thereby explore how best they can be helped with their reintegration into society and how suitable rehabilitation programmes for them may be developed.

3.2. Qualitative research tools

Qualitative research is made up of two phases: gathering materials or data and interpreting such materials or data. Through qualitative research, engagement with female prisoners and ex-prisoners was accomplished as they narrated their experiences. As a researcher, this kind of interaction with the participants provided an overview of how, as individuals, they perceive these experiences. However, since experience is subjective and internal to each person, the only way to possibly access this was through communication using words, facial expressions, vocal tones and body languages. Together, all of these forms of communication conveyed the experiences of the participants. The first step of the qualitative research process is to look for the sources for these expressions of the human experience (VanderCreek et al. 2008:99). These sources are divided into participant observation, interviews and secondary literature.

Participant observation is a rich source of information for qualitative research. By using

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6 As per Anton Boisen's terminology in *The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study in Mental Disorder and Religious Experience,* (Chicago: Willet and Clark, 1936).

participant observation in this study, an overview was gained of how participants interacted with others and of their daily life. Participant observation is different from interviews because interviews often reflect back on previous experience and on documents, as they are a static record of an experience now past (VanderCreek et al. 2008:100). Participant observation facilitated a first-hand view of the context of the participants and allowed for first-hand information about their current situations to be gathered.

The interview process is reflective dialogue, which means that it provides the deeper meaning of the human experience as opposed to the more immediate reality of participant observation (VanderCreek et al. 2008:100). Three types of interview can be identified: the semi-structured interview, the focused interview and the conversational interview. All three of these types were used in this study.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted during the fieldwork and were based on a number of specific open-ended questions (i.e., questions which require more than a yes/no answer), in order to interact at a deeper level with each participant. This method provided a structured framework, but one which was not too rigid. This method is appropriate in circumstances where the researcher understands the broad nature of the experience being investigated, but requires deeper insight into each of its aspects. Since the researcher had long been engaged in working with female prisoners, such general understandings already existed. What was required from the interviews was more specific information. In regard to the semi-structured interview:

> The advantage of this method is the ease of its analysis: its categories are already identified by each preset question and the researcher has only to organise the material within each question. Its major disadvantage is that the researcher is imposing the basic parameters of the experience's meaning on the participant rather than discovering them from the participant (VanderCreek et al. 2008:101).

In the focused interview, specific questions were posed to identify the experiences of each participant, allowing the respondents to proceed in whatever direction they chose. Hereafter, the original purpose for collecting data was returned to, to ascertain whether or not this had been addressed by the participant, and if not, further discussion was encouraged. The underlying approach here was to be fully open to discovering each

participant's specific experience. As far as the focused interview is concerned:

> The advantage to this method is to capture the organisation of the participant's experience and to capture more of the personal, effective qualities of the experience as well as unsuspected informational details. The major disadvantage in this method is the difficulty of analysing its material since each interview is so unique in its presentation (VanderCreek et al. 2008:102).

The conversational interview focused specifically on natural discourse and building meaning. In this kind of interview the meaning of an experience was jointly constructed by the researcher and the participants within the conversation itself, as both worked toward a fuller understanding of the experience being discussed. The advantage of this type of interview is to give support and engagement to the participant that is lacking in the focused interview, while avoiding the restrictions and pre-arranged format of the semi-structured interview. As VanderCreek et al. (2008:102-103) note:

> The disadvantage reflects back to the basic challenge of the qualitative method [as] much discipline is required of the interviewer to support the participant in discovering the meaning of the experience without imposing predispositions on the participant.

Documents also form part of qualitative research, but they differ from the above-mentioned sources since they are static, are removed from the context and cannot dialogue further (VanderCreek et al. 2008: 100). According to Ruth Finnegan (2006:142), secondary sources are documents which provide a judgement or interpretation of information contained in primary sources—in this case, the first-hand interviews and observation. Documentary data analysis not only places research within the context of what has gone before and explains its worth in this context, but also contributes to a deeper understanding by the researcher of her or his participants and their contexts. Documentary data are also used in the construction of the non-fieldwork parts of the research, where they contribute by providing objective and scholarly information in the area of study. However, since the current chapter focuses on research methodology (i.e., fieldwork data), the latter is not of relevance here. In this study, the following documents were employed: government publications on Zimbabwean prisons; newsletters from Prison Fellowship International; circulars from ZACRO; as well as relevant books, journals and websites that deals with issues linked to female imprisonment.

3.2.1. Researching women's experience

It is generally accepted in the field of social studies that when conducting feminist research, an approach taken by the current researcher, women's experiences are of vital importance (Sarantakos 2005:54). According to Ruether, human experience is core to human understanding. Human experiences include religious experience, experience of the self, of the community and of the world, in an "interacting dialectic" (Reuther 1983:12). As regards feminist theology, its focus on women's experience reveals how classical theology is based on male experience rather than on universal human experience. Taking this further, Valerie Saiving (1979:27) contends that, notwithstanding the reality of such universality, there are in fact significant differences between masculine and feminine experiences.

Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow (1979:6) argue that feminist experience refers simply to "the fabric of life as it is lived". Like Reuther, they point out that women have often "shaped and understood their lives according to norms or preferences for female behaviour expressed by men … [so that] there is a sense in which women have not shaped or even known their own experience" (Christ and Plaskow 1979:6). Being enabled to identify their own experience is empowering for women and therefore researching women's experience is central to feminist theory.

Two poles emerge within the feminist understanding of experience, which according to Christ and Plaskow (1979:8) may be called (1) women's feminist experience and (2) women's traditional experience. The first model posits that it is the experience of liberation which is of value in women's experience. Rosemary Ruether, Elisabeth Fiorenza, and Sheila Collins employ the experience of liberation to critique patriarchal tradition. The second model takes the view that it is the traditional experiences (including marriage and motherhood), which provide signposts for transforming patriarchal culture. In this model, those traits that have been identified as "feminine" (including intuition, expression of emotion, and a focus on human relationships) can be reviewed and reinterpreted from a feminist perspective. Experiences related to women's bodies (for example menstruation, pregnancy, lactation, and menopause), and the associated connectivity of women with nature, are among the women's traditional experiences affirmed by the second model of feminist experience which is posited by scholars such as

Penelope Washbourn and Zsuzanna Budapest (Christ and Plaskow 1979:9).

Regarding the theories on which the present study is built, African feminist cultural hermeneutics could be said to include both of Christ and Plaskow's (1979) models of women's experience, since it both critiques life-denying aspects of culture in favour of women's liberation ('feminist experiences') and also promotes life-giving cultural practices ('traditional experience'). Similiarly, feminist pastoral care covers both models in that while women's pastoral care needs include empowerment and liberation ('feminist experiences'), they also include nurturing ('traditional experiences'). Finally, as regards feminist theological anthropology it would appear that this theory takes the first model rather than the second, since the focus is on an emancipation ('feminist experience') from the oppressive view of women as lesser beings and as the source of sin, as upheld by patriarchal understandings of *imago Dei.*

Another way of examining women's experience is presented by Serene Jones (1979:35) who argues that on the one hand, women's experience can be understood in terms of a universal situating framework. This framework can be phenomenological, as in the case of Elizabeth Johnson's *She who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* and Catherine Mowry LaCugna's *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, which explain women's experience in terms of the basic structure of broader human experience. The framework can also be psychoanalytic, as in Rita Brock's *Journeys by Heart* and Cathrine Keller's *From a Broken Web* which both focus on the human relations between self and others (Jones 1979:39). A third framework employed is that of constructing women's experience using literary or textual tools as part of general cultural production (Jones 1979:42).

On the other hand, according to Jones (1979:47) women's experience can be understood through the "historical and cultural texture of identity and language". Such an understanding includes the cultural-anthropological approach to women's experience which is employed in Kathryn Tanner's *The Politics of God* and in Adam Maria Isasi-Diaz' *En la Lucha.* In addition to this cultural-anthropological perspective, the tools of poststructural theory have been used by Rebecca Chopp, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Susan Thistlethwaite, and Emily Townes to present a contextualised as opposed to a universalised understanding of women's experience (Jones 1979:50-51). Thus, Chopp's

The Power to Speak, covers an eclectic range, from scriptural hermeneutics to sin and ecclesiology, as well as language, politics, history, and power. In such an approach the patriarchal formulation of all aspects of women's lives is acknowledged and deconstructed (Young 1990:50; Oduyoye 2001a:11; Sarantakos 2005:55).

As regards the three theories and women's experiences from Jones'stance, it could be argued that African feminist cultural hermeneutics falls within the second of Jones' (1979) understandings of women's experience, since it is firmly located in a specific cultural context. However, feminist pastoral care reflects both the universal and the contextual approaches, since while the general human needs of healing, sustaining/nurturing, guiding and reconciling are met, so too are the gender-specific needs of liberating and empowering. As regards feminist theological anthropology this theory also seems to both sit in the universalising camp, since women and men are both regarded as reflecting *imago Dei*, and also in the contextualising camp, because of the acknowledgement that women's experience is moulded by the particular thinking and practice of androcentrism and patriarchy.

Whatever approach is taken - whether the focus in on women's feminist experience or women's traditional experience; or whether the slant is a universalising or a contextualising one - the goal of feminist qualitative research is to give women a voice to speak about their perceptions and experiences, in order for responses to be developed that will empower individuals and will more broadly enable social change and transformation of the dominant patriarchal systems (Sarantakos 2005:54-55). In the present study, the women's voices were consulted in order for an appropriate gender-sensitive rehabilitation approach and programme to be proposed that can contribute meaningfully to their full reintegration into society.

3.2.1.1. Feminist methodology

Feminist methodologies underpin the qualitative research of this study. Allen and Walker (1992:201) assert that:

> Feminist methodology takes women's concerns seriously and aims at understanding and undertaking research which is beneficial for women not just about women.

Women in general and female prisoners and ex-prisoners in particular, fall into the category of vulnerable people, and as Milner and Moore (1999:103) contend, their ability to make personal decisions is significantly reduced. According to Kerry Daly (1996:3-4) qualitative methods are appropriate to the study of such vulnerable people. The vulnerability of women prisoners and ex-prisoners is due to the silencing of their voices by patriarchal systems, and because they are not accepted by society. Rebecca Campbell and Sharon Waseo (2000:783) argue that "the ultimate aim of feminist research is to capture women's lived experiences in a respectful manner that legitimates women's voices as sources of knowledge."

Feminist methodology takes the stance that the process of research is as important as its outcome. This study has employed a feminist methodology since it challenges the passivity, subordination and silencing of women and encourages them to tell their stories (Maynard 1994:230), by providing the respondents with the space to express their experiences without fear and judgement, and by trying to find ways to empower them. Maggie O'Neill (1996:131) points out her commitment "to women's voices being heard and listened to" and to "action oriented" research, with the outcome of such research being "knowledge for feminist praxis facilitating empowerment, resistance and social change." Therefore, a central aim in using such a feminist methodology was to construct a knowledge base which would be to the benefit of women and other minority groups (cf. de Vault 1999:31). Utilising such a process often creates a strong sense of solidarity between the feminist researcher and the participants in her research. Renzetti (1997:134), again confirms that "feminist methodology commits to giving voice to the personal, everyday experiences of individuals particularly those who are marginalised in society," as well as to "improv[ing] the life conditions of the marginalised, and it transforms social scientific inquiry from an academic exercise into an instrument of meaningful social change." The present study is very much action-based in its desired outcomes.

Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Denise Leckenby (2004:210) argue that the feminist approach to methodology opens up the opportunity for new types of questions about women's lives, and those of other marginalised groups, to be addressed. These new kinds of questions mean that the research encourages the building of new knowledge, frequently leading to the development of innovative methods. This is seen in the present study

in both the methodology employed, which contributes to direct pioneering engagement with female prisoners and ex-prisoners in the Zimbabwean setting, as well as in the study's presentation of a new proposed approach towards and programme of rehabilitation. Hesse-Biber (2004:3) advocates for the employment within feminist research of various strategies aimed at constructing knowledge about women and their social worlds, as these are often sidelined within the dominant male society. Hence, Campbell and Waseo (2000:787) contend that:

> Feminist research is to identify the ways in which multiple forms of oppression impact women's lives and [to] empower women to tell their stories by providing a respectful and egalitarian research environment. They further state that a unique feature of feminist research is a more caring research environment that is non-hierarchal.

Claire Renzetti (1997:134) exhorts researchers to begin from their own experience, freely sharing information about themselves and their views with those they are studying, while emphasising adherence to a feminist ethic of care by advising or assisting when requested to do so. Such self-disclosure, leading to reciprocity, rapport and trust between the researchers and the researched increases the success of the process of research, which in this study was achieved through the researcher's openness with the participants about her personal experiences as an African woman. In fact, some of the participants in this study had been in the Chikurubi Female Prison while the researcher was working there as a chaplain. This further solidified their mutual trust and interest in the project.

Uwe Flick (2007:7) emphasises that ethnographic research can be undertaken from an alternative feminist approach. Feminists generally distance themselves from the traditional separation of a researcher and her or his 'subjects,' since such a distinction between the two parties has been a tool of oppression, serving mainly the interest of those in power, which has usually excluded women. Concerning the elements of a research project Flick (2007:7) states that:

> [T]he traditional idea of the detached researcher in control of all the elements of a research project was an authority figure par excellence, and his power was only enhanced by the enforcement of norms of objectivity and neutrality in the conduct of research.

Through closely identifying with the community they are studying, feminists turn this relationship into more of a partnership. With the overarching aim of explicitly promoting

the interests of women, they reject value neutrality as a scientific ideal. As a consequence, ethnographic research becomes imbued with empathy, subjectivity, and dialogue, so as to fully explore the experiences of women. Again, Flick (2007:8) argues that:

> The traditional 'interview' (which implicitly casts the researcher in role of power) is also rejected in favour of a more egalitarian dialogue, often embodied in the form of the life history in which a person is encouraged to tell her own story in her own way and on her own terms, with the minimal prompting by the researcher.

This kind of life-history approach to ethnography contributes by giving a voice to people historically marginalised, while also ensuring that a holistic picture is captured by the researcher, rather than separating this picture into analytical component parts, as commonly takes place with other interviewing techniques (Flick 2007:8). Such a methodology can be characterised as a narrative approach. The present study employed the narrative or story telling approach in order to allow the participants space to express themselves fully and openly.

3.2.1.2. Narrative methodology as an inclusive approach to data collection

This qualitative research utilised narrative methodology, which was found to be appropriate for examining the experiences of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. This methodology was implemented through the encouragement of the participants to freely "tell their stories." Narrative is present in every place and society. Life-story telling gives us direction, validates our own experiences, restores value to living and strengthens community bonds (Atkinson 2002:22).

Story telling allows participants to transmit the knowledge they have and as Andrea Fontana and James Frey (2005:709) have shown, this method is popular among feminist scholars. Story telling is viewed as a tool for understanding and highlighting women's history within a cultural setting that has traditionally relied on male interpretation. According to Gluck (1984:222) women are rejecting this situation of voicelessness and instead are formulating a new history using their voices and experiences. In an interview setting that is guided by feminist research methodology, oral history and life stories provide in-depth information about the participants. Philippe Denis asserts that: "Oral

[h]istory is the complex interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee about events of the past, which requires questioning on the part of the interviewer. The interview is tape recorded… and transcribed for the use of the research community and the public at large" (Denis 2008:3). Denis has worked extensively on oral history through the Sinomulando Oral History Centre at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus.[7]

As concluded by Chase (2005:657), feminist qualitative research views women's personal narratives as fundamental primary sources for research. This is confirmed by Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (2005:151) who advocate oral history for feminist research since it provides researchers with access to the knowledge and life experiences of the marginalised individuals and groups which would otherwise remain hidden. This is certainly the case with female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, whose voices have thus far barely been acknowledged, a situation which this study explicitly seeks to address.

3.3. Research participants

The term 'participants,' refers to the individuals who participated in this study. These consisted of thirteen women who were still in the female prison context and fifteen who had been released into society. The term 'participants' is preferred over 'subjects,' since the latter seems to imply that the research process is being carried out on them, rather like an experiment. Furthermore, it carries a connotation of possessiveness rather than involvement in or responsibility for the research process and outcome. As an interpretive and qualitative research, this study places participants at an equal status with the researcher. Therefore, the term 'participants' suggests a shared involvement and responsibility for the research (Oliver 2010:113).

As mentioned in the section on feminist methodology, the aim of this study was to give voice to the participants. This voice represented the participants' perceptions and

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[7] Philippe Denis' works include *The Power of Oral History: Memory, Healing and Development: X11th International Oral History Conference*, (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, 24-27 June 2002); *Never too Small to Remember: Memory Work and Resilience in Times of AIDS,* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005).

experiences as female prisoners and ex-prisoners and contributed to providing relevant information that the researcher needed for the development of a rehabilitation programme suitable for their reintegration into society. Since the study is based on a feminist foundation and as the researcher is an activist who advocates for justice and transformation for women in general and for female prisoners and ex-prisoners in particular, this approach allowed for a full collaboration between the researcher and the participants.

3.3.1. Selection of research participants: purposive sampling

The criterion for choosing the participants was through their voluntary interest in taking part in the study and to contributing through sharing their experiences. These women were available and willing to participate. In view of their firsthand experience of the difficulties faced by women upon release from prison, the participants were well placed to enrich the study, as the subject at hand is their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

It is important to note that the selection of the individual participants in a study forms a central part of the research process. A critical step in designing any research project therefore is in deciding on the type and number of participants to include in a study. Sampling refers to the process of selecting research participants in which a representative segment of a target population is chosen. The sampling process involves making choices on which people, settings, or events to study (TerreBlanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006:49). While there are various types of sampling, this study used purposive sampling, a technique in which researchers purposely choose participants whom they feel will be relevant to the study (Sarantakos 2005:164). TerreBlanche Durrheim and Painter (2006:50) confirm that purposive sampling involves the identification of individuals who are "appropriate" and whose contribution will allow the researcher to generate rich descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. In this present study, the participants were identified with the help of Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Association of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender, ex-prisoners, and the Chikurubi Female Prison.

3.3.2. Participants in the study and procedures for access

Having articulated on how the female prisoners and ex-prisoners came to participate in this study, their demographic details will now be presented. The total number of participants was twenty-eight. These participants came mainly from poor communities, both in the rural and urban areas. In terms of their education levels, most of the participants ranged from grade four to 'O' Level. Only one participant had received tertiary education. The age range was from eighteen to fifty-three years. Below is a table indicating the participants' religion, education, length of imprisonment, marital status and number of children. The employment details of the participants are discussed in section 6.3.2 of chapter six.

Table 1: Details of Participants.

Participant	Age	Religion	Education	Imprisonment Term	Marital Status	Children
Chiedza	35	Johane Masowe	Form 4	8 years	Divorced	0
Ratidzo	38	Jewish	Tertiary	3 years	Divorced	0
Chenai	27	AFM	Grade 7	3 years	Divorced	1
Rudo	38	Roman Catholic	Form 2	3years	Married	4
Zorodzo	33	Bible Way	Form 4	4 Months	Divorced	2
Piwai	23	AFM	Form 4	5 Months	Divorced	1
Torai	26	Johane Masowe	Form 2	1 year	Divorced	1
Zadzai	53	Johane Masowe	Grade 4	3 years	Divorced	5
Duzai	36	Roman Catholic	Form 4	1 year	Married	5
Kundiso	26	Johane Masowe	Grade 7	6 years	Married	1
Chengeto	32	Apostolic Revival	Form 4	4 months	Married	2
Batsirai	27	Faith Ministries	Form 3	On bail	Divorced	3
Tatenda	29	One way Ministries	Form 4	3 years	Divorced	1
Fananai	28	Mughodhi Apostolic	Form 4	4 years	Divorced	1
Simudzirai	35	7th Day Adventist	Form 4	2 years	Widow	3
Revai	21	ZAOGA	Form 3	1 year	Single	0

Participant	Age	Religion	Education	Imprisonment Term	Marital Status	Children
Dzorai	30	Methodist	Form 3	3years	Married	2
Turai	25	7th Day Adventist	Form 4	1 year	Married	1
Sarudzai	36	Faith in God	Form 4	3 years	Married	1
Varaidzai	35	Apostolic	Form 2	2 years	Widow	3
Rambai	18	Roman Catholic	Grade 7	3 years	Single	0
Raviro	23	Johane Masowe	Grade 7	2 years	Married	1
Maruza	28	Pentecostal	Form 2	4 months	Divorced	3
Kodzero	27	Apostolic	Form 4	2 years	Married	1
Manheru	23	Johane Masowe	Grade 5	6 months	Cohabitant	1
Oga	28	Apostolic Victory	Form1	8 months	Married	2
Regai	21	ZAOGA	Form 4	9 months	Divorced	1
Shuvai	36	AFM	Form 4	1 year	Widow	5

3.3.2.1. Female ex-prisoners' crimes

The female ex-prisoners selected for this study had been convicted of a crime, been sentenced and had served a prison term. Fifteen of the participants were female ex-prisoners. The table below provides their pseudonyms and the crimes they committed.

Table 2: Ex-Prisoner Participants and Crimes Committed

Participant	Crime
Chiedza	Murder of her baby
Ratidzo	Fraud for unpaid hotel bill
Rudo	Selling dagga (drugs)
Zorodzo	Theft of money
Piwai	Theft of baby napkins
Torai	Trespass and theft
Zadzai	Theft of household property
Duzai	Illegal gold selling

Kundiso	Stock theft
Chengeto	Theft of household property
Batsirai	Murder assisting in abortion
Tatenda	Theft through buying of stolen goods
Chenai	Theft of household property as a gang member
Fananai	Murder of sister-in-law's child, attempted murder of own child
Simudzirai	Selling of fake gold

Following their release, the women ex-prisoners may get material and psychological assistance either from Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe or the Zimbabwe Association of Criminal Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (ZACRO), while the prison authorities may also provide help in re-uniting ex-prisoners with their families. However, such assistance is often not available to the women, since the recipients of such help are usually male ex-prisoners. The greatest challenge faced by female ex-prisoners is their lack of dignity as they try to return back to society, since they suffer stigmatisation and discrimination.

One female ex-prisoner lived on the ZACRO premises and had been supported to establish a hair salon. At the time of this research she had recruited another female ex-prisoner to join her new business venture. Two other ex-prisoners lived at the Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe premises. The remaining female ex-prisoners who participated in the research lived in their own homes.

Both ZACRO and Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe helped the esearcher to identify a few of the participants, while the rest were recommended by other female ex-prisoners. The initial intention was not to approach ZACRO at all because in principle Prison Fellowship had promised to identify all required female ex-prisoners to be interviewed. However, this did not happen and it soon became clear that ZACRO would serve as a useful resource for this study. A decision had already been made to engage with Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe as regards locating participants for the research.

Prior to conducting the fieldwork, the research instruments were sent to Prison Fellowship

Zimbabwe for approval before access could be granted to conduct field research (because ZACRO was only included in the fieldwork at a very late stage, no research instruments were sent to them, nor did they request these documents). The following instruments were used in the present study: (i) the research proposal, (ii) a questionnaire with open ended questions,[8] (iii) ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal,[9] (iv) a support letter from the supervisor of this study[10] and (v) consent forms and details about the number of participants to be interviewed.[11]

Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and ZACRO both facilitated the research process as gate keepers (Oliver 2010:101), since they authorised access to the female ex-prisoners whether at the institutional premises or at the women's homes. Both organisations granted permission for their facilities to be used for interviews during the fieldwork.

Appointments were made to meet each participant individually at a date and time that was suitable to them. Meals were provided during these meetings by Prison Fellowship but not by ZACRO. Transportation for the researcher and participants was funded by the researcher. The fieldwork took place in Harare from May to July 2010.

3.3.3.2. Female prisoners' crimes

In addition to interviewing female ex-prisoners, the sample also included thirteen female prisoners as seen in the table below. As with the interviews of serving women prisoners, pseudonyms were allocated to the ex-prisoners.

Table 3: Prisoner Participants and Crimes Committed.

Participant	Crime
Dzorai	Fraudulent house-selling
Kodzero	Contempt of court by her husband
Manheru	Theft by buying stolen phone

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[8] See Appendix III.
[9] See Appendix VI.
[10] See Appendix VII.
[11] See Appendix II.

Maruza	Physical abuse, failure to complete community service, theft and fighting
Oga	Theft of firewood
Rambai	Sexual abuse of a three year old child
Raviro	Physical abuse
Regai	Theft from employer
Revai	Theft of employer's clothes
Sarudzai	Theft of employer's money
Shuvai	Fraud with money given by a friend
Turai	Vending in a prohibited area
Varaidzai	Contempt of court by her brother

This category of participants included women who had committed crimes, had been sentenced and were busy serving their sentences which were close to completion. This category of participants was included based on the view of Amanda Dissel (2008:156) that "preparation for reintegration can occur in prison." It should be noted here that the two prisoners (Kodzero and Varaidzai) serving sentences for contempt of court by their husband or brother, were cited by the complainants instead of the actual perpetrators in reprisal for personal conflicts between the plaintiffs and the two convicted prisoners. This reveals the gender injustices taking place even within the court setting.

Initially, prisoners were not included in the research but once in the field, it became clear that including this category in the research would provide a more representative sample, and in addition prisoners face the same issues as ex-prisoners and thereby provide further insights for the study. Gaining access to the prisoners also required the presentation of the research instruments, namely: (i) an application letter, (ii) a project proposal, (iii) a list of the research questions,[12] (iv) a letter from the academic institution that authorised the study,[13] (v) ethical clearance from the same institution, and (vi) consent

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[12] See Appendix III.
[13] See Appendix VI.

forms for the participants to sign,[14] and finally, (vii) a digital voice recorder which the authorities wanted to inspect. These instruments were sent to the research office at the headquarters of the Zimbabwean Prison Services, who forwarded the documents to the relevant office. Two weeks after the initial application to the Zimbabwe Prison Services, an acceptance letter was received via the rehabilitation official, granting permission for the research to be conducted at Chikurubi Female Prison. The research instruments were taken to the prison, but the guards would not allow access because there was no clause in the acceptance letter stating that a digital voice recorder would be used. Further permission was then sought from the prison headquarters to use a voice recorder, which was granted.

On the second visit to the female prison, the research instruments were handed to the officer in-charge of the prison and the nature of the project was outlined. The group of thirteen female prisoners who were about to complete their sentences was assembled and the study was explained to them, including the procedures for interviewing them. They were also provided with information on ethical procedures and given consent forms to sign. Thirteen female prisoners gave permission to be interviewed and were excited about participating in the project. Many prisoners wanted to be interviewed but for the purpose of the study, I decided to interview only those close to completion of their sentences. Long-term, life prisoners or those sentenced to death, were not considered for interviews since they may have had ulterior motives for participating, for example a reduction in their sentences. Since the interviews were to be conducted on an individual basis, a roster was drawn up and each participant selected a day and time suitable for her. After arranging how the interviews would occur, a meeting space was arranged on the lawn, in sight of the security officers. The officer in-charge wanted a prison guard to be present during the individual interviews. Again, the researcher had to explain the need for adherence to ethical procedures, and to indicate to the officer in-charge the confidentiality and consent forms that safeguarded the participants and ensured their privacy. It was finally agreed that interviews could be conducted without the presence of a security guard. In-depth interviews were subsequently conducted on an individual basis from May to July 2010. While it was not necessary - as in the case with the ex-prisoners - to provide

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[14] See Appendix III.

transport or meals, following the conclusion of the interviews, each participant was presented with small items such as toiletries and food of their choice in thanks for of their assistance. This gesture was a token of appreciation and did not compromise the research findings at all.

3.4. Data production: process and methods

Miles et al. (1984) recommend that the steps in the methodology employed in a study should be traceable to indicate each stage of data collection and analysis. This suggestion was followed and forms part of the current chapter.

The research design provides guidelines on how the data is to be collected and analysed in order to answer the research question(s) (Durrheim 2006:34-35). The data emerges from both primary and secondary sources, the selection and application of which form part of the research methodology. Primary sources involve empirical study via questionnaires, experiments, observation or experience of a phenomenon or issue. Secondary resources include previous studies on the subject and related matters in the form of books, journals etc. (Bailey 1995:41-43). The data was used to answer the questions guiding the entire study.[15]

Denzin (1970:380) contends that triangulation in data collection is very important. This means the use of a combination of methods for data generation is essential. Triangulation or the mixed method model is the term used when several research tools are employed within the same research design (Sarantakos 2005:105; Silverman 2007:98). Using multiple methods provides confirmation of results from different angles, and thus enhances the scientific credibility and utility of the research (Reinharz 1992:197).

Feminists also promote diversity in methods (Landman 2006:432), for example, Reinharz (1992:197) notes that this diversity allows for thoroughness and flexibility, as well as for responsiveness to the people being studied. Since feminist researchers often have a specific interest in understanding the hidden, personal or private aspect of people's lives, they may place emphasis on obtaining the trust of their participants. As a consequence, they tend to employ methods such as interviews, focus groups or open-ended methods

[62] See Appendix III.

(Gill Eagle, Grahame Hayes and Thabani Sibanda 2006:506). As regards the interview as a tool, Reinharz (1992:20) points out that "this method is very useful when conducted by a woman; for a woman to be understood it may be necessary for her to be interviewed by a woman."

As explained above, narrative methodology is used in this present study for data gathering. This took the form of personal interviews and observation in order to generate primary data, while secondary data which was employed in analysing this primary data, was sourced through conducting a literature review.

3.4.1. In-depth interviews

The methodology of in-depth interviewing was employed in order to get a detailed description of the experiences of the women. While the research question and sub-questions guided the research as a whole, the primary data focussed on questions about the direct experiences and perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners.[16]

Ranjit Kumar (2011:144) confirms that interviews are a common and widely used tool for collecting primary data. Monette et al. (1986:156 quoted in Kumar 2011) define an interview as involving: "an interviewer reading questions to respondents and recording their answers."

In-depth one-on-one open-ended questions were posed to female ex-prisoners at Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and ZACRO as well as to soon-to-be-released inmates at Chikurubi Female Prison. Conducting in-depth interviews with female prisoners and ex-prisoners was important in providing a way of producing empirical data about both their social world and their subjective reality, by asking the participants to talk about their experiences and perceptions, and their identities as women in general. The interview method allowed the female prisoners and ex-prisoners to provide the detailed descriptions necessary to fully understand the gendered identity construction of women and its social consequences, especially in their vulnerable situation as convicted women. Two to three times contact was made with the participants who had more to narrate more and with those who needed counselling.

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[63] See Appendix III.

Interviewing using open-ended questions allows the participants to "tell their stories." Phiri (2004:156) notes that "story telling is one of the powerful methodologies that African women have revived." Since the study is qualitative, the participants' narrations were employed as a method of data collection. As described by Darling (2000:143), the type of "interview best suited for engagement with a particular group of people is the in-depth interview. Like observation, in-depth interviewing is a qualitative technique, designed to establish a contextual basis for understanding [the phenomenon under study]." This kind of approach encourages "respondents to discuss their views and concerns" (Darling 2000:143). As added by Phiri (2004:156), such approaches to data collection lead the researcher into a deeper understanding of the situation of the participants, especially by allowing them to tell their stories. This method was best suited for this study because it not only assisted with accessing the views and perceptions of the female ex-prisoners, which were then analysed, but it also enabled the formulation of an appropriate theoretical and practical approach to their rehabilitation.

Knowledge of the perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners was deepened through intense engagement in conversations with them during the interview period (Swinton and Mowat 2006:63). Benedict Carton and Louise Vis (2008:44) note that the purpose of the interview is not to have a formal question and answer session, but rather a kind of conversation, guided by open-ended questions that allow further probing. Hence, when conducting the in-depth interviews, every question from the interview instrument was followed verbatim and every theme was covered in the conversation with each participant, but through the vehicle of open and free discussion. It is this informal dialogue or interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, as asserted by the feminist researchers that is important for in-depth interviewing in qualitative research, as it is the interaction itself that generates the data (Mason 1996:38).

The duration for each interview was forty-five to sixty minutes, but some lasted up to two hours. Adequate time was thus allowed for meaningful conversations. Each session was recorded using a tape recorder, with the participants' consent. In order to get the participants to narrate their stories, the significance of the insights they could provide towards a better understanding of the experiences of female prisoner and ex-prisoners was explained. The participants were given the option to use the language in which they were most comfortable. Among the female ex-prisoners, three chose English and the other

twelve preferred Shona. Twelve of the prisoners conducted their interviews in Shona although at times mixed with English. One Ndebele speaking participant used Ndebele and Shona as her chosen medium of communication. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed into English. In this study all direct quotes from the interviews are presented in English. Due to the limited interview time-slots, the researcher had extra time aside for participants who needed longer to narrate their stories or who required additional counselling.

It has been noted above that a central concern of feminists has been the issue of power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee, which affects data production. Joey Sprague and Mary Zimmerman (1993:257-260), critique "positivist" researchers who conduct fieldwork with the assumption that they are the "privileged" and the "knowing" party. They therefore argue that feminist researchers must emphasise the value of interviewees' own subjective daily experiences. It is this which constitutes qualitative data. While conducting interviews with female prisoners and ex-prisoners, the researcher was constantly aware of the power dynamics in play. This was particularly relevant considering her position as a pastor, a former prison chaplain and a PhD candidate. However, the fact that the researcher was a feminist activist and has worked with some of these participants in the past, and that this project was designed around feminist methods, enabled the establishment of a rapport with the participants in the study.

3.4.2. Participant observation

Uwe Flick (2007:53-54) explains that in a research context, observation is considerably more systematic and formal than observation during everyday life. Research into human situations is aided by regular and repeated observation of people and situations, which may reveal information about the nature of behaviour within a social organisation or setting. A researcher who is also an observer immerses herself more fully into the life of the group under study. Thus, "observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place" (Kumar 2011:140). For Derek Layder (1993:40), the method of participant observation allows for a situation in which the "sociologist enters into the everyday world of those being

studied so that he or she may describe and analyse this world as accurately as possible."
The observation method used in this study is non-participatory natural observation. This
method was suitable because if individuals are aware that they are being observed,
they may change their behaviour. Carol Bailey (1996:10) adds that a non-participant
observer does not take part in routine activities and events in the setting. Consequently, in
the present study, non-participatory observation provided information on the normal way
of life of the participants.

Two participants among the female ex-prisoners were observed at the premises of Prison
Fellowship Zimbabwe over a period of approximately one month on daily basis. They
were observed, for example, to be subjected to various forms of gender discrimination,
particularly in the field of employment. Permission to observe female ex-prisoners that
were affiliated to this organization was granted as recorded in Appendix V.

A combination of in-depth interviews and observations complement each other to give
insight to the understanding, in this case, of the experiences of female prisoners and ex-
prisoners. It would seem, as regards the female prisoners and ex-prisoners in the study,
that most of their everyday actions have become habits and routines, to a significant
degree induced by cultural and religious traditions, and that this is what shapes their
identity.

3.4.3. Consultation of literature

The data produced through the research methodology of interviews and observation
needed to be compiled into a coherent picture of the phenomena under study. The
compilation of the data was undertaken by the application of three feminist theories,
namely: feminist theological anthropology; feminist cultural hermeneutics; and feminist
pastoral care. These theories contributed to the interpretation of the data so as to generate
themes that encapsulated and clarified the phenomena. It was these themes that allowed
for a scholarly understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the female prisoners
and ex-prisoners, which was a fundamental part of the initial aim of the study as a whole,
in order for more appropriate rehabilitative responses to these women to be put forward.

This study thus employed primary sources (i.e., interviews and observation) to generate

data, and secondary sources (i.e., a literature review) to make this data meaningful. Distinguishing primary sources from secondary sources, Ruth Finnegan (2006:142) describes the former as those which "form the basic and original material for providing the researcher's raw evidence." The latter are those which "copy, interpret or judge material to be found in primary sources." In this present study, published books, unpublished and published theses and dissertations, journal articles, reports, and reviews on issues relating to the experiences of women in general were used, particularly those in an African setting, and those of female prisoners and ex-prisoners, all of which provided valuable background information. However, for the specific purpose of the analysis of the primary data, the focus of the literature was on the three theories mentioned above. It is this literature and its application to the data that is the subject of this section of the present chapter. The literature was employed to provide a theological framework within which the research participants' perceptions could be understood in a thematic manner. The literature provided the researcher with the theoretical and theological tools required in the deconstruction of the oppression of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners, as revealed in their perceptions of self, society and God. This formed the essence of the process of the analysis of the data which is discussed in detail in the next section.

Beyond the fieldwork section of this study, the literature survey allowed for three important research outcomes: (i) an examination of the context of women in Zimbabwe generally, as concerns their religio-cultural identity formation and the socio-economic implications thereof; (ii) an examination of the current rehabilitation theories and programmes for female prisoners and ex-prisoners; and (iii), the formulation of a response which could then be applied to the field of female prisoner and ex-prisoner rehabilitation. As previously noted, this falls outside the realm of the (primary) data analysis that constitutes the fieldwork, which is the focus of the present chapter that deals with methodology. However, the analysed primary data (organised in themes) was subsequently applied to the secondary literary sources to contextualise them within this study and this falls within the scope of this chapter.

3.5. Data analysis: process and methods

Boulton and Hammersley (2006:246) suggest the following steps in analysis: first, a close

examination of the data to ascertain "aspects of categories that may be significant" (identifying categories) and second, a further reading back and forth through the data during which "topics or categories to which the data relate and that are deemed relevant to the research focus", are noted down (slotting relevant data into those categories) (2006:251). From a feminist perspective, Susan Chase (2005:670-675) outlines five analytical lenses through which contemporary researchers need to approach narrative data. First, narrative data needs to be understood as a means of understanding and contextualising actions and events; second, narrators play an active role in formulating reality, since they "explain, entertain, inform, defend, complain, and challenge the status quo" (2005:670); third, besides just describing what happened, "narratives also express emotions, thoughts, and interpretations" of events (2005:671); fourth, "when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality" (2005:673); and fifth, a narrative is "a joint production of narrator and listener" (2005:674). This section of the present chapter outlines the process by which the narrative data obtained through interviews and observation is thematically presented and then analysed via theories obtained from literature surveys.

Broadly speaking, data analysis refers to both the fieldwork and the literature survey, where this respectively concerns the subjective reality of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners who participated in this study (experiences emerging from the primary data) and the objective reality of Zimbabwean women generally (situations emerging from the secondary data). In both, this study employed thematic analysis. This type of analysis is "engaged in codifying statements and grouping them thematically into logical groups to communicate an underlying discourse" (Sapsford 2006:269). The data that emerged from the literature led to the construction of themes around the objective reality of Zimbabwean women, a reality which the female prisoners and ex-prisoners will also face upon release. The themes that emerged in this regard were: education, employment, access to resources, health, and family life (including marriage, children, widowhood, divorce, unmarried mothers and domestic violence). The analysed information was finally used - together with the analysed primary information - to put forward concrete suggestions and proposals for action.

While this chapter deals specifically with the research methodology employed in the

fieldwork, its puts aside the analysis of the objective data emerging from the secondary sources, and rather focuses on the subjective data that emerged from the participants' primary contributions. This primary data was analysed so that it could provide direction for aspects of a programme suitable to help reintegrate female prisoners and ex-prisoners, based on the findings in terms of the particular themes that emerged from their narratives. The presentation of themes was illustrated with the women's voices, as will be seen in chapter f i v e. The themes that emerged from the fieldwork centred on the perceptions of the participants of self, society and God. The themes materialised from the perceptions of self were: fearfulness; shamefulness; inadequacy leading to pain; and the notion of being worthy or unworthy of self forgiveness. The themes arising from the perceptions of society were: fear and stigma; forgiveness; support systems; healing, care and love (by prison guards; by family members; and by female prisoners and ex-prisoners). The themes that came to the fore regarding the participants' perceptions of God were: first, a God who is ever present with them in their problems despite their mistakes; second, a God who fights for them even when they are badly treated by society; third, a God who forgives them for the mistakes that they made; and fourth, a God who provides for them as they struggle to find their feet in the society.

These themes were then analysed by employing the three theories underpinning the study. These three theories will therefore assist in explaining why the female ex-prisoners have the perceptions they do, and will also provide a critical examination of their way of thinking.

3.6. Methodological limitations

This research faced one major limitation in that a systematic search through libraries and online resources revealed that not much work has been done in the area of rehabilitating female prisoners and ex-prisoners, especially in the Zimbabwe as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (apart from South Africa). In order to obtain such information, it initially seemed pertinent to conduct this research in the province on KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa because of the close proximity of the researcher to the various rehabilitation-related institutions in that province. However, permission from prison authorities and the organisations that run programmes for ex-prisoners was not granted. The location of the

study was then shifted to Zimbabwe, where interviews were conducted with female ex-prisoners at Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and ZACRO, and with female prisoners at Chikurubi Female Prison.

A second limitation was linked to the setting of the interviews with the female ex-prisoners. The results of the interviews might have been more fruitful had the interviews occurred in the homes of the female ex-prisoners, as the reality of the issues discussed in this study would then have been more fully observable. However, both Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and ZACRO did not grant permission to conduct research outside their premises for reasons of safety and security. The prison setting for interviews with the participants in the study who were at that time still incarcerated was obviously also problematic (in terms of their inhibitions and inability to be more forthcoming), but unavoidable.

A further limitation was that some women brought their babies along to the interviews and when they began crying, the interaction was interrupted. Since this is a research study that employed a feminist methodology, the constant interruptions had to be accommodated as they formed part of the reality of the participants. This meant that some interviews took longer than initially anticipated.

3.7. Ethical considerations

In the academic field, ethics refers to a set of moral principles that aim to prevent researchers from harming those whom they research, something of particular concern when undertaking research on sensitive topics (Dickson-Swift 2005:21). Linda Bell (1993:48) argues that ethical considerations need to be integral to every phase of the research process: before, during and after. This was particularly true for this research as became clear via the Ethics Clearance Committee of UKZN, and the study was coded red by the researcher, indicating that a vulnerable group of people was being researched. As mentioned at the beginning of chapter one, female prisoners and ex-prisoners are emotionally, psychologically, economically, socially, politically and spiritually vulnerable. Therefore, it was important to make sure that they understood their rights in this study as explained in the following section.

3.7.1. Informed consent

Each participant had to fill in a research consent form. This was in line with the argument of Chi Hoong Sin (2005:279) who says that research must as far as possible rely on research subjects who have freely given their consent after being provided with adequate information on the consequences and limits of their participation as well as on any potential risks that could result from taking part in the research. Clifford Christians (2005:144-45) affirms the views of Sin by stating that codes of ethics include informed consent, confidentiality and issues concerning risk and harm. Emmanuel et al. (2000:2703) define informed consent as resulting from the provision of information to participants regarding the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the research, in such a way that a participant understands fully what is at stake and can come to a voluntary decision on whether to give her or his permission to participate or to decline. Marina Barnard (2005:14-15) notes that in research concerned with vulnerable people and sensitive issues, the matter of informed consent needs to be emphasised. Researchers, when inviting potential participants to take part in their study, guarantee that interviews will be treated confidentially and that the identity of all interviewees will be protected from other participants. The aspect of confidentiality requires further explanation in this research because of its critical importance.

3.7.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality involves concealing the identity of participants. In an atmosphere of confidence and trust participants are able to tell the researcher secrets which they might not want to reveal to others. Thus, although participants talked about their past activities in crime, having agreed to confidentiality, the researcher was not in a position to report them to the rightful authorities. Christians (2005:145) states clearly that:

> No one deserves harm or embarrassment as a result of insensitive research practices. The most disturbing and unethical harm in research is when the participants are damaged by disclosure of their private world.

Dickson-Swift (2005 cited in Liamputtong 2007:37) urges researchers to protect the identity of their research participants by giving them fictional names when presenting their statements. In order to meet this requirement, throughout this research, real names

were not revealed and were replaced by pseudonyms.

The interviews in this study were conducted on an individual basis so as to meet the ethical requirements of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, under the ethical clearance policy. As stated by Sarantakos (2005:18-19), researchers must take precautions to protect the welfare of participants and avoid anything that could bring them physical or emotional harm, as outlined in the next section. Importantly, he points out that researchers need to respect the autonomy and dignity of every individual.

3.7.3. Risks: safety of participants

According to Sin (2005:279), guaranteeing the anonymity of participants is not sufficient. Researchers must also take the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of participants into account. According to Margaret Melrose (2002:343), irrespective of the fact that participants have signed their agreements, researchers must ensure that no harm comes to any of them as a result of the research. In addition, Raymond Lee (1995) suggests that discussions of qualitative methodology need to focus more on safety issues. Because of the extent and depth to which participants may be involved in a study, Prenee Liamputtong (2007:38) contends that researchers have to make sure that research findings will not further marginalise participants. It is for this reason that information that emerged during the fieldwork had to be selectively included in this study. Information which might put the participants in trouble with the law and their family members was purposefully left out.

Warnings regarding the fieldwork process causing emotional distress in participants were heeded. Of particular importance in this study were Alty and Rodham's (1998:280) recommendations that researchers follow up interviews with a debriefing sessions, giving participants the occasion to discuss situations or feelings that had triggered difficult emotions. In the course of the interviews in this study, there were times when participants were unable to talk, but only wept. Debriefing was followed by pastoral counselling, provided from a feminist viewpoint. This action is supported by Emily Paradis (2000:84) who confirms that debriefing is not sufficient but that participants need in addition other types of support including counselling. In summary, the advice of Cutcliffe and Ramcharan (2002:1002) in terms of ethical considerations was followed which includes

the following points:

> Trust must be developed with the participants and essentially required throughout the research process: not just as a one-off event at the beginning of the research;

> Ensure that informed consent is obtained prior to the commencement of the research and re-established during the research process;

> Make sure that the participants are respected and that their dignity remains intact throughout the research process;

> Terminating the research process and withdrawal from the field must be dealt with tactfully and sensitively;

> Inform the participants that they have the right to check how they are represented in transcripts and writing;

> Be cautious about potential harm to the research participants and prepare a safety net of support if needed.

3.8. Chapter summary

This chapter has outlined the research design as a whole, focusing on the research methodology and methods used to produce and analyse data, in particular the fieldwork-based data. First, an explanation of qualitative research in general and the tools it employs was provided, followed by an overview of feminist methodologies, in particular the narrative methodology. Thereafter, the details of the research methodology of the current study were honed in on, beginning with the processes for selecting and gaining access to the participants. Next, the data-production process was examined, namely the in-depth interviews, participant observation, and the consultation of literature. This was followed by the process of data analysis, focussing on the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. Finally, the methodological limitations and ethical considerations of the study were briefly discussed.

In the next two chapters, the objective socio-cultural context of Zimbabwean women in general a n d the subjective context (i.e., the perceptions) of the participants in this study, will be presented and analysed thematically.

CHAPTER FOUR

A RELIGIO-CULTURAL GENDERED CONSTRUCTION OF THE IDENTITY OF WOMEN IN THE SHONA CULTURE

4.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the African cultural and religious constructions of women's identities will be examined with special focus on the ethnic group represented in the sample of the conducted research. The objective of the chapter is to examine the cultural and religious context of female prisoners and ex-prisoners, and the impacts thereof on their lived experience. The research location is in Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, which is an urban metropolitan city in Mashonaland East Province as indicated on the map on page xiv. The focus will be on the Shona culture, within which the majority of the participants live. Isabel Mukonyora (2007:9) asserts that in 2000, approximately 80 percent of the total Zimbabwean population were Shona, while 15 percent were Ndebele. These figures are over a decade old, but this is because,

> [t]he AIDS pandemic, oppression, violence and poverty have led to the migration of thousands of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries, such as Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique, and overseas. These developments make it difficult to provide an estimate of the current population (Mukonyora 2007:9).

In the absence of more recent reliable population figures, it can be extrapolated that the current population dynamics in Zimbabwe remain similar, and hence the study investigates the culture of the Shona group only, since this ethnic group is most representative of the national populace in general.

In order to achieve this chapter's above-mentioned objective - that of presenting the religio-cultural context of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe as well as how this context impacts on their daily lives - it has been divided into six sections, forming two broad parts. In the first part of the chapter are sections one to four. The first section contains a discussion on the way in which the identities of women are constructed by religion and society in general. The second section presents a brief overview of the

Shona culture, while the third section critically examines of how Shona culture has constructed the identities of women in the Zimbabwean context. The fourth section shows how the Christian tradition has shaped the identity of African women.

The second broad part of this chapter includes sections five and six. In section five, an outline is provided of the general socio-political and economic situation as regards gender. Finally, in the sixth section, the implications of the above constructions of women's identity in relation to women's lived experience in Zimbabwe will be outlined in detail terms of their education, employment, health, access to resources and family life.

In both the first and second part of this chapter, the primary sources of this study - namely, the voices of the female participants - elucidate and enhance the findings gleaned from the secondary sources.

4.1. The role of religion and society in constructing women's identity

Erik Erikson (1968:284), asserts that, woman has long "lent herself to a variety of roles conducive to an exploitation of masochistic potentials, she has lent herself be confined and immobilized, enslaved and infantilized, prostituted and exploited…". This means that women's identity is intrinsically linked to the role of submission, something which is also underpinned by religion. According to Durkheim (1965: 466) "beliefs and rites systems function to address difference, knowledge and meaning. Thus religion identifies, classifies and establishes identity". In this view, the Christian Scriptures, read through patriarchal eyes have entrenched women's understanding of their own subordinate identity. Georg Simmel (1982:104) states that:

> Religion's ability to sacralise males is what makes men masculine and by defining females as not men, women and their identity are created. Thus dominance of the masculine is facilitated by religions and political will.

In popular religious narratives, God has been believed to be male and it has been assumed that males are closer to God than females. This is further explained by Ruether (1983:53) who states that

> Male monotheism reinforces the social hierarchy of patriarchal rule through its religious system in a way that was modelled after the patriarchal ruling class and God is seen as addressing this class of males directly, adopting them

as "his sons." They are his representatives, responsible partners of the covenant with him. Women as wives now become symbolically repressed as the dependent servant class. They relate to man as he is related to God. A symbolic hierarchy is set up: God-male-female.

Women no longer stand in direct relationship with God as they are connected to God only indirectly through males. This hierarchy is also evidenced in the law of the Old Testament patriarchy.

Rakoczy (2004: 183) articulates the multiple identities of women through the religions of Jewish and Gentile traditions. She critiques the view that class, race and ethnicity are exclusive pillars of constructing women's identities. What she asserts is confirmed by Carla Cooper and Joretta Marshall (2010: 118) who argue that the awareness of identity is not shaped by simply one's genetics, biological make-up, skin colour, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity but is rather part of broader social constructs, in particular cultural and religious constructs.

Kanyoro (2010: 22) laments that: "Cultural practices such as female circumcision (genital mutilation), lobola (bride price), polygamy, the male prerogative to inherit land, and numerous other practices" have been perceived in some societies to be central traditions that are fundamental in shaping women's identity. She points out that such practices dehumanise and are oppressive to women. Discussing women's identities regarding bride-wealth in Ghana, Whitehead (1988: 22) has observed that: "in bride-wealth marriage, one term of the exchange is a human being and the other is not… In being equated with objects, women thus become themselves, if not objects, at least objectified". Because in Zimbabwe and some other African countries, married women leave their own family and live with their husband's family, women have significantly less power compared to men for the effective control of their own lives. The construction of gendered social identities thus positions women in a state of subordination and vulnerability.

According to Helen Nabasuta Mugambi (2007:293) gender in Africa is engaged with at a fundamental level, namely that of "the harsh reality of living with social imposed, assumed, and presumed differences of male and female. These [differences] range all the way from language, custom and societal organizations to beliefs and attitudes." African women form their identity against such a backdrop.

As pointed out by Oyeonke Oyewumi (2003:29), Western feminists, in their response to the situation of women in African (as well as Asian and Latin-American societies), have assumed that their task was to rescue "the exploited, helpless,brutalized, and downtrodden African woman from the savagery of the African male and from a primitive culture symbolized by barbaric customs." However, Stephen F. Miescher, Takyiwaa Manuh and Catherine M. Cole (2007:6) confirm that in an affirmative sense "women in Africa are often seen [and see themselves] as the carriers of culture and the procreative link between generations, a link that is both biological and spiritual", and Nwando Achebe and Bridget Teboh (2007:63-81) also indicate that African women's identities are "enmeshed with ethnicity [and culture]" (Miescher, Manuh and Cole 2007:6). Gwendolyn Mikell (1997:31) emphasizes the importance of ethnicity for African women, since their identities are "aligned very closely with cultural expectations and interests" (Mikell 1997:33), which provided them both during colonial and post-colonial times with what Judith Toland (1993:4) describes as personal and psychological resources to sustain them. However, Mikell notes that despite the "strong thread of cultural continuity", self-identity - given the current difficulties of "political instability, economic crises and structural adjustment, changing laws and public policies" - has become increasingly focussed on a collective cross-ethnic response to these issues in the form of women's associations and networks, which are beginning to "rail against the persistence of gender-biased structures and institutions in their societies" (Mikell 1997:33).

African women's identity can thus be said to be strongly linked to culture and ethnicity, but also gradually increasingly to a shared African women's experience which can be cross-cultural. Indeed this is attested to in the present chapter. As pointed out by Linell Elizabeth Cady (1997:25), Western feminists too have in recent decades begun to move from a very generalized position on women's oppression and the (Western-defined) means for their liberation, toward a "historicist perspective" which recognizes that "at the heart of … identity is a perennial "rewriting" that is responsive to the changing historical and social contexts within which one is embodied."

In sum, Erikson (cited in Hunter 1990:566), can then confirm the centrality of cultural and religious forces in identity formation. He asserts that when searching for a meaningful existence which also includes a meaningful identity, people aim to create "an integrated

tapestry of meanings, beliefs and values… by which they can make sense of their experience and find guidance, purpose and hope in their living".

The above explanations reveal why women's identity is shaped mainly by cultural and religious forces and less by socio-economic ones. While poverty, lack of education, unemployment and other factors certainly impact on the lives of women in gender-specific ways, the identity of these women is not formed so much by these factors, but rather by cultural and religious aspects which, as pointed out by Erikson, give meaning to people's lives (be it in a liberative or an oppressive manner). Culture and religion in turn shape the gender-specific impacts of the various facets of the socio-economic environment, but as noted above, these (gendered) facets do not construct women's identities in and of themselves. Rather, it is the cultural and religious patterns that have a powerful effect on identity formation because through culture and religion, people make sense of their lives. This is the focus of the remainder of first part of this chapter. The second part will provide detail on the socio-economic impacts on daily life of such an identity formation.

4.2. The Shona culture: a brief general background

As mentioned above, the participants in the study were almost all Shona speaking women, hence I focus on the Shona culture rather than the Ndebele culture, which is the other main Zimbabwean ethnic group. A brief general background of the Shona culture is necessary in this section because it helps provide understanding of gender-related issues concerning the lived experience of Zimbabwean women, including the female prisoners and ex-prisoners who are the subject of this study.

The name Zimbabwe is derived from the Shona phrase *dzimba dza mabwe*, which means "houses of stone"[17] and refers to Great Zimbabwe, a royal Shona settlement which was established in the ninth century CE near the present-day town of Masvingo. The leaders of this community were believed to rule by ancestral sanction. Power was reinforced

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[17] Michael Gelfand, *The Genuine Shona: Survival Values of Culture,* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1973); D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850,* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1980); Ruth Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe,* (London: Kesho Publishers, 1986); Elizabeth Schmit, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women, in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870 – 1939,* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1992); Michael

economically by the control of large herds of cattle and by the trade in gold. The inhabitants lived according to social collectivism, demonstrating a willingness to share and to exercise forgiveness. Land was owned collectively. Links between humanity and nature were reflected in totems and rituals which connected the community to the wider universe. The Supreme Being, Mwari, was believed to communicate through women at various oracle sites, but a male priest was required to interpret the female oracle's words. The community came together to evoke the ancestors, and these spirits were believed to provide rain and fertility to the land and to support the political order within the community (Bourdillon 1976:6-10). The spirit mediums, who communicated with the ancestors, were consulted for divination, particularly in times of trouble, and during the era of white rule, they played an important role in the guerrilla struggles against the then Rhodesian regime (1965-1980). They have come to the fore again in periods of ethnic conflict and during the economic distress of the 2000s when the land reforms took place under the government of President Robert Mugabe (Fontein 2009:5).

During the colonial era, the development of mining as well as of industry in towns, particularly in Harare and Bulawayo, required Shona (and other) men to seek work and live in urban areas, leaving women and children in rural communities (Bourdillon 1976:16). Through the imposition of a "hut tax," men were forced into the wage economy and labour (Patte 2010 cited in Phiri 2010:411). This, together with the establishment of settler farms, forced many Shona people to move off their lands. As Bourdillon (1976:16) recounts:

> Some chiefdoms broke up completely. Others were settled on less suitable land. Others still, who were not moved, had to make room for displaced groups, causing crowding in land that was left to the Shona.

The breakup of the family was among the results of this situation, with women left to fend for themselves. Nevertheless, women remained bound by patriarchal Shona customs to a large degree. A more detailed discussion of gender within Shona culture forms the third section of this chapter.

Bourdillon, *Where are the Ancestors?: Changing Culture in Zimbabwe,* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe, 1994).

4.3. Shona culture and gender

Gender constructions[18] are presented in this discussion as the way in which people experience themselves as women and men in Zimbabwe, specifically among the Shona. Learning about the gender roles is one of the most important aspects of the Shona instruction of children. The entire development of a girl and boy child centres on the gendered division of roles and this continues into adulthood, where gender roles are reinforced by taboos. Female identity is closely correlated to fertility, both human and agricultural, and is associated with a deferential manner. The hypothesis that sexual gratification is to be found in the opposite sex is reinforced for both girl and boy children in the practice of *mahumbwe* or trial marriage. This takes place towards the end of the harvest season and is participated in by children and youth, who for several days are paired together, acting out the gender-roles assigned to men and women, engaging for example in hut building and hunting for the boys and in food preparation, pounding, grinding and manufacturing cooking utensils such as clay pots for the girls (Gelfand 1979:61–64).

This was illustrated by Participant Regai who shared her experience of culturally-structured gendered domestic work as follows:

> *In my culture I have learned that a woman should not be idle, but industrious, doing hard work. This will make me to be respected and be a full woman. I have taught and nurtured my girl children to behave well. In my family, housework is done by female children. It is not culturally accepted that boys wash the plates and clean the house. A good mother will not make these demands from boys.*

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[18] According to Serene Jones, gender is a culturally constructed system of meaning, linking various things, persons, ideas, gods, institutions etc. according the dualistic categories of women/men or feminine/masculine. Gender is constructed within a particular cultural context, which includes an entire system of symbols, language, beliefs, actions and attitudes. Gender categories occur in schools, courts, hospitals, work places, places of worship and in the family. From childhood onward girls and boys learn and live according to gender codes (expected patterns of thought and action). Serene Jones, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000): 8, 32-34; Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner and Teresa Snorton, editors, *Women Out of Order : Risking change and Creating Care in a Multicultural World*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010); Judith V.Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver and Janet L. Surrey, editors, *Women's Growth In Connection:Writings from the Stone Center*, (New York: The Guilford Press,1991); Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, editor, *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).

According to Shona custom, a 'good wife' is generally a woman who is considered a hard worker and a mother, the main focus being on pleasing the husband, and young girls are given sex education in this regard, while their genitals are physically manipulated in order to maximise male pleasure (Aquina 1967:28-38). Across sub-Saharan Africa, as Phiri (1997:34) has shown, ceremonies are held in which sex education is taught by an older female relative and at which girl children are prepared to take up their future roles as mothers and wives.

Pascah Mungwini (2008:206) also notes that within Shona society, strong emphasis is placed on child bearing as an important element of womanhood. Through bearing children within a marriage, a woman becomes prestigious, gains self-esteem and is socially recognised. It is a central component of the construction of women's identity in Zimbabwe. Without marriage and children, a woman is considered inadequate and incomplete. Rudo Gaidzamwa (1985:33) and Elizabeth Schmit (1996 cited in Mungwini 2008:207), also add that within Shona society, single women are viewed as being unfulfilled and a hazard to established marriages, making women without husbands or children figures of open ridicule. Research has revealed that some Shona women who are not married have been chased away from their homes by parents or relatives for bringing shame to the family, while others have run away from their communities as they could not bear the pressure on them from society to marry and pro-create. Entry into marriage and reproduction is thus the only way for women to avoid severe social humiliation.

Mungwini denotes the ideal notion of womanhood as follows: being married, a mother, belonging, producing, and being loyal and submissive to the husband and his kin, in order to satisfy society's expectations (Mungwini 2008:209). The Shona saying, *uyundiye mukadzi chaiye*, confirms that "this is the best wife". Desiree Lewis (2003: xii cited in Mungwini 2008:208) argues that the emphasis placed on motherhood reinforces familiar gendered roles and ultimately reproduces patriarchal prescriptions.

A microcosm of the construction of gender, and hence identity formation in Africa, is the whole concept of property and procreation, strengthened by the notion of bride-wealth. Bride-wealth was traditionally understood as the payment of several cattle by the groom to the bride's parents. In present-day Zimbabwe, payment is usually made in the form of a substantial amount of cash, together with a variety of gifts (Bourdillon cited in

Middleton and Miller 2008:333).

In terms of identity formation, the bride-wealth practice reflects the entire gendered construction of women as mothers and wives, since it ultimately places women in the position of being a mere "object" in a marriage. Anne Whitehead in Diane Jeater (1993:18) observes that:

> In bride-wealth marriage one term of the exchange is a human being and the other term is not: although it is at least an animate object. …In being equated with objects, women thus become themselves, if not objects, at least objectified in so far as their status as subjects is constituted differently, and with less effectivity, than men's.

Because of economic hardship, the traditional meaning of bride-wealth as a token of uniting the two families together has become increasingly commercialised, which in turn means that women's identity has also been more and more commodified (Ruth Weiss 1986:104). Furthermore, among the Shona and other African societies, the fact that women leave their own lineage or kin to join that of their husband is another form of solidifying gender construction, since women's power is even further decreased in their new marital home. Types of cultural marriages such as *kuzvarira* (pledging a young girl to a man) and *kutizisa* (a form of elopement, sometimes using force) are additional vehicles of culturally-sanctioned gender inequality (Shoko 2008:78; Jeater 1993:21).

The above situation is reflected in the words of Participant Turai, who raised the issues of the new home and new family, the patriarchal headship of men, and the lack of financial and personal independence of a woman. She narrated her experiences with regard to culture and gender as follows:

> *As a woman I have learnt that in my marriage I am to love and respect my mother in-law. She is now my new mother. I need to be focused on this new home and not to look back from where I came. I am here for procreation. I have learnt that it is good when women go to work. Although men are the heads of the home and control us, women are having also their own rights. Giving an example from my own husband, when he was going to work and I remained at home, we lacked food in the house. When he got money, he did what he wanted with it. As a woman I need to work for myself, as waiting for*

money from the husband doesn't work. That means asking for his money, and he starts controlling me through it. A woman should be industrious and not idle. Even when my husband ill-treats me I must be humble and in future the situation will change. Sometimes he goes out with his friends, when he comes home, he will find that I have cooked food for him. He starts shouting "I do not like this food, it is not nice." He refuses to eat and goes away, that is ill treatment. When it comes to money I might ask for money to buy food and exercise books for a child and he doesn't give it me, it is another way of ill-treatment. Despite ill-treatment, I may not seek extra-marital love affairs according to my culture.

Turai, who was convicted for vending at a prohibited site, was attempting to respond to the above situation by trying to gain some financial independence from her husband so that she could look after her family. In this relationship of unequal power dynamics, the woman becomes a victim. In spite of abuse by her husband Turai is hopeful of change.

Saliwe Kawewe (2001:476) confirms that aside from marriage and procreation, women are also culturally expected to undertake heavy physical labour:

> Zimbabwean society values hard work and economic prosperity, attributes that justify women's participation in agricultural activity. These women engage in backbreaking labour, tilling the land in rural and urban fields and gardens, and housekeeping, gathering wood, carrying water on their heads and babies on their backs for long distances in the rural areas, while at the same time bearing and caring for children without interrupting any arduous chores.

While cultural understanding and observation impacts significantly on women's lives - including those of female prisoners and ex-prisoners - the same is true of religious practices and thinking. Indeed, cultural demands are frequently supported by religion, and vice versa. In Zimbabwe, the Christian religion has strongly influenced society in this regard. Although the Christian thinking introduced by the missionaries was often dismissive of women, some African women who found their situation unbearable escaped to European mission stations. However, here too they experienced strict monitoring of their every move including their sexual and marital practices (Schmidt 1991:75). In Christian circles therefore women also remained bound by oppressive cultural practices, which were compounded by the patriarchal interpretations of Christianity itself.

4.4. Christianity and gender

Christianity is the dominant religion in Zimbabwe.[19] The focus of this chapter is not however on general church history, but instead exclusively looks at gender and Christianity and the way it has shaped women's identity in the African context, specifically in Zimbabwe.

Oduyoye (2004:90) points out that the notion that Christianity brought liberation to African women from their culturally oppressed state (as described in the previous section), is a false one. Rather, "the way Western churches have been implanted in Africa mirrors their Euro-American predecessors," including their patriarchal attitudes to women; hence the early missionaries in fact were attempting "to foist the image of a European middle class housewife" on African women (Oduyoye 1995:95). The focus of missionary teaching to women was on "Christian domesticity, Christian wifehood, housekeeping and motherhood" (Ranger 1995:34; Labode 1993:128-134; Schmidt 1992:129-131 cited in Mate 2002:550).

Marjo Tuovinen (2009:40) similarly asserts that the church has undermined African women's identities in ways not dissimilar to how culture has impacted on these identities. Christianity of the colonial era had an ambivalent message for women in that when Western Christianity arrived in Africa, it claimed to seek to liberate Africans from what it labelled as demonic customs. However, the missionaries did not target those cultural concepts that undermined women, but in fact reinforced them by introducing the patriarchal patterns of their Euro-American/Western Christianity. Oduyoye (2004:91) has rightly argued that "although nineteenth century missionary theology has been revised or discarded in most areas of the world, the [W]estern churches in Africa continue to disseminate [such] neo-orthodox theology from pulpit and podium, in academic journals and religious tracts," and thus the Euro-American patriarchal thinking on women of the missionary era also enduringly holds sway over African churches.

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[19] The population of the Christian faithful in Zimbabwe is believed to be around 60% of the total, perhaps more. Close to one third of Zimbabweans follow traditional religions. A significant number of Christians "are attached to traditional religions without perceiving any contradictions" (Ambrose Moyo and Isabel Mukonyora cited in Fahlbusch 2008: 854). The Christian churches in Zimbabwe include the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Churches and the African Initiated Churches, as well as the more recently established Pentecostal Churches.

What then did such thinking entail? Oduyoye (2004) summarises the three main areas that underpinned Western Christian patriarchal thinking of the missionary period, and which has subsequently been embraced by African Christians. First, Christian Scripture was and remains a powerful force in determining women's identity. In the same way as an African proverb "delineates cultural norms for women, so the theology of 'the Bible says' defines accepted norms for African Christian women" (Oduyoye 2004:91). The absolutist reading of the Christian Scriptures which the phrase 'the Bible says' denotes, is due to the dominant method of approaching scripture in Africa. As Oduyoye (2004:101) notes, in relation to the African continent:

> Biblical models of human relationships, which fit well with the African traditional world-view, have been accepted as unchanging norms for all times and all peoples. It is not surprising, then, that anything other than a literal reading of the Bible is unacceptable.

This understanding of the Bible originated with the missionaries, who emphasized the headship of men and the subordination of women in their scriptural interpretations of male and female roles and identities. For example, "Paul's injunction in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women should not speak publicly in church [was and] is often cited in support of this discriminatory position" (Oduyoye and Kanyoro 2006:210), while particular Old Testament writings are deemed to admonish women to fulfil their most important function of being good wives, such as Proverbs 31:10-31 (Chitando and Chitando 2005:26).

Second, Oduyoye (2004:93) highlights the fact that the church has been "blinded to the absence or presence of women." According to Oduyoye and Kanyoro (2006:209-210), the most often used argument against women being involved in leadership in the church is that it is divinely pronounced that women are subordinate to men, so that there is no justification at all for their leadership over men under any circumstances.

Meanwhile, they also highlight that "all priests in Judaism were male." Oduyoye (2004: 93) further points out that:

> In Africa, collaboration between the traditions of Hebrew [s]cripture and aspects of traditional religion, has affected the nearly total exclusion of women from rituals; this naturally militates against women priests [and other kinds of church leaders]. Even worse, significant exemptions in Africa's religious practices that validate the contributions of women [such as the Shona spirit mediums mentioned above], have been overlooked because they do not

confirm Judeo-Christian perspectives.

Further still, Oduyoye (2004:97) argues that the patriarchal hierarchies "enthroned" in the church mean that "leadership and initiative are seen as contrary to the female spirit," so that once again, "the pyramids of power that exist in African culture have found companions in Christianity."

Third, Oduyoye (2004:96) mentions the exclusive masculine language of Christianity, and laments the continued "mouthing of what… [Africans] were taught a hundred or more years ago by European and American missionaries." These missionaries based their thought on long-accepted emphases on the maleness of God, as revealed in the "predominantly male images and roles of God… [which effectively contributed to] the socialization of patriarchy" (Reuether 1983:61). As pointed out by Oduyoye and Kanyoro (2006:210), Christian writing and thought also generally stressed that "Jesus and his apostles were… males." This view was reflected in the response of Participant Kundiso as follows:

> I am a Christian and I go to Johane Masowe. We are not allowed to preach in Johane Masowe. This is a church policy which is oppressive to women. We are to teach others through preaching but the church laws do not allow that we stand before people preaching. So they are holding us back.

Participant Zadzai similarly asserted that:

> I went to the Vapostori church. Women are not allowed to read the Bible. It is only men who read the Bible and preach.

Among the Masowe Apostles, as among many other AICs and mainline churches, women comprise the overwhelming majority of members. While they do not hold formal leadership positions as teachers and preachers, women participate actively in prayer meetings and healing ceremonies. Johane Masowe recognised the importance of women in his church. A collection of documents produced by early followers of Johane Masowe, known as the "Gospel of God Masowe Apostles", reads "We honour the 'sisters' greatly because they represent the house of God… however they have no power to give rules in the church… they must listen to the rules passed by God whose name they pray" (Mukonyora 2007:101). In other

words, "the rules passed by God" mirror the understanding of the nature of men and women, as defined by men, validating gender-separation and the male-dominated hierarchy of both church and society (Mukonyora 2007:101). In this respect, the Masowe Apostles have simply reproduced the gender oppression prevalent in Zimbabwean society (Mukonyora 2007:102).

Despite Mukonyora's conclusion above, many AICs do celebrate the role of women deemed to have been touched by the Holy Spirit. There are parallels between the spiritual role of women in AICs and in their role traditional spirituality, where women act as mediums, healers and midwives. Thus, women have considerable influence over their churches as prophetesses, whose task is to eliminate various forms of evil (Lilian Dube 2000:297).

However, although women prophets are not a threat to the established male hierarchy which prevails in these churches, they do command a lot of power through the authority vested in them by the Holy Spirit. West (1975:52) explains:

> A message from the prophets, as it is believed to come from the Holy Spirit, would not be ignored by Church leaders whatever their view on its content might be, and prophets are generally consulted on most important matters pertaining to the church…Thus the prophet, either as "messenger" or "oracle", will often wield more influence in church affairs than many men in the formal hierarchy.

Having outlined the ways in which Christianity has defined gender among African women, and hence how it has informed their identities, it becomes necessary to present a brief historical overview, up to the present day, of the socio-political situation in Zimbabwe and its impact on women, including female prisoners and ex-prisoners.

4.5. The general socio-political and economic situation in Zimbabwe as regards gender

According to Schmidt (1991:735), "colonial administrators and missionaries' records disparagingly document African women in Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe as indolent, lazy, slothful, immoral, frivolous, savage and uncivilized." Such language indicates that women were considered inferior to men. In addition, men were said to be remarkably receptive to European ideas, while women were seen to be clinging to their "traditional superstitions" and to old customs. Furthermore, women were reluctant to

accept the (admittedly ambiguous) teachings of European missionaries about their dignity in God's eyes, given their culturally defined assumptions about womanhood.

The ambiguity of these teachings is revealed in the gender prejudices that dominated the early years of mission. Schmidt (1991:736) cites a missionary who asserted that Shona girl children were far more difficult than boys because they were "unreliable, lacking in concentration, irritable and anxious for attention." Employing African women as teachers or catechists was strongly opposed by missionaries on the grounds that their character was incompatible with occupations involving such responsibility. Furthermore, one of the missionaries stated that, the women were "too feather-headed" and that "they would not be listened to with any respect even by the natives themselves. Their efforts to instruct would only be laughed at" (Schmidt 1991:736).

Middleton and Miller (2008:240) note that the colonial-era mentality was modelled on that of nineteenth-century Victorian Britain, and viewed women of any race as inferior to men. Nevertheless, some European missionaries and administrators did recognize the injustice of the situation. For example, Commissioner Posselt protested against the colonial laws that undermined women and wanted to amend the Shona marriage ordinance to raise the status of African wives. He pointed out that elderly African women were often divorced by their husbands who were no longer willing to pay taxes for them and that these women were left destitute. However, Posselt's colleagues rejected the proposal and stressed that African women should remain under the firm control of their fathers, guardians or husbands (Middleton and Miller 2008:240).

The colonial administration thus reinforced gender inequality through formal means, particularly via the institution of customary law. "Seeking versions of Shona and Ndebele customs that promoted their agenda, state officials consulted an array of 'legal experts,' invariably chiefs, headmen, and elders - men who had a stake in reasserting control over women" (Schmidt 1991:750) - to codify these customary laws.

Colonial officials reasoned that the best way to control African women was by keeping them completely economically dependent on their husbands:

> By providing African men access to land and cash, this allowed the authorities to monitor… [women's] behaviour and keep them in check. In this way, they would remain economically dependent and would be forced to engage in

subsistence farming in the rural areas, thereby subsidizing the wages of the men who were employed by the European colonists. The British common law principle upheld male domination by asserting that private property must remain in the name of the male head of the family, reducing women's rights to land (Middleton and Miller 2008: 240).

For example, Participant Zadzai, who had a hair salon before her divorce and imprisonment, managed to purchase a house. However, the house was registered under her husband's name. She narrated:

> *I then went to open a case about the house that I had personally bought, which my husband only signed for without any contribution of money because at that time it was only the husband allowed to sign forms for the house although he did not pay for it. We divorced in 1993 and in 1996 he came and said "I cannot leave a house because of a woman."*

In the European view of the time, "a good mother stayed at home with her children, could not earn a living to support them and had no access to land [ownership] and no eligibility of wage employment" (Seidman 1984:738). For those few women who were able to receive an education and to become employed, they were usually channelled into the teaching and nursing professions, as were their Western counterparts (Seidman 1984:422).

While under colonialism, women were thus subjected to gender bias and oppression. The country's liberation struggle to gain independence saw some changes in this regard, although the fundamental situation of women remained the same. The struggle for liberation had already begun during the early colonial period. The role of the cultural and spiritual female leader, Mbuya Nehanda, who was a fighter in the first Chimurenga war of liberation between 1896 and 1897, is recognized by Zimbabwean society. "Chimurenga" is a Shona term, used in Zimbabwe in regard to the liberation struggle up to the present day (Weiss 1986:39). Women fought for liberation side-by-side with men. In the later colonial and post-colonial periods, the figure of Mbuya Nehanda again mobilized to give authenticity to the dominant ZANU party (Campbell 2003:287).

The second Chimurenga war of liberation lasted from 1965 to 1980. According to Isabel Mukonyora (2007:41), both male and female spirit mediums participated in fighting the colonial regime. The spirit mediums provide advice on where to attack, what taboos to follow, which boundaries to cross and how to honour the ancestors in the name of the

Supreme Being, Mwari.

While women were important participants in the war of liberation both within the armed struggle and in terms of communication with the ancestors, they were also assigned various domestic roles. Consequently, they generally assisted men by providing food and carrying goods. They were also expected to provide sexual services to men. Hence, in spite of the contributions to liberation made by women in Zimbabwe, the gender disparity between male and female continued (Mukonyora 2007:41).

Following liberation, the situation of women seemed to be at the point of being transformed. Caroline Matizha (2006:7-13) notes that the Ministry of Women Affairs, which was established at independence, made important strides in ensuring the improved rights of women through legal means. As a result, the following laws were passed: the Sex Discrimination Removal Act (1980), which entitled women to hold public office on an equal footing with men; the Equal Pay Regulations (1980), which ensured equal pay for work of equal value; the Legal Age of Majority Act (1982), which gave legal majority status to all Zimbabweans aged 18 and older (previously, African women were regarded as perpetual minors); the Labour Relations Act (1984), which prohibited gender-based discrimination by employers; the Public Service Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (1985), which provided for female workers to contribute to pension funds in the same way as male workers; the Matrimonial Causes Act (1987), which aimed to ensure an equitable distribution of property after divorce; the Maintenance Act (1989), which called for the payment of maintenance to a divorced parent with custody of the children; the Electoral Act (1990), which allowed women to run for political positions both locally and nationally; the Sexual Offences Act (2001), which aimed at protecting women from sexual abuse, by targeting the trafficking of women for sex-work, and by criminalizing marital rape, sexual harassment and the wilful transmission of HIV; and the Domestic Violence Act (2007), which outlawed cultural or custom-based practices that abused, discriminated against or degraded women, including that of forced marriages.

Despite these laws which were intended to improve the legal status of women, concerns had already been raised since the mid-1980s. According to Seidman:

> Women's concerns have been marginalized in government policymaking through the creation of a rather weak ministry for women's affairs. The ministry's structural problems and an unavoidable reliance on the rest of the

government for support have limited its ability to openly challenge gender inequality (1984:438).

The initial zeal for legal reforms benefitting women thus seems to have been ineffective as patriarchal assumptions and requirements remained, and continued to remain largely in place. Indeed, although the Legal Age of Majority Act "was revolutionary in addressing the central issue of women's disadvantage under African customary law - [namely] their total lack of capacity to act as legally recognized adults, capable of owning property, entering into contracts, and making legally enforceable decisions without male consent" – the Act (and other laws like it) in fact led to a backlash of sorts by the patriarchal Zimbabwean society because of the resolute continued adherence to traditional customary law. As noted by Sita Ranchod-Nilsson (2006:61 cited in Christiansen 2009:178), reforms such as these were met with "concerns about how the legal changes would affect African culture" and fears that the law was "corrupting and un-African."

Currently, the situation is still that Zimbabwe has "a hybrid legal system composed of statutory and customary law. Whilst statutory law tends to conform to… [international human rights], discriminatory customary laws continue to apply, especially in rural areas" (Dossier of Claims nd). Thus, even in 1999, the Zimbabwe Supreme Court ruled that the Legal Age of Majority Act in fact "does not provide for women to be treated as adults under customary law," and this court moreover gave support for the inequality of women under traditional law by stating that "the inequities are justified by the patriarchal nature of society and the necessity of maintaining a patrilineal tradition" (Women's International 2000).

Matizha (2006:14) notes that after its high-profile beginnings as the separate Ministry of Women's Affairs in 1980, the department gradually declined in status, so that by 1993, it had become a mere unit of the Women's Development within the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives. Thereafter, it underwent several further transformations, until the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development in 2005, which was tasked with forming and implementing policies to ensure gender equality in all spheres of life in Zimbabwe.

This Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:1) highlights the following as areas of achievement:

Key national policy instruments are in place, namely the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Policy Implementation Strategy and Work Plan, outlining Priorities for Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment of Women for the period 2008-2012.

Indeed, a number of constitutional amendments have been made and laws have been passed to prohibit gender-based discrimination and abuse. As a result, women have been increasingly engaged in the formal sector, and equal opportunities in employment are being promoted, but "women's potential is [still] much more visible in the informal sector" (2000.3).

Various measures have also been put in place to protect the vulnerable and poor. In this regard, women farmers receive support via special loans and their access to land and land ownership is being facilitated. Small entrepreneurships are also being encouraged by the provision of loans and through other economic revival measures.

Zimbabwe is also a signatory to a number of international agreements as regards women's rights: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development; the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Women's Protocol (Matizha 2006:13).

Notwithstanding all of the above-mentioned legislative instruments, governmental bodies, and international agreements, Matizha (2006:7) concludes that a quarter of a century after independence, men have maintained their domination over women in every aspect of life in Zimbabwe. Thus "women still lag behind in political and decision making positions and in education… [and] they continue to be marginalized in the economy and in the enjoyment of their legal and human rights." The reasons Matizha gives for this ongoing situation as regards gender issues in Zimbabwe are as follows: the ministry lacks financial resources; it falls short in the implementation of policies and in the dissemination of information about legal protections provided to women; it faces the continued marginalization of women's issues by government and society; and it has been undermined by the political instability and polarization of the country (2006:41).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:4) itself admits in its progress report that the above mentioned issues still present major challenges

to establishing gender equity in Zimbabwe. In addition, the Zimbabwean Constitution continues to discriminate on the basis of customary law and most women remain unaware of the new laws in place that are aimed at enhancing their legal status. Finally, the patriarchal "attitudes and beliefs inhibit the implementation of the legislative and constitutional amendments put in place" (2000:4). Various other forces such as globalization, trade and markets, provision of services such as electricity, sanitation and water, and climate change are also playing a negative role.

Having outlined the historical socio-political and economic conditions under colonial rule, during the era of liberation, and having briefly discussed the post-independence situation, in the next section more detail will be presented on the current position of women in Zimbabwe in terms of how the identity created through the cultural and religious factors discussed above has impacted on their education, employment, access to resources, health, and family life.

4.6. The effects of identity formation on contemporary Shona women

In contemporary Zimbabwe, women continue to be marginalized in a number of the central areas of life, despite the significant legislative changes that have been enacted since independence. This marginalisation is due to the maintenance of gender-biased cultural practices and ideas as well as the on-going patriarchal approach endemic to Christian faith and worship in the country, as explained above. As Riphenburg 1997:38) has confirmed:

> In Zimbabwe today, men possess more than a fair share of economic resources. They have better access than women to jobs, education, land and other means of production. Women have limited access to cash which has become a necessity for survival.

In the decades since independence, Zimbabwe has succumbed to external and internal forces which have led to the effective failure of the State, and to widespread crippling poverty and underdevelopment (Kawewe 2002:165). According to the Centre for Global Development, these forces include international monetary policy, drought and mismanagement (Clemens and Moss 2005:1-4). As a result, Zimbabwe has in recent times been "characterised by high inflation, intensified deindustrialization, increased unemployment, stagnant salaries, and an inability to meet basic needs" (Riphenburg 1997:41).

Bearing in mind these broader socio-political and economic challenges facing the country, the ways in which Shona (and other African) women are impacted in their daily lives by their gendered identity, will now be presented.

4.6.1. Education

Colletah Chitsike (2000:71) notes that millions of women who lack education throughout the developing world, including in Zimbabwe, "continue to experience problems related to the lack of money, resources, and economic power." Further, as Riphenburg (1997:41) highlights, women's education largely determines matters of family planning, leading to more manageable family-sizes, while a mother's educational level is one of the most important determinants of her children's school participation and achievement." The United Nations has documented that, "educating girls and women substantially improves household nutrition, women's fertility and maternal mortality and child mortality rates" (Kawewe 2001:476). This indicates the importance of women's education for the broader society, while for women themselves, access to education and training provides not only a way out of poverty, but a route to economic independence from male relatives (Chauke 2006:227).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:9-10) notes that some progress has been made in Zimbabwe in recent years on the education of women and girl children. For example, the Zimbabwean government has adopted the National Gender Policy Implementation Plan as well as the National Strategic Plan for the Education of Girls, Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children in order to address the rampant discrimination against women and girl children within the education sector. As a result, measures put in place include an affirmative action policy at tertiary education institutions so as to increase female enrolment. Girl children can now also enrol for science subjects at high schools with two points lower than the required entry level for boys, and gender stereotyping is also being addressed. Girl children who fall pregnant are allowed to resume their studies once they have given birth. Various programmes at all levels of education provide educational assistance via for example the Basic Educational Assistance Module (BEAM) which provides financial aid to vulnerable learners. Finally, the Campaign for Female Education and other gender-sensitive programmes encourage

young girls to be educated.

Despite the above achievements, Middleton and Miller (2008:243) argue that women's emancipation through education in both rural and urban Zimbabwe is yet to be achieved. Women are still mostly engaged in domestic and agricultural work all day long, and lack the opportunity to gain the education and training required for them to become skilled in other fields. In Zimbabwe, girl children always have less access to school-level education than boys for several reasons: their drop-out rate due to financial constraints is higher; their ability to keep up with the work is reduced by their engagement in domestic chores; and financially constrained parents prefer to educate sons rather than daughters. As Riphenburg (1997:41) points out:

> Traditional culture maintains that it is more beneficial to the family to educate the male children, since the female children will marry and leave the natal family going to live with the husband's family.

With regard to those parents who do send their daughters to tertiary educational institutions, Chauke (2006:125) has shown that they may demand the sum of money spent at these institutions as bride-wealth when their daughters marry. Currently females form only 39.5% of the university student body (United Nations 2010).

At primary school level, as noted by UNAIDS (cited in Maureen Kambarami 2006:5), the percentage of girls is higher than at secondary school, the enrolment ratio of girls at the latter being only 42%. Among some African Independent Churches (AICs), where cultural values are strongly adhered to, very young girls get married, often to much older men, which also severely hampers their education (Kambarami 2006:5). Chipo Chirimuuta (cited in Kambarami 2006) argues that even the educated are expected to yield to cultural demands as they might be labelled "arrogant" and shunned by men, and hence become ostracized by their own society and family as unmarried women, as is discussed further below in section 5.6.5 dealing with family life.

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:12-13)

also concedes that a number of challenges to the education of women and girl children remain, namely: a lack of financial and material resources; religious or cultural factors; the failure of the authorities to follow affirmative action policies and to monitor their implementation; limited guidance as regards technical careers; and limited scholarships.

As regards the participants in this study, the above situation is reflected in the voice of Rudo. She stated that:

> *Parents in my culture hold the view that a girl child shall not be highly educated. Boys are to go to school because they are the owners of homes. So women are not given the opportunity to be educated. Now there is a problem that a woman faces. If a husband dies who has been the bread winner, the woman does not know where to begin. Some parents are of the opinion that if a girl child is able to read and write her name, that is enough. If a woman is widowed with no job, how is she going to raise children? How will children be educated or get food? That is why many children are street kids, because there is no food at home and the mother does not know what do.*

Some of the participants were forced to leave school because of their parents' crippling poverty. Participant Zadzai's experience illustrates this point well when she asserted that:

> *I did not go further with education. I went up to grade four. My father did not have money for me to go to school. My mother made clay pots and we took them to school to sell to teachers and got money to buy pencils and exercise books only. I ended up stopping going to school.*

In addition to the above issues facing girls in schools, Kambarami (2006:4) argues that the structure of the educational system in Zimbabwe upholds inequalities between the genders in two further ways: first, through stereotypes reflected in textbooks which portray boys as strong, forceful and mentally-skilled people, while girls are regarded as soft and tender and as people who enjoy doing household chores. In this context, Chirimuuta (cited in Kambarami 2006:5) adds that gender insensitivity perpetuates male models, put forward by male-authored textbooks and theories that underpin the assumption that women are academically subordinate.

The second way in which the educational system perpetuates gender imbalance is, according to Kambarami (2006:4) through the abuse of girl children by male teachers. Chirimuuta (cited in Kambarami 2006:5) explains that the girl child's education is impacted by the poverty of girls from poor families. In the school setting, these girls fall

victim to male teachers who sexually abuse them in return for money, better marks or other material needs (Chirimuuta cited in Kambarami 2006:5). It is hard for a girl child to resist such advances because she may be subjected to violence, or she may fail at school. Some girls may contract sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS. Adding to such a child's burden is her resultant ostracization by her family and society for being sexually "loose," with parents even chasing the child from the home. Usually, the male perpetrator goes unchallenged because of the gender bias of the society (Chirimuuta cited in Kambarami 2006:5).

Women are disadvantaged not only in the educational system, but also in terms of finding work. Chitsike (2000:72) asserts that women entrepreneurs are hindered by lower levels of education and other factors such as lack of adequate funding to start income generating projects, as well as cultural constraints. This leads to the next section, which deals with employment.

4.6.2. Employment

In the 1980s in Zimbabwe, the husbands of nurses at a Harare hospital lined up at the end of the month to receive their wives' pay, despite which, these nurses were considered to be among the lucky few who were formally employed (Vidrovitch cited in Middleton and Miller 2008:238). The majority of women were and still are engaged in the informal employment sector.

As outlined above, historically, the colonial administration focused on male employment in order to gain taxes and a labour force. Most women survived from small scale farming. Seidman (1984:424) points out that while "British colonial administrators tended to ignore or marginalize women's labour, traditional society continued to treat women as responsible for feeding their families." During the era of colonial and subsequent white Rhodesian rule under UDI, the migrant labour system was instituted, separating men from their families, to live and work on white-owned farms and mines. Employers could then pay for a labourer's work power alone, rather than a full "family wage," while depending on the women to provide food for the labourer's family (Seidman 1984:423). However, since African women were denied ownership of any resources because of cultural constraints (see section 5.6.3 below) many of them migrated to the urban areas. As a

result of their low levels of education and poor access to financial and other resources, urbanised women often became informal traders, or commodity producers, making goods (such as cooked food and beer) or doing work (such as laundry) linked to the domestic skills they had learned as children (Seidman 1984:425). For both rural and urban women, beer-brewing was a particularly common occupation, while some women also became sex workers (Seidman 1984:425).

During the post-independence era, the majority of women have continued to work as domestic workers, informal traders and in micro-enterprises, but they have also been employed in professional and clerical positions and in factories. According to Kawewe (2001:475) educational and professional opportunities may now be accessible to the female elite, but even within the professional sphere, women are still marginalized by gender-stereotypes, and by being placed in low-income and low-status positions. However, most women remain excluded or sidelined altogether in terms of formal economic opportunities (Moyo and Kawewe 2002:173).

Kathleen Sheldon (cited in Middleton and Miller 2008:259) points to women's reliance on gendered skills, which they peddle within the informal sector, such as sewing or crocheting clothing and household items, and braiding hair (as well as those mentioned previously, for example beer-brewing and selling cooked food). Street vendors are however frequently harassed by the municipal police since their activities are regarded as illegal (Moyo and Kawewe 2009:164). As noted earlier, Participant Turai in this study was imprisoned for vending at an illegal site. The need for employment was highlighted by many of the participants as a central concern for those re-entering social following incarceration, including Ratidzo, who feared returning home from prison as a beggar.

Another way in which women have survived the harsh economic conditions present within Zimbabwe has been through cross-border trading including trading in foreign exchange (Moyo 2001 cited in Moyo and Kawewe 2002:172). This activity involves women with limited financial resources producing or buying handicrafts and household items in Zimbabwe and then selling these in neighbouring or overseas countries. They return home with other items such as blankets, electronic gadgets, and kitchen utensils that they can sell locally (Gaidzanwa 1992; Moyo and Kawewe 2002:174). Examples of such cross-border

traders in the present study are Participants Rudo and Chengeto.

Due to problems faced by women in gaining self-employment, many continue to become involved in sex work, including a number of girl children who are forced into commercial sex to earn money for their families. Due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, this results in a high number of orphans who are then forced by poverty to perpetuate the cycle (Kawewe 1998:84-105). Participant Raviro was driven into sex work for survival. She narrated her story as follows:

> *I was in Waterfalls, that's where I used to go for prostitution because it was far away from home so that no one would recognize me there. I would get there and start drinking alcohol and smoking so that I will have courage to be a prostitute. Some men would refuse to pay me or use condoms. I am happy that I was not infected with HIV and AIDS that time and I am currently negative. I no longer want to be a prostitute because I might die and no one will take care of my children because both my parents died. It happened that I got involved with a married man who seemed interested in taking care of me and my children. I managed to give them proper food but it was very difficult time for me. He warned me that if I was caught by his wife, I should run away as she was capable of beating me severely. I managed to run away the first time I met her, but she managed to find me. She hit me with a wooden plank. I managed to bite her on the cheek in self-defence. She then reported me to the police and I was arrested.*

The above narrative points to the undercurrent of economic enslavement of poor women. As the economy in Zimbabwe weakened due to both internal and external forces during the course of the 1990s and 2000s, some men who were employed in urban areas were retrenched and returned to their rural homes. In turn, women from rural areas left for the cities in search of income generating activities, but many had to remain in the rural communities because of their lack of skills suited to the labour market and their inability to access financial resources with which to establish themselves in the informal sector (Moyo and Kawewe 2002:172). According to the statistics of the United Nations (2010), in 2000 a total of 64% of women in Zimbabwe were engaged in some kind of labour, some in the formal sector, but mostly in the informal market. By 2009, this figure had

dropped to 60%.

Examining women's work in Zimbabwe reveals two main factors. First, it indicates how the limited resources of the majority of women and their households are used, for example, farm produce is used to make food which is then sold in the informal market. Second, the types of work in which the majority of women are engaged shows "patterns of commercialisation of skills that women have used in the domestic sphere," for example sewing or crocheting, and farming or housework (Moyo and Kawewe 2002:173). As the Tanzanian President, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, at the Third World Conference on Women in 1984 could remark:

> The majority of Zimbabwean women who are not employed are found in rural areas where they 'toil on land they do not own, to produce what they do not control and at the end of marriage through divorce or death, they can be sent away empty handed' (cited in Kambarami 2006:6).

Participant Torai asserted that:

> *I was married in 2004 and in 2006 I was divorced. My husband had started drinking and had extramarital affairs. He had a girlfriend older than his mother. I decided to go back to my parents. I left empty handed and did not even have money for transport. At my parents' home they would not accept me and they insisted that I go back to the abusive marriage. I declined and decided to leave the rural area and visited my friend in Bindura. It is where I was arrested and charged of trespassing and theft.*

This leads to the next section, which deals with the impact of gender on access to resources.

4.6.3. Access to resources

Access to resources is linked to, but different from employment. Such resources include items or goods that can provide a means of making a living, including land, livestock, finances, and even labour.

African women's unequal access to power and resources does not result exclusively from colonialism and its administrative policies, but also from traditional thinking. Shona cultural values have underpinned the unequal access by women to resources that will

enhance their lives as well as those of their children. The ultimate decision-making position in a family lies with the male head. Property, including the wife and her children are resources belonging to the man. Women and children are the source of labour both in the domestic and the agricultural spheres. This labour is seen as a resource which is owned by the male head of the house (father, brother, husband or brother-in-law) (Chauke 2006:125). As Chitsike (2000:75), notes:

> Women are unpaid and unacknowledged workers for their male relatives, and their labour is accrued to the mens's assets.

As regards money, in customary thinking, the woman may not personally own large sums of cash, as whatever she earns in fact belongs to her husband, as reflected in the saying *ndeya baba*, meaning "it belongs to my father/husband". It is therefore very difficult for women to access savings with which, for example, to start up a micro-enterprises. Indeed, because of the payment of bride-wealth, a woman is in fact owned by her husband and "has no economic rights" (Chitsike 2000:73). Chitsike (2000:74) goes on to confirm that "gendered patterns of ownership and control of assets impact on women's ability to build businesses" and are therefore at the heart of economic and social injustice.

In terms of land ownership, once again "inheritance of wealth, especially land, the only asset for peasants, is parcelled out among the eligible male offspring, [systematically denying] women's equality as full partners in property rights" (Kawewe 2001:479). As is reiterated by Chitsike (2000:75), land is owned and inherited by males. The women's role is to farm for their fathers, and later for their husbands, and finally for their sons, farm on the land that they do not own. The harvest product is not theirs either, but the men's property.

Women can legally inherit in post-land reform resettlement areas, but on communal lands (i.e., the former tribal areas) where the majority of women live, plots are in practice allocated to husbands only, leaving women vulnerable to eviction upon divorce or widowhood (Goebel 2002:463).

In regard to the legal situation, as pointed out by Lovemore Madhuku (2010:31) the Zimbabwe Supreme Court has set out the division of property within customary marriage as follows: "In African law and custom, property acquired during a marriage becomes the husband's property whether acquired by him or his wife," although the wife

is entitled to her *amai* and *maoko* property: the former refers to the livestock given to the woman for her daughter's marriage and first pregnancy; while the latter includes "all property acquired by the woman through her personal labours." Nevertheless, in practice, women continue to be sidelined in terms of access to resources within the family setting. This is discussed in more detail below in section 5.6.5 dealing with family.

Women surveyed in 1984 complained that their "lack of access to land, education, technical training, to credit for seed and fertilizer, or to markets, income-generating activities, and labour-saving devices" were obstacles to raising their living standards (Seidman 1984:428). More recently, this lack of access to resources has also been evident in the urban areas, where the barriers to property ownership by women contribute to making it difficult for urban women to lift themselves out of poverty. Women do not have access to education and regular employment which means they are usually not able to get credit that would help them improve their situation (Sheldon in Middleton 2008:259).

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:7) put forward a number of areas in which some improvement has been made as regards women's access to resources. For example, women farmers have been supported through various policies and programmes, such as the Zimbabwe Agricultural Policy Framework 1995-2020 and the Macroeconomic Framework 2005-2006. Skills training in entrepreneurial and agricultural activities such as sewing, bread making and the Master Farmer certification are now being offered to women. Further programmes to economically empower women and other vulnerable groups include credit and microfinance, educational financial aid, agricultural assistance such as irrigation schemes, and trade and marketing assistance, including help in the cross-border trade sector.

Despite the above-mentioned progress, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:7) acknowledged that:

> Deep-rooted structural impediments impede the advancement of women. Poverty, especially feminised poverty… exists where women are more impoverished compared to men. Cultural and patriarchal power relations disempower women from accessing, owning and controlling resources. Not having a voice in decision-making results in women not benefiting from national resource distribution or other entitlements, [which]... increases women's vulnerability and translates into greater poverty among women

compared to men.

Mirroring such impediments, Participant Rudo narrated her fruitless efforts to access financial resources:

> *My husband is a farmer and has no inputs to embark on farming. I went to Prison Fellowship to ask for fertilizer and seeds and they did not help me. In principle they said they would offer me help and they did not. Now I am tired of it. I went to ZACRO to ask for the same inputs and they also did not give this to me... I need money to start a business of handwork and that the organizations working with ex-prisoners give me a loan for a start. CBZ Bank lends money but it is very little. I need a reasonable amount of money to go and sell in Botswana or Angola. I used to sell in South Africa as well but my passport expired.*

The same participant was in touch with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development to seek their help, but to no avail.

The inability of the majority of women to access resources because they are considered a low priority in the disbursement of the country's limited assets has deepened their poverty and also impacted negatively on their health, in that they cannot afford decent food or housing, and are unable to access medical care, a situation worsened by the onset of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

4.6.4. Health

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is an overarching burden which affects all aspects of the lives of Zimbabwean women. The Zimbabwe Human Development Report of 2003, carried out by the Institute of Development Studies in Harare, states that more women are being infected within marriage than outside marriage. This is situation is because married women have no control over their sexuality, indicating how gender issues impact on health matters (Mungwini 2008:204).

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:11) notes that some programmes are in place to tackle HIV and AIDS, including lifestyle education programmes, counselling, anti-retroviral therapies, prevention of mother-to-child

transmission programmes and nutrition programmes. The Zimbabwe National Plan of Action on Women and Girls and HIV and AIDS (2008-2010) has also been put in place. However, there are also many challenges facing the Ministry in its provision of these services, which it lists as follows: attitudes, perceptions and cultural beliefs remain difficult to transform; there is a shortage of financial, human and material resources; the burden of care for the sick falls mainly on women and girl children; and "there is also the issue of unequal power relations between women and men, especially the contestations over practicing safe sex, which often results in gender-based violence and women's continued economic dependency on men" (Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development 2009:11).

When they fall sick, many women find it difficult to meet the costs of hospitalization and medication and as a result they often die prematurely. Dan Tevera (1995) confirms that the high cost of hospitalisation and medicines has made access to medical services especially challenging as many women are unemployed and live in rural areas where health services are very poor or non-existent. As pointed out above by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, among the Shona people, women are also the providers of family and community care for the sick, therefore their own health needs sometimes fail to be adequately addressed, and in addition, they may become infected with illnesses in the process of care-giving (Tevera 1994:84).

A further women's health issue is linked to childbirth. In Zimbabwe during the 1980s, the leadership opposed birth control as a "white plot." However, a survey conducted in 1988 revealed that many women were utilizing contraceptives, although they mostly used (and continue to use) them in order to space out their children and not to prevent pregnancy altogether. Once again, this is due to the cultural expectation that as wives, they should produce numerous children for their husbands. In Zimbabwe, abortion

is illegal except where a health problem has arisen, and botched illegal abortions are a major cause of women's hospitalisation. This is best illustrated in the story of Participant Batsirai who was involved in the illegal abortion of the child of her sister-in-law. She narrated:

> I accompanied my sister in-law to abort. My friend used a stick to poke the foetus in the uterus. She died a month later in hospital. Her boyfriend had promised to pay us after performing the abortion. The boy and my sister in law were both students. However, he did not pay us and my friend and I were imprisoned for murder. That was the end of my marriage. I have three children. One was born in prison and the other two were taken care of by a friend while I was in prison.

Within the legal bond of marriage, a woman's inferior position does not allow her to control her own fertility. Often, women use contraceptives without the knowledge of their husbands for fear of being labelled prostitutes or adulterers. This obviously rules out the use of condoms, which can protect them from HIV infection (Riphenburg 1997:45). Women's lack of control over their sexuality is revealed in particular by the rape of young girls by their relatives, in response to the myth that sex with a virgin is a cure for HIV (Kambarami 2006:7). Kawewe (2001:476) also points out that in their daily occupations, women's health is affected by domestic and agricultural labour, as a result of which "most women suffer from chronic back-ache and other health problems by middle age."

In terms of custom and tradition, health is a gendered issue. Health is linked to the ancestral spirits in Shona thinking, in which a woman's ancestral spirits (being foreign to her husband's family) are considered a potential threat to health in her husband's home, whereas her husband's lineage are thought to ensure the health and wellbeing of the living descendants (Riphenburg 1997:35 citing Schmidt). Another aspect of cultural thinking that affects the health of women is that in some parts of Zimbabwe although they are the main producers of food, women and girls generally may only consume what is left over after the men and boy children have eaten (Kawewe 2001:476).

Both traditional and modern medicines are used in contemporary Zimbabwe. For

those who choose to employ Western medicine when dealing with illness, visits to medical doctors and nurses in clinics and hospitals are undertaken. Others prefer traditional medicine, which is employed because of the belief that illness may have been caused by ancestral spirits and witchcraft, and such traditional medicine involves visits to traditional healers. Some AICs do not permit their members to consult hospitals (Riphenburg 2006:7). In this regard, Participant Zadzai in the present study stated that:

> *We are not allowed to go to the hospital in the Friday Johane Masowe church.*
> *We use water and stones. Sometimes this water is poured in food. The stones*
> *are thrown into water. One is given a prayer with stones and water. When the*
> *problem is solved, the stones are returned back to the church.*

Spiritual healing (faith healing) is a third source of health-care for Zimbabweans. It is aimed at casting out evil spirits (through prayers, fasting etc.) and is practiced by the Pentecostal churches, which in the past three decades have seen tremendous numerical growth in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe (Mugambi cited in Patte 2010:189). As has already been noted, the consultation of traditional healers frequently involves issues of gender, given that sickness and death are often blamed on wives who come from another village into their husband's clans (Riphenburg 2006:7). However, gender is also a theme of faith healing in Pentecostal churches, since, as argued by Nadar (2004: 362) these churches apparently tend to encourage women to focus away from the possible source of their ill-health (i.e., poverty, but also the abuse by and economic dependence upon men), and instead engage in "more spiritual" matters such as speaking in tongues (glossolalia). In addition, their visits to clinics and hospitals which offer medical assistance based upon Western models of health care, also affect women in particular gendered ways. This is due to the fact that they are mothers who require but often do not receive ante- and post-natal care. The gendered nature of Western medical health care is also linked to women's circumstances of poverty, lack of education and access to information, and to the fact that medical facilities are often inadequate or far from their homes in the rural areas (Manderson 1997:18).

Reflecting on several of the points mentioned above, Participant Piwai asserted that:

> *There are situations where some husbands have accused their wives of*

bringing HIV and AIDS and other sicknesses from prison. Some female ex-prisoners die soon after prison as they do not get medical help on time because clinics are long distances away.

As Riphenburg (1997:43) points out:

Access to appropriate health care, better nutrition, improved education and family planning improve women's health and reduce their reproductive burden. These services allow women to have more control over their child bearing and their [family] lives.

In addition, as noted above, married women are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection (Mungwini 2008:204). As a result, marriage as an institution becomes problematic, particularly in view of the fact that Zimbabwean women's identity is culturally centred on marriage. This leads to the next section, which focuses on family life and its link to gender issues.

4.6.5. Family life

In 1980, when Zimbabwe gained its political independence the Legal Age of Majority Act legislated that from the age of eighteen, women were to be viewed as adults, in the same way as males. Prior to that time, Shona women, under customary law, were under the legal guardianship of an adult male, either a husband or a father. Despite the introduction of this Act, its inherent conflict with customary law undermined its impact. Broadly speaking, customary law continues to weaken the various gender-sensitive laws that have been passed since independence, as outlined above.

Madhuku (2010:24) demonstrates that the application of the Legal Age of Majority Act proved highly problematic against the background the dualistic legal system (statutory and customary). As he notes: "This means that in certain matters, there is a potential application of two different systems of law with different legal consequences" (2010:26).

The dual legal system remains sanctioned by Section 89 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Instances where customary law is to be applied are determined by the Customary Law and Local Courts Act. Two factors dictate whether or not customary law is to be applied to a particular situation: first, if the statutes dictate so (this is now rare as most laws have been amended to be gender-sensitive), and second, and most often referred to, if the

"choice of law formula" in Section 3 of the Act allows it. The provisions for the latter are: customary law only applies in civil matters; customary law only applies where both parties agree that it should; and customary law may be imposed by the courts of law where there is no agreement by both parties, based on the "surrounding circumstances". The "surrounding circumstances" include the following: "the mode of life of the parties"; "the subject matter of the case"; "the parties' knowledge of customary law and/or general law"; and "the closeness of the case to general law or customary law" (Madhuku 2010:28). While it is stated that if customary law should attain an unjust resolution of an issue, then general law must be applied, this often does not take place in practice (Madhuku 2010:28).

In view of the complex situation outlined above, "the interplay between customary law and general law in Zimbabwe has been problematic. This is best illustrated by cases involving the rights of women under customary law" (Madhuku 2010:30). It is obviously in the interests of the system of patriarchy for the male parties involved in a legal case to choose to apply customary law in civil cases where women's rights are at stake, Therefore the "choice of law formula" underpins male domination because it virtually ensures the application of customary rather than statutory law in many cases, thereby disadvantaging women. The outcome has been that, while the Legal Age of Majority Act has bestowed upon women a status equal to that of men, in a number of cases women's rights have been sidelined, not because they are minors, but "because they are women in an African society" (Madhuku 2010:31).

In this section, the impact of the gendered identity of Shona (and other African) women in the context of family life is discussed. In the case of the family, it is culture which particularly shapes the experiences of women. Hence, the continued application of customary (culturally determined) law, discussed in detail above, provides a background to these familial experiences and underpins the maintenance of women's oppression. In the sub-section which follows, the following aspects of family life will be examined: marriage, children, divorce, widowhood, domestic violence, and unmarried mothers.

4.6.5.1. Marriage

Previously, family life and marriage has been briefly discussed under the section dealing

with gender and culture. This present section will provide further detail in this regard, specifically in terms of how the constructed identity of women affects their experience of married life. Riphenburg (1997:35) points out that marriage is a sacred institution in the Shona culture, and that society expects every woman to be married. Parents worry when their daughters do not get married, with some going to the extent of consulting traditional healers and prophets in order to break the "curse" which they consider withholds their daughters from marriage.

As Participant Chengeto could report:

> *My family is not functioning very well especially if you are a woman and you are not married. You are not allowed to advise anyone. I am undermined although I am the oldest because my culture expects every woman to be married.*

Among the Shona people, the survival and generational continuation of a family is ensured through marriage. The Shona and other ethnic groups in Zimbabwe are patrilineal societies in which descent is through the male line after marriage. Families on both sides are involved in marriage negotiations which include deciding on the bride-wealth to be paid by the husband to the wife's family. As a result, a wife and her children belong to the husband since they have been "paid for" and they are connected to his relatives and not to hers (Kazembe and Mol 1985:55).

There are three types of marriages recognised under Zimbabwean law: monogamous marriage under the Marriage Act, which is conducted by a church minister or a magistrate; customary marriage, which is potentially polygamous and is entered into under the Customary Marriages Act; and unregistered customary marriage, which is not legally recognised, except theoretically in regard to children and inheritance. "Most women find themselves in unregistered customary law unions, [and] while society treats them as "wives," so far the law hasn't given them any recognition" (Chirawu 2006:10).

In the rural areas of Zimbabwe, the family is composed of the husband, the wife or wives, children and members of the extended family (i.e., the husband's kin). The urban unit is smaller and under normal circumstances it is comprised of father, mother and children. In polygamous families, each wife has her own house and a share of a field, while the

husband has authority as household head. The shortage of land and financial, or other resources, as well as the influence of Christianity, urbanisation and westernisation, have all combined to reduce instances of polygamous marriage (Bourdillon 1987:46), but as will be shown below, other less-regulated forms of multiple contemporary partnerships have arisen**.**

Isabel Phiri in (cited in Patte 2010:410) explains that in a patrilineal society (such as Shona society), "the husband pays the bride-wealth to the family of the wife [and so] the children and the property of family belong to the husband and his kinfolk." As was mentioned above, in the section dealing with access to resources, while customary marriage gives a woman status and land access through her husband, all property rights during marriage, after divorce and after death belong to the man. The male relatives of the husband determine the disposition of the estate and guardianship of the children. Hence, "in customary law women do not have individual economic rights, on the grounds that they have benefits given to them through their spouses or male relatives" (Chitsike 2000:73). Therefore "Shona marriage contains a clearly gendered construction of property ownership" (Goebel 2002:471). Most of the immovable and valuable property, including agricultural implements, furniture, cattle, and the buildings on the home site also belong to the husband. According to Goebel (2002:472):

> The wife owns the kitchen utensils, property she has worked for over and above her duties to her husband's land and domestic work, and any property given to her as result of her status as a mother. This latter, known as *umai* property, is property a woman has obtained through a marriage or pregnancy of a daughter. For example, it is customary in some places for mothers to receive a suit of clothes from a new son-in-law, a head of cattle (*mombe youmai*), and possibly payments in cash, although these latter would always be very small compared to the cash paid as *lobola* (bride wealth or marriage consideration), paid to the father of the bride.

Participant Turai asserted that it is a taboo in the Shona culture for a woman to engage in extra-marital relationships. However, in the same culture men are not reprimanded for engaging in such relationships. As Jeremy Gumbo (2010:15) explains, many Zimbabwean men engage in multiple concurrent partnerships outside marriage, known by the term "small house." In such "small house" relationships, men assume the head of the household, and "the relationship becomes a photo copy of the one they have with their… [wives]". That this practice is widespread, especially in urban areas, once again

indicates the low status of women in Zimbabwean society.

4.6.5.2. Children

As regards children, it is expected that women must bear offspring to continue the male lineage. As Mungwini (2008:206) explains, the centrality of motherhood in Shona society is shown by the fact that by having children a woman is socially recognised. Simon Gregson et al. (2007:1) point out that due to HIV infection and poverty, total fertility is now significantly lower than would have been expected without an epidemic. That said, as the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations 2010) has reported, a Zimbabwean woman on average will bear three children. It is noteworthy that a higher education level for a woman tends to reduce the number of children she has, as does her employment status, although this seems to apply only to those in formal employment and not to those in informal employment - currently the majority in Zimbabwe (Hindin 2000:276). Although family planning has been practiced among the younger generations, especially from the late 1980s onward, it is still men who "make the decision to use [contraceptives] and determine the number of children" (Mbizvo and Adamchak 1991:37). Moreover, "with the imbalances of power in many marriages, women may fear that discussion of family planning or contraceptives may lead to violence" (Njovana and Watts 1996; Hoff and Richters 1999 cited in Hindin 2000: 259).

This situation indicates that gender also impacts on the number of children a woman has. This gender-based impact is both direct, through the decisions made by men (based on patriarchy), and indirect, through women's level of education and employment status (both of which are affected by gender).

As confirmed by Moyo and Kawewe (2009:175), in times of crisis, in the absence of fathers, children pull together to support one another and their mother and such support can significantly contribute in the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners. In addition, mothers are motivated to improve their own lives and avoid repeat offending, in order to provide their children with a better future. While the issue of birth-control is a potential source of conflict for married women, "the most fraught sites of struggle within marriage emerge as the control of household budgets and women's vulnerability to divorce" (Goebel 2002:462).

4.6.5.3. Divorce

In Shona society, divorce has traditionally been rare because of the stigma attached to it, although this is mainly true for women only. Infertility was one of the main causes for divorce (Seidman 1984:422). Participant Ratidzo illustrated this point well when she asserted:

> *They really wanted me to have children. I think that contributed to my not getting on well with the husband which led to divorce because I had no children.*

However, in the present day, divorce appears to be due generally to the preference of men for serial monogamy rather than polygamy, and to the tendency of many men to engage in extramarital affairs (such as the "small house" arrangement discussed above) which may in some cases lead to the institution of divorce proceedings (Goebel 2002:462). Marital guidance and support are diminished because of the gradual reduction of the role of the extended family (the in-laws), due to economic deprivation and urbanisation which has led to the disintegration of the family. Accordingly, the entire institution of marriage is increasingly privatized in nature, leading to the isolation of women, who are often "left on their own when they face marital discord and the threat of divorce" (Goebel 2002:462). The impact of divorce is often severe. "Divorced women lose their rights to children, homestead, land, woodlands, and a husband's income. [They] ... are social and economic outcasts" (Goebel 2002:472).

The high rates of divorce and frequency of multiple partnerships in Zimbabwe reveal general high levels of marital discord (commonly linked to financial matters), often resulting in domestic violence.

4.6.5.4. Domestic violence

According to Eunice Njovana and Charlotte Watts (1996:46), various forms of violence exist in the African context: physical violence (beatings, stabbings, burning, or withholding food); psychological violence (enforced isolation, constant denigration, and public humiliation); (sexual abuse, rape and forced pregnancy); and economic violence (the deliberate deprivation of financial resources, the confiscation of a women's

earnings, and the dispossession of women of their own homes or land). Other forms of violence are linked to traditional or customary practices (child marriage, and the inheritance of the wife of a deceased man by his brother). Participant Zadzai illustrated this point when she narrated:

> *My husband and I started to have conflict and we were no longer at peace. One day he woke up at night and took an axe and wanted to chop me. I was fast asleep and I felt as if someone shook my body. I woke up and he started swearing and shouting. I started to intimidate him and I divulged all he was saying and thereafter we had a separation in our marriage.*

Women are particularly vulnerable to violence because of their low status and lack of power within the family. Economic discrimination limits opportunities for financial independence, and social norms condone violence by men as a means of resolving disputes and exercising control within the family (Njovana and Watts 2006:47).

As noted above, the extended family, which ordinarily might have mitigated against unjust or extreme violence, has been weakened, so-much-so that women are isolated from traditional sources of help (Njovana and Watts 2006:47). Other sources of help are however now available, as noted by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development (2009:11). The Ministry lists achievements in this regard as follows: the Domestic Violence Act of 2006, which has criminalised domestic violence and provides relief (clinics and counselling) and legal protection to victims; a National Gender Based Violence Prevention Strategy which has been in place since 2005; and the provision of community based training in dealing with domestic violence to local leadership.

However, the vociferous debate elicited by the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act indicates the depth of patriarchal thought right up to the highest levels of government. As Christiansen (2009:197) has noted:

> Those who opposed the law argued that Zimbabwean culture was under attack. This was something which was perceived as fundamentally detrimental to the social order, or at least to the marriage institution, which was also seen as foundational.

4.6.5.5. Widowhood

In Shona custom:

> If a man dies, his relatives should take over the care of his family. Any property belonging to the deceased person would be taken over by these relatives. However, there are many anecdotal reports that the linkages between the provision of care and inheritance of property have been weakened [due to economic hardship and the scale of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has resulted in a heavy burden of care on many families]. Some relatives may wish to inherit the deceased's property but neglect the implicit responsibility of care for his widow and children. This situation is sometimes referred to as "property grabbing" (Drew et al. 1996:82).

A study by Patrie et al. (2003 cited in Dube 2008:6) reveals how widows' rights to the inheritance of property and land are impacted by customary law, leading to homelessness and destitution for themselves and their children. The relatives of their deceased husbands then gain the property that was accumulated during their marriage, sometimes through violent means. Again, "the duality of laws [customary and statutory] complicates the administration of estates upon the death of the owner" and "compounds exploitative practices in property inheritance such as property grabbing" (Dube 2008:25).

While civil marriages legally protect the ownership of all property by the widow of the deceased male, most marriages in Zimbabwe are customary. Under the Customary Marriages Act, property is distributed according to the wishes of the family (by assumption, the husband's family) and the customs of the tribe, hence there is little fairness or uniformity in this regard (Dube 2008:25). In 1997, the Administration of Estates Amendment Act was passed in order to support the protection of the property rights of the widow and children of the deceased, but since customary law remains in place alongside that of statutory law, and since the determination of which law is operational in a particular inheritance case is - as described above - problematic, this Act has not been effective in alleviating the plight of widows (Dube 2008:28).

According to Participant Simudzirai, life following the death of her husband was difficult for her. She narrated:

> *The bad aspect about my culture is that, when my husband died, his relatives did not allow me to have anything from our property. The culture allows such*

injustices to go on. There were rituals carried out after his death and then afterwards his relatives told me that I was free to go back to my parents. I was told to take my children with me, as there was no one to take care of them and no one to send them to school. In spite of these responsibilities they took all the property, including his pension.

Simudzirai experienced culturally sanctioned abuse, since in fact the norm within the Shona culture is that when a husband dies, the children are the responsibility of the relatives of the deceased. However, Simudzirai was sent away with her children empty-handed, while her in-laws retained the joint property belonging to her and her late husband, as well as his pension. In such dire circumstances, it was not long after the death of her husband that Simudzirai was convicted of fraud for selling imitation gold**.**

Another issue faced by widows is the cultural practice of wife inheritance. According to customary practice, if a man dies, his wife is to be inherited by one of his male relatives, usually his brother, while the children of the deceased are then also considered to belong to the brother (Drew et al. 1996:82). In terms of custom, this is a way to ensure that property is kept within the family, including the wife and children, who are regarded as part of the property of the deceased brother (Shoko 2008:77). In this situation, the risk of the spread of HIV and AIDS is increased: if the husband had died of the disease, then the wife (who would most likely also be infected) would pass the infection on to her brother in law (now her husband), who would in turn infect his own wife or wives (Kaori 2006). While single women and unmarried mothers were traditionally stigmatised by Shona society, in recent times the threat of HIV and AIDS, together with the prospects of diminished economic freedom, has led to a growing number of women deciding not to marry at all.

4.6.5.6. Unmarried mothers

> Lack of reliable income, lack of housing, and constant harassment of women's income-generating activities, often considered illegal, speak to structural poverty experienced in Zimbabwe… Over two-thirds of the Zimbabwean population… composes the poor strata, but poverty becomes more severe among those already structurally and culturally marginalized, women with children, in particular lone mothers and their families (Armstrong 1998; Kawewe 2000, 2001 cited in Moyo and Kawewe 2009:164).

Single parenthood was traditionally considered taboo among the Shona, but several of socio-economic factors have led to the steady and increasingly rapid growth in the number of unmarried mothers. On the one hand, single parenthood has been imposed on women by matters beyond their control. In particular, the migration of men in search of work, and the assumption that women are responsible for food production and must remain in the rural areas, initiated the emergence of this trend (Moyo and Kawewe 2009:166). The desertion by men of women who have become pregnant outside marriage, rapes resulting in pregnancy, and divorces are other factors leading to single parenthood (Moyo 2001, quoted in Moyo and Kawewe 2009:166). On the other hand, single parenthood may come about due to the non-acceptance by women of dysfunctional masculinities. Women may perceive a man as a liability, because of being unemployed, abusive, alcoholic, or unfaithful and a danger in the age of HIV and AIDS (Moyo and Kawewe 2009:165). Dominique Meekers (1993:1-2) argues that while traditional bride-wealth marriages involve expectations of obedience of wives toward their husbands and claims by husbands on their wives' labour and income, in more recent times, education and employment in wage labour (formal or informal) has led women to a position in which they can challenge the authority of men and in which they want more influence in decision-making. The conflict that can arise from such situations means that many women now avoid formal marriage in order to escape male control. Meekers (1993:2) expounds on this point in the following way:

> Rather than contracting a formal marriage, these women prefer unmarried cohabitation or prefer to have lovers who do not live with them because this allows them to maintain their liberty. Should such a partner attempt to curtail the woman's autonomy, then she can leave him without the complications that normally arise in cases where the bride-wealth has to be returned.

Mungwini (2008:209) confirms Meekers' view by arguing that many parents are less enthusiastic about marriage today due to the dangers of HIV infection. He continues to state that:

> Because of the Shona culture and what society prescribes as the norms that ought to guide a good wife [i.e., unconditional obedience to her husband], a woman stands a better chance of protecting herself against HIV and AIDS outside marriage than within it (2008:209).

Further, as Mungwini (2008:209) adds, given the dire economic situation in Zimbabwe,

the relative freedom of single women to engage in work both within and beyond the country is viewed as an important benefit of not marrying.

Nonetheless, "marriage remains an important indicator of status, and many women believe that an unsatisfactory marriage (or a brief one) is preferable to not being married at all" (Meekers 1993:2). In addition, unmarried women often find themselves, as noted above by Moyo and Kawewe (2009), at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, in particular in the poverty-stricken rural areas of Zimbabwe where in 2002, 88% of poor people resided, and where 60% of households were headed by women with limited or no assets (Caracalla 2003 cited in Moyo and Kawewe 2009:162). Even in the urban areas, "[lone] women's access to employment; to regular income; and to basic life necessities such as food, housing, drinking water, sanitation facilities, and social services are limited". For urban and especially for rural women, marriage thus remains "the most important economic strategy available to [them]" (Goebel 2002:462).

4.7. Chapter summary

Given the situation described in this chapter, it is clear that religion and culture have formulated women's identity in gendered ways. This in turn has impacted on their lives in terms of education, employment, access to resources, health, and family life.

In summary this chapter has shown that, first, as regards cultural thinking and practices, women are viewed as perpetual minors, and have been disadvantaged in many ways. As a result, they are defined first and foremost as wives, and as such they lack control over their reproductive rights; they are unable to own property; and they often are subjected to heavy labour.

Second, Western Christianity has also been a factor in forging the gendered identity of women in Zimbabwe. According to the missionary churches, the main task of women was to fulfil the role of being 'good wives,' in line with biblical injunctions, while the 'divinely ordained' superior position of men justified the subordination of women (Chitando and Chitando 2005:26-27). While European Christian missionaries condemned many aspects of traditional culture, their teachings nonetheless upheld the patriarchal aspects thereof. Consequently, the practice of paying bride-wealth, together with its implications about

gender, was able to "persist alongside Christian marriage ideals" and has "been [reinforced in]… the moral values connected with 'traditional' Zimbabwean marriage" (Chitando and Chitando 2005:27).

Finally, the present chapter has sought to show what the practical, lived repercussions of women's gender construction are, namely, the patriarchal oppression of women in the sphere of daily life: in education, employment, access to resources, health, and family life. It is these repercussions which have an overwhelming impact on the lives of female prisoners and ex-prisoners upon their release and which must be taken into account in their rehabilitation, as will be discussed in chapter seven.

It should be noted briefly before concluding this chapter that despite the considerable odds stacked against them, a number of women activists have come to the fore in Zimbabwe. For example, Betty Makoni is a 2009 CNN Hero who founded the Girl Child NetWork and other innovative gender equality strategies. Betty Makoni has overseen many replications of her Girl Child Empowerment Model. In addition, she is a mentor, coach and trainer for women and girls who want to engage in empowerment work with organisations, churches, schools and families. Similary, Jestina Mukoko the National Director of the Zimbabwe Peace Project, a nonprofit organization that monitors and documents political violence in Zimbabwe, is a well-known human rights activist. She has won numerous awards, including the 2010 U.S. Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award and the French National Order of the Legion of Honor award in 2011. Mukoko also serves on the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. Despite the achievements of such individual women, various levels of gender inequity remains the norm for the vast majority in Zimbabwean society.

The next chapter presents and analyses the data which emerged from the fieldwork, namely the self-understanding of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners who participated in this study, as well as their perceptions of the society in which they live and of the God in whom they believe. This subjective reality also has strong repercussions on the daily lives of these women, and hence on the success or failure of their rehabilitation, because it shapes their relationships with themselves, society and God.

CHAPTER FIVE

FEMALE EX-PRISONERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SELF, SOCIETY AND GOD

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the socio-economic context of the female ex-prisoners who took part in the study. The gendered cultural and religious constructions of women by their society were explored along with the repercussions thereof in their daily lives. Since the research took place in Zimbabwe, the focus was on the Shona cultural construction of women. Hence, chapter four sought to present a 'bird's-eye view' of the cultural and religious identity-formulation of Shona women and what this identity means in their everyday experiences regarding education, employment, access to resources, health and family life. The present chapter will, on the other hand, present a 'ground-level' view, revealing the perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners in this study. This aspect is crucial since the entire study takes a pastoral care stance, and while pastoral care can only to a limited extent impact on people's objective reality (i.e., the world around them), it can significantly transform people's subjective reality (i.e., the world within them). The aim of this chapter is thus to present the field research findings on how female ex-prisoners perceive themselves, their society and God.

The three theories that underpin this study, which were explored in chapter two, will now be employed in analysing the women's perceptions of self, society and God, with the analysis appearing at the end of each of the three sections. First, as regards perceptions of self, the theory of feminist pastoral care will be used to examine the ways in which the women see themselves; second, concerning perceptions of society, feminist cultural hermeneutics will provide an analytical framework for understanding these perceptions; and third, with respect to perceptions of God, it noteworthy that in this case, it is the theory - that of feminist theological anthropology - which will be revealed through these perceptions, as well as the perceptions being analysed through the theory.

The methodology used in conducting the research and in analysing it to draw out the main

emergent themes, has been articulated in chapter four of this study. The first theme is the female ex-prisoners' self-perception.

5.1. The female prisoners and ex-prisoners on self-perception

In this study, self-perception is understood as a belief or opinion about one's self. This includes what one thinks about one's own personality, nature, character or identity. Self-perception is important to women because, as noted by Brigalia Bam, often women have been spoken for, spoken about and spoken at (cited in Phiri and Nadar 2005:9). Accordingly, this has led to situations in which women are unable to address their own realities because they are prohibited from even expressing what these realities are, let alone doing something about it.

Janet Surrey summarises self in women as entailing a focus on other person(s); the expectation of mutual empathy with others, which helps formulate the identity of the self and the other; and interaction leading to empowerment and deeper self knowledge (Janet Surrey 1991:58-59). Thus the self develops in the context of relationship rather than in isolation. So, in their self perception, female ex-prisoners too, feel the need to be understood or recognized by others, to be able to develop and grow, to have self-worth and to be able to take action. The 'self in relation' then implies an evolutionary process of development through relationship and through experiencing a process of openness and flexibility and change (Surrey 1991:59).

However, according to Jean Baker Miller (1991b:201), women, who have lived as subordinates, have been culturally conditioned to view negatively their own self-determined action. In the specific case of socio-economically or psychologically vulnerable women, the highly relational nature of their self-identity means that since they lack affirmation from others, they also lack the confidence to be able to "access their inner resources for resisting the oppression they experience" (Nuzzolese 2010:32).

Brita L. Gill-Austern outlines the conceptualisation of self by women as being first, "deeply rooted in women's experience of identity as essentially defined in connectivity and relation" and as being informed by the fundamental duty to "consider the need of

others, to take care of men and to care for the children" (1996:305). Jean Baker Miller explains, "Women are taught to centre [on] others, men around the self" (Miller 1976). Gill-Austern continues as follows:

> Second, women are motivated toward self-sacrifice because they have grown up in a culture that gives them the message that inorder to remain connected and maintain relation they must sacrifice themselves and their needs… Third, self sacrifice is motivated by women's economic and social dependence… Fourth women are motivated toward self-sacrifice by the unholy trinity of self abnegation, self-doubt, and false guilt which is always knocking on the door women's lives… Fifth, women are motivated toward self-sacrifice not primarily because of distortions of caring and love which are individual neuroses but by the structural inequalities which they are embedded… Sixth, women are motivated toward self-sacrifice because of their identities as women and Christians have been shaped by a theological tradition that views self-denial and self-sacrifice as the defining attributes of Christian love (Gill-Austern 1996:305-307)

Therefore, feminists have been strong advocates of the principle of giving voice to voiceless women so that they are enabled to take control of how they are defined (Oduyoye 2001:13). This principle was central also to the present study, in order for female prisoners and ex-prisoners to be enabled to express their own perceptions on self, society and God, perceptions which could then be effectively addressed in the process of their rehabilitation. Below are the main self-perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners which emerged from the fieldwork of the study.

5.1.1. Fearfulness

The majority of the participants in this study described themselves as always being fearful.[20] The most common type of fear identified is fear of ill-repute. As an example, Participant Farai stated that: *I am afraid because imprisonment gives me a bad reputation.* This was further echoed by Participant Turai who narrated that: *During the first days, I saw the world as if everything had come to an end. I felt I lost respect and felt naked.*

These two examples raise the question: why are the female ex-prisoners in the study

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[20] According to the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008:517),"[fear] is an unpleasant emotion or thought that you have when you are frightened or worried by something painful, that is happening or might happen."

concerned about their reputations? Frances Heidensohn (1996:183) has rightly asserted that, "image and reputation have traditionally been very important to women of all social classes who wished to be defined as respectable." In the context of female ex-prisoners, once arrested, whether convicted or not, they perceive themselves as having lost their respectability. Such fears seem to have deep roots in life-denying psycho-social realities that are embedded within the society. Participant Turai further argued that there were other factors that led to feelings of fear: *It is not so much how people perceive you, but how you perceive yourself.* This leads to the next identified theme: that of shamefulness.

5.1.2. Shamefulness

The second most common negative self-perception mentioned by the female ex-prisoners in the study was the feeling of shame. Why does the emotion of shame have such a great impact on them? Many authors (see Bechtel 1991; Bechtelin Hopfe 1994; Malina 1993; and Nathanson 1992 cited in Russell and Clarkson 1996:259-260) have shown that shame is understood as the feeling of inadequacy or failure to live up to societal ideals about what people should be able to do, be known for, or feel. These feelings of shame correspond to diminished self-esteem and produce feelings of inferiority, incompetence and weakness. To experience shame is to feel psychologically exposed and to feel the need to hide or cover the self.

In terms of self-perception related to the emotion of shame, Participant Zorodzo stated that:

> *I feel ashamed and guilty of myself as a woman who has been in prison. This is because people in society do not know why I am in prison. I am worried about what they are going to say about me. I feel this way because I was a very respectable person in the community, a God-fearing person.*

Rooted in this perception is the notion of how society is ordered by the institutional forces of governance to stigmatise those who the judiciary has cast judgement upon and sent to be punished by the correctional or penal services. The system is therefore designed to inflict a feeling of deep shame upon those who are duly incarcerated. In addition to this systemic shame, the female prisoners are further inflicted with feelings of shame that are

associated with feelings inadequacy and powerlessness concerning how to recover their human dignity as will be shown below.

5.1.3. Inadequacy leading to pain

The third most common negative self-perception of the female ex-prisoners was the emotion of inadequacy leading to pain.[21] The emotion of inadequacy was caused by two factors: first, the female ex-prisoners felt inadequate because they were unable to look after their children while in prison and second, because they were unable to sustain a marriage relationship. In the case of feelings of inadequacy being the result of not being able to look after one's children, Participant Rudo stated that:

> *It is painful when the mother is in prison. Men leave children looking for girlfriends. Children have no one to care for them and they go wild. They end up stealing and that pains me.*

Rudo was not only feeling inadequate as a mother who was unable to look after her children while in prison, but was also hurt by the thought that her husband had abandoned the children and might be involved in extra marital relationships during her absence.

Participant Farai was in a similar situation. She narrated her story as follows:

> *My son who is doing grade 7 is very bright and now I am not able to pay his fees and when I think about this, it is because of prison. Had I not been in prison, my life would be in order. This issue troubles me. I can't send my son for Form 1. Furthermore when I came from prison, I found that my husband had moved somewhere in Harare to live with another woman without going home, so that our children are staying with the grandmother. When I visited them, I found that they had no clothes and blankets. Such things worry me a lot. Were it not for my imprisonment, my husband would have not married another woman.*

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[21] Pain is an unpleasant emotional experience or mental distress. It can also be understood as physical hurt or discomfort caused by injury. It may also mean to cause a person hurt, or to annoy or irritate (*The Collins Paper Back English Dictionary* 1990:606).

This feeling of inadequacy was echoed by a number of women who participated in this study. The notion of imprisonment as perceived by the participants in this study can be viewed as a form of social death of the relationship of husband and wife. The abandonment of the children by the husband and leaving them in the grandmother's care suggests that the family relationship has been terminated, and that the children have effectively been orphaned and are vulnerable in the face of difficult socio-economic circumstances. This situation was mirrored in Tirelo Modie-Moroka and Marie-Antoinette Sossou's study (2001:22) which provided an example of a married woman who was imprisoned for inflicting grievous bodily harm on another woman who was in love with her husband. She was sentenced to seven years in prison and during that time, the husband moved in with his lover and abandoned his children.

The vulnerability of children in such situations is emphasized by Bob Ekblad (2005:45), who points out that as a result of their time away from their children while in prison, these youths may drop out of school, become parents themselves, or even join gangs and become engaged in crime and drug-use. He concludes that "many people lament the…years they have spent away from their partners and children" (Ekblad 2005:45).

The examples above show that for female ex-prisoners, concern for their children can be, but is not necessarily linked to, concern for their marriage. Such concern is strongly associated with the desire to retain their social identity within the family structure and to ensure the wellbeing of their dependents. Two questions are raised in particular: first, why is marriage so important in the lives of the female ex-prisoners? Second, why are they not able to let their husbands go and concentrate on their children?

Some African women theologians have demonstrated that in Africa, marriage is a requirement from society for every woman in order for her to be considered of value. For example, as observed by Fulata Moyo (2005:134), "it is almost a civil and religious jurisdiction that in Africa the institution of marriage is held in very high esteem." Therefore, in the self-perception of the female ex-prisoners, their identity is strongly linked to both marriage and children. Without these two, they feel worthless.

The female ex-prisoners' self-perception of inadequacy as mothers and wives was sometimes linked to feelings of pain based on gender-based violence, as expressed by

Participant Chengeto. She experienced three types of pain: physical pain from abuse by her husband before imprisonment, physical and emotional pain from prison guards when she was beaten and called names, and psychological pain when her family no longer respected her views because of her prison record. I have quoted at length from her story to emphasize the three types of pain:

> [My husband]... once beat me in 1996. I was 8 months pregnant. He beat me and the infant died in the womb. I was induced into labour so that the infant may be taken out. I had gone to his home in Gokwe and one day he just said: "Today I want to beat you." I did not even know why he wanted to beat me. He beat me until I collapsed. I was rescued by people because he was at the point of looking for an axe to cut me into pieces. It's true that I would have died. I stayed in marriage until I had my second child and thereafter I just left. We actually did not go through divorce procedures because the situation was bad. I had no future.

> In prison I was pained by the way officers handled female prisoners. Sometimes they called us, saying "you prostitutes, come here," even when you have never been a prostitute. That kind of labelling is not good. Sometimes they called us thieves. This kind of shouting did not build anyone up. One day we were just called to be beaten. They enjoyed beating us for no reason. Such things really pained me. Even when I think of going back to prison, I am pained. My family is not functioning very well and they don't respect me: especially if you are a woman and not married, you are not allowed to advise anyone. I am undermined although I am the oldest person in my family.

Beatings and verbal abuse combine to dehumanize the female prisoners. As noted in the Lutheran World Federation's (2002:51) Action Plan on Violence against Women, the following characteristics are typical of abused women: "diminished self-esteem, uncertainty, anxiety to please, inability to plan for the future, depression, a suicidal tendency, mood swings, nervousness, irritability and inability to concentrate." The feelings of inadequacy which lead to several layers of pain are also linked to feeling unworthy of self-forgiveness as will be shown below.

5.1.4. Worthy of self-forgiveness/unworthy of self-forgiveness

This fourth self-perception of the female ex-prisoners will be divided into two categories: those who felt that they were worthy of self-forgiveness and those who felt unworthy of self-forgiveness.

According to Gwen Nyhus Stewart (2004), "When a person forgives themselves they create space for self-growth and they develop self-esteem." She also states that "self-forgiveness is a very good healing strategy. It is the self-willingness to believe that one is worthy." However, as Stewart (2004) points out, when "a person refuses to forgive themselves for something that they had done which the society considers wrong, the person is saying to themselves that they are unworthy."

In line with Nyhus Stewart's understanding of self-forgiveness and self-acceptance, Participant Sarudzo stated that, *I am now a reformed person.* This short assertion by the participant reveals that she has learned to forgive herself. Transformation has taken place in her life. She views her situation from a different perspective. Participant Chengeto emphasized that:

> *A woman has qualities of love. Love is the most important thing. Without love you are not able to love those who are not related to you. You cannot forgive without love.*

All the participants who had been able to forgive themselves also stated that they were not angry with themselves and were not accusing themselves of having failed due to having been imprisoned for their wrongdoings. As a result, they were also able to forgive others. Conversely, the participants who were not able to forgive themselves were also not able to forgive others. Instead, they tended to blame others for their imprisonment. Participant Maruza therefore denounced another woman for her arrest. She narrated that:

> *I fought with someone and injured her. She had gossiped about me. She wanted my landlord to chase me from the place I was renting. She created stories that I was gossiping about the landlord and that is why I bit her.*

Why are female ex-prisoners unable to forgive themselves? Being aware of the alienation of society towards them, their views of themselves are often clouded. Mercy Oduyoye

(1995:195) laments the loss of self of African women in general when she writes:

> We African women have been brought up… to always love others more than self. It seems to me that in this process we have also learned to vote against the self, always preferring others and loving them more than we love ourselves, doing for them what we decline to do for ourselves because we consider ourselves unworthy of such attention.

As Nyambura Njoroge (2001:74-75) has added, African women who want to or have transformed their lives tend to be ostracized by their communities. Any acts of resistance and yearning for transformation are labelled anti-cultural. Even so, I argue that when female ex-prisoners are embedded in healing and care, the outcome is love, and thus transformation is enabled, as will be articulated below. This is because self-love is equivalent to self-acceptance and self-forgiveness. Self-love uses the experience as a tool to understand what has happened and learn from it, rather than to blame external circumstances for one's situation. As an example, participant Chiedza asserted that:

> *I have learnt to accept myself before I go out into society. This is so that I won't have problems when people start talking about me. I try to encourage myself and will try not to isolate myself when I am back in society. I would appreciate a platform to tell the world about my experiences.*

From the perspective of feminist pastoral care, Marbel Morny (cited in Oduyoye 1990:145-149) maintains that:

> [Feminist pastoral care deals with] …women's perceptions of fear, uncertainty, and distortion of the image of their humanity by pointing to Jesus Christ the liberator of women, their saviour from all the oppressive contexts, who empowers women in their state of powerlessness, their friend and ally in the context of alienation and pain. [Female ex-prisoners] …draw their strength and hope from Christ who restores their life.

Therefore, in the analysis of the self-perceptions which emerged in this study, the main emotions the female prisoners and ex- prisoners experienced were: fear, shame, inadequacy leading to pain, and a sense of being unworthy (or worthy) of forgiveness. For Jill McNish (2003:6), shame is caused by the experience of one's own inadequacies and this affects people usually where social adaptation is weakest, namely, where there is certain degree of inferiority. As female criminals these women are ostracized, which leads them to a fear of judgment and to a feeling of being inferior. The women feel inadequate

in terms of their role as parents and wives and they suffer multiple forms of pain as a result of their perceived deviance, including emotional and physical abuse at the hands of family and community. While some are able to move beyond this, to self-forgiveness, many are trapped in guilt and cannot pardon themselves for what they have done.

Feminist pastoral care thus seeks to empower women to a position of self-confidence by enabling them to remember that they too are created in the image of God. Together, men and women can learn to speak openly without fear of judgment. As Rodney Hunter (1990:434-435) says, "… feminist pastoral care facilitates the development of a new and stronger self-concept based on trust of personal and community experience."

In addition, according to Francesca Debora Nuzzolese (2010:22), feminist pastoral care addresses the psychological and spiritual needs of vulnerable women through supportive mutuality, and through empowerment. Judith Jordan (1991:83) argues that mutual understanding in feminist pastoral care plays a vital role in that there is dialogue between the caregiver and the cared for. An environment of woman to woman mutual relationship creates a context in which women are free to share their thoughts, feelings and needs with each other and the care-giver, making them feel heard, seen, understood, known and listened to. Janet Surrey (1991:166) points out that in feminist pastoral counselling empowerment is "the motivation, freedom and capacity to act purposefully, with the mobilisation of energies, resources, strengths or powers of each person through a mutual relation process". Through empowerment feminist pastoral care encourages an active as opposed to a passive approach by the participants. In regard to the women who are the focus of this specific study, the employment of a feminist pastoral approach that is appropriate to the African context is essential. Esther Acolatse (2010:226) emphasises that while women in Africa are aware of the injustices in their environment, they are powerless to protest this in view of their position of subordination which persists from one generation to the next. Through engaging in an African feminist approach to pastoral care women are thus encouraged towards mutuality a n d empowerment by a concrete and direct engagement with cultural practices and expectations.

Having discussed the ex-prisoners' perception of themselves, the focus now turns outwards to their perceptions of society and the community at large.

5.2. The female ex-prisoners' perception of society

This section discusses four categories of female ex-prisoners' perceptions of society, namely: fear and stigma; forgiveness by society; support systems; and healing, care and love.

5.2.1. Fear and stigma

The female ex-prisoners of this study perceive the society as being fearful of them to the extent of treating them as outcasts. For example, Participant Zorodzo asserted that: *The society perceives female ex-prisoners who go to jail for murder as murderers and society is in pain and afraid of them.* In addition, Participant Rudo narrated that: *Some people no longer greet me and some do not want to see me.*

The perception of the society by these ex-prisoners is supported by Laureen Snider (cited in Sumner 2004:236) who asserts that there is a pervasive notion that women who have been imprisoned do not live up to the gender roles expected by society due to having "transgressed against [both] domesticity…and the law." Snider refers to Carlen's (1983) description of such women being at odds with norms linked to gender. To a certain extent female ex-prisoners are feared by society because they have gone beyond the society's "norms" by committing crime which, in the view of society, normally falls within the male sphere. Their awareness of this leads female ex-prisoners to fear society's judgment of them as deviant people.

The perceived fear of and stigmatisation by society was echoed by a number of the female ex-prisoners in this study, for example Participant Chenai who narrated that:

> *At the sight of an ex-prisoner, they hold their bags because of fear of theft from ex-prisoners. Society is suspicious that female ex-prisoners might steal from them. Society maintains the view that ex-prisoners are lazy, they do not want to work and that is the reason for their imprisonment. The society continues to fear them; it does not believe that an ex-prisoner has reformed.*

The estrangement that the society feels toward female ex-prisoners was also voiced by Participant Zorodzo who reported that:

Society has to be brought into awareness concerning female ex-prisoners, that they are human beings like any other person. Therefore society needs to intermingle with female ex-prisoners rather than fearing and distancing itself from them.

It was clear that the participants of this study revealed an awareness that people in society are afraid because of the inevitability of the female ex-prisoners' return to society. Furthermore, the voices above have shown that ex-prisoners believe that society does not think that they are able to reform. They feel stigmatised by society due to social stereotypes that define them as being deviant from the "norm" (i.e., of what it is to be a 'good woman' as outlined in chapter four, which discussed the formation of women's identity in Zimbabwe). These voices are in line with what Oduyoye (1995:172-173) and Rakoczy (2004:199) have documented, namely that women in general find themselves in situations of dominance and harassment where they have lost their self-image. In the context of this study, female ex-prisoners found it difficult to integrate into society. As a result, they live in a state of constant hopelessness because they cannot change the society's perceptions of them.

While most of the female ex-prisoners in this study have asserted their perception of society's negative attitude toward them, Participant Chiedza saw this as an opportunity to reach out to the society. She stated that:

I will take the opportunity to tell them that I am a different person now. I will remind them about the Apostle Paul of the Bible and let them know that anyone can be arrested.

Chiedza's point of view draws from the resources of her Christian faith to think positively about her situation. This is supported by Phiri (1997:55), who asserts that:

The Bible provides to most African women church goers a reason for being. It is affirming, offering them liberation from social and cultural stigmatisation and oppression through a relationship with Jesus whose liberating message they find in the Bible.

This leads to the next section, which deals with some female ex-prisoners' views on society's forgiveness of them.

5.2.2. Forgiveness by society

A further analysis of the narratives of the female ex-prisoners reveals that many of them were determined to make things right. Their voices reveal a yearning for forgiveness and reconciliation with their complainants and society at large. Through acknowledging their wrong-doing and through recognizing that everyone makes mistakes, such forgiveness and reconciliation can be achieved. The following comments by Mark Hanson (2005:66) affirm the above statement: "the inter play between community and the individual is necessary. We do not expect…infallibility either for community or the individual."

The female ex-prisoners in this study identified various ways in which society could forgive them. These included the following: by testifying about their own transformation; by educating the society about forgiveness and reconciliation; and by employing cultural methods of attaining forgiveness. Accordingly, Participant Oga recognized the importance of forgiveness. She narrated that: *I used to look down on ex- prisoners, so I do not know how society will react towards me or how they will accept me.*

Simililarly, Participant Revai stated that:

> *There should be talks in church about ex-prisoners' reforms. Ex-prisoners are to testify about their new life in Christ. There should be talks about forgiving others and reconciliation.*

A healthy community is built on mutual trust and reciprocal dependence. In the context of a crime having been committed, this can only be attained once forgiveness has been achieved. Pattison (1989:175) describes forgiveness as a conscious process which involves both the forgiver and the forgiven. It creates an event of mutual togetherness and acceptance. As Daniel Louw (1998:413) confirms:

> The act of reconciliation is thus linked with the guilty and the forgiver. In forgiveness the guilty party accepts the implication of being delivered unto and being depended upon the love of the other…"

According to Christof Gestrich and Joachim Zehner (cited in Erwin Fahlbusch et al. 2005:333), "[f]orgiveness plays a role as a model of human behaviour by vicariously accepting human faults and failings."

When forgiveness has been achieved it brings about reconciliation. Reconciliation may be understood as a means of re-establishing a close relationship, to settle or resolve, bringing oneself to accept, coming together and healing past conflicts. Gerhard Sauter (cited in Fahlbusch et al. 2005:505-506) sums up reconciliation as a process that ends strife, and softens relations that have hardened. It heals by facing and dealing with the historical causes of conflict so that good relations can be restored. In the context of this study, the question is whether reconciliation can re-establish a criminal's distorted social relationships.

The ex-prisoners in this study also saw cultural approaches to forgiveness as playing an important role in bringing about reconciliation. Participant Sarudzai requested: *I would like someone to go and talk to my family on my behalf and tell that I am a reformed person.*

Her request needs to be understood in the context of the Shona culture where it is a common practice that if a person has wronged another person (or even society at large), then someone is sent to pave the way towards an apology so that the offender may be forgiven. In this way the offender shows remorse for the damage done and may thereby gain forgiveness by society.

In a similar situation Participant Manheru found it hard to return to her grandmother's home after prison. She requested: *I would like someone to go and ask for forgiveness from my grandmother on my behalf.*

Again, Participant Batsirai could not hold back her tears during the interview session as she talked about the broken relationship with her in-laws after her crime. She also asked for help in this regard: *I would like someone to assist me mending the broken relationship between me and my in laws.*

It is therefore the spirit of community, which is strong in the African world view, to which these participants were appealing in the process of bringing about reconciliation between themselves and members of the society. The spirit of community is connected to support systems, as will be shown below.

5.2.3. Support systems

In order to understand African thinking on support systems, it becomes necessary to draw from John Mbiti's philosophical explanation of the relation between the individual and the community in the African worldview. As Mbiti (1990:109) has strongly argued, the African person's whole being is shaped by community:

> In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone… [but exists] corporately. He [or she] owes his [or her] existence to other people, including those of past generations and his [or her] contemporaries. He [or she] is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group… Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are therefore I am." This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of… [humankind].

This perspective is important for the study because it highlights that 'no human is an island' and we all need support from each other. This support can come from other prisoners while either in or out of prison. For example, while in prison, Participant Revai asserted that: *We sometimes share at church with others about our crimes and make debate.* Female ex-prisoners are not isolated. They communicate with each other about various issues. This is confirmed by Participant Maruza who stated that communication with others outside prison was helpful to her. She asserted: *The fact that I talk and discuss with others helps me.* Participant Simudzirai was of the opinion that for society to function as a support system for female ex-prisoners, it needed to be watchful:

> *Society is to keep an eye on ex-prisoners, ensuring that they have reformed.*
> *Ex-prisoners are to learn interacting with people. We tend to shun society.*

What Participant Simudzirai's verbalizes is of importance because when ex-prisoners isolate themselves it is difficult for society to support them.

The participants' experiences are also supported by Kjell Norsdstokke (2009:79) who argues that communication can play a vital role in humanity:

> Communication builds human communities and by extension, individuals, and allows them to develop, and that sustainable development therefore depends upon effective communication and capacity-building. As development continues to be an important item on the world's agenda churches are

challenged to address this matter.

Participant Zorodzo is of the same view and she asserted: *It's only at night when it is difficult but when it is morning and I get to interact with fellow prisoners, I do not have any problems.*

Participant Zorodzo also found support through interaction with others. Such practice is understood as mutual support-giving among members of a group (Norsdstokke 2009:96). In her report Karen Buckenham (1996, cited in Gennrich, Inglis and Kromberg 2009:85) affirms that a support system involves material as well as emotional assistance:

> The church community can be a supportive environment while women's lives are in crisis, providing safe refuge, financial support, moral support and counsel.

Some examples of women who had a positive experience of the church as a support system are presented below.

In the study sample, Participant Revai shared some positive experiences of the church. As she narrated, *a woman is precious.* She went on to declare that:

> *You are given your rightful place as a woman, despite that one is a widow; one is encouraged to be self-employed. Churches light up their members in a way that one doesn't look down upon oneself. The good aspect about my church is that if you are a widow or an orphan, they ask you about what you want to be encouraged in to become self-sufficient rather than go begging. They sit down with you and give you some capital to start buying and selling. They make a follow up, checking on whether you are getting a profit or not. When you are getting profit, they wean you to start working on your own.*

Participant Shuvai also shared that:

> *When I came out of prison, I went to the pastor to explain about the prison situation and the pastor helped me to understand that it was not the end of the world and prayed with me. The pastor can talk to the society so that they can assist us with counsellors to talk with us when we come out of prison.*

According to Prison Fellowship International (2008:10), their ministries in other countries

have launched centres where ex-prisoners can receive support. For example, an ex-prisoner who was a member of the Australia Prison Fellowship, expressed gratitude for the job they offered him as follows: "For the first time in my life I now have a real loving family. I love going to work every day, and I thank God for my new life" (2008:10). When he talks of a loving family, he does not refer to a biological family but a family of fellowship that was supportive towards him and helped him find employment.

As Participant Shuvai was also to find:

> *I was accepted by the pastor and church. They were pleased with my Christian commitment. They warned me not to commit crime again.*

The pastor and the church accepted and supported her. According to Petterson (1991:279), the more religious a person is, the less likely that she or he will deviate from her or his religious values and beliefs. As a consequence of this, religion is viewed as an important means in maintaining social order and in developing a common set of values. Because of her religious commitment, Shuvai found that she was supported by her faith community.

However, Buckenham (1996, cited in Gennrich et al. 2009:85) also cautions that the church can have a tendency to respond to some issues in a rigidly legalistic way, stating that "[o]n the negative side, religious beliefs hold many women captive in a physically and spiritually destructive situation with no way out." Indeed, there were some participants in this study who reported having had a damaging experience regarding the church. Participant Ratidzo remarked that:

> *I lost all my friends after imprisonment, and the church which I had invested in so much did not help me. In spite of the church's absconding I learned that non-Christian friends were more embracing.*

The judgmental attitude of the church toward Participant Ratidzo is exacerbated by what Christina Landman (2008:161) has called the patriarchal bias: "Women are powerless in churches, since they support the patriarchal discourses that expose women to abuse".

Another example was Participant Rudo who also had a negative experience of church-based organisations as a support system. She said that:

I went to Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Association for Crime and Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders. To my dismay these organizations would not support my integration into society.

Erving Goffman (1963 cited in Maruna 2004:203) argues that prisoners, upon release, may experience that the church reacts without confidence and trust toward them, as they carry a stigmatised and "spoiled" identity. In this regard, Landman (2008:176) suggest that churches should introduce theologies to women through which patriarchal discourses which hold women captive are deconstructed. It is also the task of the church and faith-based organizations (FBOs) to empower female ex-prisoners by skills-training and education. The church structures are to assist female ex-prisoners in sourcing funds both locally and internationally to run self-help projects, as part of their support system.

Given the ambiguous/contradictory ways in which the church can function as a support system as well as a source of judgment, particularly when it comes to female prisoners or ex-prisoners, Landman (2008:16) further asserts that, "The churches are to promote gender justice within their circles, so that the empowerment of women takes place as churches become places of healing." Following up on the aspect of healing, a reflection is now provided on the voices of female ex- prisoners' perceptions of society, churches and others on the provision of healing, care and love to them.

5.2.4. Healing, care and love

In this section, the female ex-prisoners' perceptions on healing, care and love are divided into four categories and these are: (i) Healing care and love by prison officers; (ii) Healing, care and love by family members; (iii) Healing care and love by the church and faith based organisations; (iv) Healing care and love by prisoners.

Healing is a process which requires an ability to listen to each other's stories: a mutual exchange that allows for transformation to take place (Ackermann 1996:48). Healing cannot take place without accepting accountability for the actions which caused the need for this healing in the first place (Ackermann 1998:91). In order to be more than superficial, healing requires both care and love in order to be effective. Care involves both material and spiritual characteristics, as will be seen below from the

practical assistance given to ex-prisoners by prison officers, society, the church, and FBOs, while love is given to them by fellow prisoners, the church and family members.

5.2.4.1. Healing, care and love by prison officers

Prison officers play a vital role in the lives of prisoners in their day-to-day upkeep and security while in prison. In some cases, women prisoners view the light duties they are given by prison guards as a sign of love, in that they are made to feel useful. In this section some women ex-prisoners are heard expressing their experiences of healing care and love shown to them by some prison guards.

Participant Chiedza asserted that: *In prison, I was accepted by officers. I was given light duties. I sewed uniforms for officers and prisoners.* Similarly, Participant Tatenda narrated that: *While in prison, officers handled me well. I did not do hard work. I sewed uniforms for officers and prisoners.* Participant Chenai said that*: Healing and care started in prison, when serving my sentence working in the prison salon.* Participant Rudo expressed that: *I was accepted by prison officers. I made doilies for the prison at national shows.*

Having reflected on the healing, care and love experienced by some female ex- prisoners from some of the prison guards, it should be noted that other women in the study found prison officers a hindrance in the process of healing. As was noted earlier, Participant Chengeto narrated on the hardships she encountered with regard to prison guards who shouted at her, beat her, and verbally abused her, thus hampered her healing. Indeed, a larger percentage of female ex-prisoners expressed dissatisfaction in this regard. While the love and care shown to some women by prison guards was of an exclusively practical nature, and was limited to the provision of a sense of purpose, the healing, care and love shown by family members is of a different nature.

5.2.4.2. Healing, care and love by family members

What are the voices of female ex-prisoners saying about their perception of members of their households? In order for family members to respond positively to ex-prisoners, they need to receive counselling. Participant Piwai said that:

> *On release, the social worker is to meet the relatives and husbands of female*

ex-prisoners and talk about integration. If the female ex-prisoner is not married the social worker shall talk to her parents in order [for her] to be received by them. Some husbands are suspicious that in prison their wives mix with male prisoners and have extra-marital relationships with them. There have been situations where some husbands have accused their wives of bringing HIV and AIDS and other sicknesses from prison. Some female ex-prisoners die soon after prison, so these issues are to be talked about.

Once counselling has been offered to the families, they can start to effectively give love, care and healing to their family member when they come out of prison. The family is the fundamental unit of society and the main source of emotional support for any individual. It is useful here to briefly define what family is.

According to Magezi and Louw (2006:73), family in the Zimbabwean context is understood as both the nuclear and extended family, although this tie is being shaken and challenged by the economic hardships, land redistribution and resettlement which have taken place in recent times, beginning in the colonial era. The obligation of belonging to the family remains, despite long distances between the immediate and the extended family members. In times of suffering, members of the family are expected to journey with the one through the crisis, offering healing, love and care. As Magezi and Louw (2006:78) go on to highlight, all over Africa, the family is chief among those institutions of human society that has taken care of the elderly, the orphans, the handicapped and the unemployed. In spite of this fact however, the gender disparities and stereotypes that abound, undermine the care, love and healing given by families to their members who are female ex-prisoners.

Zorodzo narrated the difficulties female ex-prisoners face when members of their family stigmatise them after release. The question that arises is: Why does the family not take an interest in receiving its member, given that the traditional value of a family is to render healing, love and care?

In answering this question, it is necessary to reflect back to the gender discrimination of women. As Patricia O'Brien (2001:28) explains:

Women exiting prison experience stigma by virtue of their conviction for

crime, regardless of having done the time associated with punishment for the offence. The status of ex-offender is only one part of the person's identity, yet it can become the most prominent defining characteristic for representing self. With the label comes the baggage of distrust and lack of credibility…

The fear of a female ex-prisoner bringing HIV and AIDS into the home from prison is linked to the male assumption of domination over and suspicion towards women. Fulata Moyo (2005:134) views this conception to be a traditional patriarchal one which has frequently subjugated women. She further advocates that there is need for women's empowerment in order to create an environment of mutual respect. In this way there is the possibility that families can bring about healing, love and care for female ex-prisoners.

5.2.4.3. Healing, care and love by ex-prisoners

In their sometimes fruitless struggle to be integrated back into their families, prisoners have learned the importance of giving healing and care to other prisoners. As Participant Tatenda asserted: *I would even want to go back to prison and visit my colleagues and just demonstrate that it is easy to get out of prison and do something important.*

It is noteworthy that Participant Tatenda has been motivated to return to prison and care for other female prisoners. By so-doing she will be encouraging them to persevere until their own release. Participant Chenai echoed the same sentiment:

> Outside prison ZACRO[22] assisted me to start a salon. I am therefore constrained by the love of Christ to return to prison and extend my hands in caring for other prisoners.

Participant Ratidzo also asserted that: *I am starting a "Pilgrim Project" and I will definitely have something to donate at some point to Prison Fellowship to help them to help prisoners.*

Participant Rudo also stated that: *I need to start a programme of visiting female ex-prisoners especially those without visitors.*

Again, Participant Zadza was of the same view when she stated that: *I think of coming back and visiting those with no visitors and I will support them.*

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[22] ZACRO is the Zimbabwe Association of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender.

While female ex-prisoners showed an interest in returning to prison to give other prisoners healing, care and love, society should also assist in this regard. In the African context, as noted above by Mbiti, society plays a crucial role in the life of the individual.

5.2.4.4. Healing, care and love by society

Community members can help to support ex-prisoners emotionally. According to Linda Bell (1993:228) such relationships require the equality of all the parties and cannot flourish within the structures of dominance and submission. In this way, these members of the community are showing care, healing and love. When female ex-prisoners return to society, they yearn to feel such love from that society. Simudzirai contributed further insights on healing, care and love given by society when she narrated that: *Female ex-prisoners are to interact with society without separating themselves*

As long as ex-prisoners keep a distance from society, their estrangement will continue. Accordingly, this implies that healing, care and love is only possible where there is communication and intermingling. It can only occur when society shows commitment to the restoration and healing of female ex-prisoners, demonstrating practical care for those who have been released (Muller 2005:71).

Participant Revai was well received by society. She asserted that: *We started to communicate like in previous times. Society did not show resentment or ill feelings.*

Having been sentenced for theft, Participant Revai was also to admit:

> *I was imprisoned in 2004 for three years. I stole some clothes from the shop where I used to work because the money I was earning was not enough so I decided to supplement my income that way. When out of prison some people knew that I was in prison and some did not. I told them everything that had happened to me. If they were not happy with me they did not show it to me. I went to Prison Fellowship and they wanted to find out how society had welcomed me. They gave me some clothes, as well as some gift boxes for my child and myself. I used to come for Friday prayers at Prison Fellowship but now that I am self-employed selling fish I cannot come. I am the one who provides for the family because my husband is not working. I belong to Faith*

in God International. I went to the church overseer and told them what had happened and they welcomed me with open arms

Participant Revai went on to disclose that:

I felt ashamed of myself and out of place in the society. It is something that was not heard of, for a woman to go to prison so when I found myself in prison, I really felt ashamed. I was well received by my community so those feelings are now a thing of the past.

Revai was ashamed of the crime she had committed and felt cut off from society. However, she felt remorse and regret and thus the society received her. According to Anne Kubai (2005:108), a caring society demonstrates inclusivity in which there is peace, justice and true reconciliation which can liberate both the victim from being consumed by hatred and bitterness and the perpetrator from feeling guilty and from the fear of revenge. It is in such a context that female ex-prisoners are healed, cared for and loved.

Through listening to the voices of female ex-prisoners, it is here argued that there is a clear awareness among the participants in the study of society's provision of healing, care and love to others. The church and faith based organisations are also a source of this emotional care, as well as of spiritual support, as alluded to by Participant Revai above.

5.2.4.5. Healing care and love by the church and faith based organizations

According to Wootton (2000:113), women theologians view the church as continuing the healing mission that Jesus brings to all humanity. She further points out that healing and care by the church can be achieved through a feminist ministry which focuses on service to the marginalized, who in this context include female ex-prisoners.

What then, is church? Sarojini Nadar (2005b:19) cites Masenya who gives an over-view of what church entails. She asserts that the church is the body of Christ upon the earth. Its mission is meant to bring life not death, healing rather than suffering, freedom rather than bondage. Phiri (2005:41) adds being church in Africa includes embracing all forms of healing that promote wholeness in spirit, body, environment and relationships. The same tenets apply to those organisations such a Prison Fellowship and ZACRO that are not churches in themselves, but that are faith-based in philosophy, approach and action. It is in

this context that a church is able to offer healing, love and care to female ex-prisoners.

As Participant Chiedza reported, *Some churches visited me.* Participant Zorodzo expressed the view that:

> I would like someone to assure me that I am still a human even after being jailed. The pastor comes to offer words of encouragement and after a day or two depression sets in thereafter.

Participant Chieza also reported that: *We get visits from church representatives.* The visits paid to the participant are expressions of care and love. Participant Rudo experienced fellowship with the women from her church, as they visited and prayed with her. Healing, care and love were eminent. According to Susan Frank Parsons (2002:5), the church is seen as a healing community and offers redemptive hope for justice and peace.

Participant Turai remarked:

> I was surprised as I was visited by two women from the church. Their counselling, acceptance and willing participation and intervention, spiritually and materially, made me feel loved.

The impact of the visit met her personal needs in that it comforted her in her distress, it lifted her up from her feelings of low self-esteem and it made provision for her material needs. Similarly, Participant Shuvai asserted that: *The pastor asked the church to assist me through counselling and providing me with a job.* Participant Tatenda asserted that:

> In prison some churches visited us and provided for our needs. After prison I got a job at Prison Fellowship where I experienced care. I was treated well when I came here; I was not very educated but they helped me and taught me computers.

In support of the approach of this study as a whole, and with the chapter's objective of giving female ex-prisoners a voice, Landman (2008:175) describes the role of the church in providing healing through counselling via allowing patients to tell their own stories:

> In narrative counselling healing is retrieved from and based on the indigenous

knowledge of the patient, making healing contextual and achievable.

Through the voice of Participant Shuvai the healing, care and love provided by the church is exhibited through its assistance towards her. Such a gesture is in line with Rakoczy's (2004:199) assertion that "The life of Christian community will be one of mutual love, care and service."

In addition to the emotional, spiritual and material support given by the church (and FBOs), prayer is another form of vital support. Vivian Msomi (2008:250) asserts that healing through prayer is part of a holistic view of healing a person's whole life. Thus, when female ex-prisoners experience healing through prayer, it does not end there, but their entire lives are affected. According to Philippe Denis (2007:47), his research indicated that people who pray bring the reality of their pain to God, and thereby gain healing. Prayer however must be combined with an acknowledgement of its limitations. For example, in the context of HIV and AIDS, as Phiri (2010b:225) warns, "Prayer without appropriate knowledge is dangerous and has led so many Christians to death." Participant Tatenda reflected this opinion when she expressed her experiences of prayer in the church setting, by saying that:

> *Prayer alone is not enough. All that the church did for me is to invite me for praise, worship and prayer. I was never helped with anything. All they could say is sister we want to pray for you. God is going to bless you. They just focused on praying for me. They did not think of helping me financially as a person from prison.*

Nevertheless, the healing brought about by prayer for female ex-prisoners was evident in many of the testimonies of the participants in the study. Participant Rudo narrated that:

> *Some women came to my house to pray for me. They asked for God's grace and mercy. They were thanking God that I came out of prison alive whereas others die in prison. They thanked God for doing great things so that I came out of prison to meet my family.*

Participant Raviro also stated that:

> *When I had marital problems with my husband, being physically abused,*

church members assisted me in prayer. I need prayer because some of these problems are caused by bad spirits which can be defeated through prayer. We were nine children but six of us are now dead because of these bad spirits. Through prayer by myself and others, I should do something productive with my life in order to take care of my children.

When the above female ex-prisoners' perceptions of society are analysed from a feminist cultural hermeneutics perspective, four themes emerge. The first theme is that of fear of and stigmatisation by of the society. While of course male criminals are also stigmatised, the level of ostracisation of female criminals is far higher. This is because of the cultural and religious understanding that expects certain things of women and not men, a situation which is desconstructed and critiqued by feminist cultural hermeneutics.

The second theme is that of the female ex-prisoners' perception of forgiveness by society. Similar to the theme of fear and stigma discussed above, an analysis of the perceived lack of forgiveness by society of the ex-prisoners in this study can be linked to the cultural and religious dimensions of women's identity in Africa. Because African society's expectations regarding these women have been failed, female ex-prisoners perceive society's inability to forgive them. In Zimbabwe, as a patriarchal society, these women are regarded as deviant, and are thus stigmatised due to their imprisonment, but especially because of the fact that they are female prisoners.

The third theme that emerged from the interviews with the female ex-prisoners as regards their perceptions of society was that linked to the issue of support systems. As pointed out by Kanyoro (2002:13), feminist cultural hermeneutics recognises that while cultures can sometimes be used to justify oppression towards women, they also underpin community identity.

The fourth theme that arose when analysing the participants' perceptions on society was that of the healing, care and love shown by society. As Oduyoye (2001:26) has shown, feminist cultural hermeneutics recognizes that human beings depend on life in community for their self-understanding. In the African thinking: "I am because we are." According to this understanding, it is destructive to withdraw or deny a person membership of the family in the first place and the community at large in the second place (Ramose cited in

Coetzee and Roux 2002:227). The community provides the space in which culture and religion find their life and expression; in turn, religion and culture determine people's relationship and attitudes. Feminist cultural hermeneutics emphasizes not only that the oppressive aspects of African culture and religion need to be challenged, but also that the life-giving aspects whereby each member of the community is responsible for every other member need to be celebrated. In this sense, there is an obligation in African societies to care for one another (Oduyoye 1994:166).

As far as ex-prisoners are concerned, this sense of community is essential in terms of providing support systems for them upon release. Their greatest concern is for a sense of belonging. As Burnett Ros (2004: 152-180) has observed, female ex-prisoners often feel that they have lost their sense of belonging, something was confirmed by the women's stories above. Through the lens of African feminist cultural hermeneutics, the pain caused by this loss is clarified since cultural and communities are the cornerstones of life for most Africans.

Five main facets emerged from the theme covering female ex-prisoners' perceptions of society's provision of healing, care and love. These were the healing care and love shown by: (i) prison officers; (ii) family members; (iii) other ex-prisoners; (iv) the community; and (v) the church and FBOs. As in the section on the perceptions on self, feminist pastoral care could also provide a tool in analysing the present theme (perceptions on healing care and love by society). However, since this theme falls under the section on perceptions of society, it will instead be analysed by employing feminist cultural hermeneutics because the latter specifically allows us to view healing, care and love in its socio-cultural and religious context.

Healing, care and love are shown in material, emotional and spiritual dimensions. As regards to the provision of healing, care and love through material means (e.g., financial help, training, the provision of school uniforms, or food, as were mentioned by the participants in this study), all five of the categories mentioned above assisted female ex-prisoners in this regard, although in a limited way. Concerning the giving of healing, care and love through emotional means, encouragement and support (e.g., through showing understanding and through counselling) were mainly offered by the church and faith based organisations and by fellow ex-prisoners. In terms of the third method of

offering healing, care and love, which was through spiritual means (e.g., prayer and pastoral counselling), this was largely provided by the church and faith based organisations.

The theme of the provision of healing, care and love by society and the perceptions of female ex-prisoners on how they did or did not receive this, and from whom, can be explored using feminist cultural hermeneutics. This is because the feminist cultural hermeneutics paradigm highlights context (including the social background) and also looks at human beings holistically in terms of all aspects that shape them. As Kanyoro (1997:176) has noted, African culture restricts women's access to resources such as land and finances, thereby making it difficult for female ex-prisoners to support themselves. Hence, by receiving healing, care and love through material means, this answers a real need, the cause of which (i.e. culturally justified limitations placed on women) is highlighted through the lens of feminist cultural hermeneutics.

The lack of emotional support given by family members as a way of showing healing, care and love can also be understood by using feminist cultural hermeneutics. This is because the theory of feminist cultural hermeneutics points out the reasons why the female ex-prisoners were shunned by their families, namely that crime is a taboo for women within African cultural and religious thinking.

Finally, the spiritual means by which healing, care and love were shown can also be examined through employing feminist cultural hermeneutics. As confirmed by Phiri (1997:55), the Bible gives African women deep support and comfort in the face of "social and cultural stigmatisation and oppression." While Bible-based prayer and counselling are helpful in giving spiritual support, feminist cultural hermeneutics also points to the ways in which the Bible and Christian tradition have reinforced some oppressive aspects of African culture.

Pamela D. Young (1990:86) maintains that the love of God was interpreted by Jesus in terms of love of one's neighbour. One can only love God through this neighbour. Elizabeth Johnson (1992:184) further stresses the interrelatedness of all creatures with each other providing the context for responsible attention to the needs of others inclusively, especially those who are most underprivileged, such as female ex-prisoners.

This leads to the next section, which deals with female ex-prisoners' perception of God.

5.3. Female ex-prisoners' perception of God

In the earlier section which dealt with self-perceptions of the prisoners and ex-prisoners, it was noted that imprisonment led most of the participants in the study to hold negative images of themselves. Also above, their perceptions of society included negative facts of fear, stigmatisation as well as ostracization. However, when examining what the female prisoners and ex-prisoners said about their relationship with God, the tone was overwhelmingly positive, and most did not blame God for what had happened to them but looked up to God for their healing and restoration into society. The way they perceived God can be grouped into four categories: first, God who is ever present with them in their problems despite their mistakes; second, God who fights for them even when they are badly treated by society; third, God who forgives them for the mistakes they had made; and fourth, God who provides for them as they struggle to find their feet back in society once released.

As regards the female ex-prisoners' perceptions of God, a general observation can be made before discussing each of the four themes that emerged, namely that they felt that God is not to blame for their imprisonment. This is well illustrated by Participant Ratidzo who narrated that:

> *Whatever went wrong, I am to blame not God. I am stigmatised. My name has been soiled by imprisonment and I wait for God's vindication. I tend to learn directly from God for spiritual direction. It is me and God. I tend to now learn directly from God because I dream a lot and I get messages a lot directly, so I am less dependent on books.*

In her perception of God Participant Chiedza asserted that: *I am of great importance in my family by restoring family unity, as intended by God.*

The first category or theme that arose in terms of the participants' perception of God is that God is always with them in their problems, regardless of what they may have done. Female ex-prisoners perceive God as present in their lives. For example Participant Sarudzai reported that: *I have learnt that as a woman I am very important and my body is*

the temple of God. Participant Rambai also narrated: *What can really help me is to know God personally, because when I was I arrested, I did not know God, but now I am a prayerful Christian.*

As in the Zimbabwean context, what emanated from female ex-prisoners' perception of God in a North American context studied by the scholar Nikki Howard, was how their relationship with God has impacted their lives. The prison experience drew them closer to God. This is what has saved their lives and given them a stronger relationship with God. Kim (an ex-prisoner) in Howard's thesis (2009:85) described herself as the bride of Christ and as a woman who lives her life for God.

Female ex-prisoners in the present study also demonstrated a confidence that God was beside them despite their crimes.

The second theme is that the women in the study believe that God is on their side even when society is not. As Participant Zorodzo claimed: *God loves me always in happy moments and sad moments and I am a God fearing woman.* Participant Maruza also maintained: *When I hear people talking derogatorily about me, I do not argue, I just say that may God help them.*

This theme denotes a God who fights for them despite their rejection by society. In the words of Masenya (2005:53), the thinking of Participant Maruza is reflected: *God however is the avenger of God's people. Whatever evil is done to God's people will be avenged by God in God's own time.*

The third theme is that female ex-prisoners have come to grips with a God who offers forgiveness even though they have been doubly condemned as deviant women and as criminals. For example, Participant Shuvai reported that: *God forgave me. I pray to God that I should work for myself and not steal other people's money.*

Rosemary Radford Reuther (cited in Gonzalez 2007:127) points out that:

> While women tend to already be linked to sin and a state of being fallen through the kind of thinking that perpetuates gender injustice, feminist theological anthropology highlights that male and female both fully reflect the divine image, and are both fully deserving of God's grace.

The fourth theme to emerge was a faith in a God who provides for them. When Participant

Chenai was assisted at ZACRO after having been turned down at Prison Fellowship, she asserted that: *I was treated well, given food and accommodation. God is with me in all this.*

Their idea of God who provides for them as they struggle to cope in society is linked to material survival in particular. According to Beverley Haddad (2008:49) survival embraces a dignity, a quality of life, which is fundamentally linked with these women's understanding of God in their lives. Building on this understanding, poor and marginalised women are able to employ strategies that can take control of and impact on their material conditions of oppression. Haddad goes on to suggest that in the interconnectedness of faith and material conditions, these survival strategies and resistance practices are fostered, which in turn can lead to social transformation.

As aluded to in the above quotation by Reuther, regarding a God who forgives all humanity (male and female) equally, feminist theological anthropology is revealed in the above perceptions of God. Feminist theological anthropology, as indicated in section 2.2, consists of three major facets. The first is the critique of longstanding patriarchal readings of the Bible which endorse "interpreting women's subordination to men as part of God's original and enduring intention for human life" (Kvam 1996:11). Feminist theological anthropology argues rather that women and men are both created equally in the image of God. The second facet is to question Christian theology's dualisms which tend to "posit a [diametrically opposite] difference between two entities", so that maleness is categorized with "mind, reason, will and transcendence, …[while femaleness is] "categorized with body, intuition, emotion and immanence" (:11). This implies that women's domain is that of the body (reproduction), children and the home and that to fail in, or to venture beyond this domain constitutes deviance. The third facet of feminist theological anthropology is linked to its critique of Christian theological assumptions of women being the source of the original sin, being "prone to sensual desires". This is deemed to constitute a "danger", which is then used to justify male control over females, leading to the marginalisation and oppression, and hence the suffering of women. The three facets together form the basis, within feminist theological anthropology, of the problematic understanding of the nature of women.

First, by stating that God is with them despite their crimes and prison sentences and

despite the fact that they are described as criminals, the female ex-prisoners mirror the thinking of feminist theological anthropology even though they are unaware that such a theory exists. Odoyuye (2001:72) points out that Christ is the ultimate representation of the *imago Dei*, being "the paradigm or archetype of what humanity is in God". Therefore, all who follow Christ - women and men - are "called to image Christ" and, like the female ex-prisoners, de Gruchy (1997:254) concludes that "there is nothing in my 'being-ness' that offends God." As articulated by Rakoczy (2004:43): "Feminist theology advocates "an anthropology which affirms women's dignity and equality." Second, when these women admit in their interviews that they experience severe physical and emotional suffering and that God is their comfort in the midst of such pain, they again affirm the feminist theological anthropological emphasis on women's experiences of "the concrete reality of suffering, oppression and liberation" (Maria Pilar Aquino 1993 in Gonzalez 2007:116).

It seems patently clear from the above four themes that the women's perceptions of God reveal aspects of their spiritual and emotional struggles as well as their material hardships. In view of these various forms of suffering, we now examine the question: why do these women cling to God when they are suffering, and how do they understand this suffering?

I argue that their continued trust in God, despite their suffering, is a representation of how African people in general perceive evil and suffering in relation to God. African theologians have provided some indicators of how Africans embrace God irrespective of their suffering. Isaiah Dau (2010:118-127) shows that Africans view God as the creator, the Supreme Being and source of life. God is therefore not the source of suffering and would not harm anyone. Mbiti (1990:199) asserts that it is rather the spirits who are believed to be sources of evil, for example, the living dead who have recently died are thought to bring fear and evil to the living. Human beings are understood to invoke these spirits to harm those whom they resent or envy. Consequently, when Africans suffer they do not blame God, as they are of the view that suffering and evil are caused by human beings. The more Africans suffer, the more they hold on to God and pray to God, while blaming humanity for the calamity which befalls them (Smith 1950:30; Magesa 1997:50).

However, suffering is not to be glorified. The example of Jesus is emphasized by feminist theological anthropology, and his suffering and self-sacrifice (as Isaiah's suffering servant)

for the salvation of humanity, forms part of this example. Their liberationist view sees salvation not as something to be awaited in heaven, as Rakoczy (2004:52-54) states, our humanity is to be experienced in our communities as we offer human care and respect each other on earth, rather than waiting for God's justice in heaven. Feminist theology has challenged traditional eschatology, by arguing that women (and men) are not looking for help in the future alone. They want to see God act now. Salvation is now.

Kennedy Owino (2010:158) takes up the theme of the suffering of women, pointing out that in many cases women see themselves as co-sufferers with Christ and remain passive without addressing their situation of suffering. He further reflects on Phiri's citation of Carolyn Huggen who argues that there is a belief that suffering is a Christian virtue, while women in particular have been positioned as the suffering servants. As Owino warns: "There is danger in this kind of perception which spiritualises suffering and glorifies pain" (2010:158). In spiritualising suffering, a theology of prayers, liturgies, songs and poems has been developed, which fails to address the real problems that prevent the fullness of life. Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro (2010:25) concludes in such situations that: "Much of our time our loud lamentations are heard only as tiny whispers." Feminist theological anthropology thus requires that the systemic causes of women's suffering need to be addressed rather than sacralising the experience of suffering itself.

Nevertheless, in the midst of suffering female ex-prisoners continue to cling to God, and, as noted by Phiri (2005:37) this is of great importance, since "African women's spirituality is marked by a constant life of prayer [or communication with God]."

This brings to a close of this chapter, which has summarized and analysed (using the three theories underpinning this research study) the female ex-prisoners' perceptions of self, society, and God.

5.4. Chapter summary

This chapter first discussed the participants' perceptions of self, namely that they saw themselves as fearful; shameful; inadequate; and worthy or unworthy of forgiveness. Next, the chapter outlined their perceptions of society toward themselves, namely, feelings of fear and stigmatisation. The same society however could also forgive them and provide

support systems to them. They also knew that healing care and love could come from different social bodies (i.e., prison guards, family, the community, the church and fellow ex-prisoners). Third, their perceptions of God were presented. They saw God as being ever present with them in their problems despite their mistakes; fighting for them even when they were badly treated by society; forgiving them for what they had done wrong, and providing for them as they struggled to find their feet back in the society. Each of the three themes was analysed using one of the theories underpinning this thesis. For the theme of self-perception, feminist pastoral care was employed in its analysis; for the theme of the perception of the ex-prisoners of society, feminist cultural hermeneutics was applied; and the theme of their perceptions of God was analysed using feminist theological anthropology.

The chapter was constructed around a living text: the voices of the women participating in this study. Their narratives revealed both pain and resilience. It is this latter aspect which must be built upon in order to effect rehabilitation. These women are wounded healers, pointing out ways to facilitate their own healing, a call to which this present study responds directly.

Having explored and analysed the perceptions of female prisoners and ex-prisoners of self, society and God, it is clear that they need assistance in making their way back towards self- and social-acceptance. This is what defines full rehabilitation, which is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

A GENDERED ANALYSIS OF THE THEORIES AND PROGRAMMES OF REHABILITATION

6.0. Introduction

In chapters four and five, it was noted that female ex-prisoners' identities are constructed by society and religion and that their self and societal perceptions are frequently negative, yet their perceptions of God are positive. It is of vital importance to find ways to smooth their transition back into society, as is echoed by their voices. In order to reflect meaningfully on this requirement, an examination of what scholars have said about rehabilitation theories and how the participants experienced the effects of some of the theories becomes necessary. For that reason, the first part of this chapter focuses on a gendered analysis of theories of rehabilitation and draws also on the experiences of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners. To do this, a critical discussion of the six theories of rehabilitation is presented. The theories are: (i) t h e self-determination theory of needs; (ii) the good lives theory; (iii) the transformative theory; (iv) the deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime; (v) the social learning theory, and (vi) the healthy institutional environments theory.

To conduct this critical analysis, a basic definition of rehabilitation is proposed from the perspective of the three theories underpinning this study: feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care. Using this definition, each of the rehabilitation theories is then analysed from this gendered perspective, while drawing from the experiences of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in the study to illustrate what is being discussed. This section concludes by summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of current theories of rehabilitation.

In the second part of this chapter the basic definition of rehabilitation is expanded further to identify the specific features of a new approach to rehabilitation that responds to the needs of women in the Zimbabwean setting. This is done by drawing on four components or building blocks: first, the basic definition mentioned above (formulated using the three

theories underpinning this study) of what is it to be rehabilitated for African women; second, the strengths identified in the current theories of rehabilitation, following their gendered analysis; third, the life-experiences of women in Zimbabwe in general; and fourth, the perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners in my study. From these four components, central features of rehabilitation considered to be essential from an African feminist pastoral care approach will be identified together with two additional features (those of gender sensitivity and the role of faith based organizations). These six features together make up a suggested approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care perspective that is then used to critique current rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe. The South African strategies employed for rehabilitation will also be presented as these can provide useful lessons for Zimbabwe. In the next chapter, an alternative approach to designing such programmes will be proposed in regard to the prison-related work conducted by religious organizations, particularly in the African context.

6.1. Rehabilitation

There is no commonly agreed definition of the term 'rehabilitation' among the schools of the social sciences and humanities. It is therefore the aim of this section to analyse a variety of definitions from different scholars. As explained in the introductory chapter of this study, according to Amanda Dissel (2008:156), from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in South Africa, 'rehabilitation' is a term that is generally acknowledged to be used interchangeably with the word 'reintegration.'

According to Marian Liebmann (1994), the aims of rehabilitation in the Scottish Prison Service are defined as follows:

> To provide for prisoners as full a life as is consistent with the facts of custody, in particular making available the physical necessities of life; care for physical and mental health, advice and help with personal problems. To protect and preserve the self respect of prisoners. To enable prisoners to retain links with family and community; to encourage them to respond and contribute positively to society on discharge (Liebmann 1994:17).

> Derick T. Wade and Bareld A. de Jong (2000) define rehabilitation as "a reiterative, active, educational, problem solving process focused on a… [person's] behaviour …, with the following components:

•Assessment—the identification of the nature and extent of the patient's problems and the factors relevant to their resolution
•Goal setting
•Intervention, which may include either or both of (a) treatments, which affect the process of change; (b) support, which maintains the … [person's] quality of life and his or her safety
•Evaluation—to check on the effects of any intervention."

Dissel echoes the view of Clive Hollin (2002), that rehabilitation when considered from a moral basis is a humanitarian action which is aimed at reducing crime. Therefore it takes care of issues of justice for both the individual to be integrated and the community into which the person is being settled. The concept of justice is further developed by Morgan and Owers (2001:12) who have shown how the definition of rehabilitation of the UK Association of Chief Officers of Probation combines the needs of the individual with the protection of the community. They define rehabilitation as follows:

> A systematic and evidence based process by which actions are taken to work with the offender in custody and on release, so that communities are better protected from harm and reoffending is significantly reduced. It encompasses the totality of work with prisoners, their families and significant others in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations (Morgan and Owers 2001:12).

In a broader sense, the theory of justice expounded by John Rawls (2001:6-7) has at its basis the concept of fairness, which in turn involves social cooperation to achieve reciprocal and rational advantage for all persons. In the context of rehabilitation, such a concept of justice is restorative in that implies that both victim and perpetrator deserve a fair outcome in terms of recompense for crime committed (for the victim) and rehabilitation (for the perpetrator). However, it also implies that the recompense offered as well as the rehabilitation received must be morally sensible or reasonable[23].

The concept of justice is also central in feminist theory, although the primary concern for feminists is with gender justice. From the feminist perspective on justice, Rakoczy (2004:47) notes:

> Since women are baptised into Christ, gifted with his Spirit, they hear the

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[23] John Rawls, *A Theory of justice.* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) 1971; John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement.* Edited by Erin Kelly. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard) University Press) 2001.

same gospel as their brothers, with its call to make the world a place of justice and freedom.

Rakoczy goes on to highlight the document "Justice in the world" (1971), in which it is argued that:

> …action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation ("Justice in the World" 1971:6 cited in Rakoczy 2004:47).

Rakoczy (2004:48) further asserts that justice in the church includes the voices and experiences of all people, whom the church is called to liberate as part of its mission. In addition, she argues that it is not enough to only allow women to be involved in church work when it concerns cleaning, cooking and flower-arranging, and to exclude them from all decision making processes (2004:221). The inclusivity advocated by Rakoczy extends beyond the church to the broader society. With regards to the rehabilitation for female prisoners and ex-prisoners, they too need to play roles in decision making regarding the ways in which their rehabilitation and reintegration will take place, in order for justice to be attained. As a result, their voices in this study are crucial.

Three facts are notable as regards the above definitions of rehabilitation. First, they do not address the need for pastoral care for the ex-prisoners while in prison or after release. Second, the definitions are working with the assumption that the needs of male and female ex-prisoners are the same. Accordingly, they do not address the central issues of gender. Third, the understanding of community is not contextualised. These definitions thus claim to be valid for all contexts and all ethnicities and both genders. However, according to feminist perspectives, the idea that female prisoners and ex-prisoners can be rehabilitated into living in a law abiding manner once released into the community, is unfeasible unless the fact that the community itself has cultural and religious laws which are unjust towards women is recognised. For example, Participant Chengeto from the study was sentenced for theft of domestic property. She stated that:

> I stole at my place of work and I worked as a house maid. I stole because sometimes they did not pay me. At other times we drank mahewu [a drink made from fermented maize meal], for the whole day. So I thought of stealing

from the house to supplement food after selling the stolen items. Sometimes after earning my salary I would buy food because they did not always offer me food. I ate once a day in the evening when they came home from work.

The story told by this participant reflects the situation of structural injustice in several ways. First, in her place of work she had little to eat. Second, although she holds a Secondary School Form Four certificate she has no access to training for skills so that she may look for a job. Third, she is a former convict. Caught up in this vicious cycle, it is very difficult for female ex-prisoners to be law-abiding citizens after release. This narrative has thus exposed the underlying issue of economic justice as a core component of any analysis of rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners. This is more than a pastoral care issue. Imprisonment is not simply a moral and ethical issue, but rather one of economic injustice within a society built on an unjust economic order.

The crime of theft was common among the participants of the study. Participant Sarudzo was arrested on three accounts of theft. She narrated that:

I was arrested in 2006 for theft. I used to work in a bar and I stole money with another guy I used to work with because the salary was so meagre that I mainly used it for transportation both to and from work. The guy managed to escape and I was caught and jailed for two years. I came out of prison in 2008 and stayed for a while and I stole again, mainly because I did not have any work. I stole some money and a cell phone from my boyfriend and I was arrested and jailed. I was released on the condition that I pay back all the money I had stolen. I failed to pay since I was not working and I was re-arrested and that is why I am in prison now.

A further feature identified above for women's rehabilitation is to consider the context in which female ex-prisoners find themselves after release and the experiences they face in daily life. For this reason, the statement by Participant Rudo reflects the needs for training or supplies that will be in demand or of use in her particular environment.

Participant Tatenda also expressed the need for self-empowerment and acquiring skills even before release from prison. After release from prison the participant was employed by Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and this is what she had to say about her empowerment:

In fact rehabilitation started when I was in prison as I sewed uniforms for fellow prisoners and officers. Training in other projects will help me build on the knowledge which I have already acquired. Prison Fellowship is to include projects such as sewing, computers, breeding chickens, piggery and gardening in order to help us to be self-sufficient. Women do not come to Prison Fellowship after release because they do not get the empowerment that they need.

Participant Tatenda's story shows that female ex-prisoners in this study find themselves in a dilemma because there in nothing in place for their reintegration after their release. The underlying issue identified by all of the women is an unjust economic system that discriminates against them based on gender. If issues of employment, as well as programmes that aid female prisoners and ex-prisoners are not addressed and administered efficiently, it becomes difficult for them to integrate back into society and abide by the law when they live in poverty and struggle to survive. Consequently, there is a need for a definition of rehabilitation and reintegration that takes into account structural injustice in terms of for example education, access to resources etc., in the society.

Given the above, a definition of rehabilitation from the perspective of the three theories underpinning this study should have the following features: first, it should include the aspect of pastoral care, which covers healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. From a feminist pastoral care position, rehabilitation should in addition be empowering, nurturing and liberating, giving the women a fundamental feeling of self-worth. As noted by Sutherland and Cresser (1978:558), often "all a prisoner has left is her sense of identity and if it should be taken away from her in the name of rehabilitation, or treatment, she will have lost everything." Second, such a definition should incorporate the question of gender-sensitivity. Rehabilitation cannot be defined without taking into account the gender of those being rehabilitated. This is discussed in more detail in the next section. Third, the context (i.e., the socio-political, cultural and economic environment) from which those being rehabilitated come and into which they will return after release, should be considered. Dissel (2008:156) stresses that rehabilitation involves transforming those aspects of the offender that could lead to recidivism. However, as highlighted by feminist cultural hermeneutics, there is also the need for the transformation of the society itself, in

particular the religio-cultural aspects which shape it, to bring about more equity between men and women. This equity is demanded by the theory of feminist theological anthropology, which promotes an understanding of the fundamental value of all humanity and a re-examination of the nature of women so that female convicts are not simply condemned for having deviated from the assumed feminine "norm". Furthermore, rehabilitation comprises reintegration, which refers to the process of returning the offender to a full and productive participation in community life (Dissel 2008:156), which is particularly important, given the central role of communality in the African context.

These three points on the definition of what rehabilitation is, are now used to give a gendered analysis of current rehabilitation theories, which will enable drawing out those features which are deemed to be of use in rehabilitating female prisoners and ex-prisoners, especially in the Zimbabwean setting. First however, the requirement for gender-sensitivity in the rehabilitation process is discussed in more detail.

6.2. The need for gender-sensitivity in rehabilitation

As mentioned above, the second recommended aspect of a definition of rehabilitation from the perspective of the three theories underpinning this study is that of gender-sensitivity.

Feminist theories examine female criminality as a reflection of the life situations of women and girl children and their attempts to survive (Arnold 1990; Chesney-Lind 1997). As mentioned in chapters one and four when describing the situation in Zimbabwe, many women and girl children are on the social and economic margins, struggling to make ends meet outside legitimate enterprises, a situation which brings them into contact with crime and the criminal justice system. To illustrate this point, some examples of the gendered nature of the crimes committed by the participants of this study are as follows:

Participant Chiedza indicated that she was not considered an 'ideal' woman by her husband's family. As she narrated:

> I killed my child because my in-laws did not want their son to marry me
> because of my disability. I was traumatized because I was left to prepare for
> the arrival of my baby by myself as a result I became suicidal. I drank some

poison and also gave some to my child and the baby died and I was arrested.

Participant Piwai stated what the legal system classified as a crime:

> *I was sentenced for theft. I stole nappies for a baby. I was pregnant and*
> *wanted them for my baby. My husband ran away from me when the economic*
> *situation in Zimbabwe was tough. He left me pregnant and never came back.*
> *I am not married but I have a child with this man.*

The point that criminal behaviour itself is gendered is therefore associated with the third recommended point (that of the need to take the socio-economic and political context of ex-prisoners into account) presented in the proposed definition of rehabilitation outlined above. However, what is discussed in this section examines, as mentioned, the second recommended feature: the overarching need for gender-sensitivity in the process of rehabilitation.

A number of experts in the rehabilitation field have raised the need to develop gender specific interventions. According to Barbara Bloom and Stephanie Covington (1998:7), the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention (OJDP) in the United States defines gender-specific services as follows: those which are designed to meet the needs of female offenders; that value and honour female experience; that respect and take into account female development; and that empower girls and young women to reach their full potential. As noted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime:

> Although many problems women face during re-entry into society are similar
> to that of men, the intensity and multiplicity of their post-release needs
> can be very different. Women are likely to suffer particular discrimination
> after release from prison, due to social stereotypes. They might be rejected by
> their families, [may lose out on employment opportunities] and in some
> countries they may lose their parental rights (2008:22).

According to Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:15-16), research and practice suggest that female offenders have special needs not typically addressed by programmes designed for male offenders. Examples are as follows: first, programmes for men include anger management training to promote appropriate means of expressing anger, whereas women may also find it difficult to express anger but they would need different techniques to deal with this, as argued by Inciard et al. (1993).

None of the participants in the present study have received anger management training. It is in this context that women are to be provided with alternative skills training. It is believed that women respond positively to techniques that reduce feelings of guilt and self-blame, as well as the improvement of self-esteem and self-awareness (Bloom and Covington 1998).

Second, females are also more receptive to parenting skills training and since they are the usually the caregivers, this type of programme is essential for female inmates (Peugh and Belenko 1999).

Third, vocational and educational programmes are readily available for males to learn a trade that enables them to earn a living when they re-enter society. However, the females tend to receive very little vocational and educational training (Gray et al. 1995). The training they do receive is for low paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement. Most women offenders who are mothers will return to their children after release and they need a means to support these children. Many of these women do not expect to receive financial or emotional support from their husbands (Prendergast, Wellisen and Falkin1995). As a large proportion of the women have no marketable skills, many female inmates re-offend (Shearer and Baletka 1999). Vocational and educational training for female prisoners that enable female ex-prisoners to acquire jobs in order to earn a living and to raise their children is therefore of great importance.

The features of gender sensitive programmes highlighted above by the OJDP have clearly shown the need for the self-empowerment of female prisoners, including their financial self-sustainability. This need for self-empowerment was clearly articulated by Participant Rudo who asserted that:

> *I need some substantial capital to start a business of craft work, so it would be helpful that organizations working with ex-prisoners would give a loan for a start. CBZ bank lends money but it is very little. I need a reasonable amount of money to go and sell the craft work in Botswana and Angola. I used to sell in South Africa as well. At the same time ex-prisoners are to be encouraged to start clubs which help them to raise funds, while the government offers rehabilitation programmes which include education and*

training.

Participant Rudo is interested in small-scale trading in neighbouring countries, and also in small-scale farming for her household. She went on to say:

> *My husband is a farmer and has no inputs to embark on farming. Prison Fellowship did not give inputs of fertilizer. The help I got was from a researcher. She gave me fertilizer and seeds and I grew tomatoes for sale. She also gave me twenty balls of wool and I knitted jerseys for sale.*

Having discussed reasons given by professionals or experts working in the field as to why gender-sensitivity is essential for rehabilitation programmes for women offenders, as well as having provided the views in this regard of some female prisoners and ex-prisoners who participated in this study, it becomes necessary to analyse current rehabilitation theories from a gendered perspective.

6.3. Critical gendered analysis of rehabilitation theories

Rehabilitation theories[24] are important resources for providing a comprehensive approach to understanding the reintegration process, instead of simply matching an intervention plan to a particular type of problem. Scholars have argued that ill-planned rehabilitation programmes both in and outside prison are threats to the whole concept of rehabilitation (Cohen 1985; Crow 2001; Lynch 2006; Morgan and Owers 2001; Maguire and Raynor 2006; and Lewis et al. 2003). The same scholars have also argued that an understanding of rehabilitation theories can assist in designing and implementing successful programmes. For this reason, a suggested theoretical rehabilitation approach is presented in this chapter below, which will underpin a proposed programme outlined in chapter seven.

Both Hooker (1987) and Psillos (1999) maintain that good theories provide the researcher with a cognitive map of the way the world works and thus are useful intellectual resources for the construction and implementation of ways of living. A good theory should be able to give an account of why certain things happen the way they do and why they have the features they do. On the basis of the description of the elements of a good theory, six

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[24] Andre Kukla (2001 cited in Maruna and Ward 2007:30) states that a theory is a description of an unobserved aspect of the world and may consist of a collection of interrelated laws or systematic set of ideas.

rehabilitation theories that provide relevant information for the present research have been identified as follows: (i) the self-determination theory of needs; (ii) the good lives theory; (iii) the transformative theory; (iv) the deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime; (v) the social learning theory; and (vi) the healthy institutional environments theory.

What follows is a gendered analysis of each theory together with some examples of how each was reflected in the conversations with some of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners in this study. It should be noted that these theories have emerged from a Western worldview rooted in a Western model of political and economic governance, which may not mirror the situation in the Zimbabwean and African contexts. It is however noteworthy that the concept of restorative justice, which as mentioned above is seen in much contemporary Western thinking as part and parcel of rehabilitation, has long been integral to African approaches to dealing with crime and punishment. Omale (2005:50), refers to Perrott (2004:1) who, in his document "Finding community alternatives in the Gambia", argues that,

> Africans, with their societal focus on collectivist values and communitarian, have a much longer tradition of settling problems at the village level than does the West. Even presently he further argues, many criminal matters never come to the attention of the police, but are settled by Councils of Elders … under the leadership of village chiefs or regional chiefs. Remedies sought during these mediation sessions are consistent with the principles of restorative justice insofar as the law-breaker must make amends for his or her actions.

This strength of the African worldview on justice is returned to when the thesis begins to put forward its own approach to and model of rehabilitation, but because Africans are yet to develop comprehensive and systematic theoretical paradigms on rehabilitation, this study rather draws on Western theories to draw out current best practices. However, the study takes into account at each step both the experiences and the perceptions of Zimbabwean women, hence rooting the proposed approach and model of rehabilitation firmly in African soil.

6.3.1. Self-determination theory of need

According to Shadd Maruna and Tony Ward (2007:144), the self-determination theory of need states that human beings are intrinsically active, self-directed organisms who are naturally inclined to seek self-sufficiency, relatedness and competence.

Burnett (2004) and Lin (2000) and are of the opinion that the self-determination theory of need should be understood in the context of prisoners' and ex-prisoners' desire to change their lives and desist from crime. Further, they are agreed that self-change and self-empowerment leads to a turning away from crime by enabling participants, rather than compelling them, to change. In line with this mode of thinking, female prisoners and ex-prisoners are active human beings and benefit little when rehabilitation is done or prescribed for them as passive recipients. These scholars also argue that ex-prisoners need to rehabilitate themselves. This is however highly problematic in the context of patriarchy, a context within which most African women find themselves. Being structural, patriarchy exists across the institutions (including religious, social, economic, and political institutions) and social practices (including culture in particular). These institutions and practices shape people's understanding of what it is to be female or male (Weedon 2004:3) and in the African setting, they work together to oppress the former.

Notwithstanding the hindrance of patriarchy, there are examples from this present study which illustrate the self-determination theory in the lives of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners. One is that of Participant Chenai, who after failing to get financial assistance from Prison Fellowship, proceeded to ZACRO where she received help and was then able to open a beauty salon. This participant realized that she needed to take action in order to become financially independent.

The major strength of this theory is in its ability to encourage prisoners and ex-prisoners to take control of their own destinies. However, as was the case with the general definition of rehabilitation above, although the goal of being empowering, nurturing, and liberating is at the core of this theory, it falls short by failing to take into account gender-sensitivity and the context in which participants find themselves. As a consequence, the weakness of this theory is that it does not recognise the fact that many aspects of the prisoners and ex-prisoners' lives are beyond their control, for example their environment, culture, socio-

economic situation etc. In addition, the details of how the central functions of pastoral care (i.e., healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling) are to be achieved, are missing, in regard to the process of reintegrating them back into society.

The second strength of the theory of self-determination of need becomes clear when aligned to the Asset Based Community Development theory (ABCD), first articulated by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann in the early 1990s (Mathie and Cunningham 2003:475) which was discussed by Therese Mukamakuza (2009:5). Mukamakuza (2009:6) asserts that:

> The theory is a need-driven approach which focuses on the needs and deficiencies of the people. ABCD theory gives power to citizens to promote what is in their hands for their own interest.

Using the feminist pastoral care theory, the question that one may raise in connection with the self-determination theory of need is its applicability to Christian practice. Pamela Dickey Young (1990:25) refers to Schüssler Fiorenza's argument that in feminist theology, women's experiences become the central focus. It can then be assumed that, like feminist pastoral care, the theory of self-determination of need could contribute to a model which "supports and ensures the overcoming of women's oppression and foster women's… quest for self–affirmation and self-determination" Young (1990:25).

6.3.2. The "good lives" theory

According to Tony Ward and Shadd Maruna (2007:141), the "good lives" theory capitalizes on individuals' interests and preferences and focuses on equipping them with the capabilities they need to realize their goals in their context after release. Its aim is to promote their plans, while taking into account each individual's unique set of circumstances. This theory focuses not only on the risks or temptations to re-offend facing the participants in the outside world, but also on individuals' motivation to change. The "good lives" theory provides impetus for individuals to transform themselves by highlighting their unique life goals. For Ward and Maruna, rehabilitation as a practice has become focused on lowering risk and increasing community safety so that it is easy to overlook the rather basic truth - stressed in the "good lives"theory - that ex-prisoners want a better life, not simply the promise of a less harmful one.

Andrews and Bonta (2007:174), argue that in order to explain fully the likelihood that a person will perpetrate a crime it is essential to consider the wider political, economic, social and cultural contexts within which s/he lives. Yet, these conditions alone are insufficient to cause crime. Individual personal factors must also be present. The "good lives" theory emphasizes the need to look both at this broader context and at the individual's charater and situation in order to create opportunities for positive, rather than negative living.

From the perspective of the three theories that form the framework of this study, the "good lives" theory emphasizes the core feminist elements of empowering, nurturing and liberating, as well as the traditional transformational characteristic of rehabilitation. In addition, it takes into account the context or environment in which ex-prisoners find themselves. However, any programme that promotes the idea of a good life but which does not consider the impact of gender on women's "good life" plans, cannot be successful. As stated above, there are specific challenges that women experience which hinder them from experiencing a good life before and after imprisonment. Furthermore, as was the case with the previous theory (i.e., the self- determination theory of need), the aspect of pastoral care is lacking in the "good lives" theory. Despite the fact that the theory is a secular one and does not refer to the Christian faith, two of the features of pastoral care mentioned above, namely healing and sustaining, are fundamental to the process of rehabilitation, be it a faith-based or secular process, and hence their absence from this theory is problematic.

The participants in this study had their own dreams about a good life as illustrated first in the case of Participant Zadzai who stated that:

> I would like to improve my life goals in rehabilitation through a catering service, a salon and sewing. I had a catering service before and I cooked delicious food and as a result I had many customers.

Participant Revai also asserted that:

> I used to attend a prayer meeting for ex-prisoners on Fridays but since I started to work at my mother's pre-school, I stopped attending the meetings. I am working very hard to earn a good amount of money because I would like

to start my own business of selling fish and making peanut butter for sale.

Nevertheless, most of the female ex-prisoners testified that upon release they were prevented from returning to their jobs in the civil service or from receiving training for any other job within the government sector. Participants Tatenda, Kodzero, Chiedza, Zorodzo, Torai and Dudzai, who had passed their "O" level and Tatenda, who holds a tertiary degree in Marketing and Sales Management, were concerned about their prison records which would exclude them from employment in government sectors such as the prison service, nursing, police, air-force and teaching. As a result, their career goals are cut short, and the "good lives" theory would be difficult to apply in such circumstances.

The situation is even more difficult for non-government workers who are often under-skilled. Thus, as Sithembiso Magnus Ngubane (2007:33), such a situation contributes to the escalating rate of crime among the lower socio-economic groups who face unemployment and low income. With no or little income source, it is almost impossible for individuals to focus on goals or to be motivated to live "good lives." As seen in the table below, which compares ex-prisoners' employment pre- and post-incarceration, the "good lives" theory does not work for the female ex-prisoners of this study because the jobs that they are involved in are not well paid and moreover, many are not employed at all, which makes it difficult for them to reintegrate. The table indicates the previous employment and present occupation to illustrate the change that has taken place and why it would be difficult for these women to realize the "good life".

Table 4: Participants' previous and present employment

Participant	Previous	Present Occupation
Tatenda	Sewing clothes	A secretary and then a cook at Prison Fellowship; currently sewing uniforms for schools at a widows' project
Piwai	Domestic worker	Buys and sells goods
Shuvai	Illegal gold panning	Pre-school work
Farai	None	None
Chengeto	Domestic worker	Works at a drink bottling factory and cross-border trading
Simudzirai	Sold fake gold	None

Ratidzo	Marketing and business	Marketing
Zadzai	None	None
Rudo	Cross border trading selling	Selling doilies locally after passport expired
Dudzai	Illegal gold dealings	Cross-border trading, knits and sells jerseys
Batsirai	None	None
Chenai	Gang theft	Hair braiding, renting a beauty salon
Revai	Shop keeper	Self-employed selling fresh fish
Zorodzo	Selling airtime	None
Kundiso	None	None

Some activities that the released prisoners are engaged in remain dangerous. For example, those involved in cross-border trading face many risks. Women pay a lot of money in order to cross the border into neighbouring countries and may be injured in the process of illegal border jumping. If caught, they are imprisoned and deported, losing all their goods. If they are not caught, they live in poor accommodations and are vulnerable to all sorts of abuse. However it should be noted that not all cross-border-traders are illegal border jumpers.

Discussing the situation in terms of employment, Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:10) confirm that women in sub-Saharan Africa:

> [H]ave a long history of deprivation… [and] powerlessness, a result of patriarchy, colonialism and ongoing gender struggles. This is shown in their relative over-representation in poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and bad health, the scale of their child-care responsibilities, their lack of safety, and the prevalence of gender-based violence. As a result, when women commit crimes it is most often a result of continued deprivation and helplessness.

Therefore, according to Participant Ratidzo, a viable rehabilitation programme should offer female ex-prisoners some form of employment in order for them to live "good lives," as per the theory under discussion. Participant Ratidzo asserted:

Self-sufficiency is very important for female ex-prisoners not to integrate as

beggars but to contribute something to the families. Prison life make them live
with shame and stigma hence it is worthwhile that they integrate ndependently.

Rehabilitation needs to make sense to the clients themselves and to be clearly relevant to the opportunities available in their attempts at living a better life. In such a way, the individual can contribute to her or his family, community and society.

Cultural and social values define what is and what is not acceptable in a community in terms of behaviour. In order to fully reintegrate into that community, such values need to be adhered to by individuals undergoing rehabilitation. The next theory, the transformative theory of rehabilitation, seeks to address this issue.

6.3.3. Transformative theory

Mezirow reflects on a transformative theory of learning, arguing that attitudes, which he terms "habits of mind," play a fundamental role in shaping actions:

> Habits of mind are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes. These codes may be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological (1997:6).

Later in his study, Mezirow (1991:161) goes on to state that transformation involves both the development of more critical understanding of how one's social relationships and the culture in which one lives have shaped one's beliefs and feelings, as well as an empowered sense of self. Empowerment therefore needs to be part of the pre-release programmes to assist female prisoners with spiritual, psychological and social integration. This point is emphasized by Mangokwana (1996) and Williams (2003) who assert that the prisoner's rehabilitation should begin in prison and end in her/his respective community or society. Williams (2003) argues that rehabilitation has its end in the reintegration of the offenders into society as full law-abiding citizens, while in the opinion of Mongokwana (1996), the offender should be taught acceptable societal values and norms through the rehabilitation process. However, what these scholars do not spell out is how the spiritual, psychological and social integration with regard to transformative theory should practically take place.

Using the transformative theory for rehabilitation programmes for female prisoners and

ex-prisoners could be effective if they support these women to develop a critical perspective of themselves and their society. It would be particularly useful if this theory could help the female prisoners and ex-prisoners understand that some of the crimes that they commit are a result of the structure of their society and the belief systems promoted by their religion, which are undergirded by cultural values that promote gender bias. If they were aware of the role of these structures in leading them to commit some crimes, they would not live with the full weight of guilt for their actions which are largely founded on structural rather than personal sin. It is however also essential for the perpetrators to acknowledge that they have committed crime. This involves a process, moving from denial of any blame, to realisation of the enormity of what they have done, to seeking to mitigate the outcomes of their actions, to bargaining about the degree to which they are responsible for their actions, and finally to "accepting responsibility not just for the consequences of their actions, but also for their actions" (Robert Shaw 2010:8-9). Debora Nuzzolese (2010:38) suggests that such self-reflection leads to empowerment and "the strengthening [of] internal and interpersonal resources for the sake of more mature relationships".

Participant Chiedza illustrated critical thinking when she argued that:

> *Programmes should enforce women's rights. The government is to enforce women's rights. The women are to be given jobs and good positions in government sectors in spite of having been in prison.*

Chiedza's statement is crucial because, as noted previously, the Zimbabwean government does not employ ex-prisoners even when they have appropriate qualifications for the jobs. Therefore, Participant Chiedza is critiquing the structures of government and the practice of governance that perpetuates the suffering of ex-prisoners through the denial of good employment opportunities. Indeed, it has been observed during this research that while female ex-prisoners are absolutely excluded from government posts, male ex-prisoners are more readily employed.

In terms of a critique of the transformative theory of rehabilitation from the perspective of the three theories on which this study is based, several points can be made. First, once again, since it is not a faith-based theory, the spiritual aspect of rehabilitation is not covered by the transformative theory. Second, gender-sensitivity is not dealt with

specifically by this theory, but because it emphasizes critical thinking about the ex-prisoner's environment, the gender issue could be raised in the process of such thought. In addition, the goal of enabling ex-prisoners to transform themselves is empowering and liberating, as per feminist thinking. Third, the transformative theory also incorporates the aspect of the context (i.e., socio-political, cultural and economic) of the participant. Fourth, the theory enhances the transformation function of rehabilitation by encouraging the ex-prisoner to reflect on herself and her relations with others. Finally, pre-release programmes are used to assist prisoners to reintegrate into society upon release, a feature which also resonates with the suggested factors of rehabilitation as defined earlier.

The critical thinking of Participant Chiedza was not demonstrated by other ex-prisoners. For example, Participant Tatenda expressed the need for such critical thinking when being exploited by the church and Christian organizations. Participant Tatenda stated:

> *We were allowed to visit some churches while in prison. After release I got work here at Prison Fellowship. I was treated well when I came here. I was not very educated but they helped me and taught me some computers. I was given my office. I had more work than any receptionist; I did typing and recording of donations. It was a lot of work so I did not manage to further my education. They do not have enough money to help me, but spiritually, they are doing very well.*

What Participant Tatenda did not realize is that the process of self-transformation through working for a church organisation that is meant to prepare her for integration into society, was also in many ways misusing her. First, she was given too much work and therefore did not have time to further her education. Second, the labour that she was offering Prison Fellowship was not being paid for. As a result, she remained dependant and exploited. Third, although she did not elaborate on what she meant by claiming to be being helped spiritually, it appeared that she was made to feel that she is working for God, and that, having been in prison, she should be grateful for forgiveness and an opportunity to work even though she was not paid. She also mentioned that she was given poor accommodation. Tatenda was a survivor of sexual violence, but the rehabilitation programme that she was enrolled did not equip her to understand and process what she had gone through. In addition, it should be noted that if a non-liberative interpretation of the

Bible is employed by the church/FBO, this too can work against transformation, by emphasizing the sin committed without looking at the root causes of such sin. This reinforces feelings of guilt and shame and keeps prisoners and ex-prisoners from moving forward.

Participant Kundiso stated that:

> *These organizations should not keep on telling the employers that this person has been in prison, the employers will end up undermining ex- prisoners. The employers are to be helped so that they do not keep on thinking that these ex-prisoners will steal from us. The way prison has meant to me is change. The pain in prison has reformed me. Most of us, who come from prison, have totally changed, so to keep on being reminded of the past sin does us harm.*

Nevertheless, Tatenda also displayed elements of critical thinking, which if developed through a transformative rehabilitation programme that is gender sensitive, could allow her to be more analytical of her church/FBO experience. She was able to recognise that it was wrong when told that she would only be helped if she brought money to give as an offering. She was also aware that the help she was going to receive was only prayer to cope with the problem of being an ex-prisoner, and that her basic needs regarding proper rehabilitation were not taken into account at all. She desired a better life for herself and her child than the one she currently had, a goal toward which the transformation theory of needs could have made a contribution.

6.3.4. Deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime

The deterrence theory is based on the assumption that severe punishment and strict rules for prisoners will lessen their possible future criminal tendencies. In modern times, while this practice has been upheld in the US, European countries have tended to move away from it (McGuire 2002:118). However, Kibuka (2001:4) notes that "in a number of [African] countries, the public does not appear to tolerate any measures to deal with offenders and suspects, other than imprisonment as punishment."

Toughening a prisoner's life conditions is today rarely considered as a therapeutic technique in regard to a prisoner's rehabilitation and reintegration into society. As Muller

writes, the deterrence theory is more about punishment than transformation. He states:

> Punishment does little to deter in social contexts of economic despair, political hopelessness, or systemic violence. Most criminologists and sociologists agree that crime rates are more influenced by social and economic policies than by penal policies (2005:53).

This is apt, especially when considering the current political and economic context of Zimbabwe where the participants in this study live. While the socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe have been examined in some detail in chapter four, the political situation has not been a focal point in this study. This is for two reasons: first, none of the women concerned were political prisoners in the sense accepted by Amnesty International (Seymour 1979:99) of being imprisoned for expressing certain opinions deemed to be threatening to the ruling party; second, their daily lives as women are in any case moulded by religio-cultural factors and not directly by the government of the day.

In terms of a critique from the perspective of the three theories underpinning this study, the following points can be made with regard to the deterrence theory. Clearly, it includes neither the pastoral nor the spiritual aspect, nor the feminist emphasis on empowering, nurturing and liberating. It also does not take into account either the issue of gender, or the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts from which a prisoner comes and into which she will return. Finally, the factors of transformation and reintegration are excluded altogether from the deterrence theory, which focuses only on punishment.

The experience of Participant Chengeto echoed the problematic nature of the deterrence theory. She explained that she had been called a prostitute and a thief by prison guards, that she had been beaten and shouted at by them, and that she had been forced to do hard labour. She felt that none of these tactics contributed positively to her rehabilitation.

Similarly, Participant Ratidzo narrated that:

> *I was humiliated, especially coming from a well-known family. I was in the police cells before coming to prison. It was a dreadful experience in my life history. Beds were dirty and nasty, horrendous and crowded and it is where I got my first shock. A few days in the police cells, I was then taken to prison. Giving an analogy of what I went through in prison, is similar to animals*

taken from Africa to the West, where they are put in small enclosures or cages.
I think they should return them into wild life because they are wild animals
and God did not create them to live in small compartments. They are
depressed and unhappy. Such illustrates prison life. However, as a person I
knew that as each day passed I will be released soon. Animals when put in a
cage, do not know when they will be released, but are imprisoned for life.

Given this sense of deprivation and victimization, and in view of the outline provided in chapter one, it appears that the theoretical approach to the Zimbabwean prison system is based on the deterrence theory of rehabilitation, a model which was inherited from the period of colonial rule. Consequently, the legislative framework as well as the infrastructure remains significantly unaltered (Adae-Amoakoh 2012). However, as expressed by the above female prisoners and ex-prisoners, the harsh treatment inside and outside prison does not help them become better people. Using a feminist pastoral care approach, the emphasis is rather on caring for human beings irrespective of their crime. Stevenson Meossner (2005:9) states that:

> Pastoral care is meant to engender confidence and caring in the initiate, and to assuage the fear and anxiety that naturally occur when accompanying people in their journeys through their trials and suffering.

As a result, the deterrence theory has no merit at all in terms of the rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners from an approach underpinned by feminist pastoral care, feminist theological anthropology and African feminist cultural hermeneutics.

6.3.5. Social learning theory

The social learning theory uses learning mechanisms to undo the prisoners' former learning processes, allowing participants to discover new ways to suppress criminal conduct, and to absorb and practice new socially acceptable behaviours (Morris and Braukmann 1987). Programmes based on this theory are to be supervised by qualified staff and specialists who are able to develop a framework for understanding how social learning takes place, namely, through social forces and peer influence on the behaviour of an individual (Akers 1998). Prisoners are taught the following: how to relate to family members, employers and society at large in terms of interpersonal skills; how to cultivate

problem solving skills; how to control their emotions and anger and use negotiation rather than violence or confrontation; how to think critically about their behaviour and that of others; and how to embody humane values such as empathy. They focus on ways in which to develop themselves as individuals, rather than constantly resorting to "the habitual anti-social solutions that are used by many ex-prisoners" (Ross and Ross 1990). McGuire (2002:118) as well as Ross and Ross (1990) further assert that at present, these kinds of programmes that focus on changing offensive behaviour are the most widely used types of rehabilitation programmes in the Western world.

Participant Chiedza narrated and mirrored the thinking of the social learning theory, when she said: *I have learnt to share my problems. I used to bottle up my problems and ended up in crime. By sharing my problems, I get help from others.*

As noted above in the section dealing with the transformative theory of rehabilitation, Participant Chiedza had been in prison because she wanted to commit suicide together with her baby. Unfortunately her baby died and she survived. She was later imprisoned for twelve years. The problem that led her to her attempted suicide and the murder of her baby was a failed relationship due to her rejection by her mother-in-law because she is disabled. She felt rejected by society also, but did not have access to pastoral care to help her see herself as created in God's image and worthy of fullness of life despite her disability.

In examining the social learning theory from an understanding or definition of rehabilitation based on the three theories on which this study is built, two main features highlighted by the theory are noted. First, the way in which the theory encourages transformation of those aspects of the offender's make-up that could lead to recidivism, and second, how it works for the reintegration of the offender. In particular, the social learning theory addresses problems in social interaction and the management of negative situations through negotiation rather than through violence. However, other features highlighted by the definition of rehabilitation, namely the pastoral care aspect, the issue of gender-sensitivity, and the particular challenges of the environment or context of the prisoner, are not dealt with by this theory.

The social learning theory is also reflected in the response of Torai who was convicted of trespassing and theft. Participant Torai asserted that:

First I want to have God in my heart. Second when I leave prison, I would like someone from Prison Fellowship to escort me home in order to assist with the mending of broken relationship with my angry family because of the crime I committed. Third, I would need financial assistance to start a business of selling. At home I would need a counsellor to assist me with reintegration into society.

While economic independence clearly constitutes a vital part of the women's perception of what it is to be rehabilitated, in the case of the social learning theory the focus is rather on developing healthy inter-personal relations and coping mechanisms in situations of stress. Accordingly, the social learning theory would be effective in the rehabilitation programmes of female prisoners and ex-prisoners, as while its interventions are not very expensive to implement, they effectively encourage transformation, reconciliation and empowerment (Hollin 2013:67). Learning positive interpersonal behaviour can begin while the prison sentence is still underway, if the prison staff can interact positively with the prisoners, as the next theory shows.

6.3.6. The "healthy institutional environments" theory

The "healthy institutional environments theory" emphasizes relationships between inmates and prison staff, who become like patient and nurse in a therapeutic context. The assumption of the theory is that a healthy and participatory engagement between prisoners and prison employees will bring about greater psychological balance in the former and will reduce their anti-social behaviour, both during the individual's stay in the custodial institution and after release. In such environments, the rigid controls and punishment-based systems are not part of the institutional ethos (MacGuire 2002:119). For example, regular meetings are held to discuss problems, and participating staff have appropriate training in counselling, etc. This kind of programme emphasizing healthy institutions has been used in Western countries with convicted drug addicts and violent offenders serving long sentences (MacGuire 2002:119). It is the opposite of the deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime, which was examined above.

Participant Rudo is an example of a prisoner who supports the "healthy institutional environments" theory. This is what Participant Rudo had to say about her experience in

prison:

> *Female prisoners were friendly to officers. We used to laugh and I heard that*
> *male prisoners are not all that close to officers. I heard that they are treated*
> *roughly. Some of them are very stubborn. They end up saying officers are*
> *rough while the problems lie with themselves. Female prisoners are treated*
> *differently from males.*

Participant Kundiso also experienced participatory engagement with the prison staff. Her experience when she was sick was positive. She said:

> *Look at my face; it's different from the way it used to be. When you called me*
> *for an interview, I was talking to the prison nurse who also noticed from my*
> *face that I am thinking too much. I had a slight stroke and most of the time I*
> *am sleeping. The nurse advised me to see the doctor tomorrow.*

The definition of rehabilitation from the viewpoint of the three theories of feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and feminist pastoral care, fits well with the healthy institutional environments theory, although not all of its features are covered by the theory. The traditional tasks of pastoral care (i.e., healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling) are not covered from a Christian perspective, but psychological support and counselling are provided under this theory. As per the recommendations of a feminist perspective, the theory encourages nurturing by treating participants with respect and by promoting their well-being. However, there is no specific provision of the tennets of empowerment or liberation, and a gender-specific approach is lacking, as is a focus on the precise nature of the context of the prisoners. Through the process of psychological healing, the transformative role of rehabilitation is met, but the reintegration aspect is only served in so far as helping prisoners to feel more positively about themselves and in relation to others.

Participants Rudo and Kundiso had positive experiences of prison life because they had skills which they used to raise funds for the prison establishment. Rudo made doilies which the prison management displayed at shows and sold to earn income for the prison. As a reward, she was treated well by the guards. Kundiso reared chickens and sold eggs to raise funds. Participants Chiedza and Tatenda were also engaged in making uniforms for

prisoners and officers. They too had positive stories to share. This was not the case with the women who did not have skills to exchange for good treatment.

6.3.7. Strengths and weaknesses of the existing theories of rehabilitation

The strengths and weaknesses of the above rehabilitation theories have been identified as follows: the self-determination theory of need places its emphasis on the notion that every human being has the capacity to control her/himself in order to fit in with what society has constructed as the norm. According to the self-determination theory of need, every rehabilitation programme needs to capitalize on this human characteristic and to empower prisoners to create their own destinies. However, the weakness of this theory is its failure to take into account the challenges inherent in the outside environment, which to a large degree dictates the actions of people. As a result, female prisoners and ex-prisoners who are bound by patriarchal restrictions and expectations, cannot benefit comprehensively from the self-determination theory of need approach, since it is very difficult for them to "rise above their circumstances."

The "good lives" theory of rehabilitation on the other hand, does take the broader context into account by trying to engage in the risk factors that may lead to recidivism, such as exposure to criminal elements. In addition, a particular strength of this theory is that it encourages prisoners to focus on their personal goals and talents. The limitation of this theory however is that the female prisoners and ex-prisoners can only focus on their personal goals and talents within the political, economic and social structures of their environment which, as stated above, are constructed by patriarchy that has shaped both their religion and the society.

The transformative theory also highlights the empowerment of prisoners as well as their socio-cultural contexts. The strength of this theory is that it encourages prisoners and ex-prisoners to reflect critically on their crimes and on the society within which they committed these crimes, as well as to develop a self-understanding of what drove them to become criminals. Critical thinking makes a person who is or has been in prison see beyond the immediate circumstances which led them into prison and also reflect on the structural limitations that are put before them.

The weakest theory is the deterrence theory, which highlights harsh punishment as a prevention against committing further crimes for fear of the consequences. This theory fails altogether to deal with the root causes of criminal behaviour. Therefore it is not recommended for a rehabilitation programme for female prisoners and ex-prisoners

The social learning theory emphasizes the need for appropriate social behaviour by teaching prisoners interpersonal skills, anger management, etc. Its strength is that it deals thoroughly with the psychological aspects of criminal behaviour, but its weakness lies in its failure to take into account the environment in which crime is committed and the practical problems faced by those prisoners and potential criminals, such as violent homes, unemployment etc. It is unfortunate that the social learning theory has been misappropriated in practice in some Zimbabwean prisons, given that kindness and care were shown only when financial gain was possible by using the prisoners' skills.

Having discussed the theories and analysed them from a gendered perspective, in conjunction with the experiences of the participants of the study, those elements or features which appear to be most useful in the rehabilitation process are drawn out and moulded into a coherent approach, again as understood from a position based on the three theories underpinning this study.

6.4. Six features of an African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation

An African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation which is based on giving life to female prisoners and ex-prisoners is drawn from their experiences as reflected in their voices from chapter four onwards of this present study. What then were the women saying and what does this tell us about their rehabilitation needs?   Given that the four main emotions the female prisoners and ex-prisoners experienced concerning themselves were fear, shame, inadequacy leading to pain, and a sense of being unworthy (or worthy) of forgiveness, this has implications for their rehabilitation needs. It therefore becomes clear that an essential feature for a rehabilitation programme for female prisoners and ex-prisoners, which is based on feminist pastoral care, is the empowerment and nurturing of women to a position of self-confidence and self-worth.

The female prisoners and ex-prisoners' perceptions of society are also indicative of their

rehabilitation needs. They see the need to address society's fear of them; their need for forgiveness by society; the support systems available from society; and the provision of healing, care and love by various segments of society (e.g., prison officers, family members, the church and FBOs, their community, and other prisoners). Two fundamental threads emerge from this as regards their rehabilitation. First, as social beings the women need to be incorporated back into their communities, dealing with the fear and alienation of society toward them. Second, they need to be supported and shown love by their communities. This means that society at large and those specific segments of society mentioned above, need to be involved in the rehabilitation process.

There is a significant contrast between the negative self-perceptions of prisoners and ex-prisoners and their relationships with God. Most of them did not blame God for what had happened to them but looked up to God for their healing and restoration back into society. This is because they saw first, a God who is always with them in their problems; second, a God who stands by them even when society does not; third, a God who forgives their mistakes; and fourth, a God who provides for them. This is an indication that the women's faith in God can enable their experience of self and society to be transformed, acting as a springboard from which to launch the process of rehabilitation.

In addition to drawing from the prisoners and ex-prisoners' perceptions, the study has shown the importance of an examination of the socio-cultural context in which they live. This context in general is highly gendered, as indicated in chapter four, including in the aspects of daily life such as employment, education, health, access to resources, marriage and children. Thus the realities of life of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners need to be taken into account when designing and implementing rehabilitation programmes. First, the empowerment of the women through education and training must be undertaken to enable them to be economically self-sufficient. Second, the form taken by this empowerment must be appropriate to their context and must be realistic in its methods and goals. Finally, through developing an understanding of the structural nature of the patriarchal injustice that pervades their context, the participants need to be enabled to critically reflect on how they became involved in crime in view of that broader context.

The study has shown the need to also draw from the strengths of current rehabilitation theories, when designing a rehabilitation programme for female prisoners and ex-prisoners

in Zimbabwe.

In view of the above, I offer six features of a suggested African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation as follows:

i. The need for self-empowerment of prisoners, including financial self-sustainability, by using community resources (which builds on the African culture of communality), as well as those of the criminal justice system, and in particular by providing education and training. As Participant Turai reported*: I think there should be projects of keeping chickens and sewing, as we have in prison. Others can be sent on courses about farming…growing flowers…and providing cleaning services*. Meanwhile, Participant Kodzero stated: *I think of projects such as sewing, plaiting or even gardening. I can earn a living doing these things*. The assertion of the two participants is supported by Oduyoye (2001:16) who argues that feminist pastoral care seeks liberation of the entire community and promotes gender justice in the socio-economic and political spheres.

ii. The need to consider the environment or context in which prisoners will find themselves upon release. Given that the women will face numerous obstacles in regard to employment, education, access to resources, health, and family life, these issues must be addressed in any rehabilitation attempts. Regardless of the nature of an individual's positive feelings toward themselves or society and vice versa, these realities will remain. For example, Participant Chenai contended that: *I went up to grade seven. Since I did not go further with education that led me into many problems until imprisonment.* Through the assertion of Participant Chenai, I see her need to be assisted through empowerment.

According to Emmanuel Lartey (1997:41), empowerment as such adopts educational and dialogical methods in facilitating the participant to achieve her goals. Empowering in this sense can be seen as a communal affair that includes people working together in order to restore the community spirit. Further, Lartey (1997:41) defines empowerment as:

the processes of re-valuing self and personal characteristics together with finding and using valuable resources outside oneself in such a way as to enable and to motivate persons and groups to think and act in ways that will result in greater freedom and participation in the life of the societies of which they are a part.

iii. The requirement to incorporate benefits of critical reflection by the prisoners on themselves and the crimes they have committed, which aids in achieving restorative justice, thereby bringing the victims on board in the rehabilitation process. This allows the perpetrator to acknowledge the full extent of their crime and its effects, decreasing the likelihood of recidivism. Participant Oga said: *The [rehabilitation] programme shall take into account talking to our families on our behalf so that they forgive us any wrongs we have done to them. This is important as it allows us to be accepted by our families.*

iv. The importance of learning about the psychological factors that can drive ex-prisoners back into criminal behaviour, such as extreme anger and the failure to manage it, as well the need for psychological and emotional support and healing in order to both overcome stigmatisation from their families and society at large, and to regain their self-esteem. As Participant Chiedza stated: *I have learnt to share my problems. I used to bottle up my problems and ended up in crime. By sharing my problems, I get help from others such as counselling.*

v. The fundamental need to address issue of gender-sensitivity, g i v e n the systemic nature of patriarchal practice, particularly in Africa, which makes this point all the more pertinent. Gender-senstivity is essential in view of the following: first, the objective, socio-economic reality in which the effects of patriarchy (through its construction of women's identity) are experienced by women in Zimbabwe generally, (as has been explored in chapter four); and second, the subjective, psychological reality, in which the results of patriarchy are manifest in the perceptions of the present study's female prisoners and ex-prisoners of themselves and of society, (as has been explored in chapter five). Together, this objective and subjective reality produce a picture of a highly gendered environment that needs to be taken into account throughout the

rehabilitation process.

The women themselves are indeed calling for a reconstruction of Zimbabwean masculinities, and were at times critical of the lack of mutuality between men and women. Participant Turai stated that: *[My husband] was going to work and I remained at home, we lacked food in the house when he got money, he did what he wanted with it. Sometimes he took all the money and I had no voice over it.* Participant Turai was here critiquing Zimbabwean masculinity and its patriarchal approach to women. The women were also adamant that they wanted to be able to stand independently of men, without being regarded as outcasts for so doing. Participant Sarudzai asserted that: *I have learnt that women should work for themselves and not be too reliant on their husbands. This is often leads to temptations such as stealing because you will not be getting enough financial support from the husband subsequently leading to imprisonment.*

Although women prisoners and ex-prisoners reached out to each other in mutual care, this was not undertaken from a liberative position. Therefore, within the field of rehabilitation, it will be through a critical recognition of their gendered environment and its accompanying systemic injustices, that woman will be truly empowered to find creative ways to subvert the system to be in solidarity with one another.

vi. The need for a spiritual dimension - given that the study seeks a feminist *pastoral* care approach to rehabilitation. In addition, since FBOs (as opposed to governmental and non-governmental ogranisations), particularly in the African context, play a central role in assisting prisoners and ex-prisoners, I argue here that this aspect needs to be highlighted. It is noteworthy that in chapter five, the positive and empowering perceptions of God of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners were revealed and these present an opportunity for healing in the rehabilitation process. Thus, Participant Rudo requested: *Churches are to give counselling sessions to female prisoners and should initiate a programme of visiting female prisoners especially those without visitors.* Participant Piwai noted that her depression lifted when the pastor came to offer words of

encouragement. Participant Rudo added that: *Churches are to be taught on how to receive and counsel female ex-prisoners. Ignoring them does not help. Crime will continue if nothing is done for female-ex-prisoners. Our children need to go to school and we need help in this regard from the church.*

At the heart of the work conducted by churches and FBO are biblical teachings. In chapter four, the study indicated how religion can reinforce stigma, shame and injustice. A rehabilitation programme must therefore explicity focus on incorporating life-giving pastoral care, based on the ministry model of Jesus. According to John 8:3-11 (New Revised Standard Version):

> The scribes and the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery… Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say? … Jesus said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." When they heard this, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. … Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one Lord". And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

Such an approach to pastoral care gives a second chance to women who have often been the victims of structural sin rather than simply personal sins. Through feminist pastoral care, women are taught to re-read the Bible to reconstruct their identity in God's image (Rakoczy 2004:42-43), and to empower themselves so that they can confront, or at least identify, the structural injustices which have contributed to their involvement in crime.

In the next section, the six features outlined above are employed to critique current rehabilitation efforts in Zimbabwe. Given that prisons in South Africa successfully implemented numerous rehabilitation programmes which Zimbabwe could emulate, and given that a number of Zimbabweans are imprisoned in South Africa, some of the main programmes being run in South Africa will first be discussed.

6.5. Strategies of rehabilitation of prisoners in South Africa

While South Africa is well known for having a high level of crime and recidivism, there

are a considerable number of rehabilitation programmes taking place throughout the country. In her Masters dissertation, Fikile Gumada (2001:10) states that offender rehabilitation in South Africa has been managed and facilitated by the Department of Correctional Services. Gumanda reflects on the White Paper of the Department of Correctional Services (1994) which stipulates that "…offenders are responsible for their own behaviour change, and that they have the potential to live as law abiding citizens" (2001:9). In 1994, the National Crime Prevention Strategy highlighted the role played by the Department of Correctional Services in rehabilitating offenders as a way of preventing recidivism (Gumanda 2001:28). South Africa's prison system demonstrated a change in policy from as early as the 1970s in the development of a rehabilitative approach. According to Coetzee et al. (1995:41), the rehabilitation programmes that were offered from this time encompassed aspects of psychology, education, social welfare and religious instruction. A radical change occurred from the earlier emphasis on deterrence and retribution to a focus on the development of the prisoner as a law-abiding citizen.

The current post-apartheid era in South Africa gave rise to new laws that have influenced the development of offender rehabilitation. This is in line with the transformed socio-political ethos and policies supporting human rights. This approach emphasizes the helpfulness of undertaking a needs assessment of a prisoner in order to determine in what programme the offender should be involved (Dissel 2008:162). Dissel (2008:162) further asserts that in 2005 the South African Correctional Service ushered in an expansive set of rehabilitiation objectives, as set out in the White Paper on Rehabilitation in South Africa. The document outlines a twenty-year vision in which rehabilitation forms the basis of all activities in the Department of Correctional Services. The White Paper prioritizes the goal of the Department of Correctional Services as being to correct offending behaviour in a secure, safe and humane environment in order to facilitate the achievement of rehabilitation and avoidance of repeat offending.

Sandra Hoffman (2005:7-8), a South African psychologist, argues that crime and recidivism are higher in repressive social contexts, while more open and just societies embrace notions of empowerment and these are helpful to sustainable rehabilitation. In South Africa however, while the apartheid system has been dismantled, economic repression and oppression continue to exist in the form of high poverty levels.

In the South African context, as elsewhere, rehabilitative measures often label prisoners and become invasive of their personal lives since they are examined at each turn (Williams 2003; Benda 2003). Labelling leads to objectifying prisoners and ex-prisoners (Kellerman 1999; Pistorius 2002). In this process, the ex-prisoner loses human value (Buber 1958; Scheff 1997). Frequently, marginalized ex-prisoners and prisoners have no place in which to discuss or live out their own personal, unique needs and feelings, so that negative emotions of disempowerment and rage, as well as violent behaviour, become commonplace. True humanity, based on mutual respect and trust, is reduced.

There are however a number of organizations in South African that are working with prisoners and ex-prisoners to try and counter this situation. It is noteworthy that three out of the five major organizations working in the field in South Africa, are faith-based or faith-driven organizations.

6.5.1. National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO) programmes assist pre-release offenders with the development of a variety of life-skills, building and improving relationships and developing potential and motivation for action. The programme runs for a period of three to six months in prison and thereafter is extended to post-release offenders for a period of nine months. Ex-offenders are provided with continuing support as they strive to reintegrate into their families and communities (Sarkin 2008:75).

NICRO encourages participants to take responsibility for those factors that led them to engage in crime. An evaluation, consisting of interviews and surveys with released prisoners, their families and service providers found, that the programme was effective in addressing three key factors reducing the risk of recidivism: improved personal empowerment, increased ability to deal with the experience of stigmatisation and, to a lesser extent, improved economic empowerment (Sarkin 2008:75).

The NICRO programme thus incorporates a number of the features of the proposed feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation. First, feature (iv) is embraced by the programme in that the psychological need for healing and de-stigmatisation are

highlighted, as is the need for improved interpersonal skills, especially through contact with families. Second, by providing some skills training, feature (i) is met via this programme, because prisoners are empowered and their potential to succeed is enhanced. Third, by taking into account that the environment into which prisoners will return may be conducive to recidivism, the programme's extension beyond the prison sentence itself is effective in meeting the requirements of feature (ii). In these regards, the voice of Participant Batsirai stated that:

> *The project of rehabilitation shall help me reconcile with my husband and his parents. I want the broken relationship mended. I need assistance through counselling so that I may be able to accept my predicament. The programme shall enhance teaching society about receiving ex-prisoners because they stigmatise them. We have sinned but receive us.*

Similarly, Participant Farai asserted that:

> *I was mentally ill and killed my aunt's child. I was really not myself, I was only told about how the crime happened. The programme shall employ counselling, prayer and church so that the evil spirits which influenced my crime may not return.*

6.5.2. The Khulisa programme

The Khulisa programme, which works with youth, offers a four-part programme aimed at improving offenders' self–image, accountability for their actions and leadership skills, as well as providing them with training and work opportunities following their release from prison. A significant dimension of the Khulisa programme is its facilitation by mentors who are either current or former offenders. Importantly, these facilitators have an insider's understanding of the challenges which face young offenders and the programme reports high success rates (Sarkin 2008:75). In terms of the six features outlined previously, the Khulisa programme is noteworthy in that it encourages prisoners to take responsibility for what they have done. This links to feature (iii), which emphasizes the need for critical reflection by prisoners of themselves. This in turn also assists in improving their self-image which forms part of psychological healing, as stressed by feature (iv). In addition,

by providing skills training and work opportunities, feature (i) is acknowledged in this programme, since the empowerment of prisoners is facilitated.

With regard to the skills and empowerment, Participant Rudo returned to prison after her release to visit her two friends who were still serving their sentences. She went to encourage them and support them. She narrated that:

> I have been to prison since release. I bought some slippers for these friends. Even now whenever I get money, I will visit them again. I thank God for the little I have so that He will increase. God is blessing me. I was given wool to knit clothes. As way of improving our skills, someone with a shop has decided to visit women in my area to teach us making polish using candles. I believe God has used this person. I have faith that I will get a donor. I propose that ex-prisoners empower each other through setting up clubs where we teach each other sewing and cooking.

6.5.3. Prison Fellowship South Africa

Another programme of importance in South Africa is Prison Fellowship South Africa (PFSA), a faith-based interdenominational prison ministry, which is a subsidiary of Prison Fellowship International. Volunteers for PFSA, who are given training, work in many prisons around the country under the leadership of Provincial Coordinators. PFSA designs needs-based programmes to guide the work of volunteers in prison and in the community. The vision of Prison Fellowship South Africa is to be a reconciling community of restoration for all, through rehabilitating offenders and through the delivery of needs-based services to them, thereby aiding their reintegration back into the community. According to the PFSA website, this is done in particular by the proclamation and demonstration of *ubuntu* (i.e., the African philosophy that highlights the integrated relationship of all humanity), and the love of God (Prison Fellowship South Africa 1994).

Prison Fellowship South Africa thus fulfils several of the features defined as useful in the proposed approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care perspective. For example, being needs-based, it takes the environment and context of prisoners into account when delivering services to them (feature (ii)). It also emphasizes the requirement of the

involvement of the church in rehabilitating prisoners, which can have a far-reaching impact since on the one hand, a large percentage of prisoners are religious and on the other hand, faith based organizations often have access to many resources, both human and material (feature (vi).

6.5.4. Phoenix Zululand: a restorative justice programme

According to Z. C. Zondi (2009:1), the Phoenix-Zululand programme is a non-governmental restorative justice organization that works in correctional centres in the Zululand area of the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Gifford (2003:10) asserts that programmes focussing on restorative justice seem to be more effective than long-term prison sentences. Gifford (2003:7) further contends that longer sentences result in more overcrowded prisons and less capacity for rehabilitation. According to the White Paper on Corrections (2004:40), families, victims, offenders and communities members all play an active role in restorative justice:

> It holds offenders directly accountable to the victims and communities they have harmed. In broad terms, offenders apologise and ask for forgiveness from the harmed and traumatised victims (White Paper 2004:40).

The Phoenix offender programme prepares ex-prisoners to return to their families, communities and societies and finds ways for them to become economically self-sustaining. It extends its support to those who are affected by imprisonment indirectly, for example, when a father is in prison and neglects the family because of his imprisonment.

The Phoenix Zululand programme also trains people from faith communities, the educational sector, the business community and other professionals in Offender Victim Mediation. In addition, ex-prisoners undergo training and sometimes are called to facilitate programmes for "Youth at Risk" (Zondi 2009:6). Other programmes include the module "Starting with Us", which is a life-skills project that runs for two to three months and focuses on promoting self-esteem and conflict resolution. Another programme is "Groundswell," a project dealing with environmental learning aimed at awakening inherited knowledge of trees and plants and their value in society. A further programme is "Voice beyond Walls," in which the inmates tell their stories to the outside world in the form of plays or dramas. The project has produced many radio dramas and other

programmes for community radio stations. "Conversations in Families" is an additional programme that requires participants to focus on their responsibility towards their families, including deciding on how they will need support from their families upon release. This project is integrated with "Family Conferencing," which involves meetings between families and prisoners. The "Pre-release Programme" which prepares offenders for release is also worth noting. Finally, the "Art Project" includes music training offered by peer facilitators, some of whom are employed full-time after release (Zondi 2009:7).

It is clear that Project Phoenix includes most of the six features mentioned above. Restorative justice, which is the central feature of the project, means that prisoners are called to account for their actions and to reflect deeply on what they have done and on how it has hurt both their immediate victims and their indirect victims (i.e., their family and community at large). Restorative justice is thus representative of feature (iii). The project further takes into account the need to consider the environment into which the prisoner will live once released and the challenges that each inmate will face, thus covering feature (ii). In addition, Project Phoenix highlights both the requirement of emotional healing through allowing prisoners to tell their stories, as well as the need for improved anger and conflict management, which are stressed by feature (iv). By making extensive use of members of the community (including business-people, educationalists and other professionals), to train and empower ex-prisoners, the points made under feature (i) are also included in the project. Finally, feature (vi) is covered in Project Phoenix since use is made of the church and other FBOs in rehabilitating participants.

Participant Manheru asserted that she wanted a programme to enhance conflict resolution:

> *I used to be angry and would just take a knife and do anything but now I am transformed through the church. I am not educated. I wish I was educated. I left school at grade five. The programmes shall include education.*

Participant Shuvai also narrated how her pastor assisted her to come to terms with what she had done and the consequences thereof and how he also spoke to the congregation on her behalf. In addition, her pastor requested the congregation for assistance in terms of finding employment.

6.5.5. Kairos Prison Ministry

The Kairos Prison Ministry is an FBO in which the present researcher had the opportunity to participate as a volunteer for a brief period of time. Kairos Prison Ministry has been running successfully in many countries for more than thirty years. This Ministry asserts that participating prisoners have a low rate of recidivism upon release. Kairos Prison Ministry trains volunteers to enter into and evangelize in prison. Twice a year intensive Christian evangelization is provided to forty-two prisoners. The people in the Kairos team serve the prisoners meals, which are obtained through donations from the wider community, whilst ministering to them over a whole week-end. As they describe on their website:

> The weekend is followed by monthly reunion meetings to encourage participants to support each other by participating in weekly share and prayer groups (Kairos Prison Ministry: n.d).

The Kairos Prison Ministry thus focuses on feature (vi) in that it emphasizes the role of the church in rehabilitating prisoners, but feature (iv) is also covered because through Christian evangelization and prayer, inmates are assisted to heal and regain their self-esteem.

Participant Revai expressed a desire for such ministry when she asserted that: *The church is to visit female ex-prisoners in our communities, pray with us and conduct church services.*

6.6. Current rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe

The current socio-political situation, combined with the steady rise in incarceration rates in Zimbabwe have severely reduced the effectiveness of the rehabilitation process in that country, since only limited staff and resources are available. Linked to this, overcrowding also impinges on the basic human rights of offenders, not only in reducing their personal space and privacy, but also in restricting opportunities for physical and mental inspiration (Sarkin 2008:73). Nevertheless, a number of initiatives exist in the country, which are dealing with issues of both overcrowding and rehabilitation.

According to the Zimbabwean Commissioner of Prisons, seventy percent of convicted

prisoners are engaged in rehabilitation activities which include literacy classes/education, skills training, church services and counselling (Dissel 2008:164). The Commissioner listed only two civil society organization (i.e. non-faith-based) that were providing prison-related services to prisoners, (these will be discussed later in this section), the rest were all faith-based (Commissioner of Prisons 2005).

6.6.1. Community service

In its quest to overcome the problem of overcrowding, the Zimbabwe Prison Service has emulated the ideal reinforced by the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution of 27 July 2006 which asserts that the "providing of effective alternatives to imprisonment policy and practice is a viable long-term solution to prison overcrowding" (Garwe 1998). As a result, the Zimbabwean Prison Service introduced a programme of community service from the early 1990s, overseen by the Zimbabwe National Committee on Community Service. In response to a survey which revealed that sixty percent of prison inmates were serving sentences of six months or less, the Ministry of Justice initiated the community service schemes as an alternative to imprisonment (Garwe 1998). This programme has kept thousands of individuals, especially young and vulnerable people, out of prison and has also saved the State a great deal of expenditure. The non-governmental organization (NGO), Penal Reform International which has worked with civil society organizations and criminal justice agencies in central, east and southern Africa, has partnered with the Zimbabwe National Committee on Community Service "through the provision of information and educational material, training and advocacy work, as well as sharing expertise" (Penal Reform International 2012). The success of the Zimbabwean model of community service for prisoners has resulted in its extension to twelve other African countries (Garwe 1998).

In the 1990s, when this programme was developed, the socio-economic conditions were generally favourable, while the government still had the ability to assume control over the service. Other role players also came on board, namely the judiciary, the donor community and several non-governmental organizations. A National Committee on Community Service was formed in 1992, consisting of representatives from the police, the prisons department and the justice department. The daily management of the

programme was the responsibility of a National Coordinator and twelve Regional Assistants, all of whom were aided by other social agencies and institutions through which offenders would perform their community service. As a registered NGO, Penal Reform International raised funds for the scheme from international governments. The professional staff of the programme visited offenders for assessment and monitoring purposes, attended court proceedings, and oriented new community servers regarding their duties and responsibilities, and even involved the victim(s) and family, if required. From 1992 to 1997, the success rates of the scheme were impressive, as noted by the Minister of Justice and Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (Sarkin 2008:180-181).

In November 1997, delegates from fifteen African countries met in Zimbabwe for an international conference on community service, and in the following years Penal Reform International supported community service projects in numerous other African countries. Community service alleviates the overcrowding in prisons, while at the same time serving as a rehabilitation programme in that offenders are simultaneously brought back into their communities as useful citizens, and are providing these communities with some form of reparative work (Sarkin 2008:182).

In commenting on the community services programme in terms of the highlighted features of the suggested feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation, several points can be made. First, feature (i) is incorporated by empowering convicts through using community resources. Second, by involving participants in community-based work, they are being prepared for reintegration into society, thereby including feature (ii) in this programme. Third, the family and victim may be involved in readying the offender for the community service to be performed, thus the element of healing within feature (iv) is also covered.

At the time of the research, none of the participants in this study were involved in community service although some of them expressed a wish to be given this opportunity, for the reasons stated in the above features. The fact that none of the female prisoners in this sample became engaged in community service seems to be linked to their gender, since the researcher interacted with male prisoners who were doing community service both at Prison Fellowship and ZACRO.

Participant Revai stated that:

I propose that prisoners go for community service towards the end of their sentences in order to take care of their children who have stayed without their mother for long.

6.6.2. Open prisons rehabilitation programme

Open prisons are institutions with less restrictive systems, where the aim is to facilitate re-entry into the community (Dissel 2008:169). The literature reveals that open prisons are operating in Namibia, Mozambique and Mauritius. Zimbabwe also has an open prison at Connemara where the researcher worked for some time. The open prison is for male prisoners only. Its focus is on rehabilitation that is based on self-discipline and the development of a prisoner's sense of responsibility. Prisoners have the opportunity to learn and be engaged in different jobs, for example working on a farm and gaining skills in the cattle and pig breeding. These prison farms serve a dual purpose in providing much needed nutrition as well as activity outside of the prisoners' cells (Dissel 2008:169). According to Mondlane (2001:467-477):

> [M]ost inmates entered the open prison centre with no qualifications, but were released as skilled artisans in farming, plumbing, carpentry… [and mechanics]. Prisoners who behaved well and those who had served one-third of their sentences in closed prisons were sent to the open prisons.

Experiences in the forty open prisons that were operating in Mozambique by 2001, revealed that even with minimal supervision, escapes from these prisons are rare (ACHPR 1997). This is an indication that when prisons provide services that prisoners recognize as valuable and conditions are more comfortable, and when the system encourages substantial contact with families, prisoners are not only more willing to abide by prison rules and regulations, but are less likely to reoffend after release.

In terms of the features of the approach to rehabilitation according to a feminist pastoral care paradigm, the open prisons programme includes feature (i) in that it empowers participants to be involved in productive work. This will also prepare them for life beyond their sentences as they can use the skills they have gained in the contexts in which they will live upon release (i.e., in farming communities or communities engaged in small scale industry), hence feature (ii) is also catered for. In addition, feature (iv) is incorporated by encouraging self-discipline.

A simple reflection on the skills offered in open prisons reveals that these are male-oriented skills, which in turn indicates that they are targeted at male prisoners. The organizations working with female ex-prisoners have not yet implemented any such activities for them, and they rather focus on the prayers initiated by Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and on a few visitations to congregations with a handful of selected individuals. This is due to the fact that female prisoners' rehabilitation needs have not been prioritised because of a lack of trained personnel and resources as well as broader societal gender imbalances.

The participants in this study commented at length on this issue of open prisons. Their comments showed an internalized societal construction of women. Participant Chiedza is of the opinion that open prison is a good idea, but that generally women are seen as being not reliable, making it difficult to implement such programmes for female inmates. Meanwhile, Participant Ratidzo asserted that: *Open prison is possible but tricky because women become pregnant and then a new issue to deal with crops up.*

Participant Kodzero also was concerned that female prisoners might escape in an open prison system, asserting that:

> *Open prisons are not suitable for women because of what we are capable of doing given the least bit of freedom, if a person has been in prison for a very long time, they might be tempted to look for men, or escape.*

A female ex-prisoner, Participant Chenai, also narrated that:

> *Open prisons are not good for women because they are easily deceived. Some will end up pregnant and without anything to support that child. It is not good for women. They will end up committing crime.*

Participant Shuvai was also of the opinion that open prisons would lead to temptation and crime:

> *Open prison is not good for women prisoners. They will run away and prostitute. Women need support for their children as most of them are single parents so they are likely to prostitute themselves in an open prison.*

On the other hand, Participant Rudo was of the view that open prisons are positive for female ex-prisoners, because being in prison for many years leads to mental problems. Participant Farai was also in favour of open prisons. She voiced the opinion that: *Open prison is good because I can go freely without an officer behind me. I can go to the market place on my own and that makes me free.* Participant Simudzirai similarly stated that: *Open prison is good because it makes people free. It teaches female ex-prisoners to be responsible.*

Given the above voices of women on open prisons, it is clear that the female ex- prisoners in this study had mixed opinions about this programme, but they themselves have not had experience of this system and hence they could only speak as observers. These comments indicate the way that society's negative perceptions about women have been internalised by the participants.

6.6.3. Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe

Prison Fellowship International (PFI), founded in 1979, is an international NGO of the national body, Prison Fellowship (PF) which includes organizations from 117 countries. In each country, Prison Fellowship supports organizations working in prison chaplaincy and assisting the work of the church behind bars.

Its primary mission is to mobilize and aid the Christian community in its ministry to prisoners, ex-prisoners, victims, and their families, and to work for the advancement of restorative justice. Restorative justice is an approach which is taken at Prison Fellowship International Centre for Justice and Reconciliation. The Centre operates Restorative Justice Online and provides information and consultation to PF organizations, governments, the United Nations and other international bodies. PFI seeks to promote the principles and practices of restorative justice - an approach to justice focusing on healing broken relationships, repairing the damage done by crime and restoring the offender to a meaningful role in society.

PF thus links with feature (vi) of the suggested feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation, which highlights the role that churches can play in prisoner rehabilitation, as well as with feature (iv), which emphasizes the need for psychological healing by

involving families and victims. In addition, in order to be restorative, justice needs to take into account the full gravity of the misdeeds committed and hence this programme also includes feature (iii), which emphasizes the need for critical self-reflection by prisoners concerning their crime and its results. In this regard, Participant Torai asserted that she wished to have a Prison Fellowship worker to accompany her to her home, in order to facilitate the healing of broken family relationships.

Church–based volunteers from the national bodies of PFI provide support for the prisoners upon their release. Services offered include: mentoring, transitional accommodation (i.e., half-way houses), support to find work and purposeful activity, and for those who desire it, an introduction to a local church. While PF organizations assist ex-prisoners with practical challenges of re-entry into the community, they also operate intensive 'aftercare' programmes including residential support for parents. Ex-prisoners who are mothers bear the responsibility for their children's upbringing, and as former criminals, they need support in this task. Thus, for example, many national ministries operate camps, retreats, and a variety of year-round events and support services designed to keep the children of prisoners from becoming involved in crime themselves.

According to the information accessed on 25 March 2011 from the website of PF-Zimbabwe, in the context of the socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe, it is the prisoner and ex-prisoners who are particularly suffering. Prison Fellowship works with both inmates and ex-prisoners for their rehabilitation and integration into society. It falls under the umbrella of PFI, as discussed above. As its other national branches have done, PF-Zimbabwe assists ex-offenders, their families and communities through the entire process of reconciliation and healing. By providing counselling and support, feature (iv), which highlights the need for psychological support and healing, is covered in this programme. There are also a number of individual churches that visit prisoners as part of the PF programmes, and pray with them on Friday mornings.

As mentioned above, female ex-prisoners find it difficult to return home after release and assistance in returning to one's family eases this process; hence PF employees and even the director of PF-Zimbabwe sometimes accompany ex-prisoners on their journey home, as witnessed by the researcher. This aspect of the work of PF- Zimbabwe therefore incorporates feature (ii) since it takes into account the difficulties of returning to one's

home environment. As Participant Dudzai also narrated:

Prison Fellowship is very good for people, from when you are in prison and even after prison. They made me feel like I am not a prisoner. They gave me books for my children and even paid fees for my daughter.

As regards the women's voices, Participant Torai requested an escort from PF- Zimbabwe, to help her to restore her broken relationships with her family. Participant Oga also emphasized that Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe and ZACRO (the Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation) can be of great help in assisting the families of female ex-prisoners to forgive them for their wrongs and to accept them back into the family.

Participant Oga went further to note that:

Prison Fellowship assists with farming inputs, clothing, school fees and school stationary, and female ex-prisoners need assistance from PF and ZACRO to start projects that can financially support us upon release.

This links with feature (i) since participants in the PF-Zimbabwe programme are empowered to enable them to be self-sustaining.

Participant Revai also testified that:

Prison Fellowship gave me some clothes for my child and myself, as well as some gift boxes for my child. Prison Fellowship should begin new projects for us, such as selling of fish and making peanut butter.

However, some participants stated that they did not receive help from PF-Zimbabwe. Participant Chenai narrated her experience thus: *I went to Prison Fellowship after prison and they said there was no help they could offer me. I decided to come to ZACRO where I got helped.* Similarly, Participant Sarudzai claimed that:

I approached Prison Fellowship for assistance and asked them to talk to my family on my behalf but I was not assisted with anything, even bus fare so that is why I am saying those projects do not work. Prison Fellowship's halfway home does not help anyone.

Participant Chengeto added that:

Female ex-prisoners do not go to Prison Fellowship because they do not get the help they need and they feel it is a waste of time. ...The leadership at Prison Fellowship draws volunteers back from helping female ex-prisoners.

Participant Tatenda further added that:

Female ex-prisoners do not come to Prison Fellowship because they do not get what they want. Prison Fellowship is to include projects such as sewing, training in computers, breeding chickens, running a piggery and gardening.

The above voices reveal that PF-Zimbabwe appears to be failing to provide the services outlined under feature (i), since participants are given insufficient training or financial support to become empowered and self-sufficient.

In summarising the positive and negative aspects of the programme of the Zimbabwean version of Prison Fellowship as regards the features of the proposed approach to rehabilitation within a feminist pastoral care paradigm, it should be understood that the programmes were designed from a patriarchal, traditional religio-cultural perspective, prior to the more recent trends of prioritising gender issues. PF Zimbabwe is a church-based organisation, focussing mainly on restorative justice. Its strengths are as follows. First, the initiatives it takes to assist the offender return to society as a transformed individual, liaising with family of the offender, the victim and the church. Second, a further positive aspect is that means of psychological healing are offered to participants. Third, the programme takes into account the use of volunteers, since - like most programmes aimed at the rehabilitation of offenders - PF Zimbabwe is understaffed and under-resourced. A fourth strength is that the programmes target both prisoners and ex-prisoners. Fifth, Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe offers much needed material assistance to some of the ex-prisoners, which is of great relief to them. Finally, the provision of spiritual nurturing is a

strength of the PF Zimbabwe programme. The main weakness of PF Zimbabwe, besides not being gender-sensitive, is the lack of training and education that provides female ex-

prisoners with skills that will enable self-sufficiency because the help they render is for short periods only.

6.6.4. Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (ZACRO)

The vision[25] of ZACRO is: "a crime free society where everyone is secure and enjoys his or her rights." Meanwhile, the mission of ZACRO is "to prevent crime and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, in order to have peace in society while advocating for justice in prisons of Zimbabwe."

The aims of ZACRO are to facilitate the re-integration of prisoners in Zimbabwe back into mainstream society; to mobilise various communities to fight crime; to promote the rehabilitation of offenders and ex-prisoners; to provide humanitarian assistance and amenities to prisoners; to facilitate Zimbabwe to practice international and regional minimum standards of treating prisoners; and to study and seek penal reforms based on rehabilitative laws.

ZACRO therefore includes feature (ii) of the proposed approach to rehabilitation based on a feminist pastoral care paradigm, which takes into consideration the society into which prisoners will be released and tries to improve this context by fighting factors leading to criminal behaviour, as well as feature (iv) which emphasizes the need for a psychologically-positive prison environment where prisoners are treated humanely. Given the vision, mission, and aims of ZACRO, the participants of this study had a number of things to report regarding their interaction with the organisation.

Participant Chenai asserted that:

> *Through ZACRO I was assisted to start a salon. I was welcomed, given accommodation, and food. However I do not think that ZACRO is doing enough for female ex-prisoners.*

According to Participant Farai:

> *ZACRO is to assist female ex-prisoners with capital to start projects, for*

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[25] This is displayed on the organisation's notice board and was viewed by the present researcher on 22 June,

example the breeding of and selling of chickens. In prison, ZACRO's special focus was on children. They provided milk for children, soap, Vaseline, clothing, blankets and food.

These critiques by participants about the work of ZACRO indicate that feature (i) is lacking from its programmes since education, training and start-up funding are not provided to satisfactory levels. Participant Sarudzai was more positive and stated:

I have heard about ZACRO. It helps in prison, and donates sugar and peanut butter for our children. I heard about an ex-prisoner who is doing very well there after their assistance.

In summing up the strengths and weaknesses of the programme of Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender in regards to the features of the proposed approach to rehabilitation within a feminist pastoral care paradigm, again this programme is grounded on gender-insensitive, patriarchal perspectives. ZACRO broadly aims to reintegrate prisoners into society. It is a non-religious organization. Its strengths are: first, taking into account the environment of prisoners upon release; second, advocating on socio-cultural and economic root causes of crime which is also a concern of feminist pastoral care; third, providing psychological support to participants; and finally, rendering material assistance offered to female prisoners. The main weakness of ZACRO's programme is the lack of training in skills or any type of education for female ex-prisoners. The voices of the participants under study indicate their conclusion that ZACRO can do much more to meet their needs as indicated in its mission statement.

Having examined four South African and four Zimbabwean rehabilitation programmes, this section concludes by highlighting the problems of African prisons and their programmes of rehabilitation. John Reader (1997:63) contends that, "a lack of infrastructure, desperate overcrowding and inability to conduct any meaningful rehabilitation programmes are enduring themes which characterize imprisonment on the African continent during the post-colonial period." The problems related to infrastructure and resources are not the only ones facing prisons and their rehabilitation programmes in Africa, but also the entire focus and understanding of the purpose and manner of the

2010.

imprisonment of criminals. According to Kibuka (2001:4) "the punitive element characterised by imprisonment constitutes the dominant perspective of conservative African penal systems. Where emphasis on punishment is especially strong it serves to negate the goal of reintegration virtually in its entirety."

6.7. Chapter summary

This chapter began with a gendered analysis of theories of rehabilitation, while drawing on the experiences of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners in the analysis. The aim of this chapter was to identify the rehabilitation theories that are gendered and which can address the experiences of female prisoners and ex-prisoners. Six theories of rehabilitation were analysed: (i) the self-determination theory of needs; (ii) the "good lives" theory; (iii) the transformative theory; (iv) the deterrence theory and the hardening of the prison regime; (v) the social learning theory and, (vi) the "healthy institutional environments" theory.

Critical analysis was undertaken on the basis of a definition of rehabilitation from the perspective of the three theories underpinning this study: feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care. Thereafter the various strengths and weaknesses of the current theories of rehabilitation were put forward.

Following this, features of a new approach to rehabilitation aimed at African women was identified and labelled (i) to (vi). These features were then employed to analyse current rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe. South African examples were also referred to because they contribute to the aim of this present research study. The particular goal was to seek a more contextually effective approach by postulating what specific features of such an approach would be of most help to the women.

In the next chapter an alternative approach to designing such programmes is proposed with regard to the prison-related work conducted by religious organizations, particularly in the Zimbabwean context.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWARD AN AFRICAN FEMINIST PASTORAL CARE APPROACH TO AND PROGRAMME FOR THE REHABILITATION OF FEMALE EX-PRISONERS IN ZIMBABWE

7.0. Introduction

In chapter six, after discussing the various understandings of rehabilitation, a feminist pastoral care definition of rehabilitation from the African viewpoint was put forward. This was followed by a discussion of current rehabilitation theories from a gendered perspective, while drawing from the experiences of the female ex-prisoners of this study. From these theories, central features considered to be essential were identified, together with two additional features (that of gender sensitivity and that of the role of faith based organizations). These six features together make up a suggested approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care perspective that was then used to critique current rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe, drawing out their strengths and weaknesses.

In the present chapter, building on this critique of Zimbabwean programmes, and drawing also on examples from South Africa, the six features making up the proposed African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitating female ex-prisoners are once more applied, this time to a particular analysis of current programmes being run by faith-based organisations and churches. This is necessary because this study is targeted at the faith community and its role in pastoring to female prisoners and ex-prisoners. Thus, five main factors characterizing the current rehabilitation programmes of FBOs are identified and, employing the methodology of See-Judge-Act associated with liberation theology, a programme of rehabilitation based on the proposed African feminist pastoral care approach towards rehabilitation is finally presented.

In chapter four an objective view of the cultural and religious identity formation of women

in Zimbabwe (specifically Shona women) was presented and analysed from a gendered perspective by showing how this constructed identity impacts on their lived experience in terms of education, employment, access to resources, health and family. In chapter five, a subjective view of the perceptions of female ex-prisoners of self, society and God was given together with an analysis thereof, employing the feminist pastoral care theory, the feminist cultural hermeneutics theory and the feminist theological anthropology theory respectively. In designing an appropriate programme for the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in the Zimbabwean context, it is necessary to take into account both the women's objective and subjective realities, as laid out in chapters four and five.

This chapter will be concluded with signposts that suggest a way forward together with an outline of broader issues to be explored under an African feminist pastoral care approach.

7.1. A proposed African feminist pastoral care programme of rehabilitation for faith-based organizations

Building upon and drawing from chapter six, where secular and faith-based programmes for rehabilitation from South Africa and Zimbabwe were presented and analysed respectively, this section presents an outline of the proposed modules for an African feminist pastoral care programme of rehabilitation. As noted above, in designing these modules, both the objective experienced realities of the women at whom they are aimed, and their subjective perceptions are considered in order to maximise the effectiveness of the entire proposed programme. Crucially, the particular strengths and weaknesses of faith-based programmes currently operational in South Africa and Zimbabwe need to be drawn from. This is so that positive aspects thereof can be included in, missing aspects supplied to, and negative aspects eliminated from the rehabilitation programme for female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe which is to be proposed by this study.

7.1.1. Factors common to current rehabilitation programmes of faith-based organizations

In order to put forward suggestions for a new programme for FBOs (and others), the current programmes offered by such organizations, which were outlined in detail in the

previous chapter, are now evaluated. As seen from the descriptions of the various rehabilitation programmes in South Africa and Zimbabwe, many are run by religious organizations and these have tended to reveal the following elements as regards the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners: first, there is a lack of both gender-specific as well as environmentally-appropriate programmes; second, there is an emphasis on Christian evangelization; third, there is a practical support element, but only to a limited degree, for example by assisting with children's school fees etc.; fourth, pastoral counselling services feature strongly as regards the prisoner and her/his relationship with her/his family, and in bringing about restorative justice which heals both the perpetrator and victims (including indirect victims, such as the family); and fifth, the programmes are heavily reliant upon volunteers.

These five factors are now examined one by one, from the perspective of the suggested rehabilitation approach based on an African feminist pastoral care perspective, through applying to them features (i) to (vi) which were discussed in the previous chapter. First, there is the failure to provide gender-sensitive rehabilitation to women prisoners and ex-prisoners. This factor is of particular importance in this study since gender sensitivity forms the core of feminist pastoral care. Pattison (1997:242) argues that feminists are currently challenging the patriarchal oppression of women as reflected in the provision of traditional pastoral care in which the needs of women are ignored, in my context, the needs of female ex-prisoners. In the African setting, this lack of gender-sensitivity is particularly problematic, given the highly patriarchal nature of African society at all levels and in all spheres of life, as indicated from an objective and a subjective perspective respectively in chapters four and five. As a result, Rakoczy (2004:10) asserts that:

> Striking at the root of women's humanity and finding it totally deficient, patriarchy is an ideology, a way of thinking, feeling, organizing human life which legally, politically, socially and religiously enforces male dominance and power. Culture and religious bodies, including the Christian church, are all structured on this principle.

The suggested approach to rehabilitation combines feminist pastoral care with African women's theology and its responses to patriarchy to formulate an African feminist pastoral care perspective. As noted by Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:15), gender is a fine thread running through the female prisoners' and ex-prisoners' lives, from the moment

they commit a crime through to their incarceration, during the process of their rehabilitation, and once they return back to society. Despite the fact that most women in prison are single parents or grandparents and are breadwinners with the sole responsibility for maintaining their children and/or grandchildren, the services offered in prison will not help them to turn to productive activities. Instead, women in prison are offered menial and undervalued work activities, the very activities which failed to keep them from coming to prison in the first place. Furthermore, once in prison, women continue to provide cheap unpaid labour to the prison itself, all in the name of rehabilitation. The lack of proper gender-sensitive programmes for women in prison stems from a lack of knowledge and understanding of why women become involved in criminal activities.

The failure by faith-based rehabilitation programmes to consider the environment into which prisoners will return upon their release (also part of the first factor) means that the success of their programmes has had a very limited impact. Female ex-prisoners are disadvantaged due to the way they are treated by society, as both ex-prisoners and women. Women continue to experience systematic discrimination and lack of equal opportunity, both as contributors and recipients in spheres such as education, the legal system, the work place, healthcare, and the family environment. Feminist pastoral care recognizes that this situation needs to be addressed urgently, particularly in the African context, as African women are taught from childhood onwards that women are weak, that they need a man to be complete, and that they must always subjugate themselves to men, to the degree that women are afraid to trust themselves (Oduyoye, 2004:78-89, 1995:195; Njoroge 2001:74-75; and Phiri and Nadar 2005:82). By proposing an African feminist pastoral care paradigm of rehabilitation, this study is attempting to address this issue. It is here argued that the liberation of women is an on-going process whereby they can find and examine in their own lives the roots of oppression and by so doing can prepare to enter into and shape human society.

This first factor common to the work of many current faith-based programmes of rehabilitation concerns the lack of gender-sensitivity and the failure to take into account the environment and is linked to feature (v) of the suggested African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation. This feature highlights the need to emphasize gender specifically; in the case of the faith-based programmes, the issue of gender is also linked to

feature (ii), which looks at the context or environment from which prisoners come and into which they will be returned. Given the socio-economic and psychological challenges faced by women, especially in Africa, taking this factor of the broader context into account is essential in the successful rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners.

The second factor common in many current faith-based rehabilitation programmes is the stress placed on Christian evangelization, while limiting the practical support (e.g., finance, education, training etc.) given to female prisoners and ex-prisoners. By heavily focusing on the former, the latter tends to be neglected. As discussed previously, listening to women's own voices and comments about the rehabilitation programmes and about what they need is of paramount importance. It is essential to look at reality through the eyes of these women, to understand the position of the female ex-prisoners, and to heed what they say about their lives in order to help them make the necessary changes which will empower them for better opportunities (Pattison 1997:243). This is associated with feature (i), which deals with the need for the self-empowerment of prisoners, by making use of networks in order to access community resources as well as those of the criminal justice system, and in particular by providing education and training to enable the prisoners to become self-sustaining. As Modie-Moroka and Sossou (2001:16) can confirm:

> A shift from "home economics" oriented strategies to income- generating activities like skills training and job apprenticeship is an urgent need. …If women are taught survival skills they could access legal income opportunities more and use these to stay in the community in their own right and not in an emotionally or financially dependent relationship "with the father of my child."

The third factor - namely the limited practical support given to prisoners and ex-prisoners - only partially fulfils the requirements of feature (i), because, generally, faith-based rehabilitation programmes tend to emphasize Christian evangelisation at the expense of concrete action such as providing training, financial help, etc. In the context of faith based rehabilitiation programmes, this third factor's focus on evangelism involves the *missio Dei* in terms of spreading the love of God. However, according to Innocent Iyakaremye (2010:87), to participate in God's mission is to participate in the movement of God's love towards people since God is the source of love. As Iyakaremye further elaborates, "Outside God's Mission the Church is not needed and does not have reason to be" (2010:87).

This third factor of faith-based programmes thus links to feature (iv) of the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation, in providing a sense of self-love and belonging as well as an awareness that one remains a child of God. The sense of the love of God can sustain those who are suffering and rejected, and many Africans cling to God in times of trial, as noted by Mbiti (1990:199), Smith (1950:30) and Magesa (1997:50), including the female ex-prisoners, as is clear from their positive perceptions of God, discussed in chapter five.

The fourth factor common to faith-based rehabilitation programmes is that pastoral counselling services are emphasized, as regards the prisoner her/himself and her/his relationship with family, but not necessarily focusing on gender issues. In view of the gendered nature of all aspects of life, as argued by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (2000:242) and as discussed in chapter four of this study it is essential to note the following:

> Pastoral care from a liberation [i.e. feminist] perspective is about breaking silences, urging prophetic action, and liberating the oppressed. … [Conventionally], pastoral care has…been equated with healing; sustaining, guiding, and reconciling… [but] four [further] pastoral practices acquire particular importance [from the feminist perspective]: resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating.

In the African context, the need for such an approach in ministering to women is particularly acute and hence, "the challenge of feminist pastoral care does not simply require [women's]…inclusion within that which remains otherwise unchanged" (Oduyoye 2001:16). Hence, in the understanding of the feminist pastoral care paradigm, women prisoners "do not need the sympathy of men but rather they need space to establish their own identities and plans" (Pattison 1997:243).   As explained in chapter four, African women face severe challenges with regard to education, employment, access to resources, health, and family life. From the perspective of the suggested rehabilitation approach from an African feminist pastoral care perspective, the current pastoral care offered by FBOs involved in rehabilitating women prisoners, is often problematic in view of its continuation of traditional praxis without taking into account the need for, in the words of Miller-McLemore (2000:242), "resisting, empowering, nurturing and liberating," a need which is especially urgent in the African context. That said, the provision of pastoral care by religious organizations working with prisoners is a very positive factor, which

encompasses features (iii) and (iv). Consequently, a number of faith-based programmes are successful in bringing about restorative justice, by bringing the victims on board in the rehabilitation process. In addition, the psychological factors that can drive prisoners to repeated criminal behaviour are also dealt with, such as the need for emotional support and healing, regaining self-esteem and reducing stigmatisation from families and society at large.

The final factor common to rehabilitation programmes run by religious organizations is that they tend to rely heavily on volunteers. As it is exclusively church members who make up the volunteers doing prison work, this factor is associated with feature (v), which notes that churches, particularly in the African context, play a central role in assisting prisoners, where often governmental agencies have failed to do so.

Given this dependence on volunteers who minister to female ex-prisoners and the inmates in prison, Lewis (2003:223) can assert that:

> [R]ehabilitation cannot rely on work by volunteers. Religious ministry cannot create permanent changes in attitude. Change and rehabilitation should be spearheaded by… [government and in partnership with other private sector institutions] through relevant programmes and be made available to all prisoners [and ex-prisoners].

The problems faced by women prisoners as well as women in general call for a far more systematic and broad response than that which can be provided by a handful of volunteers. The feminist paradigm provides a framework for such a response by uplifting the partnership of humanity in a balanced way for the fullness of life for the community as a whole. According to Oduyoye (1986:12), feminist pastoral care calls for the incorporation of women into the community of what it means to be human. Feminist pastoral care identifies what enhances transformation or promotes justice in such a way as to build community. Feminist pastoral care promotes life-giving and life-enhancing relationships for both female and male ex-prisoners. Given the structural nature of patriarchy in Africa, which prevails across all institutions (including religious, social, economic, and political institutions) and all social practices (including cultural practices and marriage/family life) (Weedon 2008:3), the proposed African feminist pastoral care approach towards rehabilitation argues that such systemic patriarchy cannot be addressed by volunteers alone, and requires a more formalized communal response.

7.1.2. A proposed modular programme of rehabilitation for Zimbabwean female ex-prisoners

Having analysed the factors particular to current rehabilitation programmes offered by FBOs and churches, an outline of a programme based on the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation for use by such organizations and others, can now be suggested. Since the modular approach seems to have been effective elsewhere, for example in Australia (Freedman, Karski and Doak 2002:2), the same phase-based practice is adopted here. It is suggested that each module should last four months, making up a year-long programme, a time-frame which can accommodate both short-term and long-term prisoners. There is no set time, because all sentences vary in length. Features (i) to (vi) of the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation, which were discussed in full in chapter six, are employed to formulate this programme. Since it is given that the programme would be run by faith-based organizations (being a form of pastoral ministry), feature (vi) is inherent to the whole programme and does not function as a distinct aspect of any one of the modules making up the programme although it features strongly in Module #2. In addition, care is taken to address the issues raised concerning the factors common to currently operational rehabilitation programmes run by faith-based organisations.

As a whole, then, the programme emerges from the experiences and perceptions of the women themselves, while ensuring that each of the six features identified as essential in successful rehabilitation is represented, as well as learning from the strengths and weaknesses of current programmes run by faith-based organizations. The methodology behind the programme is known as See-Judge-Act. This method came to the fore with the popularisation of liberation theology - of which feminist theology forms a part - in the 1970s. According to Rakoczy (2004:5), feminist theology, "is one of the family members of liberation theology which began in Latin America in the 1960s."[26] Leonardo and

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[26] Other key texts on liberation theology are as follows. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 1975, Feminist Theology as a critical Theology of Liberation. *Theological Studies* 36, 605-626; Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*. (MaryKnoll: Orbis Books, 1973). I. Gebara, *Longing for running water: Ecofeminism and liberation*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999); L, Boff and C, Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology,* (London: Burns and Oates, 1987); Rosemary R. Ruether, Ministry and Community for Liberation from Patriarchy. In, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward A feminist Theology*, edited by Rosemary R. Ruether (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 201:213; Susan Rakoczy, Feminist Theology: A Liberating

Clodovis Boff (1987:22-42) list the four key elements of liberation theology as follows: First, the preliminary stage encapsulates a living commitment to taking part in bringing about a just society. Second, the stage of socio-analytic mediation describes the realities with which we are faced. Third, the step of hermeneutical mediation seeks to understand in what ways the present social realities oppose the will of God and what indeed should take the place of these realities. Finally, in the fourth stage, a practical mediation takes place in which concrete actions are proposed for dealing with the situation as it stands and for bringing about a new world that gives birth to a new way of life on earth as it is in heaven.

With regard to utilizing such a methodology, de Gruchy (2009:130) can observe:

> Following the preliminary stage, which involves a faith commitment to participate in the movement of liberation in society, the next three steps follow the familiar See-Judge-Act method of Christian social engagement.

The the See-Judge-Act method summarizes each aspect. In the 'See' phase, the focus is on the realities of the world, on the issues human beings face, on how things are. In the 'Judge' phase, the focus shifts to an interpretation of what this reality should be, of how the Bible, theology and ethics tell us how things should be. Finally, in the 'Act' phase, the response to the first two phases is concretized as the focus moves on to what we must do to act on the biblical, theological and ethical directives that emerged from the 'Judge' phase. The See- Judge-Act method is applied to each of

the three modules making up this programme of rehabilitation[27].

Module #1: The first module of the proposed rehabilitation programme based on the approach to rehabilitation from the African feminist pastoral care perspective, focuses on

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Theology. In, *In Her Name: Women Doing Theology*, edited by Susan Rakoczy, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004), 4-27.

[27] The "See-Judge-Act" method emerged from the work of the Young Christian Workers, which was formed in Belgium in 1925, under the initiative of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, followed by the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW) movement, which was established in 1957. This is a learning by doing movement based on the "see, judge, act" method of observing realities, ascertaining whether these realities are unjust and why, and then taking action to rectify the situation. The IYCW movement thus works to protect human dignity, focusing on unemployed men and women, and those living in exclusion, exploitation and repression.

feature (iii). This feature highlights the benefits of critical reflection by the female ex-prisoners on themselves and the crimes they have committed. Feature (iii) aids in bringing about restorative justice, hence including the victims (both direct and indirect victims) in the process of rehabilitation. In the Zimbabwean context, it is forbidden to bring victims into prison and thus Module #1 could only be run with ex-prisoners and victims. Given the reality of the pervasive gender injustice within the environment where they committed their crimes, the participants in this module also need to be enabled to understand what they did in the context of that broader environment. Imbalances in all spheres of daily life, underpinned by patriarchy that is based on religio-cultural constructions of male and female identity, lead many women into desperate situations and criminal activity.

Pertaining to ex-prisoners and their victims then, in this module, first ex-prisoners' crimes and their impact on society will be focused upon for a period of two months. Through this, the offenders will be made aware of the wrong they have done and the full implications thereof. This requires an emotionally safe environment which is provided by the shared experiences of all the participants, by the facilitator's insight and by the use of appropriate tools through which to engage with these sensitive issues. The tools of drama and art will thus be used as vehicles for participants to express their guilt, shame and regret. As noted in chapter five, as regards their perceptions of themselves, the female ex-prisoners who participated in this study highlighted their fear, shame, inadequacy leading to pain, and their sense of being unworthy (or worthy) of forgiveness. In view of this, when self-critique and remorse come into play during the course of Module #1, feminist pastoral counselling will be offered to the offender. The offender will be helped to understand that, with acknowledgment of their crime, there is always a second chance through repentance and God's forgiveness.

Second, after the female ex-prisoners have been fully oriented and prepared to meet those impacted by their crimes for talks on forgiveness and reconciliation, the latter will join the programme. Through the tools offered by the approach of African feminist pastoral counselling, the offended persons will be brought together for preparation to meet the offenders who have genuinely accepted the harm they have done and are prepared to face the consequences and the anger of those they have offended. The main tool used will be critical self-reflection (feature (iv)), while referring to Christian teaching and practice

(feature (vi)) from a gender-sensitive (feature (v)) and contextualized African perspective (feature (ii)). Under the guidance of the African feminist pastoral counsellor, the reconciliation process will occur over the remaining two months of Module #1. Should there be further need of expertise, referrals to the experts in these areas will be made, with the consent of the offenders and the offended. The first part of this module will take place in a group setting, with up to ten ex- prisoners in each group, while the second part will take place on a one-to-one basis.

The objective of Module #1 is to build a foundation for the offenders (as well as the offended) to enable them to face what has happened and why it happened, and because this is done via the media of drama and art, this painful process is made more bearable. By gaining insight into what led to the criminal act, the offender develops a deeper understanding of what factors drove her to crime, while the victim can build empathy, compassion and forgiveness for the offender's experience. At the same time, both offender and the offended are able to perceive that the crime has elements of both personal responsibility (that of the perpetrator herself) and of social responsibility (that of the unjust structures of society). Working from this platform, the participant can thereby progress to Module #2, which deals in more depth with the ex-prisoners' emotional and psychological needs going into the future. It could be said that Module #1 focuses on rectifying the past, while Modules #2 and #3 look to the future.

In Module #1, the 'See' phase is represented by a conscious acknowledgement of the objective and subjective realities linked to gender-injustices that the ex-prisoners have experienced throughout their lives. Additionally, the reality of the crimes they have committed is also acknowledged. The 'See' phase thus recognizes that the systemic and damaging effects of the ex-prisoners' objective and subjective experiences of gender-injustice have contributed to their criminal behaviour, as well as acknowledging the harm caused by their crimes to the offended, family and society. The 'Judge' phase of Module #1 is represented in God's judgement of gender injustice. Here, a feminist reading of the Scriptures, according to Bernadette Mbuy-Beya (1998:94), can be employed to affirm that God is on the side of the oppressed and to stress to the participants that they are among these oppressed, both as women and as ex-prisoners. According to the proclamation of Jesus in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set the oppressed free." This text, if read and analysed from feminist perspectives will empower ex-prisoners. Furthermore the Magnificat of Mary, the mother of Jesus in Luke 1:47-53 can also be used in the module above, especially verses 52-53, "He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands." Psalm 9 verse 9 explicitly shows that God is a shelter to the oppressed. It states, "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a place of safety in times of trouble."   Finally, the 'Act' phase emerges through the facilitation of initial steps in the healing and reconciliation process, while ensuring that both offended and perpetrator remain conscious of the wider factors that contributed to the committing of the crime, and also that the ex-prisoner is encouraged to remain conscious of the impact of her actions on others.

Module #2: Having achieved a level of self-understanding as to the gendered nature of the crimes and having faced the consequences of her actions for victim(s), her family and society at large in the first module, the participants will now be ready to begin rebuilding their own self-esteem and to find support mechanisms in society and family, as well as within themselves in order to avoid destructive behaviour in the future. This links to feature (iv), which emphasizes the importance of learning about psychological factors that can drive female ex-prisoners to criminal behaviour, as well as the need for psychological and emotional support and healing to avoid feelings of stigmatisation and to develop a sense of worth. In this module, emotions which are often very intense are dealt with, including feelings of personal failure, guilt, rejection and fear. The African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation applied in this module employs gender-sensitive pastoral counselling, with a strong focus on psychological needs. In addition, there is recognition of the powerful force for survival and sustenance which faith in God provides, and which can be harnessed by churches and other religious organizations working in the rehabilitation field (feature (vi)). The strength and support that such faith in God provides was also revealed, in chapter five, in the perceptions of the female ex-prisoners of God as the one who is always present with them regardless of what they have done; the God who always fights for them despite their rejection by society; the God who forgives them for the mistakes they have made; and the God who provides for them as they struggle to cope in society.

This module will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on behaviour management which would enable participants to control their emotional responses to difficulties and conflicts, as well as to temptations. This part of the programme will involve one-on-one counselling sessions over a period of two months, employing psychology and pastoral care methods to provide ex-prisoners with mechanisms that they can refer to when difficulties, conflicts and temptations arise in their lives. The second part of Module #2 will deal mainly with stigmatisation and self-esteem. This involves gaining support from families and society at large. The tool of story telling will be employed as a technique for the reasons provided in the methodology chapter. Through self-expression, participants share their perceptions of society (including the family) and God. As seen in chapter five, the female ex-prisoners' perceptions of society included a recognition of the fear felt by their community, resulting in their stigmatisation, and the need to gain forgiveness, while also understanding that this same society provides support systems and functions as the basis of their cultural and communal identity. Society was also highlighted as being sources of spiritual and emotional healing, care and love, in particular that shown by family members, other prisoners and the church. In addition, as mentioned, their continued trust and dependence on God as a source of support was also emphasized. All of these insights point to both their need for belonging, care and love, and to the potential sources thereof. This part of the module also lasts two months and will be conducted on a group basis.

In Module #2, psychological tools are developed in order for criminal behaviour to be avoided in future and coping mechanisms are provided. In this module, the 'See' phase is represented by an analysis of the participants' failure to handle anger, stress or difficulties, which is a factor contributing to their criminal behaviour. They are also given the opportunity to deal with their low self-esteem and issues of stigmatisation, together with their families. The 'Judge' phase assures them that despite these problems, God is standing by them and will walk with them on their journey. They are reminded that God's responses to their human failings are not judgement and condemnation. Here, a reading of the biblical texts can be referred to, in order to confirm that God forgives them and that God's love embraces us all just as we should forgive and love one another. Part of God's unlimited forgiveness is linked to our own self-forgiveness. According to Clinton et al. (2005:125), self-forgiveness involves declaring that one is not going to seek revenge

against the self or the other, and is a process that encompasses a change of heart that develops over time whereby negative emotions are replaced by positive emotions. Thus forgiveness in this module is not a static occurrence but a process of letting go and allowing relationships to rebuild. Finally, the 'Act' phase of Module #2 is embodied in the actual provision of pastoral and psychological care.

Module #3: Once the offender has been given sufficient tools to sustain her self-esteem and to maintain a healthy relationship with herself, her family and society, the final module provides the offender with practical skills and opportunities to reduce the temptation to return to crime. Accordingly, this module incorporates features (i) and (ii) in that the need for self-empowerment, including financial self-sustainability, which is met through the support of community resources and the provision of education/training - in other words, through networking with governmental, non-governmental and community organizations. Module #3 is again divided into two parts, each lasting approximately two months. The first part will be conducted on a one-to-one basis and involves the facilitator developing, in conjunction with the participant, an outline of her goals in life. This includes examining her strengths and the opportunities that are open to her. It is important that this part of Module #3 takes the environment of the ex-prisoner into consideration since whatever training/education she will receive, this must be appropriate to this setting. As a consequence, her context or objective experienced reality which has been shaped by the constructed identity of women in Zimbabwe, must be explored as discussed in chapter four. Issues in this regard include particularly those linked to the female ex-prisoner's family situation (e.g., marriage, divorce, widowhood, children, domestic violence), as well as issues concerning education, employment, access to resources, and health. Bearing this context in mind, the second part of this module will involve the provision of appropriate training or education in a field of the participant's choice, together with others who have made the same selection. Various small business entrepreneurial options will be explored (i.e., small scale farming, airtime vending, and craft work), again keeping in mind the need for suitability and sustainability in the setting to which the participant will be returning once released into the community. Through the support and involvement of community resources (including church-based resources), these entrepreneurial opportunities will be engaged with so that relevant training or education can then be provided. In this way, the participants will become

involved in networking with others in their community. Throughout Module #3, as in the other modules, cognizance must be taken of feature (v) because, as revealed in the description of the lived experiences of Zimbabwean women in chapter four, patriarchy defines to a large degree what opportunities are available to a female ex-prisoner.

In Module #3, the ex-prisoners are empowered to live productively beyond the prison walls, as full members of their communities. The 'See' aspect of this module is indicated in the analysis of each individual person's strengths, skills and interests as well as in the recognition of the obstacles facing them in terms of the broader socio-economic realities of their daily lives. The 'See' phase also brings to the fore a critical awareness that such socio-economic realities are shaped to a significant degree by the systemic and pervasive gender-injustice that dominates all aspects of their existence. The 'Judge' phase comes into play when God's will for the fullness of life is considered. According to John 10:10, Jesus declared that, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." In this statement, Jesus is promising that this wholeness and fullness of life covers all aspects of human existence. African women theologians through feminist Christology, seek such life-affirming authenticity for all humanity (Mombo and Joziasse 2010:187). In the same vein, de Gruchy (2008/2009:135) notes "the centrality of life or well-being". Through this third module, the female ex- prisoner will be enabled to experience fullness of life through being empowered to return to the outside world in ways that are liberating and life-giving, as seen in the 'Act' phase of Module #3, which consists of skills-provision and education as well as networking with government, faith-based and community organizations to assist ex-prisoners to achieve full reintegration into society and into their families with dignity.

Table 5: Proposed modules

	Module #1	Module #2	Module #3
Theme	Restorative justice for offender and the offended.	Psychological factors and emotional support.	Practical skills and opportunities to build self-sustainability.
Duration	4 months	4 months	4 months
Objectives	Building a foundation for the reconciliation of the offender and the offended. Offenders face their crime and are assisted in developing an understanding of why it happened.	Developing coping mechanisms for handling of anger, stress, low self-esteem and stigmatisation.	The empowerment of the offender with education, skills, training and opportunities for self-sustainance.
Methods	Drama and art are employed in the process of critical self-reflection in a small group setting, while one-on-one feminist pastoral counselling provides a supportive environment.	One-on-one feminist pastoral counselling allows the offender to develop behavioural management skills. Through story telling in a group setting, issues of stigmatisation and self-esteem are dealt with.	One-on-one feminist pastoral counseling to identify life goals of the offender, including strengths and opportunities. Training and education is provided to the offender in a group setting, for example in small scale farming or small business entrepeneurship.
Outcomes	The offender takes responsibility for the damage done to self, to the offended and to society. The role of social pressures and imbalances in the offender's criminal activity is acknowledged.	The offender is reassured of God's forgiveness and society's forgiveness, while also attaining self-forgiveness. Negative emotions and relationships are replaced by positive ones.	The offender gains skills and access to resources by networking with the community, with faith-based organizations and with govenmental and non-governmental orgnanisations.

In concluding this section, the proposed rehabilitation programme based on an African feminist pastoral care approach can be summarized as follows: First from the theories underpinning this study, one can draw out the defining features of an African

feminist pastoral care paradigm. Feminist theological anthropology provides a theological basis for understanding the role of women in the world as being of equal worth to that of men. Feminist cultural hermeneutics provides a framework for critically examining the patriarchal culture that undergirds the oppression of women on the African continent in particular. Feminist pastoral care highlights the need for gender-sensitivity to empower, nurture and liberate women in the processes of healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling them. Under the guidance of an African feminist pastoral care understanding of rehabilitation, Christian faith, African cultural practices and unjust socio-economic realities come together in the search for ways in which female ex-prisoners can return into a hostile society, through facilitating forgiveness, support and love. An African feminist pastoral care approach incorporates the theological, socio-cultural, and pastoral care aspects of the above three theories to produce a new paradigm in caring for African women.

Second, in this programme of rehabilitation based on African feminist pastoral care, the participants will be assisted to confront their actions and the reasons behind them including broader societal reasons and their consequences. Thereafter, their direct and indirect victims will be brought together in a process of reconciliation and forgiveness. In the next step, the participants will be enabled to deal with their emotions in a non-destructive way so that when anger or conflict arises, there is not a negative outcome. In addition, the issues of stigmatisation and self-esteem will be engaged with by involving families and communities. Finally, the participants will be equipped for reintegration into their societies by providing them with training and education so that they have a means to support and sustain themselves and their families, and to make a positive contribution to their communities.

In the next section, a way forward with regard to the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation is proposed. The proposals made below are undergirded by an acute awareness of the lived experiences and the perceptions of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners of this study as discussed above.

7.3. Suggestions for a way forward

Rehabilitation programmes for Zimbabwean female prisoners and ex-prisoners need to

take into account the features drawn from the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation. Clearly, the proposed programme need not be emulated by organizations working in the field, but the suggested approach can be a guide for those organizations designing such programmes. In chapter six, features were provided that formulated the proposed approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care perspective: for female ex-prisoners' empowerment and economical self-sufficiency, the use of community resources including those of the criminal justice system, particularly through providing education and training is recommended. Firstly, this because it is essential to utilize whatever resources are available in the context of the ex-prisoners (and prisoners); and secondly, because of the communal nature of African society, as encapsulated in the concept of *ubuntu* as discussed above.

The context in which female ex-prisoners return upon release needs to be taken into account, so that realistic measures can be taken to prepare the prisoners and ex-prisoners for reintegration into society. For example, income generation projects need to have a target market to be viable.

How do female ex-prisoners perceive themselves and their communities? What are the impacts of their crimes? Are there possibilities for bringing about reconciliation between the offender and the victim? Reflecting on such questions is necessary because the process of rehabilitation can only be achieved where there is recognition by the perpetrator of her actions and the impacts thereof, and where there is mutual tolerance and acceptance between perpetrator and victim of what has happened and why. This again ties in with the emphasis on communality found in African societies.

It is also noted that the psychological aspects of rehabilitating female ex-prisoners and prisoners need to be taken into account. For example, issues of drug abuse and anger management need to be dealt with to avoid recidivism. The aim of considering psychological issues is to provide appropriate support and enable healing. Low self-esteem and stigmatisation are common among female ex-prisoners and prisoners, as this study has shown, and it is essential to the process of rehabilitation that these factors be addressed, both within the family and the wider social setting.

The specific failure of current rehabilitation theories to address gender means, in terms of

an African feminist approach, that these theories are inadequate. Accordingly, the present study serves to argue for the need for gender-sensitivity across all aspects of any rehabilitation programme for women, especially African women in Zimbabwe. The literature-based part of the study noted the presence of widespread gender injustice which is perpetuated through the vehicles of both religion and culture. This injustice is experienced by women in the arenas of education, employment, access to resources, health and family life. Meanwhile, the fieldwork-based part of the study found that the female ex-prisoners' perceptions of self and society also revealed the effects of patriarchy upon their lives.

Current rehabilitation theories also fail to mention the role of churches or other religious organizations in the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners and prisoners. This feature has been added to the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation for three important reasons. First, since the approach is from a pastoral care perspective, churches and FBOs will naturally be involved by nature of their work. Second, as indicated in chapter six, the participants' perception of a liberating and empowering God is a basis from which to begin the process of their rehabilitation, given that this is often the only strength they have to rely on. Third, since it is often only churches and FBOs that are engaged in rehabilitation work, particularly in Africa, the importance of recognizing their role cannot be overstated.

This study proposes that an African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation can be adopted by entities working with female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. This approach was formulated based on the features identified above. These six features form a framework for engaging effectively in rehabilitation work, and the contents of the approach as a whole are now reiterated. By providing education, skills and work opportunities, participants in programmes guided by the African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation are empowered to become self-supporting. In this process, it is essential to take into account the environment into which the participants will return, an environment that includes cultural and socio-economic aspects, since whatever work the participants eventually engage in, this work will have to be viable and supported within this environment, in terms of marketability, access to resources and the religio-cultural attitude of the family and community. In order for real rehabilitation to take place,

it is essential for the perpetrator to confront her actions and the consequences thereof, for herself, her family, the community and the victim. In this way, restorative justice is enabled since the hurt and anger are recognized and dealt with by all involved. In view of the integrated nature of person and community in the African context, this is of particular importance. The perpetrators' low self-esteem and the effects that this, as well as the stigmatisation received by family and community, need to be addressed through providing emotional and psychological support.

Given the systemic nature of patriarchy in Africa, it is vital that any programme for rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners takes gender-sensitivity into account at every stage of the process. Any pastoral care work obviously requires, by its very nature, the involvement of a church of FBO. Since most rehabilitation work in Africa is currently undertaken by FBOs of which Christian churches play a leading role and yet the churches are overwhelmingly patriarchal, it is also logical that any rehabilitation programme needs to engage with such entities. Finally, a noteworthy facet which emerged from this study, is that possibly the only initial strength that many African women prisoners and ex-prisoners have, is that of their religious faith. They believe in a God who is ever present with them regardless of their mistakes; a God who is on their side even when society and family rejects them; a God who forgives their wrongdoing; and a God who provides for their physical needs as they struggle to reintegrate into society.

7.4. Broader issues to be explored in an African feminist pastoral care approach

Several broader issues emerge from the proposed model.

First, there is a need to create an environment conducive to championing women's liberation in Zimbabwe. This can only be achieved through intentional political action that is reinforced with education, since education is a major tool for empowering women.

Second, identifying unjust laws at both the traditional and national level that continue to oppress women, especially those who are on the margins of society, as demonstrated by the participants from this study, is crucial. This requires the mobilization of women and law-makers to take a stand against the inconsistencies within current legislation with regard to gender, for example, as demonstrated in chapter four. For example, while civil

marriages legally protect the ownership of all property by the widow of the deceased male, most marriages in Zimbabwe are customary and deny widows' property rights (Dube 2008:25). It is therefore necessary to acknowledge that the preservation of human life and dignity is more important than maintaining community taboos that condemn engagement in certain practices by women but not by men, as participant Turai lamented with regard to extra-marital affairs.

Third, it is more important for society to embrace a theology of survival than to hold onto the fear that ex-prisoners will return to criminality. For Carol Watkins Ali (1999:2), survival incorporates the struggle to resist systemic oppression and to recover the self from abuse and dehumanization. Theologically, such survival is encapsulated in Jesus' words that he came to give life in all its abundance (John 10:10). Society's fear and stigmatisation of former prisoners is clearly mirrored by participant Chenai's statement that: *At the sight of a female ex-prisoner, some members of society hold tightly to their hand bags with the* view *that these women are not to be trusted.* The women need to be given a chance to prove their worth within society, without being rejected outright. As Participant Kundiso asserted: *Most of us who have been in prison are totally transformed, so to keep on being reminded of the past does harm us.*

Fifth, the criminal acts of the prisoners and ex-prisoners are often difficult to categorize into categories of right and wrong. Instead, pragmatic questions need be asked by women prisoners and ex-prisoners alike, such as the following: "Do I steal to feed my children or let them die?" "Do I abort my foetus or do I raise a child for whom I cannot provide?" Such choices leave the women with few options, many of which are classified as crimes, leading to the following exclamations: "If I steal, it's a crime," "If I let my children starve, it's a crime," "If I abort, it's a crime." Feminist theological anthropology and feminist cultural hermeneutics provide scholars with tools to examine the ethical dilemmas in which African women often find themselves. There are no easy answers as provided by the law. It is in this spirit that gender tools are employed to keep issues of women, religion and law on the agenda of theological discourse in Africa.

7.5. Chapter summary

This chapter began by analysing, by using the six features of the proposed approach to rehabilitation from an African feminist pastoral care stance, the faith-based programmes currently operational in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The weaknesses and strengths of these programmes were drawn out and listed as five factors that needed addressing. The main objective of this chapter was to formulate an African feminist pastoral care programme of rehabilitation for female ex-prisoners in the Zimbabwean context. This programme is holistic in dealing with all aspects of rehabilitation, and in taking into account the experiences and context of participants (both the objective/lived reality and the subjective/perception-based context), including the overarching issue of gender. The programme is thus ultimately life-giving.

In the next chapter, a summary of the entire research project will be provided. The fieldwork and literature review will be used to propose a way forward for further research as regards the rehabilitation approach from an African feminist and feminist pastoral care perspective.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

8.0. Introduction

This study has focused on the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, with the aim of giving a gendered feminist pastoral care analysis thereof. In the current chapter, the way in which the objectives of the study were achieved is presented, by means of a summary of each chapter of this study, together with the main findings. Thereafter, the contributions of the study to the field of practical theology are pointed out. Finally, areas for future research are proposed.

8.1. Outline of the present study

This empirical qualitative study was facilitated through feminist methods to investigate the lived experiences and perceptions of female ex-prisoners and prisoners which were analysed through three theories. These theories were: feminist theological anthropology, which viewed male and female as equals before God; feminist cultural hermeneutics, which assisted in recognising that culture and religion have a significant influence in shaping women's identities and experiences, especially in the African context and in particular in Zimbabwe; and feminist pastoral care, which highlighted that all human beings are entitled to care and dignity and that in view of pervasive gender injustices it is essential for women to receive nurturing, liberation and empowerment during the pastoral care-giving process.

Field research was undertaken to collect the narratives of female ex-prisoners and prisoners so as to get a fuller picture of their perceptions and experiences. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty-eight female ex-prisoners and prisoners. The research findings highlighted central themes that emerged about how the participants perceived themselves, society and God. This data represented the subjective reality of the women. Their objective reality was ascertained by examining the gendered identity of

women in Zimbabwe, and how this identity has been shaped by patriarchal aspects of religion and culture. The impact of these constructed identities on the lives of women in Zimbabwe was found to be most evident in the areas of education, employment, health, access to resources and family life.

The purpose of this study was to identify the rehabilitation needs of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. To achieve this, an examination of the current theories of rehabilitation was conducted, followed by a critical, gendered analysis thereof, employing the three theories underpinning this study. The theories of rehabilitation exhibited a number of ommissions, including in particular that of gender-sensitivity and to address this, a six-point African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation was proposed. Using this proposed approach, current rehabilitation programmes were interrogated, with a special focus on those working with African women prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, while also making reference to those in South Africa.

Following on from this, a gender-sensitive programme of rehabilitation was put forward, which took into account three important aspects: first, the subjective experiences of the female ex-prisoners and prisoners of this study; second, the objective reality of Zimbabwean women's daily lives, and third, the five main elements of current faith-based programmes that emerged when the six features of the proposed African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation were employed to analyse these programmes. The rehabilitation programme that emerged from this process is of potential use to churches, FBOs and chaplains working with women inmates and released prisoners in Zimbabwe.

8.2. Summary of chapters

The objective of **chapter one** was to introduce the study as a whole. To achieve this, the motivation for choosing this area of research was explained, the context of the study was provided, the research problem was established, the objectives of the study were listed and the research design, methodology and structure of the study were presented.

The objective of **chapter two** was to discuss feminist theories in general but especially to focus on the three feminist theories underpinning this study: feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics and feminist pastoral care. This was achieved

by critically analysing each theory and then indicating its application to the study. The ways in which feminist theological anthropology aids this research in viewing humankind (male and female alike) as created in the image of God, in critiquing assumptions about the nature of women and in emphasizing that Jesus is the example for the life of a Christian, was also explained. The chapter then revealed how feminist cultural hermeneutics assists in this study through its recognition that culture and religion have a significant influence in shaping women's identities and experience, especially in the African context. In addition, the chapter indicated how feminist pastoral care contributes, by noting the fact that all human beings are entitled to care and dignity and that in view of the pervasive gender-injustice, nurturing, liberation and empowerment during the pastoral care-giving process are especially necessary for women.

The objective of **chapter three** was to present the methodology employed in the study, particularly the fieldwork. The main focus of the chapter was to point out how, in addition to literature research, fieldwork research was undertaken to collect the narratives of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners so as to get a fuller picture of their perceptions and experiences. In this chapter, the details of the research methodology were further explained, namely: the participants and their identification, selection of the research sites and the procedures to gain access to these sites, the methods of data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

The aim of **chapter four** was to study the African cultural and religious construction of women's identities, with special emphasis on the Shona ethnic group, to which most of the participants in the study belonged. This was necessary in order to understand the ways in which women's realities in Zimbabwe are formed and how this impacts on their daily lives. This objective was achieved by first discussing how women's identities in general are constructed by religion and society. Next, the ways in which the Shona culture has shaped the identities of women in the Zimbabwean context was discussed. Then, the manner in which Christianity has shaped women's identities in Africa was indicated. Finally, the impact of these constructed identities on the lives of women in Zimbabwe was revealed, namely in the areas of education, employment, health, access to resources and family life.

In chapter four, the first findings of the thesis emerged, namely that the systemic gender-

injustice faced by women in Zimbabwe has significant consequences for female ex-prisoners, and must be taken into account in terms of their rehabilitation. The three theories underpinning this study: feminist theological anthropology, feminist pastoral care and feminist cultural hermeneutics, provided a feminist standpoint through which to understand the situation faced by women prisoners and ex-prisoners. Through this perspective, it became clear that religion and culture have formulated women's identity in gendered ways, which has impacted on their daily lives. As women are subjected to patriarchal bias in all spheres of life, they are disadvantaged in many ways. These realities also have consequences for the lives of female prisoners and ex-prisoners upon their release, and thus must be considered in their rehabilitation.

In **chapter five,** the objective was to present the field research findings on how female prisoners and ex-prisoners perceive themselves, society and God. This objective was achieved through highlighting the central themes which emerged from the women's voices. Having clarified the perceptions or subjective reality of the subjects of this study, it was possible, in chapter seven, to ultimately suggest a rehabilitation programme that would allow them and others in their situation to be rehabilitated successfully. The three theories underpinning the study, as put forward in chapter two, were employed to analyse the women's perceptions. Using the theory of feminist pastoral care, the participants' perceptions of self were examined. Feminist cultural hermeneutics was the vehicle through which the participants' perception of society was scrutinised. Lastly, feminist theological anthropology was used to study the participants' perceptions of God. Interestingly, feminist theological anthropology was not only a tool for understanding the women's views on God, but the thinking behind this theory was itself revealed through the women's voices.

The second main finding of the thesis emerged in chapter five. The women's perceptions of self, society and God reflected their religio-cultural identity and through that, their socio-economic lived reality. The participants' perceptions of self were that they felt fearful, shameful, inadequate, and worthy (or unworthy) of forgiveness. Their perceptions of society were that they were feared and stigmatised; that they required society's forgiveness; that society could provide support systems to them; and that healing, care and love could come from different social bodies (e.g., prison guards, family, church,

community and prisoners). Their perceptions of God were that God is ever present with them and comforts them in their problems despite their mistakes; that God is fighting for them even when they are badly treated by society; that God forgives them for the mistakes that they made; and that God provides for them as they try to reintegrate back into society. In responding these three sets of perceptions, feminist pastoral care represents a vital tool in empowering, liberating and nurturing the women as they re-enter society after release from prison.

In **chapter six**, the objective was to present various current rehabilitation theories from a gendered perspective and to critique current rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe according to an African feminist pastoral care approach. The chapter was introduced with a discussion of various definitions of rehabilitation. Next, an African feminist pastoral care definition of rehabilitation was proposed, employing the three theories outlined in chapter two. The current theories of rehabilitation were then analysed through the lens of both this new definition and the voices of the participants in this study. Following on from the critical analysis of current theories of rehabilitation, central features deemed to be of relevance from the perspective of the proposed African feminist pastoral care definition of rehabilitation were drawn from these theories, while further features were added. Finally, out of these features— labelled (i) to (vi)—an African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation was formulated. This African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation was then employed - together with the participants' voices - to critically analyse rehabilitation programmes operating in Zimbabwe, as well as in South Africa since the latter provided some useful additional illustrations of current programmes.

In chapter six the third main finding of the study came to the fore. Given what was uncovered in chapters four and five, it was concluded that any rehabilitation approach that deals with female prisoners and ex-prisoners needs to be approached from a gendered perspective. In this case, an African feminist pastoral care approach to rehabilitation was put forward. Current rehabilitation theories were also found to have certain strengths and weaknesses that could then be drawn from to assemble six important features required when rehabilitating women, particularly in the Zimbabwean context.

The objective of **chapter seven** was to propose a gender-sensitive programme of rehabilitation which could be employed by churches, FBOs and chaplains working with

women inmates and released prisoners in Zimbabwe. Given the pastoral care (i.e. faith-based) approach of this study, the five main factors of the currently operating rehabilitation programmes of faith-based organisations were discussed, and in answer to this, a programme of rehabilitation using the African feminist pastoral care approach was put forward. This programme consisted of three modules, which were aimed at achieving the reintegration into society of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe. Crucially, both the subjective perceptions of the participants in this study, (revealed in chapter five), and the objective reality of Zimbabwean women (presented in chapter four), were also taken into account in formulating the proposed programme.

The fourth finding of this research project, which was revealed in chapter seven, was that like the secular rehabilitation programmes, the current faith-based programmes also have a number of gaps in their approaches. Although they have some positive attributes, the study found that future faith-based rehabilitation programmes need to ensure that (i) they incorporate effective rehabilitation strategies, and (ii) that they take into account the experiences and context of participants (both in their daily lives and their inner perceptions), bearing in mind especially the overarching issue of gender.

By way of concluding the study, **chapter eight** began by reviewing the research question and objectives of the whole study and then indicated how these objectives were achieved, chapter by chapter. The study will conclude by outlining the ways in which it has sought to contribute to the praxis of practical theology and by suggesting a way forward in terms of further research into the rehabilitation of women from an African and a feminist pastoral care perspective.

8.3. Contributions of this study to the praxis of practical theology

As Stephen Pattison and James Woodward (2000:7) have noted:

> Practical theology justifies the first part of its name by the fact that it is concerned with actions, issues, and events that are of human significance in the contemporary world

According to Richard R. Osmer (2008:4), practical theology responds to four core questions: (i) What is going on? (ii) Why is this going on? (iii) What ought to be going on? (iv) How might we respond? It thus involves:

i. **The descriptive-empirical task:** "Gathering information that helps in discerning patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts" (Osmer 2008:4). In the context of this study, this descriptive-empirical task was accomplished in chapters four and five, which examined the objective and subjective realities of the female prisoners and ex-prisoners.

ii. **The interpretive task:** "Drawing on theory of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring" (Osmer 2008:4). This task was undertaken in chapter four, in which the religio-cultural identity formation of women in Zimbabwe was outlined. It was also achieved in chapter six, in which core theories of rehabilitation were critiqued from the perspective of the underpinning theories, as well as from the viewpoint of the participants in this study.

iii. **The normative task:** "Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice'" (Osmer 2008:4). This task was achieved in two steps in this study. First, in chapter two which examined the three theories underpinning the research, namely feminist theological anthropology, feminist cultural hermeneutics, and feminist pastoral care; and second, in chapter six, which applied these theories to the practical situation of rehabilitating female prisoners and ex-prisoners. The outcome of this was the formulation of the six features of a proposed approach to the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners.

iv. **The pragmatic task:** "Determining strategies that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted" (Osmer 2008:4). This practical task was accomplished in chapter six where - employing the perspective of the proposed theoretical approach from an African feminist pastoral care stance – current rehabilitation programmes were critically examined, and where five aspects of faith-based programmes in particular were identified and critiqued. Out of this emerged, together with input from the participants' contributions, an outline of a proposed programme for the rehabilitation of female prisoners and

ex-prisoners in the Zimbabwean context. This study does not contain feedback since the proposed strategy has not yet been enacted. However, this would be an area for future research.

Practical theology implies in-depth reflections and application to practical situations and a contribution in this regard has been the aim of the present study. Pastoral care from a feminist approach has been the focus of the research, specifically within an African context. This resonates with the recommendation of Redwood (1999:1) that indigenisation, which "describes efforts to relate to culture," and contextualization, which "defines an application to context…have become crucial to the process of theological reflection, as well as the discharge of ministry." Given Redwood's statement, the proposed approach and programme for the rehabilitation of female prisoners and ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe makes the following contributions to the field of practical theology through its efforts at both indigenization and contextualization.

The context of the women is thoroughly incorporated into the approach as well as the programme which emerges from it. This context was examined both at an objective and subjective level. As regards the objective reality, this was identified by examining the gendered identity formation of African women in Zimbabwe, in particular Shona women, whose daily life is shaped by this identity in terms of their health, education, employment, access to resources, and family life. As far as the subjective reality is concerned this was established by hearing the women's own voices as regards their perceptions of self, society and God. Contextualizing was also incorporated more generally into the rehabilitation approach and programme by drawing on other rehabilitation theories (worldwide) and programmes (in South Africa and Zimbabwe) in order to locate and develop the research specifically in the context of rehabilitative work with African women. The analysis of faith-based rehabilitation programmes to identify strengths and ommissions was also part of the contextualisation effort, since the study sought to contribute to the field rehabilitation specifically within the locus of pastoral care.

The indigenization aspect was most clearly manifest in the employment of feminist cultural hermeneutics as an underpinning theory in this study. The main focus

of feminist cultural hermeneutics is to strive for "the appropriation of Africa's religio-culture," by critiquing African cultural patriarchy, which excludes them as women, and European cultural hegemony over biblical and theological interpretation, which excludes them as Africans.

Pattison and Woodward (1994:9) explain practical theology to be "a place where religious belief, tradition, and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical and practically transforming." In the context of this study, this understanding of practical theology can be rephrased as follows: An African feminist pastoral care understanding of rehabilitation involves a place where Christian beliefs, African traditions and cultural practices meet harsh socio-economic realities, questions of reintegration into a hostile society, and actions of forgiveness, support and love and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical and practically transforming.

8.4. Practical suggestions for future study in the rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in the African context

This study only represents a first step in understanding the rehabilitation needs of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe, and how best to address these needs. There are a number of possibilities for further study.

A first avenue for future study is the need for an investigation within the field of developmental economics on the rehabilitation of women. It was clear from this study and other literature consulted in the course of this study, that self-sufficiency is a central concern to female prisoners and ex-prisoners since often what led to their incarceration were the vicissitudes of financial vulnerability. Further research is required, in view of the fact that women have limited opportunities open to them due to their gendered identity, in addition to which the negative socio-economic context in Zimbabwe has led to widespread poverty and unemployment.

A second avenue for future study is linked to the issue of family life, in particular the protection of children of female prisoners and ex-prisoners. It was noted throughout this study that the breakdown of families and the neglect of children's needs was a source of

great distress for the female prisoners and ex-prisoners. Such a study could be undertaken from a sociological perspective, given that it concerns matters regarding the family unit and childhood, and that addressing these issues would ideally require the intervention of social workers.

A third route for further study is to conduct an investigation into what it means to express faith in God. African women experience gender injustice in all spheres of life: physical, emotional, psychological. The women who participated in this study revealed that they perceived self and society in ways that were coloured by this gender injustice. Female prisoners and ex-prisoners therefore have very little to draw upon in terms of their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. Despite all their experiences of patriarchy, backed by cultural and religious institutions, the participants nevertheless saw God as liberating, ever present and providing for them in the midst of suffering. Although in principle, the women did not know about the concept of feminist theological anthropology, their thinking actually mirrored such an approach. This is a strength which requires further research in the rehabilitation field, given that their positive understanding of God is often all they have to hold onto. This could be a significant foundation for making progress within the rehabilitation process. It has been noted that feminist pastoral care seeks to nurture, liberate and empower. If this is its aim, then in recognizing the women's liberating perception of God, we already have a starting point for achieving this goal.

When designing rehabilitation programmes run by churches and FBOs, this recognition could then be a useful initial springboard for moving forward.

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Appendix I: Participant Interviewees

	Name of participants[4]	Date of interview	Place of interview
1.	Chiedza	03 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
2.	Ratidzo	03 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
3.	Rudo	07 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
4.	Zorodzo	08 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
5.	Piwai	16 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
6.	Torai	16 June 2010	Prison Fellowship, Harare
7.	Zadzai	21 June 2010	ZACRO, Harare
8.	Dudzai	22 June 2010	ZACRO, Harare
9.	Kundiso	22 June 2010	ZACRO, Harare
10.	Chengeto	27 June 2010	Prison Fellowship
11.	Batsirai	28 June 2010	ZACRO, Harare
12.	Tatenda	30 June 2010	ZACRO, Harare
13.	Chenai	01 July 2010	Prison Fellowship
14.	Fananai	04 July 2010	Prison Fellowship
15.	Simudzirai	13 July 2010	ZACRO, Harare
16.	Revai	14 July 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
17.	Zadzai	14 July 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
18.	Turai	30 July 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
19.	Varazaimba	31 July 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
20.	Sarudzai	31 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
21.	Rambai	01 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
22.	Raviro	01 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
23.	Maruza	02 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
24.	Kodzero	02 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
25.	Manheru	02 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare
26.	Oga	05 August 2010	Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare

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[4] To protect their anonymity, these are not the actual names of my respondents, but pseudonyms.

| 27. | Regai | 05 August 2010 | Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare |
| 28. | Shuvai | 05 August 2010 | Chikurubi Female Prison, Harare |

Appendix II: Consent Form for Female Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners to be interviewed

Study Title: Rehabilitating Female Ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe: A critical analysis from a Feminist Pastoral care perspective.

Investigator: Tsvakai Zhou, DipTh., BTh (Hons)., MPhil.

Affiliation University of KwaZulu-Natal

Purpose

Dear Participant

Thank you for showing interest in participating in this research designed to investigate on how best a rehabilitation programme for female ex prisoners can be formulated through a feminist pastoral care perspective for their integration into society.

Subject Identification

To help you decide whether or not you wish to be a part of this research study, you should know enough about its risks and benefits to make an informed judgment. This consent form gives you detailed information about the research study as follows:

Description of Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be involved in individual interviews answering questions on issues around how women's identities are constructed by culture and religious traditions which influence the way they are treated by society and how they internalize society's perception of women; an understanding of the rehabilitation needs of women; empowerment of female ex-prisoners through a rehabilitation programme that is gender sensitive by using feminist pastoral care, theories and methodologies.

You will be required to share your own story of experiences as a woman in your culture, your religion and in prison. I will ask you some questions to assist you to tell your story. All information will be recorded on an individual basis.

Risk and Benefits

This study involves the giving information about your private life. You will sign a form to agree to confidentiality of the contents of the individual interview. This research will require 45 minutes to 1 hour of your time per interview. During that period, 45 minutes to 1 hour of your time will be disrupted. However, I will make sure that the interviews are on time and within the agreed time. By going through the individual interviews you will answer questions and share your story.

Confidentiality

As already mentioned, every effort will be made to keep your identity anonymous. Any research materials that could provide clues on your identity or jeopardize your safety will be destroyed as soon as the study is completed. While the research is going on all the research records will be placed in a locked up metal trunk.

As you participate in this research, you will be expected to maintain strict confidentiality about the information you encounter during the study. Under no circumstances are you to reveal to others the opinions, situations, or circumstances of particular people who are participating in this study, either by associating their specific names with such information, tacitly indicating their identity to others in other ways. Failure to maintain confidentiality could jeopardize the viability of this study.

I am committed to keeping the identity and all information collected in this study confidential. I will destroy all papers, tapes and note books once the study is completed.

Voluntary Participation

You will not receive monetary remuneration for attending the interviews because the researcher does not want you to feel that she is buying information from you. Participation is a voluntary one. No information will be solicited in exchange for payment in cash or kind.

For this reason, you are free to withdraw from participation whenever you feel like. There will be no prejudice held against you for withdrawing.

Questions

I may have used words that you did not understand in this form. You are welcome to ask questions about anything that you did not understand. Consider the things mentioned in this form carefully before making a decision.

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and have decided to participate in the project described above. Its general purpose, the particulars of involvement and possible hazards and inconveniences has been explained to my satisfaction. My signature also indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

For any enquiries you may contact: Tsvakai Zhou School of Religion, Philosophy and

Classics University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville, 3201

Republic of South Africa

Cell: 0762459522

Email:952059692@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Declaration of Agreement to Participate

I……………………………………………………………… (Your Full name) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

Appendix III: Research Questions for Female Prisoners and Female Ex-Prisoners

Name…………………… Date……………… Place of
Interview…………… Age………………………… Crime ……………   No of
years in Prison………… Education…………………..... Marital Status………
Religion……………..………..

What have you learnt from your culture about being a woman?

From your experience what did you find to be good and bad about how your culture views a woman?

What have you learnt from your religion about being a woman?

From your experience what did you find to be good and bad about how your religion views a woman?

When were you imprisoned? What were you sentenced for?

What would help you not to be charged with this or another crime again? Do you think female prisoners are treated differently from male prisoners? Explain why you think like that.

How do you feel about yourself as a woman who has been in prison? Why do you feel that way?

How do you like to be helped in order to change the way you feel about yourself?

What is your perception of how people in society view a woman who has been in prison?

Do you think society perceives a male ex-prisoner differently from a female ex- prisoner?

Why do you feel that way?

How do you want to be helped in order to change the way you feel society perceives you?

If a person wants to design a programme that would assist female ex-prisoners to be integrated into society, what would you recommend be included in such a programme?

Appendix IV: Letter of Approval from Zimbabwe Prison Service

ZIMBABWE PRISON SERVICE

			Reference: G/24/17
Telephone :	706501/2/3/4, 777384, 728421/2, 754197		**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**
Telegrams :	"PENAL", HARARE		Private Bag 7718, Causeway
Fax :	739986/777385		Harare
E-Mail :	zps@gta.gov.zw		ZIMBABWE

30 June 2010

RE: AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH —Tsvakai Zhou

1. Reference is made to your application for authority to conduct research study on-**The rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe: A critical analysis from a Feminist Pastoral Care Perspective.**

2. The Commissioner of Prisons has granted you the authority to carry out th : research at your own cost and on completion; a copy of the same should be forwarded for his attention.

3. She has also been authoirised to use a voice recorder in her research.

4. By copy of this letter the Officer Commanding Mashonaland Region and Officer in Charge Chikurubi Female Prison are advised of the approval and encouraged to assist the member accordingly.

P. Chinamasa (Chief Prison Officer)
A/CSO Rehabilitation Coodinator
to the **Commissioner of Prisons**

DISTRIBUTION

O/C Mashonaland Region
OIC – Chikurubi Female Prison

Appendix V: Approval Email from Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe

Professor Isabel Apawo Phiri
Academic Coordinator: Theological Studies
School of Religion and Theology
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X01
Scottsville
3209
Pietermaritzburg
South Africa
Tel: 27 33 260 6132 (w)
     27 33 3462920 (h)
     27 724239134(c)
Fax 27 33 260 5858
phirii@ukzn.ac.za

>>> "PFZ" <pfz@africaonline.co.zw> 3/24/2010 7:51 PM >>>
We are accepting your request to come and interview the ex-prisoners here in Zimbabwe as from May to July 2010.

However, you can interview 8 ex-prisoners per month. Please note that you will be fully responsible for the ex-prisoners busfares to enable them to come for your interviews. We are not comfortable for the interviews to be conducted at their homes . All interviews must be done at our offices.

During your stay with us, you will be required to fill in a membership form and pay US$5.00 joining fee so that you become our volunteer. No allowances are given volunteers. You must be in a position to arrange for your transport to and from work. Tea and lunch will be provided.

Please let us know your arrival dates and bring a letter from your school.

Appendix VI: Letter from the University of KwaZulu-Natal

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL: sshrec@ukzn.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

5 MAY 2010

REV. T ZHOU (952059692)
RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Dear Rev. Zhou

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0255/09D
PROJECT TITLE: "The rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners: A critical analysis from a Feminist Pastoral Care Perspective"

FULL APPROVAL NOTIFICAITON – COMMITTEE REVIEWED PROTOCOL

This letter serves to notify you that your response in connection with the above study has now been granted full approval by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Ethics Committee:

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation.   In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully

....
PROF S COLLINGS (CHAIR)

cc. Supervisor (Prof. Isabel Apawo Phiri)
cc. Mrs. B Jacobsen

Founding Campuses: ▬ Edgewood   ▬ Howard College   Medical School   ▬ Pietermaritzburg   ▬ Westville

Appendix VII: Supporting Letter from Academic Supervisor

School of
Religion and Theology

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Private Bag X01, Scottsville Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
Telephone: +27 33 260 6132; Facsimile: +27 33 260 5858
phirii@ukzn.ac.za; www.sorat.ukzn.ac.za/
16 February 2010

The director of Prison Fellowship
Zimbabwe

Dear The director of Prison Fellowship

Supervisor's Supporting Document For Rev Tsvakai Zhou's Request For Permission To Conduct Research Prison Fellowship, Zimbabwe

I wish to confirm that Rev Tsvakai Zhou is a registered PhD student in the Gender and Religion Programme of the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. Her PhD thesis title is "The rehabilitation of female ex-prisoners: A critical analysis from a Feminist Pastoral Care Perspective." The Higher degrees Committees of the School of Religion and Theology and the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science have approved her proposal.

Tsvakai Zhou has applied to your office for permission to conduct her research with female ex-prisoners in Zimbabwe.

Your positive response to her application will highly be appreciated by the University of KwaZulu Natal in its efforts to design research projects that are of assistance to the society.

Professor Isabel Apawo Phiri
Supervisor and
Academic Coordinator: Theological Studies.

Appendix VIII: Researcher's Application Letter to Prison Service, Zimbabwe

Prison Fellowship Zimbabwe
24 B Simon Mazorodze
Waterfalls
Harare
31 May 2010

National Prison Headquarters
Private Bag 7718
Causeway
Zimbabwe

To whom it may concern

I am a former member of Prison Service who passionately served as a Chaplain at Chikurubi Female Prison from 2003 to 2006. I terminated my job for further studies and am currently a PHD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg campus.

At the moment I am back home on research with female ex-prisoners as a volunteer of Prison Fellowship from May to end of July. I would like to extend my research with inmates who are about to be released at Chikurubi Female Prison.
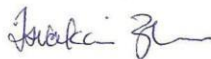
I kindly request for permission to interview 13 inmates on individual basis using a voice recorder, also offering counselling when need arises and attend some of their services.

I am enclosing my research proposal and supporting documents from the university.

My anticipation is that I return home and continue serving as before, after completion of my study.
Looking forward to your positive response

Yours faithfully,

Tsvakai Zhou.