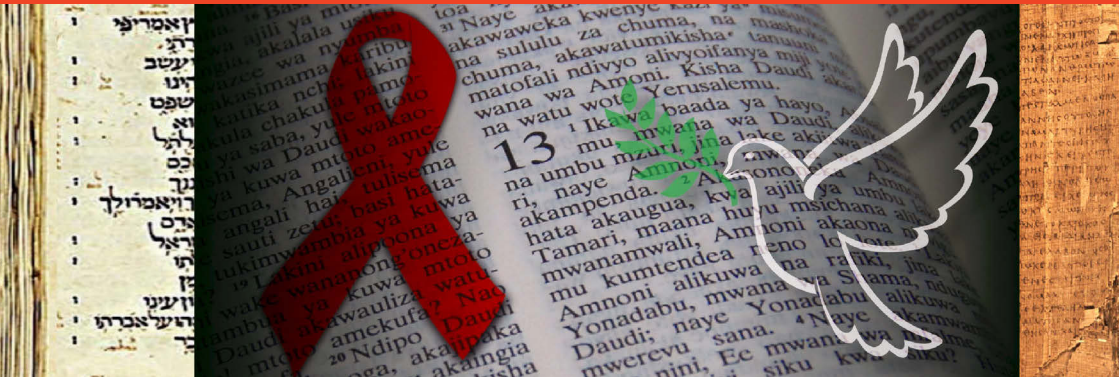


HIV/AIDS AND THE BIBLE IN TANZANIA

A Contextual Re-reading of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33

Mussa Simon Muneja



UNIVERSITY OF
BAMBERG
PRESS

Bible in Africa Studies

Études sur la Bible en Afrique
Bibel-in-Afrika-Studien

Bible in Africa Studies

Études sur la Bible en Afrique
Bibel-in-Afrika-Studien

edited
by

Joachim Kügler, Masiwa R. Gunda,
Lovemore Togarasei, Eric Souga Onomo

in
cooperation
with
Ezra Chitando
and
Nisbert Taringa

Volume 9



University of Bamberg Press 2012

HIV/AIDS and the Bible in Tanzania

A Contextual Re-reading of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33

by

Mussa Simon Muneja



University of Bamberg Press 2012

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der
Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische
Informationen sind im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de/> abrufbar

Diese Arbeit wurde vom Department of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies der University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, als Doktorarbeit unter dem Titel "Re-Reading 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 in Tanzanian Contexts: Towards an HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics" angenommen.

Promoter: Prof. Peet van Dyk

Tag der mündlichen Promotionsprüfung / Day of Defense: August 23, 2011

Dieses Werk ist als freie Onlineversion über den Hochschulschriften-Server (OPUS; <http://www.Opus-bayern.de/uni-bamberg/>) der Universitätsbibliothek Bamberg erreichbar. Kopien und Ausdrücke dürfen nur zum privaten und sonstigen eigenen Gebrauch angefertigt werden.

Herstellung und Druck: docupoint GmbH, Barleben

Umschlagfoto: © Mussa S. Muneja

Umschlaggestaltung: Joachim Kügler / Dezernat Kommunikation und Alumni der Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg

Textformatierung: I. Loch / J. Kügler / M.S. Muneja

Editor-in-chief for this volume: Joachim Kügler

© University of Bamberg Press Bamberg 2012

<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/ubp/>

ISSN: 2190-4944

ISBN: 978-3-86309-115-6 (Druckausgabe)

eISBN: 978-3-86309-116-3 (Online-Ausgabe)

URN: urn:nbn:de:bvb:473-opus4-9957

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	12
DEDICATION.....	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	14
CHAPTER 1:	
A LAUNCHING PAD FOR AN HIV/AIDS BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS	16
1.1 The AIDS epidemic in Tanzania	16
1.2 Human sexuality in Tanzania	18
1.2.1 Patrilineal and matrilineal societies.....	19
1.2.2 Rites of passage	19
1.2.3 Unacceptable sexual practices in Tanzania	20
1.3 The multidisciplinary debate	23
1.4 Faith-based organisations and interpretation of the Scripture .	24
1.5 Faith-based organisations and mainstreaming of AIDS	26
1.6 The role of African interpreters in Biblical Studies	27
1.7 Problem statement	28
1.8 Focus	29
1.9 Research objectives	30
1.10 Significance of the study	30
1.11 Limitations of the study.....	30
1.12 Sources for the study	31
1.13 Following chapters	32
CHAPTER 2:	
READING STRATEGIES WHEN INTERPRETING THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS.....	34
2.1 Introduction	34
2.2 The historical-critical method and its assumptions.....	34
2.2.1 Source criticism	35
2.2.2 Redaction criticism	36

2.2.3	Form criticism	37
2.3	The text horizon versus the horizon of the reader	39
2.4	Postmodern and reader-response reading strategies	40
2.4.1	Liberation theology: a global setting	42
2.4.2	Liberation theology: the African setting	43
2.4.3	Enculturation	44
2.4.4	African women theology	46
2.4.5	Reconstruction theology	48
2.4.6	Contextual bible study	50
2.4.7	Tamar's campaign – reader response reading movement	51
2.5	Previous interpretations of the Samuel text	52
2.6	Summary	53

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN FOR

FIELDWORK

3.1	Introduction	55
3.2	Feasibility	55
3.3	Theoretical framework	55
3.3.1	Case studies	56
3.3.2	Positive characteristics of case studies	56
3.3.3	Negative aspects of case studies	58
3.4	Narrative analysis	60
3.5	Population analysis and selection of respondents	61
3.5.1	Selection of respondents	62
3.5.2	Respondents by gender and institutions	63
3.5.3	Respondents by gender and education	65
3.5.4	Respondents by age and marital status	66
3.5.5	Respondents by faith	67
3.5.6	Respondents by rationale of distribution	67
3.6	Instrument selection	69
3.7	Description of research questions	71
3.7.1	To what extent have the academy and persons with HIV adhered to stereotyping and social categorisation?	71
3.7.2	What pointers does the narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39 portray in the context of AIDS?	72

3.7.3	What is the way forward towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics?	73
3.8	Approaches to interpretation of data	74
3.8.1	Data collection timeline	74
3.8.2	Data transcription timeline	75
3.8.3	Data coding	75
3.8.4	Types of coding	77
3.9	Establishing the validity and credibility of data	84
3.10	Ethical Considerations	86
3.11	Summary	88
 CHAPTER 4:		
MY CONTEXTUAL RE-READING OF 2 SAMUEL 13:1-22		89
4.1	Introduction	89
4.2	Discussion of characters in the text	90
4.2.1	Amnon	91
4.2.2	Jonadab	94
4.2.3	Tamar the princess	95
4.2.4	King David	98
4.2.5	Absalom	100
4.3	Discussion of invisible characters	101
4.3.1	Hebrew women	101
4.3.2	Narrator	102
4.4	Conclusion	103
 CHAPTER 5:		
STIGMATISATION OF PERSONS WITH HIV BY THE ACADEMY AND CHURCH		105
5.1	Introduction	105
5.2	Stigmatisation: To what extent do the church and academic institutions stigmatise persons with HIV?	106
5.3	Curriculum: Is HIV and AIDS study reflected in the curriculum?	106
5.4	Culture: Why is HIV and AIDS not fully reflected in the curriculum?	107
5.5	Chapter summary	107

CHAPTER 6:	
RE-READING 2 SAMUEL 13 AGAINST THE HIV and AIDS	
CONTEXT – MAJOR CHARACTERS.....	109
6.1 Introduction.....	109
6.2 Amnon.....	110
6.2.1 Rape: Why did Amnon rape his sister Tamar?	111
6.2.2 Identification.....	112
6.2.3 Curse: Could a curse be a valid reason for the rape of Tamar?	113
6.2.4 Contemporary Amnons	114
6.2.5 Curriculum: Are the issues of rape and Amnons addressed fully in our curricula?	114
6.2.6 Corruption: According to the text, Amnon was not dealt with accordingly after the rape incident; do we find similar parallels in our context?	116
6.2.7 Culture: Can rape be associated with culture, whether ancient or modern?	116
6.2.8 Church: Based on the internal evidence within the text, Tamar was not helped by her society. Is the Christian church following the same pattern?	117
6.2.9 Emotional expression	118
6.2.10 Real-life stories	118
6.2.11 Way forward.....	119
6.3 Tamar.....	119
6.3.1 Church.....	120
6.3.2 Identification.....	121
6.3.3 Stigmatisation: Are rape survivors stigmatised?.....	122
6.3.4 Economic power	123
6.3.5 Real-life stories	124
6.3.6 Way forward.....	125
6.4 Absalom.....	125
6.4.1 Struggle for power: Was the seeming intervention of Absalom motivated by genuine concern of love or something else?	126
6.4.2 Identification.....	126
6.4.3 Donor funding.....	127

6.4.4	Real-life stories	128
6.4.5	Way forward	128
6.5	Chapter summary	128
CHAPTER 7:		
RE-READING 2 SAMUEL 13 and 14 AGAINST THE HIV/AIDS CONTEXT – MINOR CHARACTERS		131
7.1	Introduction	131
7.1.1	Jonadab	131
7.1.2	Servants	137
7.1.4	Reporters	141
7.1.5	King's sons	145
7.1.6	King David	147
7.1.7	Joab	152
7.1.8	Woman of Tekoa	155
7.1.9	Chapter summary	158
CHAPTER 8:		
WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARDS TOWARDS AN HIV/AIDS BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS?		159
8.1	Introduction	159
8.1.2	Reconciliation	159
8.1.3	Reader response hermeneutics: Do we need to read the Bible in the context of HIV and AIDS?	160
8.1.4	Ordinary readers: Do we need to respect ordinary readers' views (especially PLWHAs) as they read the text based on their experiences?	160
8.1.5	Empowerment: Do ordinary readers and biblical scholars need to be empowered by the church and academy as they read the text?	161
8.1.6	Fictional vs non-fictional authorship: Is the narrative of 2 Samuel 13-14 a work of fiction or non-fiction?	162
8.1.7	Way forward	162
8.1.8	Unexpected findings	162
8.1.9	Chapter summary	163

CHAPTER 9:	
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN RELATION TO PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP	164
9.1 Introduction.....	164
9.1.1 Definition of data analysis	164
9.2 Research question one	165
9.3 Research question two	170
9.4 Major characters	171
9.4.1 Amnon	172
9.4.2 Tamar	178
9.4.3 Absalom	183
9.5 Section summary	186
9.6 Minor characters	186
9.6.1 Jonadab.....	187
9.6.2 Servants	192
9.6.3 Reporters	196
9.6.4 King's sons	199
9.6.5 King David	200
9.6.6 Joab.....	204
9.6.7 Woman of Tekoa	207
9.6.8 Section summary.....	209
9.7 Research question three.....	210
9.8 Unexpected findings	215
9.9 Chapter summary	217
CHAPTER 10:	
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	218
10.1 Conclusion.....	218
10.2 Recommendations	218
10.2.1 Recommendations for church leaders	219
10.2.2 Recommendations for church affiliated universities	219
10.2.3 Recommendations for government leaders.....	220
10.2.4 Recommendations for socially engaged scholars	220
10.2.5 Recommendations for future research	221
BIBLIOGRAPHY	222

APPENDICES	238
Appendix A: Demographic Data Protocol	238
Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol	239
Appendix C: Probing Questions	240
Appendix D: Consent Form	242
Appendix E: World Council of Churches Statistics of TEE	243

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Respondents and transcription time	57
Table 3.2 Methodological underpinning of the study	61
Table 3.3 Respondents by gender and institutions.....	64
Table 3.4 Respondents by gender and education	65
Table 3.5 Interview transcript (Mount Meru University lecturer, January 29, 2010)	70
Table 3.6 Codes for focus groups	76
Table 3.7 Data collection and analysis timeframe	77
Table 3.8 The development of categories and themes during axial coding.....	79
Table 3.9 Sample of findings as a result of selective coding.....	82
Table 3.10 Further steps in data analysis	83

ABSTRACT

It is arguably clear that the AIDS epidemic has infected and affected our world in radical ways. Although every sector, including Biblical Studies, has come to its 'senses', by realising the urgency to respond; there still appears to be inadequate contextual engagement with the biblical text to stimulate empowering and transformative readings of the Bible. This case study is aimed to contribute to scholarship by determining the extent to which the church, the academy and Persons with HIV have adhered to stigmatising interpretations. The theoretical framework used, was the reader response method as applied within the context of African theology because it is socially located. The data was collected through focus groups and personal interviews. The purposive sampling included 70 participants, who were divided into three key categories: academic theologians, university students and persons with HIV. All participants in the study re-read 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 in order to ascertain if the characters therein could be relevant to the context of AIDS. The overall findings showed that characters from 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 can provide an empowering message in the context of AIDS. Although this biblical text has often been misused to promote stigma, this study confirmed that it was nonetheless possible to use the same text to unearth redemptive and empowering interpretations. Therefore the study recommends that the move towards an HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics invites socially engaged scholars along with ordinary readers to read the text together for transformative purposes.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book with love in memory of my late sister, Minza S Muneja, who died of AIDS. She has left to me a lifetime's task to care and advocate for the welfare of persons with HIV. Moreover, to my mother, Ellen Nkinda, you were barred from school that I might go to school. This thesis is a mark of your commitment in my life!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I concur with both Hoschele (2005) as well as Synman (2006) who confess that nobody under the sun can write a thesis alone. Thesis writing is a communal effort, therefore to claim this honour as entirely an individual effort is an act of injustice or a form of plagiarism of the highest order. For these reasons, I would like to thank the following, who contributed towards the successful completion of my studies.

Joyce S Muneja, my spouse – a woman who gave me the first challenge to go for doctoral studies, way back since dating days. She has ensured that the dream was sustained with dedicated companionship until it has come into realisation. To you I say: *Seba Akolanghane!*

Sharon S Muneja, my first-born princess – you have been a sure source of revitalisation every moment I arrive home from this tedious task. Your smiles and tears are reflected in every word written in the thesis. To you I say: *Seba Akolongoje!*

Nancy S Muneja, my second-born princess—you have just been born on time to witness this unfolding goodness from the Lord. To you I say: *Mfumwa Akunke Lute Lwedi!*

Prof. Peet van Dyk and Prof. Alta C van Dyk – my promoter and his spouse: you took my studies on at a family level: this is a rare privilege. It is heaven that will make one fully realise how I am indebted to you. To you I say: *Aluta Continua!*

Editors of BiAS series under Prof Joachim Kügler are forever appreciated. You've brought me into the world map of authors. To you I say, *Danke schön!*

Pastor Azza Nyamakababi and Pastor Enos Mwakalindile – I am forever thankful to your critical and yet constructive comments. You are the only persons who are second to my promoter, Prof. Peet van Dyk, in terms of academic support. To you I say: *Mukama Awajenje!*

Research participants – your insightful interpretations led me into a sea of adventure in quest for knowledge. Moreover your comments have transformed my career forever. So what shall I pay back for this great honour? To you I say: *Mungu Awabariki!*

UNISA staff especially the Postgraduate Bursary Personnel – you made sure that the remittance of funds to support my studies was effected on

time. In addition to that, UNISA Library Personnel, you allowed me to enjoy state of the art services in your world class library. These acknowledgements go also to the entire UNISA community. To you I say: *Kea Reboga!*

University of Arusha Community – you all have scored a positive mark in my thesis. The administration gave me every support I needed for my study. The Department of Theology and Religious Studies waived some university responsibilities so that I could concentrate on my studies. And finally but not least the university students, you were the first ones to give challenging insights to improve my studies. To you all I say: *Muende mbali kwa neema ya Yesu!*

Professional colleagues like Prof. Musa W. Dube, Prof. Ezra Chitando and Prof Gerald O. West – you have been supportive mentors who have left an indelible mark of excellence in my life. I yearn to reach where you've attained. To you I say: *God bless!*

Pr. Simeo Makunja and all prayer warriors – this thesis has been baked in the furnace of your prayers. To you I say: *All things are possible to whomsoever believes!*

Mr Magesa Biseko-your creative mind in designing the pictures and seeking copyright requirements is hereby appreciated. To you I say--*Ubarikiwe*

Mr Andy Grewar – you close the list of those I have mentioned but this does not imply that your contribution in editing this thesis is less appreciated. On the contrary, I'm forever indebted to your expertise and cordiality. Wherever this work will be read, it will in remembrance of your contribution. To you I say: *Aluta continua!*

Finally, I want to acknowledge all the unnamed individuals who in one way or another participated in encouraging me to move on with my studies. Beyond these words of gratitude, let me hasten to add: *to the only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen* (Jude 1:25 RSV).

CHAPTER 1:

A LAUNCHING PAD FOR AN HIV/AIDS BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

1.1 The AIDS epidemic in Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the countries with the highest prevalence of AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. Reports from the Ministry of Health of Tanzania confirmed that the first three cases of AIDS occurred in the Kagera region (Northwest of Tanzania) in 1981. Since then the single digit number has multiplied to over 600,000 cases of AIDS as well as about 2 million people who have been infected with the HI virus. AIDS has become the primary cause of death among adults in this country and is has decimated the most productive age group, leaving behind misery, suffering and poverty (TACAIDS 2010). The epidemic has continued to cause a big social-economic problem affecting the entire nation.

The key reasons for the spread of HIV infection appear to fall in two categories: The first category can be called the drivers of epidemic and include:

- Promiscuous sexual behaviour
- Intergenerational sex;
- Concurrent sexual partners;
- Presence of other sexually transmitted infections such as the herpes simplex 2 virus; and
- Lack of knowledge of HIV transmission.

The second category, which is equally important, is called the contextual factors. These include:

- Poverty and transactional sex with increasing numbers of commercial sex workers;
- Men's irresponsible sexual behaviour due to cultural perceptions of virility;
- Social, economic and political gender inequalities, including violence against women;

- Substance abuse such as alcohol consumption;
- Local cultural practices e g widow cleansing;
- Mobility in all its forms, which leads to separation of spouses and increased establishment of temporary sexual relationships; and
- Lack of male circumcision (TACAIDS 2010).

In response to this, the Tanzanian government established an body called TACAIDS (Tanzania Commission for AIDS) to provide strategic leadership as well as offer coordination of AIDS related issues. This was on 1st December 2000, when the former President Benjamin W Mkapa announced the establishment of TACAIDS and afterwards it was enacted under the Act No. 22 of 2001 by the parliament. This major event did not take place in a vacuum. The government and stakeholders through the Ministry of Health have been involved since the first three cases were identified. For example, by December 1985, eight out of twenty mainland regions previously reported 404 cases of AIDS – 80% being from Kagera region; but by December 1986 all twenty regions had reported AIDS cases (EHAIA 2004). The prevalence of AIDS has since then shown a sharp increase. However, in 2008 nationwide figures indicated that AIDS prevalence had stabilised at 6%, but there is a heterogeneous pattern in various regions. The reason for this includes the increase of AIDS awareness, the use of condoms, and the availability of ARVs, among other factors. In all geographical locations, however, women seem to be more affected than men for biological, cultural and economic reasons (TACAIDS 2010). The table below further explains other variations of Tanzania HIV/AIDS prevalence.

Variation in AIDS prevalence according to various factors

Gender	Women are generally more affected than men
Age	Women of young ages and men of older ages are more likely to be HIV positive, but this is changing.
Education	Persons with higher education levels used to have higher prevalence, but this is also changing

Financial factors	Up to 2003 wealthier persons were more likely to be HIV positive
Marital status	Married or formerly married men and women are most likely to have higher risk behaviour
Geographical settings	HIV prevalence is almost double in urban than in rural areas, but there are more HIV positive people in rural areas than in urban areas
Male circumcision rates	Relationship between male circumcision status and HIV prevalence remains strong as regions with higher number of circumcised males have lower HIV prevalence rates.
Population Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HIV prevalence in areas of mobility is higher than in rural areas, and prevalence in urban areas may be reducing. ▪ HIV prevalence and incident are higher amongst short-term migrant men than women who stay home alone for a long time. ▪ Risk behaviour of men increases more when their wives have moved than when they are mobile themselves.

(Source, TACAIDS 2010)

It is also critical to note that the rate of prevalence amongst Christians as opposed to people of other faiths is more or less the same. Mutaki (2007:15), citing the Tanzania AIDS Indicator Survey, found that the HIV infection rate was 5% among non-religious people, 8% for Muslims, 8% for Catholics and 6% for Protestants. When taking these facts into consideration, it is imperative to look on how Christians interpret the biblical text, hence the rationale for this study.

1.2 Human sexuality in Tanzania

This section discusses the sociological background of Tanzania communities in the backdrop of human sexuality practices as a context for interpreting the results of this study.

1.2.1 Patrilineal and matrilineal societies

Tanzania communities can be divided into two groups in terms of kinship patterns. These kinship patterns are patrilineal (patriarchal) societies and matrilineal societies. The former has a larger number among the population, amounting to 80% (Tanzania Gender Networking 1997). Moreover, inheritance and power is vested with the husband's clan. The usual custom is that the sons are the ones who are important in carrying family decisions. This is a typical feature in the Hebrew Bible, where even the narratives were written from a males perspective (Masenya 2006: 149-155, Fiorenza 1982:32-46). The matrilineal societies are few and their way of life began to decline since early in the 19th century. Such a trend could be described by frequent intermarriages to patrilineal societies. In this kinship pattern, inheritance and power are vested through maternal uncles. Matrilineal societies are mainly found in the coastal regions of the country. These communities include the Kaguru, Zaramo, Luguru, and Nguru. So there are still male voices projected even in this type of socio-legal status.

An understanding of social legal status is necessary since, as described earlier, it is women who lack power in making decisions in various matters including how to have sex, where to have sex, and when to have sex (this situation happens in marriage and in other sexual relations). It is women who are not allowed to own property, though in policies it is described that 'they have the power.' (This situation among many others needs to be redefined as we want to read the Hebrew text contextually to empower PLWHAs and other affected persons (Gupta 2002; Setel, Mwageni & Hemed 1997:330).

1.2.2 Rites of passage

The rites of passage refer to a time when Tanzanian boys and girls are introduced into some special kind of training to prepare them for family and social responsibilities as adults. This training is also called *Jando* and *Unyago*. The former was a training offered to boys of age ranging from 14 to 20. The later training was offered to girls of age ranging from 11 to 20. The training in most societies culminated with the process of either male or female circumcision. The trainers were usually men and women of strong moral repute, and moreover, they had to be people who

valued family traditions and customs (Rashid 1975: 87-106; Nkomazana 2005:26-49).

Among the Zaramo for example the *jando* curriculum included 'good manners, bravery, the secrets of life, marriage, death, the responsibilities a man has to carry, and the customs and taboos to be observed' (Mbunda 1991). *Unyago* training was conducted by elderly reputable women. Girls were taught about male physiology, how to become a good wife, how to become good mothers, and they learnt about household chores. A few societies like the *Kurya* and *Maasai* had to end the training with female circumcision for the purpose of reducing libido and training girls to learn how to experience pain before childbirth (Mbunda 1991:150).

While girls were prepared for reproductive roles and family responsibilities, the boys were prepared to be future leaders, beginning from the family level and extending to society level. While this was not bad in itself according to the earlier times, currently such a mode of life is problematic. This is so because of introduction of Christianity which largely undermined such practices and introduced Tanzania communities to a western form of education (Isichei 1995:233-234). The situation has been further complicated by modern technological advances which have put Tanzanian culture at the crossroads. Today both men and can be breadwinners. Today both men and women can take leadership roles beginning at the family level and extending to national and international levels. Significantly enough, sometimes women perform even better than men. Since culture is dynamic and does not change overnight, most people are still holding on to earlier values of education that disempower women. As a result, women continue to receive a larger painful share of HIV infection. Moreover, Tanzanian women who have scarce economical means are still heavily loaded with the work of home care (TACAIDS 2008; Digler 2007:98).

1.2.3 Unacceptable sexual practices in Tanzania

In spite of some pitfalls of gender equity in Tanzanian culture, there are some good sexual knowledge practices that if followed AIDS will be highly reduced. It is noteworthy that all of these unacceptable sexual practices are also directly or indirectly condemned in the Hebrew Bible. These sexual unacceptable practices include:

- Public masturbation: Chagga, Makonde, Makonde Malaba, Nyakyusa, Nyaturu, Zaramo;
- Interest in watching animals mate: Chagga, Fipa, Gogo, Nyakyusa, Sukuma;
- Sexual intercourse before marriage: Chagga, Fipa, Gogo, Makonde, Makonde Malaba, Nyakyusa, Nyaturu, Sukuma, Zaramo;
- Sodomy: Makonde, Makonde Malaba, Maasai, Nyakyusa;
- Bestiality: Makonde, Makonde Malaba, Maasai;
- Rape: Makonde, Maasai;
- Prostitution: Makonde;
- Touching anothers' genitals: Zaramo;
- Incest: Makonde, Maasai;
- Child abuse: Makonde, Makonde Malaba;
- Lesbianism: Maasai, Nyakyusa (Mbunda 1991: 98-100).

In Tanzania, many cultures are particularly permissive to polygamy or having multiple sexual partners. The classic examples of this are found among the Zaramo and Sukuma. This 'favour' was designed for men. Such a culture must be critically evaluated and, if possible, eradicated as we seek African solutions for AIDS (Amanze 2006:30). Another permissive practice is the *Chagulaga mayu* (literally meaning, 'choose one among us'.) It is usually done during harvest festival season which is usually coloured by traditional dances and other festivities. During this time all the unmarried women who have attended *mbinas* (traditional dances) are expected to choose their lovers from among several men who have surrounded them. When the lover is selected, sexual intercourse is the end result at a certain secluded place. Then later, plans will be made to meet the parents of the woman for marriage arrangements. In such setting women were usually expected to agree on choosing a 'lover', and if they refused to, physical chastisement was administered. All of this indicates the pitfalls of patriarchy in gender-based relations. The practice of *chagulaga mayu* has existed in Sukuma society from time immemorial and it has continued to persist even in the era of AIDS. Amanze (2006:30) contends that if such practices are allowed to continue there is the possibility of opening a floodgate for the

spread of HIV. The government banned this activity in 1998, but unreported incidents of this nature continue to happen.

In Tanzania, there is no particular tribe that endorses prostitution. Prostitution in Swahili is referred to as *Umalaya*. A *Malaya* is a female sex worker. This term is derogatory. To men, relations with a prostitute are a matter of prestige and a sign of wealth. Prostitution flourishes underground in major cities like Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Mwanza (Bamrange 1998:221-240). Women who engage in sex work do it either by being forced by hard economic situations, or patriarchy, or through chosen behaviour. Since women in Tanzania have been socialised to respond to men's sexual advances, it is seen as a sign of disrespect if they happen to suggest how sex is to be done and the place to do it. So chances to suggest using a condom to save life is very minimal if not zero. The male client empowered by culture and money holds in his hands the destiny of the sex worker. Prostitution is illegal in Tanzania, but it is sad to note that, the arm of the law falls heavily upon female sex workers (Tanzania Gender Networking 1997, Gichaara 2008:188-199). Thus, such individuals are usually rounded up by police and the locations known to house prostitutes are raided. It must be noted that these sex workers are also created in the image of God. Their lives are just as valuable as the lives of other people. When they are infected with the HI virus, the church is also affected. So an understanding of the plight of female sex workers is critical in this project in an endeavour to seek a message of hope.

The discussion of changing human sexuality will not be complete without mentioning homosexuality among Tanzanians. As noted earlier, the following tribes do not endorse homosexuality. These include but are not limited to the Makonde, Makonde Malaba, Maasai, and Nyakyusa (Mbunda 1991:99). The idea that a homosexual lifestyle is unacceptable is an indication that it exists, though not seen in public. Male homosexuals or gays are called *Wasenge* (meaning behaving like a woman). Female homosexuals or lesbians are called *Wasagaji* (meaning grinding – they need to 'grind' each other to attain sexual arousal). Tanzanian lesbians are less prominent than their male counterparts. Tanzanian law forbids homosexuality in its penal code as a criminal offence punishable up to 14 years in prison. However, this law is rarely enforced since it is very difficult to establish valid proof that a certain person is a homosexual (Setel, Mwageni & Hemed 1997:220). Both of

the terms *Wasenge* and *Wasagaji* are heavily loaded with messages of stigma. I do not mean to approve their lifestyle, but I am concerned with their human worth. Since recent research statistics show that the HIV virus is transmitted faster among homosexuals than heterosexuals, as a community of faith we need to go beyond a message of sin and judgment to a message of active compassion and love (Muneja 2006:150). The culture of stigmatising people for whatever reason as far as their human sexuality is concerned needs to be revisited. Stigma has existed before and since the era of AIDS, and its effects in fuelling the disease are incalculable; therefore we need to be a community of hope and active compassion.

1.3 The multidisciplinary debate

Empirical findings from elsewhere have indicated that the church, academy, and governments are no longer silent, but have started to respond to the AIDS¹ pandemic.² The pandemic is being proactively approached from ecumenical, multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral perspectives (United Nations 2008; Dube: 2007: vii; Airhihenbuwa 2004; OAU 2001). It is also noteworthy that faith-based leaders and academic theologians; as well as social scientists, are among the stakeholders who are appalled by AIDS statistics. The statistics indicate that sub-Saharan Africa has a higher prevalence than the rest of the world. A report of the UN Secretary General states: 'Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 68 percent of all adults living with HIV, 90 percent of the world's HIV-infected children and 76 percent of all AIDS deaths in 2007' (United

¹ HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS refers to the retrovirus isolated and recognised as the etiologic (i.e., causing a disease) agent of AIDS. HIV-¹ is classified as a lentivirus in a subgroup of retroviruses. Most viruses and all bacteria, plants, and animals have genetic codes made up of DNA, which uses RNA to build specific proteins. The genetic material of a retrovirus such as HIV is the RNA itself. HIV inserts its own RNA into the host cell's DNA, preventing the host cell from carrying out its natural functions and turning it into an HIV factory. While AIDS is what people die of, HIV is what they are infected with. The expression AIDS-related illness can be used if the person has an AIDS diagnosis. UNAIDS, *UNAIDS' Editors' Notes for Authors* (New York: World Health Organisation, 2006), 1.

² Pandemic refers to a disease prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world. Preferred usage is to write 'pandemic' when referring to global disease and to use 'epidemic' when referring to country or regional level. UNAIDS, *UNAIDS Editors' Notes*, 9.

Nations 2008; see also Muneja 2006:15; and OAU 2001). From this observation it appears that each sector or discipline has been responding to the pandemic in its own right. A preliminary literature survey indicated that the Circle of Concerned African Women theologians have been in the forefront in the area of faith-based pedagogy (Togarasei 2008:79). Whereas the opinion may seem to be exaggerated, the study concurs by proposing that it is possibly due to the weight of academic publications available.

In connection with the above, Schmid (2000: 91-103) (a woman theologian) argued that the AIDS discourse should include biomedical, development, legal, ethical and activist discourses. However, Schmid does not say if there is anything like an HIV or AIDS biblical hermeneutical discourse which may engage issues such as poverty, gender inequality, sexual violence, peer pressure, age and power differences which partly pressurise people to continue engaging in sexually-risky behaviour (Seloibe and Ntseane 2000:130, Marman *et al.* 2002:53).

1.4 Faith-based organisations and interpretation of the Scripture

It is noteworthy that the faith-based communities have been some of the first interpreters of the biblical text as it relates to the pandemic. Through the biblical text, persons with HIV and those affected³ can get hope that one day the disease may be eradicated. They can get hope that the God of the Hebrew Bible has the power to resurrect the dead to life, (Ezekiel 37). However, biblical interpretation in relation to the disease has been sparse and seemingly inadequate. Studies show that most of these early readings were judgmental, moralistic and stigmatising (Foster 2006:157-163; Ottati 2005:21-26). These reactions may partly be attributed to the motif of sin as a source of disease, thereby promoting a theology of retribution in irrelevant contexts. For example, the readings from Deuteronomy 28:27-29 and Numbers 25:1-3 may conceptualise that diseases (sexually transmitted infections included) arise from the anger

³ PLWHA refers to People Living with HIV/AIDS. This group is composed of two categories, the infected (those who are sick), and the affected (those who are directly involved though not sick)

of God. However, the final message in the book of Job provides a clear negation of this idea that all diseases are a result of God's anger.

Despite this negation in the book of Job, Africa's faith-based communities have often found it too easy to interpret diseases as punishments from an angered God or gods (Mbiti 2003:116). It is also true that promiscuous sexual behaviour can have terrible consequences (Gatumu 2008:1-14). As much as this view appears to be true in some contexts, it can be problematic when certain groups in society are labelled more risky than others and stigmatised. These groups include females and the poor (Kealotswe 2007:14; Van Dyk *et al.* 2008:682). This study wishes to ask: can it be justified that these groups, which are usually marginalised in many sectors of life, are more immoral than others? In cases such as these, the study proposes a need for a liberating and empowering hermeneutic.

Faith-based organisations, under the umbrella of the World Council of Churches, have been key leaders in producing worship resources in the context of AIDS. These resources are both liberating and empowering. Some examples of such resources are the following:

- The book *Africa Praying*, edited by Musa Dube (2003) and translated into French and in the near future into Swahili (Chitando, 2008).
- The World Council of Churches also used Musa Dube's expertise to edit a monumental work on mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in the curriculum of theological institutions. The book *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programs*, (2003) is handy and 'down-to-earth', contextually relevant to African readers, with vibrant African liberation perspectives.
- One of the recent publications available in CD-Rom format (also by World Council of Churches) is 'HIV/AIDS Curriculum for Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in Africa'. The modules were edited by Musa Dube. The modules' titles include:
 - Gender, Religion and HIV/AIDS Prevention, by Isabel Apawo Phiri;

- Sexuality and HIV/AIDS, by Peter Ngunjiri;
- African Indigenous Religions in the HIV/AIDS Contexts, by Ezra Chitando;
- A Theology of Life in the HIV/AIDS Context, by Moiseraela P Dibeela;
- A Theology of Compassion in HIV/AIDS Era, by Musa Dube;
- A Theology of Healing in the HIV/AIDS Era, by Nontando Hadebe
- A HIV/AIDS Pastoral Care and Counselling, by Paul Leshota;
- Preaching and Liturgy in the HIV/AIDS Context, by Paul Leshota and Nontando Hadebe;
- Studying the Hebrew Bible in the HIV/AIDS Context, by Sarojin Nadar; and
- Reading the New Testament in the HIV/AIDS Context, by Musa Dube (2008).

These modules are ground-breaking in getting African scholars to become 'relevant' to their own socio-cultural issues. But it is noteworthy that it is only Sarojin Nadar who has engaged the biblical text, indicating an important gap which needs to be filled by biblical scholars.

1.5 Faith-based organisations and mainstreaming of AIDS

The World Council of Churches, through the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative, has been organising conferences on mainstreaming AIDS in the theological curriculum in most parts of Africa. An interview with Musa Dube (2008), who has been the main facilitator, indicated that there are already more than 815 church leaders who have been trained in how to mainstream a theology of HIV in their work (refer to Appendix F, p. 253).

All the countries that have hosted the conferences belong to Sub-Saharan Africa, the area most affected by the AIDS pandemic (UN report 2007). The trend of how these conferences were conducted has been in a rather non-directional fashion. The fact that Tanzania is the last on the list (according to the available schedule), may illustrate that

the country's religious sector and its host of academic institutions have been less proactive than other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

It is important to keep in mind that church leaders are one of the key stakeholders in the response to AIDS. The churches have been formulating policies of HIV prevention, care and advocacy. The religious leaders have not only been formulating policies, but also implementing them (WCC Action Plan 2001; OAIC Policy 2001; Lutheran World Federation 2002; Anglican Communion 2001). The churches are crucial in the HIV and AIDS response because they stand at the centre in finding contextual interpretations and implementing them. Most importantly, churches have been struggling with the ancient biblical text in order to unearth relevant and non-judgmental meanings for persons with HIV and those affected by it. This aspect of interpretation is central to the thesis.

An empirical study done in South Africa by Van Dyk (2007:682) reveals that 71% of the participants interviewed would be willing to seek advice from their clergy when infected with HIV. This finding shows that people still trust their religious leaders, and implies even that their interpretations are trusted. The study agrees with Tanzania's social patterns where people still honour their church leaders. Therefore this study selected academic theologians as key respondents to represent church leaders, who are not easily accessible.⁴ The study further aims to call academic theologians alongside persons with HIV to work together in re-reading the selected text of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39.

Since the AIDS epidemic has radically interrupted our world and our lives, it is time to engage the biblical text contextually and finally disseminate knowledge that will promote empowerment and holistic healing (Synman 2006:318).

1.6 The role of African interpreters in Biblical Studies

To this end, the study turns briefly to current developments of the Old Testament debate. While many outstanding scholars in the Old Testament are preoccupied with the methods of doing theology either in Postmodern or traditional ways. It appears that little research has been

⁴ I have interviewed academic theologians, out of convenience since most of these persons are religious leaders too.

done on contextual reading of the Hebrew Bible in the era of AIDS. Scholars like Brueggemann and Barr have done well to advance the frontiers of Old Testament theology but have paid little attention to African, Jewish and womens' studies (Bruce 1984:1-8). Moreover, when Bellis (2001: 1-7) reviewed the works of Brueggemann and Barr, he made the observation that 'those who consider themselves as biblical theologians have been and continue to be mostly white, heterosexual, Christian males.'

Similarly, Clements (2008:25-42) in his article, 'The Enduring Value of the Old Testament: An Interesting Quest', surveys the Old Testament debate starting from 1871 to the present, indicating that the growth was painful especially when archaeology and anthropological research began to pose 'serious' questions about the historical origins of the Hebrew scriptures. Moreover, scholarship stopped being confined to the seminary but moved to the academic and secular arena. All in all, Clements contends that the Hebrew Bible is an enduring resource for scholarship in all its perspectives. Despite the fact that Clements (2008:25-42) provides an impressive historical survey of Old Testament scholarship, he did not adequately acknowledge Third World theologians as instrumental in building this body of knowledge. This shows again that the 'interesting quest' of interpreting scriptures is also based on the social location of the interpreter.

Therefore, this thesis is a platform to engage with African scholars without losing sight of western scholars in an attempt to interpret the biblical text in the context of AIDS. Frontiers of knowledge must be pushed forward in the discipline of Biblical Studies, seeing the need to restore hope to people who have been infected and affected with AIDS.

1.7 Problem statement

Since the discovery of the AIDS epidemic in 1980, the church and the academy have moved from a biomedical discourse to a medico-moral discourse that has been judgmental of persons with HIV. There have been various calls to engage AIDS theologically from the African perspective, but not to a great extent within the field of Biblical Studies. Gatumu (2007:1), laments, 'Biblical scholars have not given much attention to AIDS from a biblical perspective'. It is arguably needful to pursue African solutions for African questions (Muneja 2006b, 81-97).

Nevertheless, the biblical text has to be continuously engaged in an African context in response to the epidemic. Therefore, it was the intent of this study to advance scholarship from the perspective of a male African biblical scholar in collaboration with Tanzanian communities.

A review of literature indicates there are several authors engaging AIDS themes theologically (Jacobson *et al.* 2006, 29-56; Christiansen 2004, 6-8; Van Schalkwyk 2006, 4-19). By contrast, Dube (2004) is among the few scholars who have engaged the biblical text. The book *Grant Me Justice* has five chapters under the theme of the Hebrew Bible, HIV and AIDS and gender and another five chapters on New Testament, HIV and AIDS and gender. These chapters are critical and relevant to the sub-Saharan Africa social location. The review of literature further indicates that there are only two doctoral studies in completion dedicated to HIV and AIDS. These doctoral papers review the HIV and AIDS discourses contributed by Mercy Oduyoye, Musa W. Dube, R.S. Sugirtharajah, Kwok Pui-Lan and F. Segovia. Other scholars writing on biblical themes include B. Haddad and F.L. Moyo (Dube 2007:2). However, none of these engagements are in the discipline of Biblical Studies. Empirical findings from Tanzania show a glimmer of hope in African theological perspectives. However, these are only at master's level and again not in Biblical Studies (Lugaganya 2007; Mpinda 2007; Lyamuya 2003). These studies by African scholars, who have engaged the AIDS discourse through Christological, liberation, feminist and Marxist approaches could be regarded as important ground-breaking work. However, there is always a need for another approach to HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics from an African perspective. The study proposes that the time has come to converse with the biblical texts more extensively to empower men and women, as well as persons with HIV.

1.8 Focus

The focus of this study consists of the integration of a contextual interpretative component and a case study. Moreover, the study has the intention of providing both theological and practical advice to people working in the AIDS field. The study has applied a motif characterisation of the biblical narrative in the context of AIDS in order to provide empowering interpretations (Osborne 2006:200-220; Alter 1981; Culpepper 1983). The study has involved ordinary readers (literate

or non-literate) in re-reading the story of Tamar and its aftermath (2 Samuel 12-13). This narrative is important because it contains an interplay of sexuality, politics and culture, and all of these themes are relevant in the AIDS contexts.

1.9 Research objectives

The study has three research objectives, namely:

- To determine the extent to which the church, the academy and persons with HIV have adhered to stereotyping and social categorisations;
- To problematise issues of gender and reconciliation as displayed in the selected narratives and how they impact Tanzania communities in the AIDS context;
- To contribute towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics that will be applicable in the church and academy in scaling up a response to the AIDS pandemic.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study is considered important for the following reasons:

- It assesses biblical interpretations in order to promote social justice;
- It contributes to scholarship a contextual narrative reading in the era of AIDS;
- It addresses an interpretive method to be employed by the church in the era of AIDS;
- It helps to address socio-economic issues with reference to the poor by empowering them via the biblical text.

1.11 Limitations of the study

This study will not focus on methods such as Source, Redaction and Form criticism, which fall under the wider umbrella of the historical-critical method. The historical-critical method tends to concentrate on the domain of the text and its transmission but it largely ignores the reader. This study therefore uses a reader response method. Moreover, many African theologians are deeply engaged with Postmodern methods

under the assumption that such methods speak more closely to present sub-Saharan socio-economic realities (Holter 2001:27-40; Jonker 2001:77-88, Mojola 2001:89-99). Moreover, Mbiti (2004) argues that Africans are 'notoriously religious'. Therefore, it appears that most African biblical scholars as well as the communities of faith believe the available biblical text to be final and authoritative. So, the study argues that most Africans, whether literate or non-literate, appear to be in need of an empowering hermeneutic. This is the interpretative framework that is expected to address socio-economic injustices such as AIDS, poverty, corruption and poor leadership among many others.

This study does not cover non-Christian traditions such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or African traditional religions, because of its research objectives and design. Nevertheless, the unexplored areas remain a fertile ground for further research in the field of Religious Studies. In addition to that, the geographical coverage of participants is limited to the Arusha region (north-east of Tanzania) because of its strategic position in reference to the researcher's location.

1.12 Sources for the study

This study is posited on the Hebrew Bible because this book is still both believed and trusted as a source of empowerment by persons with HIV as well as church leaders (Masenya 2001:133-146). Also, the study concurs with Kimilike (2006: 23) who argues that deep in the heart of African Christians, they still remain African and this implies that they will have a holistic view of things. So, an African Christian will always seek to use the Hebrew Bible as an interpretive tool (cf. Mugambi 2001:16; Vivian 1965:88).

Finally the study focuses on 2 Samuel 13.1-14:39, which is the story of Tamar's rape and its aftermath. This story has been chosen because of its prime significance in the era of AIDS. It is a text which has the potential to grow wings and to be useful in the campaign against gender-based violence, poverty, stigma and discrimination, abuse of power, forgiveness, the role of advocacy and reconciliation. This story is loaded with meaning, especially when it is read in the context of AIDS. Thus, to crown the matter, the narrative has received a lot of attention from scholars and HIV and AIDS activists (Tamar Campaign 2007, Ackermann 2004:50-57, Montgomery and Nyabera 2007: 105).

1.13 Following chapters

Chapter 2: Reading strategies when interpreting the Old Testament in the context of AIDS. The chapter surveys and analyses the following topics: the current state of Old Testament debate featuring Historical-critical methods and their effect on the book of 2 Samuel. The review proceeds by entering a dialogue with Postmodern methods and how they fit into the AIDS era. Later it turns to previous readings of the book of Samuel. Then the chapter concludes by highlighting some selected African scholars, who have ventured a new 'African hermeneutic' in the context of AIDS and suggesting further directions for research

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design of the fieldwork. This chapter will present and discuss the methodological underpinnings of the fieldwork. It covers the techniques and qualitative procedures used in the fieldwork and in the analysis of data. The sections include sources of data, theoretical framework, data site analysis, research respondents, data gathering strategies, approaches to interpretation of data, establishing validity and reliability of data, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and finally a summary of the chapter is given.

Chapter 4: My contextual re-reading of 2 Samuel 13:1-22. This chapter examines vividly the trends of male power and how it affects negatively the disadvantaged, who are mostly females. It uses the case of Tamar in the Old Testament to make its argument relevant to people who live in the 21st century. The chapter employs feminist criticism and narrative methods of biblical interpretation. Finally the chapter suggests the need to stop blaming each other because of unfair utilisation of male power in the past and even in contemporary times. It will advocate the necessity to reconcile and build a better world of women and men who live happily together in love, peace and justice.

Chapter 5: Stigmatisation of persons with HIV by the Church and Academy. The chapter presents empirical findings of the first research objective. The finding indicates there is still stigmatisation in communities of Christians ranging from medium to high levels.

Chapter 6: Re-reading 2 Samuel 13-14 against the HIV and AIDS context – Major characters. The other section which has been presented is the first part of the research objective two. This was geared to discuss how biblical characters in 2 Samuel 13-14 can be appropriated in an HIV and AIDS context through the eyes of ordinary readers. The characters that

are presented comprise the major actors; these are Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. The finding indicates that every major character in the narrative has relevance in the AIDS context.

Chapter 7: Re-reading 2 Samuel 13:1-14 against the AIDS context – Minor characters. This chapter is a continuation of the previous one: it is set to finish the second research objective. As stated earlier the second research objective problematises the power play between characters of different genders and how that can be related to the HIV and AIDS context. So although the characters that are presented here are minor, they are important to complete the narrator's picture.

Chapter 8: What is the way forward towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics? The chapter discusses the last research question, which sought to propose workable re-reading strategies in the context of the epidemic. The finding indicates that both ordinary and socially engaged scholars need unity in reading the text.

Chapter 9: Discussion of findings in relation to previous scholarship. The chapter discusses all the three research findings in light of previous scholarship. The conclusion proposes for a need of an HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics to benefit both the church and academy.

Chapter 10: Conclusion and recommendations. This is the last chapter, it summarises the study by endorsing a need for an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics. Thereafter recommendations are given to critical stakeholders. These include the church, universities, government, and socially engaged scholars. Lastly, areas that need further research are suggested.

CHAPTER 2:

READING STRATEGIES WHEN INTERPRETING THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF HIV/AIDS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter surveys and analyses various options in terms of reading strategies and the main differences between historical-critical methods (text horizon) and reader response (reader horizon). The chapter places greater emphasis on the reader response method, which strives to fuse the horizon of the ancient Hebrew texts with that of the reader in the AIDS era. Later the review turns to previous readings of the book of Samuel. The chapter concludes by highlighting some gaps in AIDS readings and suggesting further trends for research. Moreover there is a decided stance with an emphasis on gaining another African perspective, through establishing the context of the problem in relation to current developments (Hart 1998:27; Neuman 2006: 111-112; Glatthorn 1998: 28-32).

2.2 The historical-critical method and its assumptions

The historical-critical method arose in the Enlightenment era of the 18th century where the emphasis in Biblical Studies on the supernatural gave way to human reason (Davidson 2000:24, Togarasei 2009: 80). This was also the time when the colonisation of Africa started to take place. Africa and Africans had negligible contributions to Biblical Studies. So this hermeneutic which has persistently remained dominant up to the 21st century arose in the setting of European universities among the elite. Ukpong (2002:14) and Dube (2004:50) are probably right in accusing such scholarship of having colonising and modernistic tendencies by assuming that there is only one way of seeing reality. This reality claims to be bias free and objective, with the possibility of unearthing the original meaning. While this argument may seem appealing to some scholars, it has a severe limitation in that the interpreters had forgotten their own ecclesiological, cultural, racial backgrounds and gender and how these may bias their interpretation (Togarasei 2008:80).

The historical-critical method is a wide umbrella, which includes Source criticism, Tradition history, Redaction history and Form criticism. Source criticism deals with the written documents underlying the present written text. Tradition history deals with the oral phase. Redaction criticism deals with the question of how redactors edited the text before it was transmitted in the present canonical form, whereas Form criticism is concerned with the classification of materials in the form of hymns, genres, and parables (Stern 2008:182-188; Bray 1996:396-410). The next section discusses further the major aspects of historical criticism.

2.2.1 Source criticism

Davidson (2000:52) defines Source criticism as, ‘an attempt to hypothetically reconstruct and understand the process of literary development leading to the present form of the text, based on the assumption that scriptures are the product of the life setting of the community which produced them.’ Matthewson (2002:3) defines source criticism comparatively based on age as ‘the great-grandparent of historical criticism – the one first on the scene, whose progeny can easily be traced: Source criticism to Form criticism to Redaction criticism, with all that goes in between.’

According to source critics, the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were written by an anonymous author (or authors), called the Deuteronomist (Nelson 2005:319-337). This author is said to be responsible for the authorship of the books of Joshua to 1 and 2 Kings. The criteria used in Source criticism include but are not limited to similarities in writing styles, ideological assumptions, word choice, particularity with regard to divine names, and any number of other differences (Stern 2008:182). The assumptions of authorship by the Deuteronomist are postulated by scholars in the theory called the Documentary hypothesis (2008:183). However, there is another camp of scholars who contend that the Deuteronomist was the redactor not the author. Whatever the position on origins, this study means to concentrate on the finished text and its relevance in the AIDS context.

While Source criticism has enjoyed applause in the academy, some fundamentalist academics are not comfortable with its assumptions because they view it as an attack on the authority and the integrity of the

Hebrew text. In favour of this stance, Stern (2008: 183) argues that Source criticism sees reality as accounting for only a fraction for the total evidence, 'especially when analysing a literary corpus as bulky and complex as an elephant.' Stern further argues that, it is a 'system which fails to consider all the evidence, and wherein scholars shape the data into the configurations of their own imagination.' I generally agree with Stern, but believe that these facts do not disqualify the basic premises of the method. It should however be supplemented by other approaches.

In an endeavour to re-read the book of 2 Samuel in the context of AIDS among persons with HIV and Christian scholars in the academy, it becomes problematic to limit one's focus to Source criticism and the text horizon only. The study has therefore endeavoured to fuse the horizons of ordinary readers with the horizon of the ancient Hebrew text to bring about empowerment in the AIDS era (Hasel 1991:16; Osborne 2006:24-26; Canale 2005:450-451).

2.2.2 Redaction criticism

As explained earlier, Redaction criticism is concerned with the 'supposed redactors' who edited the Hebrew text before it reached the present canonical text (Morrow 2008:113). Studies in the New Testament indicate that Redaction criticism includes 'an activity of collecting, rearranging, re-elaborating, and reshaping older material' (Ska 2005:4, Tan 2001:601). Ska (2005: 5) further explains the duty of the redactor(s) included living channels of transmission, being custodians of the ancient sources, and interpreting the ancient text. The substantial work in this paradigm is accredited to scholars like Bultmann, G. von Rad, W. Marxsen and H. Conzelmann, among others (Bray 1996:401, Ska 2005:5). Redaction critics claim that the Pentateuch, the books of Joshua, 1 and Kings as well 1 and 2 Samuel underwent several interpolations which ultimately changed the theological emphasis of the books. This outcome has resulted in three groups among scholars in Christian circles. These are (1) total repudiation; (2) qualified acceptance; and (3) ready adoption (Tan 2001:605). Concomitant to this division, this study chooses qualified acceptance, because the biblical text is primarily a document of faith and it should be regarded as such. It is designated for believers in Yahweh to trace the supernatural things he has done through the characters represented, whether moral or immoral. All of

this is meant to transmit moral lessons to the present generation (Nkansah-Obrempong 2007:142). But all in all, we cannot be naïve to scientific discoveries about the transmission of the biblical text.

One staunch believer in Redaction criticism is Joe Barhart. In an article that appeared in the *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, he endorsed that:

The material of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1-2 contains putative accounts of characters' employing fabrications to serve presumably worthy purposes. The following are some examples: Nathan's story of the beloved lamb slaughtered; David's lie to King Achish; Jacob's persuading Ahimelech; possibly Nathan and Bathsheba's lie to the dying David; Ahimaaz's serving as David's secret agent; Saul's deceiving the medium at Endor; David's telling Jonathan to lie to Saul regarding his absence at the New Moon festival; the young messenger's lie that he had killed King Saul; Joab's deceiving Abner and murdering him; Amnon's lie to David and Tamar regarding his supposed illness (2006:231).

The analysis of Barhart that the content of selected texts is to be seen as 'fabricated information done willingly,' are questionable. Many Christian faith traditions accept that the biblical text has a moral fabric woven tightly to benefit future generations. So to regard the Bible as wilful fabrication is not only questionable, but is not helpful in a worshipping context. However this critique is important to let us know that every interpreter has his or her own biases that are brought into the text, whether consciously or unconsciously (Surrey 1960:51). Although it is accepted that some forms of Redaction criticism may be helpful in exploring the text horizon and more specifically the historical origin of the text, the focus of this study is primarily on the horizon of the readers, which fuses with the horizon of the text to bring about useful meanings in the context of AIDS.

2.2.3 Form criticism

The great progenitor of Form criticism was a German scholar called Hermann Gunkel. Bray (1996:396-400). Longmann (1985:46-67) argues

that Gunkel's contribution to Form criticism is a response to the failure of source criticism to appreciate literary creations embodied in the biblical text. While Source criticism takes a diachronic approach, Form criticism is synchronic (Chisholm Jr 2005:368-369). Whereas Source criticism has been blamed for dissecting and dismembering the text and leaving it bare, Form criticism has been praised for viewing the text as a whole (Longmann III 1985:59-60, Long 2000:512). Gunkel's approach to the text was influenced by a comparative study of other religious texts, which exemplified close resemblance in the mood or thoughts of the text, linguistic forms (grammar and vocabulary) and the social setting.

The initial task of Form criticism is taxonomic. This has to deal with classification of forms of Hebrew literature into a group of psalms, prose, genre, lament, or prophecy, among others (Muilenburg 1969:3). Brueggemann (1975a:11) argues further that 'Form criticism can help us see that the mode and form of community, intentional or not, is to some extent a political decision about the way in which reality will be presented ... to that extent form criticism is not one method among others but the most elementary way in which the *interest* behind the text can be discerned.' At the risk of exaggerating, Longmann (1985:47) has argued that if Form criticism can be employed properly it is possible to some extent to recover the author's original meaning.

Current research in biblical studies indicates that Form criticism has been growing from antiquity to the present. It has taken many forms which include: narrative criticism; rhetoric criticism; structuralism; reader-response analysis and other methods after their kind. Just like other reading strategies, Form criticism has its inadequacies. Muileburg (1969:5-6), summarises them to include (1) that the ancient men of Israel, like their Near Eastern neighbours, were influenced in their speech and their literary compositions by convention and custom and (2) aversion to biographical or psychological interpretations and its resistance to historical commentary. Seeing that there is yet a method to be discovered that will give a full view of 'an elephant', this therefore suggests that we will always have the need to advance old methodologies into new frontiers of scholarship. The current study focuses on the horizon of the reader, which fuses with the horizon of the text to bring meanings useful in the era of AIDS.

2.3 The text horizon versus the horizon of the reader

When a hermeneutist approaches the text he or she basically faces two options: that is, to focus either on the text or on the reader in order to bring out meaning. However, Van Dyk (2009:423-424) delves deeper to explain four options with which the reader is confronted. These are:

- *A rationalised reading of the text* – this kind of reading to a greater or lesser extent regards the text as authoritative with regard to some of its scientific details. Usually the reader tends to understand the text more or less literally.
- *Rejection of the pre-scientific view* – this is a skeptical approach which refuses to engage in any real discussion between the text and the reader. This type of reading is usually incapable of making a fusion of horizons between the text and the reader.
- *Symbolic interactionism* – proponents of this view acknowledge the fact that the pre-scientific view is outdated but maintain that it is still authoritative if interpreted allegorically. Its inadequacy is based on the fact that symbolic interpretation sometimes does not communicate harmoniously with the grain of the text.
- *Gadamerian Hermeneutics* – this scholar criticised the notion of 19th century Romantic exegetes that a ‘temporal gulf exists between ancient texts and the current reader. While Gadamer did not minimise the idea of the ‘temporal gulf’ he contended that fusion of horizons can take place.

In response to Van Dyk, this study opted to partially engage Gadamerian hermeneutics because of its heavy emphasis on the reader (Dostal 2008:247-269; Di Cesare 2004:74-102, Risser 1991:93-105). While the study acknowledges that there is a temporal gulf between the succession narrative era and the AIDS era, it has opted to fuse the two horizons in order to provide meaningful interpretations which would empower persons with HIV as well as persons without HIV. As the empirical findings will declare in the next chapters, it has been possible to fuse the horizons, leaving both the researcher and the respondents fully satisfied and empowered.

Although Gadamerian hermeneutics is central to this study by providing a foundational framework of the study, it also has some inadequacies. Gadamerian hermeneutics does not fully discuss African socio-

economic issues or AIDS. So in order to supplement this inadequacy, the study employs liberation theologies with an African slant. In addition to that, Gadamerian hermeneutics has been confronted by feminists who claim that he has not taken women's issues seriously. This is attested by his minimal engagement with feminists in lectures as well as his published works (Code 2006:1-35). So in order to supplement this inadequacy the study has also integrated feminist interpretations.

Another interesting option that confronts readers is offered by Clines (1992:82-83). Clines argues that when reading the Old Testament text, the reader may either read with or against the grain of the text. Reading 'with' the grain of the text refers to a reading of the text that subscribes to the ideology of the text whatever the cost. It can arguably be referred to as a pre-critical reading of the text. Whereas reading 'against' the grain of the text means critical readings which challenge orthodox understandings of the text. Clines contends that reading against the grain of the text is not necessarily a gesture of showing disrespect to the text, but can mean that the grain actually exists. This study to a large extent employs readings against the grain of the text. For example, it critiques patriarchy through feminist readings; moreover it goes against the grain of the text, which has the major theme of succession to David's throne, by relating it to AIDS themes.

2.4 Postmodern and reader-response reading strategies

Canale (2005:259) defines Postmodernism as 'the conviction that human reason cannot produce absolute truth. All truth is regional...and that truth springs from the creativity of an individual'. One of the leading evangelical Postmodern theologians is Vanhoozer. He interprets postmodernism as 'messianic,' meaning that it is open to the coming of the other and the different and for this reason, he insists that faith, not reason is endemic to the Postmodern condition (Harris 2006:833). In essence, Postmodernism emphasises the notion that the text can produce multiple meanings for different readers (Stenmark 2003:325).

Bray (1996:380) places Postmodernism in the late 20th century, characterised by its method of subjectivism. This study is undergirded by the assumption that the Old Testament is an inspired record and appeals to both absolute and relative scenarios (Canale 2005b:57).

When Postmodernism reached its height of popularity during the 1960s and 1970s, it did not leave the discipline of Biblical Studies unaffected. It elevated the reader as an important channel in the hermeneutical process. Dube (2004:42-58) identifies two major paradigms in Biblical Studies. The first is the *literary paradigm*, which includes the following reading strategies: narrative criticism; ideology criticism; rhetorical criticism; genre criticism; structuralist readings; reader response readings; psychoanalytical readings; and postcolonial readings. The second paradigm, is the *cultural paradigm*, emphasises the social context in which the biblical text originated and the ideologies incorporated within the texts. The cultural paradigm includes the following theories of reading: social description, sociological analysis; Marxist readings; cultural anthropology; and archaeological excavation analysis.

The reader-response method of biblical interpretation is selected as the interpretative framework for the study, because it takes seriously the social location of the reader (reader's horizon) and has it primacy in the text itself (Nadar 2008), in contrast to the historical-critical method, which emphasises the world behind the text (text's horizon).

Reader-response criticism is defined by Bray (1996:484) as a method which: 'emphasised the importance of the reader and his or her perception of the text, which could live only to the extent that he or she was able to absorb and appreciate it.' Reader response reading strategies developed relatively recently, but nonetheless play an important role in many developing world theologies. These theologies include Tanzanian Ujamaa theology, South African Black theology, African theology, Reconstruction theology, Enculturation theology and Womanist/Bosadi theology, amongst others. Bray further categorises reader-response criticism as a social trend within interpretations and not as either academic or evangelical in nature. However, in contrast to Bray, it can be argued that the reader response reading strategy may also be considered an academic discipline, and not necessarily different from other evangelical readings, for the following reasons:

- It is often practised by socially engaged biblical scholars;
- It is widely employed by African scholars in contemporary debates (West 1996);

- As argued earlier in this chapter, reader-response strategies can be regarded as an integral part of Gadamer's scientific hermeneutics, emphasising the horizon of the reader;
- Reader response may also be regarded as evangelical because it takes seriously issues found in evangelical churches and universities.

Within the wider context of reader-response reading strategies, various different versions can be distinguished. Following is a brief overview of some of these reading strategies or theologies proposed by various scholars during the past few decades.

2.4.1 Liberation theology: a global setting

Liberation theology is one of the methods that have become a centre ground in Postmodern hermeneutics. The method began in Latin America in the 1970s as a resistance against oppression in sectors of race, economy and gender. Liberation theology has spread very fast in the southern hemisphere into what has come to be known as Third World theologies (Mashau and Fredericks 2008:116). This includes Asia and southern Africa. Uchegbue (2008:15) captures very well the essence of Liberation theology by portraying it as, 'any theological enterprise on behalf of and from the perspective of the poor, deprived, oppressed and marginalised in society against all forms of structures – social, economic, political or ideological – which support and perpetuate their condition.'

Liberation theology can be differentiated from the methods of northern hemisphere scholars by being contextual and emphasising human social needs, whereas the latter is mostly philosophical and abstract in nature. Liberation theology therefore has a strong inclination towards doing theology contextually (Thomson 2006:31-48). Mashau and Fredericks (2008:112) argue that 'our theological reflections about a God can only find true meaning when issues raised by the Bible find relevancy in the specific contexts.' While Liberation theology has gained prominence both in the academy and with many grass-root readers, critical northern hemisphere scholarship has prevailed mostly in the academy.

Liberation theology has derived inspiration from the story of Exodus plus prophets like Amos and Hosea. God is seen as a liberator, healer and as the one who stands on behalf of the oppressed and the

marginalised. Jesus is also seen as a liberator who is not only interested in the spiritual realm but also the social realm (Bray 1996:516). I concur with Brueggemann (1975b:161-185), who argued: 'liberation theologies in their abrasiveness likely may be located on the trajectory rooted in Moses'. Liberation theologies are meant to restore and not scatter, to reclaim and not silently endure oppression like the masses suffering with AIDS in Africa.

Its theoretical point of departure was advocated strongly by Norman Gottwald, whose instrumental work, the *Tribes of Yahweh* (1979) is still considered as an authority by many scholars. It is interesting to note that Gottwald draws his interpretive premises from Marxism, for which he was severely criticised by some scholars. Like any other hermeneutical approach discussed herein, Liberation theology has its own shortcomings too. Bray (1996:516-517) and Ochegbue (2008:14-24) summarise the main criticisms against the method: 1) it reduces faith to politics; 2) it gives a one-sided interpretation of the Bible by stressing only its political element; 3) it uses the Bible to support its political ends by encouraging chauvinism; 5) it has supported other forms of human sexuality against traditional Christianity; 6) it has sometimes resorted to violence.

This study therefore has made a decided effort not to turn faith into politics; nevertheless its role is not ignored. It should also be made clear that the intention of this study is to be an antithesis to any form of violence whether related to gender or not. So through employing liberation theology as the backdrop of interpretations the study has embraced both the weak and powerful as essential stakeholders in eradicating the AIDS pandemic.

2.4.2 Liberation theology: the African setting

Africa has not only been oppressed economically, socially and politically, but has also to a large extent been excluded from interpreting the biblical text. Therefore the need to engage in liberation methods is pertinent and does not need apologies. Engaging in Liberation theology in Africa essentially means a reaction against western Christianity as well as promoting African culture. Kathide (2003:3) has contended that European theology is 'irrelevant' in certain aspects; since it has made students studying theology to concentrate on the past problems and

debates of the European Church, while not being sensitive to current pressing social-economic needs. Mashau and Fredericks (2008:115) have captured the essence of this contention in the following words:

Western Missionaries marginalised virtually everything that had to do with traditional world view...they succeeded in convincing Africans to dress, talk, walk and even eat like themselves. But they failed to make Africans realise that Christianity is comprehensive and that it seeks to address. Indeed African religious experiences were driven to the periphery, because everything of African origin was considered pagan.

The study concurs with the above statement, arguing that the time has come to challenge the view that Africa's own culture and problems are unimportant. Africa's problems should be solved by Africans, especially in spearheading the battle against HIV and AIDS. This stance is supported by a Swahili proverb that says, ' *Kidole kimoja Hakivunji Chawa* ' (*one finger cannot kill a lice*). So African scholars need to engage with other scholars from the north instead of remaining on the periphery of scholarship.

In South Africa, Liberation theology has manifested itself through Black theology, which was mainly against racism and the injustices done to the people of African descent in South Africa. The components of Black theology are well explained in the Kairos Document (Maluleke 2003:63). However, in this study the Black theology perspective will not receive the central focus, because Tanzania has never seen racism as its big issue as compared to gender inequalities, poverty and stigma and discrimination against persons infected with and affected by HIV.

2.4.3 Enculturation

Liberation theology is also expressed through a reading strategy called enculturation, which aims at making an intersection with Christian Scriptures. It is noteworthy that enculturation has not claimed the death of God or questioned the inspiration of the scripture but has assumed the full authority of the scripture. In 1977, African theologians endorsed at the 3rd Pan-African Conference in Accra that:

The Bible is the basic source of African Theology, because it is the primary witness of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. No theology can retain its Christian identity apart from the scripture. The Christian heritage is important for African Theology because Africa is part of the worldwide Christianity (Final communiqué 1977).

The key proponents of enculturation are John Mbiti, Jesse Mugambi, Kwame Bediako, Byang Kato, among many others (Mashau and Fredericks 2008:121; Kato 2004:130-139; Nkansah-Obrempong 2007:140-150). Like other methods, enculturation has been criticised too, especially as being syncretic by absorbing African ideas, which are sometimes contrary to the traditional understanding of Christianity. For example one of the key proponents of enculturation Byang Kato (2004) has suggested using 'juju' in Christianity, that is, the veneration of African ancestors and further claimed that the God worshiped in Christianity is the same God as that in African traditional religions (ATRs).

The Roman Catholic church in Africa has been a pioneer in utilising enculturation. However, most of the Protestant churches, and even pockets within Roman Catholicism, treat enculturation with suspicion. In a recent study carried out in Tanzania, Wijzen (2000:38-65) observed that Father Joseph Blomjous, who worked as early as 1954 in the Mwanza region used enculturation in the following ways:

- By employing traditional rain making rituals;
- By translating Catholic hymns and chants into local languages;
- By using local herbs for healing;
- By equating the biblical figure of Melchizedek with Sukuma traditional leaders.

The response to this study has indicated that many Sukuma people do not wish their culture to be mixed with Christianity. They view this mixture as '*udanganyifu*' (confusion). Such analysis is an indication that when enculturation is to be employed, special care must be taken to differentiate ideas that are contrary to mainstream Christian teaching (see also Bowie 2001:67-93).

Although this study has chosen to use enculturation to some extent when interpreting the narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-39:14:33; it does not

accept everything it advocates. The study has been cautious with areas which contradict the basic tenets of Christian theology. For example, this study does not wish to advocate polygamy because it is problematic in the context of HIV and AIDS. The study further does not support widow cleansing or having sex with virgins with the assumption that it may cure of AIDS. Moreover the study does not support any witchcraft ideas that contradict both the biblical foundations as well as medical knowledge.

2.4.4 African women theology

African women theology is another branch of liberation theology which views the biblical text from a feminist perspective. African women theology is different from mainstream feminism because it is socially located in Africa and is against some forms of gender-based oppression sometimes perpetuated by their white sisters. Nkansah-Obrempong (2007:145) holds that 'the main concern of African feminist theologians is to heal the brokenness between men and women'. This is truly a noble goal in present Africa, which has been ravaged by ethnic wars, languishing economies and to a large extent the consequences of AIDS. The foundations of gender-based oppression are still rampant in African cultures. This can be seen where physical abuse of women is accepted in certain cultures. The issue of having multiple sex partners is seen as a favour to men and not women. Women to a large extent have been excluded from owning property as well as pursuing education. In fact one of the key contributions of feminist theology is the strategy to read the Bible from the perspective of the disempowered, who are usually women, the poor and children. In the context of AIDS, this is also the group most affected by the AIDS epidemic (Fewell 1987:77-87).

Dube (2007:346-367) traces the issue of gender imbalance in both the Old and New Testaments. She argues that gender is a social construct. Once misused it is women who are normally at the receiving end of violence. Gender imbalance is rampant in Christian churches, as seen in gifts given at weddings, leadership sharing, and property ownership among others. But the antidote to all of this is employing the lifestyle of Jesus the Liberator. A strategy to read the Bible against the backdrop of AIDS should therefore not shun away from gender inequalities. This is the trend that biblical scholars ought to follow.

Therefore reading the Old Testament to resist oppressive patriarchy, the way Tamar did (2 Samuel 13), seeks to affirm life as intended by God as a critical step to eradicate AIDS. African women theologians bring all of these concerns to the fore as they read the biblical text to unearth gender balanced readings. African women theologians are not intending to overthrow patriarchy but to re-position it in the context of 21st century. By repositioning it, African feminists mean to elevate principles of equality but without losing focus on biological roles and differences.

Amongst African women feminists are pioneers such as Mercy Amba Oduoye, Isabel Phiri, Musimbi Kanyoro, Madipoane Masenya, Musa Dube, Sarojin Nadar and others. To this study the work of Sarojin Nadar is especially relevant and will therefore be discussed in more detail. Her work is a part of the modules published by the Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa (2008)

In module 1, she discusses the problem of AIDS as defined and negotiated in Old Testament disease and illness frameworks. Unit 2 and Unit 3 delve into hermeneutics and other methods of studying the Hebrew Bible. In unit 4, she begins to apply methods of interpretation to study the book of Genesis in such a way that it would empower its readers. In unit 5, the book of Ruth is studied in the AIDS context. The theme of how culture and economic injustice can contribute towards the spread of AIDS is clearly highlighted. In Unit 6, the book of Esther is studied in the HIV and AIDS context, arguing that the acceptance of rape in religious communities is one of the most burning issues on the agenda. In Units 7 and 8, the book of Job is read critically and contextually in an attempt to answer the question of whether AIDS is a punishment from God. Other interesting perspectives include reading the book as a woman or a poor person. Finally, the perspective of stigma and discrimination cannot be overemphasised. In Unit 9, the book of Hosea is explored in HIV and AIDS contexts. The predominant theme is the link between violence, women and HIV/AIDS. In Unit 10, the book of Ezekiel is studied, the main perspective being realising hope in the AIDS era. This coverage is ground breaking and quite informative in AIDS contexts. The advantage of her method is also its extensive applicability.

However, in this study, rather than attempting another bird's-eye view of the Old Testament, only one section of the Book of Samuel will be studied in depth. Nadar's work is also mostly a philosophical analysis,

while this study wishes to combine both interpretative analysis and empirical approaches. In Nadar's work, there are various Old Testament writing approaches, while this study has concentrated one Old Testament narrative. Moreover, it is noteworthy that we have a similar theoretical framework, that is, liberation theology in African contexts.

The weaknesses of feminism can be summarised as follows: feminism has a tendency to project itself into the biblical narratives as if they were written for the 21st century. So in order to avoid this weakness, the interview questions used in this study began by presenting ancient contexts before moving into HIV and AIDS applications. Also, feminism has a tendency not speak of anything 'good,' about patriarchy as if matriarchy stands without imperfections. This weakness has been dealt with in this study by comparing interpretations between males and females, with the purpose of emphasising mutual responsibilities.

2.4.5 Reconstruction theology

In recent years, there has been a major shift from Liberation theology to Reconstruction theology (Getui and Obeng 1999: I-II). Reconstruction theology seeks the middle way between African Christianity and western Christianity. Kwame Bediako calls this phenomenon a 'third way position' (1994:16-17). According to Nkansah-Obrempong (2007:146) and Gunda (2009:84-102), Jesse Mugambi is accredited as the leading proponent of the theology of reconstruction. Reconstruction theology has become necessary because many of the challenges during the cold war and apartheid eras are not as pressing as in the past. Today we face different issues which demand different methodologies of reading the text.

Among the emerging issues which African people face today, according to Mashau and Fredericks (2008:122), include but are not limited to:

- Poverty and inequality locally and globally;
- High infant mortality rates and the consistent exclusion of certain groups from further education;
- Issues of leadership, power struggle and corruption;
- Civil war and ethnic cleansing;
- Reconciliation and peace;
- *HIV/AIDS pandemic (reality and effects thereof)* [my emphasis];

- Neo-colonialism and globalisation;
- African Renaissance and NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa's Development);
- Gender issues (Women in African Churches and Society);
- Religious pluralism and the challenge of Islam;
- Ecological issues;
- Issues of theological training.

The mentioned topics have necessitated the shift from Liberation theology to 'liberative constructive theology'. This study used many of the aspects of this method when reading the text, because it also deals with issues such as the AIDS pandemic, gender issues, poverty, issues of theological training, leadership, reconciliation and peace.

The work of reconstruction is multidisciplinary, it requires not theology alone but also social sciences and philosophy (Nkansah-Obrempong 2007:146). AIDS too is an epidemic which should be approached within a multidisciplinary context. The study therefore used various approaches to facilitate discussions, including research methods in the social sciences and multiple interpretive strategies. This all suggests that Reconstruction theology is a pertinent and relevant example of contemporary hermeneutics.

Reconstruction theology has shifted the exodus motif of Liberation theology to the Nehemiah and Ezra motif in reconstructing the fallen walls of Jerusalem during the Babylonian captivity. The captivity can be seen to symbolise the social economic evils ravaging Africa. For reconstruction to be successful, academic theologians and church leaders need to demonstrate strong commitment and leadership skills, like Nehemiah and Ezra of ancient Israel. We need leaders who will be brave enough to speak a message of empowerment even in the midst of opposition, since sometimes we are our own enemies. On this note, the prophetic words of the book of Amos bring sense:

They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth. Therefore because you trample upon the poor and take from him exactions of wheat, you have built your houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine (4:10-11).

In line with the idea that we create our own stumbling blocks, Gunda (2009:101) has stated that, 'we Africans are the worst enemies of Africa and its reconstruction and unless we appreciate this painful truth, reconstruction remains a dream, a bad one for that matter.' So in implementing Reconstruction theology in this study, a decided effort was made not to try and find 'scapegoats' for the present situation of HIV and AIDS in Tanzania. Instead, participants were guided to feel that everybody has a shared guilt in the scaling up of the pandemic. Therefore Reconstruction theology is timely and tells the truth as it is. The time has come that we redirect some of our energies to critiquing ourselves instead directing all of our efforts to blaming western Christianity for present calamities for which we are accountable.

Perhaps the weakness of Reconstruction theology is that it is still very new and for this reason it is very difficult for people who have been accustomed to find blame for every occurrence. So the study endeavoured to bear with respondents who had the tendency of blaming others. In this way the study still calls for further research.

2.4.6 Contextual bible study

Contextual bible study, as developed by Gerald West, was extensively influenced by most of the above-mentioned reader response methods (cf West 2008:285-303). This reading strategy has been present in the scholarship arena since 1989 and should therefore be seen as a recent and yet evolving scholarship within the wider field of reader-response strategies. In his own words West (2006:148) has described Contextual Bible Study as 'a particular African manifestation of biblical interpretation. It is a regular part of the praxis of the Ujamaa Centre and so its contours are not fixed. It is constantly evolving, shaped by both the communities we work with and biblical scholarship.'

Contextual bible studies (CBS) has the following ten premises:

1. The Bible study begins and ends with community consciousness;
2. The Bible study belongs to the community and is therefore authoritative;
3. It equalises power relationships (this includes gender inequalities);

4. It is a collaboration between both critical readers and ordinary readers;
5. It owns local embodied theologies;
6. It reads the Bible for individual and social transformation (pragmatic) through the See-Judge-Act Method;
7. Modes of reading include: behind the text (past), the text itself, and in front of the text (present);
8. It recognises the interpretation as a dynamic process: the reader is active and not passive;
9. It reads the Bible from the perspective of the poor, working class and the marginalised;
10. It includes literary interpretation against the backdrop of historical and sociological construction.

When reading the text of 2 Samuel 13:1-21 with various groups and individuals during the fieldwork part of this study, West's Contextual Bible Study method was used as the most appropriate version of the reader-response reading strategy for exploring the text within the AIDS context.

2.4.7 Tamar's campaign – reader response reading movement

Tamar's campaign is a project that started in 1996 at the University of KwaZulu Natal and had the aim of bringing together socially engaged scholars with ordinary readers of the Bible (whether literate or not). The union of socially engaged scholars and ordinary readers of the Bible have always resulted in empowering and liberating messages of life.

Tamar's campaign has produced many contextual Bible studies, amongst them is the article by Cooper-White (2007:1-6). The article begins by explaining that the story of Tamar is marked by dark spots of incest, domestic violence and unfounded retribution to the rapist (Amnon) by his half brother (Absalom). The article advances by relating the event to the contemporary situation. Finally, the writer devised eight discussion questions which begin by asking the themes in the narrative and smoothly finishing by the application aspect inquiring, 'what can the church do to break the silence against gender based violence? What

is impressive in this short exposition is its simple continuum with a powerful contextual relevance.

Another comprehensive article from Tamar's campaign is the article by West *et al.* (2004:1-6). The article begins by acknowledging that there is silence in the church about women who are sexually abused like Tamar. Furthermore, the passage has been used to create a safe and sacred space in which women (and sometimes men) articulate their own experiences in relation to sexual abuse. From that point, the article advances smoothly with 8 questions to read the text by, which begin by asking group members to read the text aloud and finishing with the question: 'what will you now do in response to this Bible study?' The article comes to an end by applauding the strategy, which has campaigned against AIDS since 2000.

The point of departure from West *et al.* (2004) is to complement what has been done in South Africa and bring it to Tanzania's different cultural context. Moreover, this thesis is a detailed study which does not only end by bringing contextual meanings in the era of AIDS but contributes to the body of scholarship as a theory proposed for future biblical hermeneutics in the context of AIDS.

2.5 Previous interpretations of the Samuel text

Merril (2008:397-412) discusses the books of 1 and 2 Samuel by considering them alongside other historical books such as 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. These books were written during the post-exile era (400 BC) by an anonymous author. But the various historical books have striking similarity and some minor differences in setting, literary thrust and theological emphasis. Merrill further argues that some scholars consider the historicity of these books as suspect, although others believe it to be factual if understood from the point of view of the authors.

Another noteworthy reading is the book by Campbell (2003), which is a continuation of another volume (1 Samuel). This work dissects the discussion first structurally then textually, while placing emphasis on genre, setting and meaning. Such an approach is well organised and useful in approaching the text. The succession narrative does not escape his serious treatment (2 Sam 9-20). Campbell claims such narratives were invented and created independently and at the moment they seem

to have lost such a quality. However, the study contends that if one engages with an African who believes the narrative as an inspired record, one will encounter a serious disagreement. Therefore, the study argues that since the book is viewed as historicised fiction, it will miss the thrust in addressing the AIDS related issues. And if such a method is used in a Church setting, great suspicion may arise (Brenner 2005:92). Another critical essay is that by Gray (1998:39-58). The work uses rhetorical analysis of the biases of the biblical author to portray strategically how Amnon misused his male powers for immoral sexual gratification in the life of Tamar. The unjustified sexual act had a link to his power struggle against Absalom in search of becoming the heir to the throne of David. The article categorises Tamar as a representative of the suffering poor communities being misused by an illegal wealthy class. I consider this work to be what I call, 'reading to benefit communities.' The development of his assessment is tight and arguably rich. This thesis agrees with this approach but it strategically features the poor in the context of AIDS.

Another important reading is by Martin (1984:209-222), who discusses the state of scholarship of 2 Samuel 1 and 2. Martin cautions interpreters to be aware of Text critical matters. There is a well developed argument that the Masoretic text is corrupt as compared to the Septuagint. So readers are encouraged to know both Hebrew and Greek in order to get closer to the meaning intended by the authors. While this analysis is exhaustive and current, it is designated for scholars in the academy, who are important in their own right. The treatment of the book of Samuel in this thesis has taken into account grass root readers too, since they are key persons in getting to the text's meaning. It must be noted the Old Testament text was written primarily for a general public to meet the ends of worship.

2.6 Summary

This chapter began its journey by defining its aims as tracing the current state of scholarship in the Old Testament and how it relates to contextual hermeneutics in the era of AIDS. As the review shows, there is an important gap that many methods such Source, Form and Redaction criticisms have not engaged contextually because their philosophical premises focus on the horizon of the text, while largely ignoring the

horizon of the contemporary reader. By contrast, Liberation methods work the other way round: starting with the context, then finding relevance in the text. Nevertheless, the study pinpoints the weakness of Liberation methods and gives alternative solutions for an empowering hermeneutic.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN FOR FIELDWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology and design of the study for the fieldwork. It explains the qualitative procedures used in the fieldwork. The chapter also discusses the analytical processes undertaken. The chapter's divisions range from: sources of data, theoretical framework, data site analysis, research respondents, data gathering strategies, approaches to interpretation of data, establishing the validity and reliability of data, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and finally, a summary of the chapter is given.

3.2 Feasibility

Preliminary contacts with prospective respondents took place in early 2008 during a one week Training of Trainers Conference on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the theological curriculum. This meeting took place between 21 and 26 September, 2008. The main facilitators were Musa W. Dube (University of Botswana), Ezra Chitando (University of Zimbabwe) and Paul Leshota (National University of Lesotho). This meeting was sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC). In this nationwide conference, the researcher was privileged to be the coordinator. Because of this, the researcher was able to meet and discuss preliminary plans for this thesis with prospective participants.

Before commencing with the fieldwork the researcher surveyed relevant literature that traces the on-going debate on HIV and AIDS in relation to the biblical text. It included surveys in the field of biblical hermeneutics as well as research methods.

3.3 Theoretical framework

Every research programme has to be done within a certain theoretical and methodological framework. Thus the study will benefit from a

particular focus, because knowledge is so diverse. Madden (2007:78) argues that a theoretical framework has the capacity to offer a lens through which the researcher can justify the structures of the study under implementation. He adds further that without a theoretical framework the research process may become confusing, which may result in wrong findings. Therefore, this thesis chose a multi-dimensional approach in its selected theoretical framework. The theories underpinning the thesis are: case study, narrative approach and a reader response method.

3.3.1 Case studies

Case study is a research technique in the social sciences that combines both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Cresswell (2003:15) defines case study as ‘an exploration of a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals’. Yin (1991:23) describes it as an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within real life contexts when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and where multiple sources of evidence are used. Furthermore, case studies have the ability to study problems from a multiple dimensional approach, which may provide rich descriptions of an individual or a group of individuals. In this study, Yin’s definition (1991) was used as a working definition for the researcher to study how lecturers, students and persons with HIV read the text (2 Samuel 13-14) contextually and address issues of stigmatisation and gender in the context of AIDS.

3.3.2 Positive characteristics of case studies

In his unpublished dissertation, Madden (2007) has outlined four positive characteristics of case studies; these components are discussed in the context of the study.

1. *It responds actively to participants’ situations wherein realities of life are examined.* When studying and comparing interpretations of persons with HIV, others in the academy or males and females, the participants were actively involved and discovered that the selected text has an empowering message.

2. *It provides rich descriptions of events, context and other variables.* The study has been able to document rich raw text of more than 200 pages, which is a result of transcription which took 240 hours. The data collection took exactly 2 months (December, 2009 to January 2010). The transcription process also took approximately 2 months (March-May 2010). The data explores insights gained from biblical interpretations in the context of AIDS among persons with HIV and others in the academy. For further clarification, see the table below:

Table 3.1
Respondents and transcription time

Parti- cipants	Indi- vidual inter- views	Hours	Number of focus groups and hours	Number participate d in focus groups	Type of data
UoA	10	20(x2)*hrs=20	3(x2)=6	21	Recorded qualitative data
MMU	4	4(x2)hrs=8	3(x2)=6	16	
Muco	0	0hrs	2(x2)=4	7	
UHAI Group	2	10 minutes	3(x2)=6	16	
Total	16	28.10hrs	20	60	
Grand Total in hours		48hrs x5hrs=240 (Transcription Hours)			

*Where there is (x2), it indicates that each interview and focus group was done in two phases, each session totalling 1 hour.

3. *It presents opportunities to develop assertions or generalisations.* The study was enriched by the fact that it provided opportunities for generalisations and by the other strengths of case studies. Since the study is designed to study biblical characters in the selected text and to ascertain if they can feature more or less the same in

the AIDS context. The responses from participants were always 'yes,' in relation to the applicability of the text. The participants were particularly impressed to discover how ordinary readers (themselves) can discover empowering truths in the biblical text that are applicable in the context of AIDS.

4. *It offers flexibility to explore interpretations and explanations.* The study was able to meet this strength too by comparing interpretations of the biblical text between persons with HIV, others, academics, males versus females, lecturers versus students and participants from various denominations. Due to this, the study argues that the interpretation is a result of a multi-faith group as opposed to particular faith or individual faith. Also, the study took seriously the agenda of the marginalised such as persons with HIV, women, and those who are not 'usually' in the domain of biblical scholars.

3.3.3 Negative aspects of case studies

Sarantakos (2005: 216-217) contends that there is 'no method that is free from problems and case studies are therefore not an exception!' This statement is valid because it does not matter whether the study takes a quantitative paradigm or a qualitative approach there will always be problems, but these ought not to discourage us from pursuing knowledge. All we need to do is to reduce problems through alternative strategies.

Below are five weaknesses of case studies as outlined by Sarantakos (2005:216), and how they were minimised in the study.

1. *Results do not allow inductive generalisations.* This is true but not all world solutions can be found by inductive generalisations, some world problems like AIDS are contextual, and so they demand contextual solutions. For example, how Christian communities are responding towards the epidemic in South Africa can be different to how Christian communities are responding to it in Tanzania. This is made evident by different cultural, economic or political situations and literacy levels, among many other factors.

2. *Findings entail personal impressions and biases.* While this may be true, every person has his or her own biases, but this cannot be avoided even in so-called 'quantitative studies.' What is important is to weigh whether the personal impressions affects human dignity negatively. This study has the assumption that both men and women, persons with HIV and others in the academy have equal responsibility in restoring AIDS damaged lives. So the bias is located on the sense of equality.
3. *Research cannot be replicated.* Replications means repeating the same study in different environments and obtaining findings with minimal differences. This aspect carries some truth, but if the findings are meant to solve specific contextual problems, then what is the need to replicate the research? So the aspect of replication does not have much weight in qualitative studies, because in this tradition, the emphasis is on contextual problems rather than general problems.
4. *There is limited access to the field and to the personal information.* This can be true if an ethical consent form has not been provided for negligent reasons. This research took into account all ethical considerations to ensure that participants' privacy and human rights were protected. Also there was a deliberate effort to separate men and women due to cultural issues embedded in patriarchy. Also students were separated from lecturers to ensure the lecturer-learner domain was protected. Finally, a decided effort was made to separate persons with HIV and others in the academy due to prevailing stigma issues.
5. *The interviewer's presence may cause distortions and can even be destructive.* In this respect, the researcher was conscious of his possible influence on participants and countered it by facilitating an open and truly honest relationship with the participants. It must further be noted that the sessions took place on two separate occasions. Each session took one hour. In the initial phase, the participants were somewhat suspicious, but as time elapsed, more trust was gained. This was marked by an

increasing sense of peace, deep disclosure of personal lives and interpretations, moods of joy and even moments of tears. It was noticeable that participants were sometimes willing to continue with discussions even beyond the allocated time.

In summary, the case studies gave the researcher an opportunity to develop a detailed biblical-contextual explanation on HIV and AIDS with an ecumenical value. The case study was useful, because it allowed the researcher to communicate communal research data with individuals and groups as well as different and relevant reading strategies such as Liberation and Womanist theology (Heather 2001: 85).

3.4 Narrative analysis

A narrative research approach is a methodological strategy to gather and analyse data in the form of 'lives lived through in-depth interviews'. The data can also be in text form, as long as it takes the shape of a story, that is, having a beginning, a middle and an end as well as a plot and characters interacting with each other (Silverman 2008:379; Polit and Hungler 1997:38). Denzin (1989:28) rightly argued that a life that has been lived can be studied, constructed, reconstructed and written about.

The purposes of narrative analysis are to help people to construct identity and find meaning in life (Newman 2006:475). It further helps in tracing individual histories or a particular historical event, uses interpretative tools that are designed to analyse phenomena, issues and people's lives holistically, and last but not least, it permits the incursion of value and evaluation in the research process (Daiute and Lightfoot 2004:xii-xiii). Narrative analysis has also been used extensively in the medical and counselling fields because it may have a therapeutic effect (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005:135)

In this study, the narrative analysis was implemented through in-depth interviews based on the reading of the text of 2 Samuel 13:1–14:33. The text was chosen specifically because it contains themes that are relevant to people who are living in the AIDS era. These include misuse of human sexuality through rape, dishonesty, revenge, deliberate killing, stigma and discrimination and finally forgiveness and reconciliation.

The narrative analysis also has the advantage that it allows participants to tell their own stories in relation to the text. Later they were asked to

elucidate the similarities and differences between the lived experience and written experience. At the end, respondents were asked to give their views on how the community of faith should treat each other in the era of AIDS (Dube 2003:110-111).

Throughout the process, the researcher was aware that he was also part of the process and had an influence on the data collected. This is true because the researcher carries his beliefs, ideologies and world views as an African scholar into the process. Newman (2006:475) was correct when he said, ‘the researcher, as an individual social actor is inseparable from the research process and from data presentation.

In summary, this section has explained the theoretical underpinnings of the field study. This has covered two applicable methods, namely case study and narrative analysis, while the reader-response reading strategy for reading the Samuel text was discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The following table summarises the fieldwork methodology.

Table 3.2
Methodological underpinning of the study

Data gathering	Primary Data: Interviews, focus groups, and observations. Secondary Data: Refereed journal articles, book chapters, books, PhD theses, e-resources.
Methodology	Qualitative Inquiry
Theoretical perspective	Case study, Narrative analysis, Reader–response reading strategy
Epistemology	Interpretive: Biblical hermeneutics, utilising a synchronic literary paradigm to allow ordinary readers to view the text through and within their own context.

3.5 Population analysis and selection of respondents

Babbie (1995:103) defines a population as a group (usually people) about whom we want to draw conclusions.’ It is usually impossible to study an entire population; one must therefore select a target group through a

randomised process of sampling or a non-random form of sampling. This study wanted to study a population which can be divided into three main groups:

- University lecturers or academics;
- University students (undergraduate and graduate levels); and
- People living with AIDS.

All these groups are generally referred to in the study as 'ordinary readers' since the reading of the Samuel text used a pre-critical reading strategy.

3.5.1 Selection of respondents

There are many sampling techniques (Aina & Ajiferuke 2002:34-39; Neuman 1997:205; Creswell 2003: 156,185; Bless& Higson-Smith 2004: 83-93). These include:

- Simple random sampling, which gives any person a chance of being included in the sample;
- Systematic sampling, which is more systematic than the above;
- Stratified random sampling, which randomly selects people in predetermined groups;
- Quota sampling, which selects anyone in predetermined groups, or targets of particular types,
- Cluster sampling, which involves dividing the population into clusters, then drawing a sample from those clusters;
- Snowball sampling, which selects people connected to one another; and
- Purposive sampling, which attempts to deliberately handpick certain groups due to their key relevance to the study.

The study utilised the last mentioned sampling strategy (purposive sampling). The method was chosen because of its appropriateness in getting hold of participants '*who are crucial to the study*' (my emphasis) (Aina & Ajiferuke 2002:39). Additionally, purposive sampling is efficient because lecturers, university students and persons with HIV are difficult-to-reach groups. Thus the most appropriate method for the study was purposive sampling. Moreover, the topic of human sexuality

as related to HIV prevention is the least addressed subject among the clergy. Consequently, the best way to get in-depth information which is more focused was to use purposive sampling (Neuman 2006:206; Creswell 2003:185).

Aina & Ajiferuke (2009:39) emphasise that purposive sampling is a technique of selecting units from a study population through a judgment made by a researcher. (Creswell 2003:185). The researcher therefore handpicked a sample of individuals due to their relevance to the issues under scrutiny. Miles and Huberman (1994:50) also build on the above definition by identifying four aspects related to purposive sampling:

- The setting, where the research will take place. In this case the Arusha region;
- The actors are the ones who will be observed or interviewed. These are lecturers, students and persons with HIV;
- The events, or what the actors will be doing and saying during the interviews. This aspect was monitored by reading their emotional levels;
- The process, which revolves around the events undertaken by the actors within the setting. The process in the study was the reading of the Samuel text by ordinary readers, using a reader-response reading strategy as facilitated by the researcher.

Despite all the advantages of purposive sampling as the preferred sampling method in this project, it has some pitfalls just like any other sampling method. Its main weakness is that there is no complete assurance that the respondents selected will be a fair representation of academics, students and persons with HIV (Bless & Higson-Smith 2004:92). In order to minimise this weakness, the researcher has avoided broader generalisations of the findings. Below is a further explanation of the background of the respondents included in the sample.

3.5.2 Respondents by gender and institutions

As stated earlier, the sample included a total of 70 respondents. Amongst them there were 16 persons with HIV from the UHAI group. The study further included interviews with 14 male academic theologians from the Universities of Arusha (UoA), the Mount Meru Baptist University (MMU) and the Makumira University College

(MuCo). The student groups included undergraduates and graduates. At the University of Arusha, 21 undergraduate students were divided into focus groups, while at Mount Meru University, 16 students participated. It was only Makumira University College that was able to provide seven graduate students since it has the only graduate programme relating to AIDS and Missions.

The demographic distribution shows that there were fewer women respondents (35%) and more than 50% of them were living with HIV. This is a logical representation since in Tanzania, like in many other parts of Africa, women are still highly disadvantaged in getting tertiary education. Moreover it is women in most cases who are infected and affected with the disease and they are also more likely to participate in support groups like the UHAI group. The table below gives further clarification, but also see Appendix A for more demographic detail regarding respondents.

Table 3.3
Respondents by gender and institutions

			UoA	MMU	MuCo	UHAI group	Total
Gender	Male	Count	25	15	7	0	49
		%	33%	20%	9%	0%	65%
	Female	Count	6	5	0	16	27
		%	8%	7%	0%	23%	35%
Total	Count		31	20	7	16	76
	%		41%	27%	9%	23%	100%

3.5.3 Respondents by gender and education

The demographic data shows that there were no women included in the study with a doctorate, a master's degree, or a doing her master's degree in theology or religion. No female respondent was in the process of studying for an undergraduate degree in theology, so to rectify this fact, female students from education faculties were included in the study.

The respondents in the group of persons with HIV also included people with an education ranging only from primary to secondary school. This finding implies that if no effort is made to empower women to get further education, the interpretation of the Bible will remain a discipline for men. The fact that all persons with HIV had lower education levels indicates the need to hear their voices since it is they who know the real experiences of being sick and uneducated. So, it was the deliberate intention of this study to accept the challenge and include the people least equipped in terms of education and theology, that is, women and persons with HIV (Kemirere 2007:111). All of this was done to obtain a communal result as a product of interpretation to empower both the infected and affected. The table below gives a summary of their gender and education:

Table 3.4
Respondents by gender and education

			PhD	MA	BA/B Sc	Second ary/Pri mary	Total
Gender	Male	Count	5	17	25	0	49
		%	8%	23%	33%	0%	65%
	Female	Count	0	0	11	16	27
		%	0%	0%	15%	21%	35%
Total	Count		5	17	36	16	76
	%		8%	23%	48%	21%	100%

3.5.4 Respondents by age and marital status

The age range of respondents who were lecturers was between 36 and 60, and all of them were married. This age includes young theologians, middle-aged theologians as well as veterans in the theological enterprise. The diversity of the population gives an added advantage to the study since it will be possible to get balanced views of issues, which will help to give a new direction to interpreting the Old Testament text in the context of AIDS.

The age range of university students was between 21 and 50. In this group, there were those who were single and others who were married. The male students were fulltime, doing undergraduate programmes in theology and religion. Another group was studying graduate programmes in theology with an emphasis on Missions or AIDS. All the female students were registered in undergraduate programmes in Education. It was impossible to get female students doing theology because here in Tanzania, like in many other parts of Africa, women have practically been excluded from that discipline. The impact of this has been a perpetuation of male-centred interpretations, so this study has taken the initiative of including women, though few in number.

The last group of respondents was comprised of persons with HIV, whose ages ranged from 21 to 50. Some of them were married, others unmarried, while others were widows. The group was drawn together irrespective of their denominational affiliations. This group was sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church. They were found in the vicinity of the University of Arusha. One of the study's overarching objectives was to put together persons with HIV and to run income-generating projects. The UHAI group is also geared to become a social network for studying the word of God in order to find hope, and, finally, it aims to sensitise the local community to be aware of the magnitude of the AIDS epidemic. The UHAI Group is taken as a representative category of persons with HIV to give a 'neglected perspective of the infected.' This study took a deliberate initiative to include them in order to hear what has not been heard.

Although the researcher had good intentions in finding a point of entry into this group, it was not an easy task! On the day the researcher got the appointment to meet the entire group of 16 members at the Catholic Church building at Maji ya Chai, he had to wait for 2 hours before

getting in. The members of the group were overly suspicious of my coming since several have been 'used' as springboards to make other people rich. All in all, things worked out after the researcher was given an audience to explain the research objectives recorded in the consent form (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005:220-221, Doucet and Mauthner 2008:333-335).

3.5.5 Respondents by faith

The study has taken a multi-faith dimension. HIV and AIDS does not know any religious or denominational boundaries; it is a common enemy to all human beings, therefore if any strategy is to be employed it is to be multi-faith, and multi-dimensional. The population has respondents from the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, the Baptist Church, the Moravian Church, the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church and Pentecostal communities. So this ecumenical component is meant to provide empowering biblical interpretations which will be used in a broad Christian spectrum.

3.5.6 Respondents by rationale of distribution

As noted earlier, the study is comprised of three categories of research respondents. These are lecturers, students (undergraduate and graduate), and people living with HIV. A special consideration was taken in distributing respondents so that research data would not be affected negatively. First, the groups were divided based on institutional affiliation, namely Mount Meru University, Makumira University College, University of Arusha and finally the UHAI Group. Any attempt to mix respondents would have jeopardised freedom of expression, so this was avoided. Secondly, within a particular institution a further categorisation was made, based on level of education, gender and marital status. Based on this, lecturers were singled out for interviews, since because of their lectureship status they would not accept being mixed with students.

Thereafter, all students in the selected universities were categorised into focus groups according to gender. So there were separate focus groups for males and females. The researcher made a decided effort not mix genders because Tanzanian societies still maintain patriarchy tendencies

even in the present 21st century. In this cultural setting, women are meant to have limited ability to comment on issues. If women become bold in speech, they will be deemed disrespectful to men. The violation of this social norm can even result in an engaged woman being abandoned by the man! The consideration of separating groups according to gender gave this study a plus which would never otherwise have been achieved. This was made evident by findings which indicated women's greater interest in expressing secrets of their lives in relation to the study.

There was still further categorisation of the male students. For example, at the Makumira University College, students were categorised based on their programme of study, i.e. Masters of Theology with AIDS emphasis, and Masters of Theology with Missions emphasis. If any attempt had been made to mix the groups, then there would have been unnecessary debates because students have a tendency to think that their programme is 'superior' to the rest! The comparison of findings between the two groups makes a sharp distinction, so the categorisation worked.

Moreover, male students at Mount Meru University and the University of Arusha were categorised based on their marital status, that is, married and unmarried. The researcher did this with the assumption that if the two groups were mixed then the unmarried men (who were particularly younger), would be afraid to air their views. The researcher could not measure with certainty if this strategy really worked, because when the findings were compared there were no sharp differences.

The last form of categorisation was of persons with HIV against others in the academy. The major reason for separating these groups was based on the assumption of rampant social stigma. According to the study's research findings, persons with HIV are still viewed as promiscuous, loose, immoral, and so on. Such stereotypes would not grant freedom of expression to PLWHAs in front of people who are not infected. Moreover, the UHAI people have a strong bond among themselves, so it would be very hard to mix them with people whom they are not familiar. As noted elsewhere, it took the researcher 5 hours of waiting before gaining entry to begin the first focus group discussions. Nevertheless the researcher made another conscious categorisation within persons with HIV by dividing them into three groups of 5 to 6 respondents. These groups had the following labels, married, widows and non-married (singles). According to research findings, there was no sharp difference

of responses, but this factor has not affected the overall scope of the study.

3.6 Instrument selection

There are various ways to collect data systematically. According to Onyango (2002:64-65), Bless & Higson-Smith (2004; 103-124) and Creswell (2003:186-187), we find six commonly used instruments of data collection in any research. These include:

- Questionnaires: Mailing or administering of questionnaires to informants;
- Interviews: Face to face interviews, Telephone interviews;
- Focus groups: Researcher interviews participants as a group;
- Observation: Complete participant, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete observer;
- Documentary sources: Public documents, private documents and e-mail discussions;
- Audiovisual materials: Collecting photographs, video tapes, art objects, computer software and film.

According to the nature of the study, which is a qualitative paradigm, the study has used face to face interviews and focus group discussions out of the other six methods of data collection. Onyango (2003:84) simply defines an interview as ‘an oral questionnaire.’ Bless & Higson-Smith (2004:155) have the following detailed definition: ‘An interview is a data collection technique based on a series of questions relating to the research topic to be answered by research respondents’, whereas a focus group is ‘a semi-structured group interview conducted by a skilled facilitator (2004:154). Therefore, through utilisation of these instruments, I was exposed to the following advantages which are hardly found in other data collection methodologies:

1. Access to ‘indirect’ information filtered through the views of interviewees;
2. Access to ‘control’ over the line of questioning.
3. Access to personal contact of interviewees. This provided a greater capacity than if I had used mail questionnaires.

4. Access to better to disclosure of complex and emotionally laden information (Creswell 2003:186; Onyango 2003:90).

So through the employment of these two instruments; the researcher was able to conduct 16 face to face interviews and also 20 focus group discussions. Each focus group was made of approximately 5 to 6 respondents. An intentional effort was made to include women in the focus groups. The major part of the interview and focus group questions was semi-structured. The social context of the interviews and the focus groups was noted and seen as an important avenue for interpreting the meaning of the responses. Here below is a transcribed interview:

Table 3.5
Interview transcript
(Mount Meru University lecturer, January 29, 2010)

Researcher: *To what extent have scholars in the academy adhered to the stereotyping of PLWHAs?*

Respondent: I assume scholars have participated, but do you want me to judge? (Refused to answer claiming it was a judgmental question)

Researcher: *Have we been hearing texts preached at the pulpit against gender based violence?*

Respondent: Not much.

Researcher: *Why is this so?*

Respondent: I have not thought about it. I have not done that myself simply because it has not come to me as an issue.

Researcher: *Do you think the church has really been addressing gender based issues or we have left the matter to other sectors?*

Respondent: (struggling) Well the Bible is clear on gender issues, now for the church to address such issues, I rather say they have not been actively worked on as activists do.

Researcher: *What is the reason for least involvement?*

Respondent: Well, I think the church has always tried to identify with the people and to be relevant to the people at the contextualised level. And I think the issue did not originate from the continent, so for the church in Africa we are seeing it as an agenda from outside the continent. And therefore it may not rate high in the issues that rank in the high priority.

So in short it is not ranking as number one agenda in Africa because it is coming from outside the continent.

Researcher: *What could be done, therefore?*

Respondent: What I have said that we cannot make it as a top agenda at the national or conventional level. Gender issues are human issues and anything that touches human life can be addressed by the church. So the church can still address them. Now based on the extent is where the debate is!

3.7 Description of research questions

The research questions which are hereby described originate from the research objectives in chapter one. These research objectives aim at one overarching goal, which is to contribute towards a HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics. This is not a new domain in biblical interpretations but this study takes it to a new setting using the Tanzanian context. So the research questions are heavily influenced by two key theologies namely liberation and womanist theologies. It is important to recognise that these research questions have been drawn and 'modified' from the Institute of Contextual Studies, based at University of KwaZulu Natal (West 2007; Appendix B p.200; Appendix C p.201). There are three research questions emanating from three research objectives.

3.7.1 To what extent have the academy and persons with HIV adhered to stereotyping and social categorisation?

This question provided an opportunity for respondents to assess the level of stigmatisation directed at persons with HIV. The assessment was based on the frequency of preaching or not preaching certain texts with gender overtones. It was meant to act as an introductory role, so that if participants confessed that there is a stigma attached to AIDS, it would prepare them well to answer the next question, which involves a high level of gender-based stigma and oppression. And if the respondents would not confess that there is stigma, then the direction of research would have taken quite a different trajectory. All in all, the earlier assumption worked and in the course of data collection many other themes surfaced. These too are interwoven with stigma, and they

include curriculum, positions, and culture. Below are probing questions which helped to attain responses of the first research question:

- *Have you ever preached, heard or taught a narrative on Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-22) or any other text related to sexual violence (Judges 19:1-30; 2 Samuel 11:1-27)?*
- *Was there any occasion this year when you heard a biblical text used against gender based violence?*
- *Is your response connected to African culture?*
- *Does the curriculum in your institution have mainstream HIV or AIDS courses?*

3.7.2 What pointers does the narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39 portray in the context of AIDS?

This research question is the heart of the study. It provided participants with an opportunity to read the selected text and 'discover' similarity of themes in the context of HIV and AIDS. It should be noted that even a cursory reading of the text identifies the outstanding themes as including gender and reconciliation. The research question embraces 10 characters, namely, Amnon (antagonist), Tamar (protagonist), Jonadab, servants, reporters, King's sons, Absalom, King David, Joab and the woman of Tekoa. It was surprising to note after the process of data collection that all respondents with the exception of one lecturer from the University of Arusha were fully convinced that the chosen text has a full bearing in context of AIDS although its original context is within the parameters of a succession narrative. Furthermore, there were a myriad of themes that emerged based on each character. These are fully presented and analysed in the next sections. Since each character responded differently to the rape of Tamar, this condition meant that each of them needed a different set of probing questions (see Appendix C). All in all, here below are the sub-questions that prompted the probing questions.

1. *Who is the character, and why did he or she behave in a particular way? (On the text – focusing on the text as a final product);*
2. *Do we have such characters in the context of AIDS? (In front of the text – focusing on the application to contemporary society);*
3. *Are there any true stories?*

4. *What is the role of the church, legal authorities, police and community in helping such people?*
5. *What is the way forward?*

3.7.3 What is the way forward towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics?

This research question was geared to enable respondents to give suggestions that would contribute towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics. This is a method which is expected to be used ecumenically (of course with some variations) to reduce stigma-related biblical interpretations. In response to this question, the following themes were evident: reconciliation, reader response hermeneutics, ordinary readers, empowerment, fictional versus non-fictional authorship, and narrator's point of view. During the process of data collection, this question became a peaceful landing strip where every respondent felt the research process was worth it. Below are the probing questions which build on the main question.

- *What is the narrator's point of view.[Male/female] Do we have such narrators today?*
- *If we view this narrative as fiction what will be its impact to PLWHAs?*
- *Can the culture in the narrative which disempowered women and servants be similar to African culture. What is the way forward in the context of AIDS?*
- *What are the political implications of the narrative?*
- *Does HIV or AIDS display the politics of power struggle? Can we find this in our institutions, churches, hospitals among others?*
- *Are there indications of reconciliation in the narrative? Can we employ reconciliation in institutions, churches and community as a whole? How do we begin?*
- *What can the community of PLWHAs do to help communities to read the Bible and to empower people who are marginalised for reasons of their ill-health?*

- *What can the community of socially engaged scholars do to help the community of believers and the general public to read the biblical text to render empowerment to those who are marginalised?*
- *What can institutions of higher learning do to equip their students with skills for proper biblical interpretation in the context of AIDS?*

3.8 Approaches to interpretation of data

Data interpretation is a crucial stage in making ‘sense’ out of raw data. In fact, without data interpretation, it is like getting all the problems of cooking food and when it is ready for consumption, there is nobody to eat. Newman (2000:467) and Bogden *et al.* (1982:145) believe data interpretation has the objective ‘of examining, sorting, categorising, evaluating, comparing, synthesising, comparing and contemplating the coded data as well as reviewing raw and coded data’. Furthermore, Patton (1990:485) endorses the idea that qualitative research has tends to use inductive analysis of data, which simply means that themes emerge out of the data. I agree with these authors, and from their ideas I was conscious of the following during the coding process:

- Watch for patterns and find reasons for them;
- Watch for differences and find reasons for them;
- Capture good quotes and use them;
- Make use also of positive comments;
- Do not avoid negative comments;
- Take note of ambiguous comments;
- Take note of joking statements;
- Recognise the level of enthusiasm when responses are given.

3.8.1 Data collection timeline

Before data interpretation took place, it was obviously preceded by the collection of data, which was done during the two months of December 2009 and January 2010. As indicated earlier, the researcher used focus groups, discussions and semi-structured interviews of the group of lecturers. All focus groups and interview sessions were done in phases, because the protocol had many questions. Each session lasted

approximately one hour or slightly more. The second session was usually scheduled for the next day, with the consent of the respondents. It is worth noting that all the respondents apart from the doctorate holders accepted the second session of interviews because they were encouraged by the first session. This indicates that when people attain high levels of education they tend to be unavailable. Nevertheless, the researcher believes that their unavailability did not seriously affect the scope of the study.

3.8.2 Data transcription timeline

Data transcription meant transcribing audio files into MS Word files ready for coding and analysis. The total length of the audio files was 48 hours with an average transcription time of 5 hours per file. This made a total time of 240 transcription hours, spanning over two months (March 1, 2010 to May 10, 2010). At the end of the work there were approximately 250 pages of raw data. This work was slow and tedious, but the researcher gained greater insight and experience as the transcription progressed. The researcher would not have gain this advantage if a professional transcriber or research assistant had been hired for the job (see Chipunza 2007:102).

3.8.3 Data coding

Data coding is another indispensable tool in qualitative research. Before we define data coding, let us find the meaning of a code. Sarantakos (2005:424) defines a code as a symbol or a set of symbols used in measurement and analysis in the place of responses collected through social research. Whereas data coding is defined by social scientists as ‘tags for assigning units of meaning during the study. Codes are usually attached to chunks of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs connected to a specific setting’ (Mile and Huberman 1994:56). So before starting the phase of data coding, (this will be discussed later) I assigned symbols for the purpose of helping me to identify focus groups as well as respondents. For example, FGMMU represents a focus group that was held at Mount Meru University. Sometimes the code could indicate the respondents’ gender, HIV status, or type of education. Individual respondents in the focus groups will be identified as S.1, S.2, and S.3 etc. ‘S’ stands for Speaker and the numerals represent the order of speakers as they responded to the questions. Table 3.8 below gives a more detailed explanation:

Table 3.6
Codes for focus groups

Type of Focus Group	Explanation
FGMMU (Married)	Focus Group at Mount Meru University, (comprised of married men)
FGMMU (Unmarried)	Focus Group at Mount Meru University, (comprised of non married men)
FGMMU (Women)	Focus Group Mount Meru University (women regardless of marital status)
FGHIV/AIDS	Focus Group of, MA students in HIV/AIDS at Makumira University College (comprised of married men)
FGMISSIONS	Focus Group of MA students in Missions at Makumira University College (comprised of married men)
FGUoA (Married)	Focus Group at the University of Arusha (married male students)
FGUoA (Unmarried)	Focus Group at the University of Arusha (unmarried male students)
FGUoA (Women)	Focus Group at the University of Arusha (represents female students regardless of their marital status)
FGPLWHAs (Single)	Focus Group of people living with HIV/AIDS (comprised of single women)
FGPLWHAs (Married)	Focus Group of people living with HIV/AIDS (comprised of married women)

Furthermore, the names of the lecturers have been rendered fictitious, in order to maintain privacy. Nevertheless these fictitious names remain connected to their affiliated institutions. The lecturers were numbered according to the order of their appearance in the interview schedules, for example, Lecturer 1 (MMU); Lecturer 4 (UoA), and so on.

3.8.4 Types of coding

According to Newman (2000:420) and Sarantakos (2005:350), there are three types of coding that fall into the category of advanced coding; these are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The study will give a detailed discussion of these in the next subsection. It is worth noting that all of these stages of coding were employed in the study. The coding process took a further two months (June and July 2010). During this process, there was development of categories and refining of themes and this then led to data analysis (Heather 2001:98). The table below gives a quick summary of these processes:

Table 3.7
Data collection and analysis timeframe

Stages	Data Collection Strategies	Timeframe	Population Sample
Stage One	Focus groups, Semi-structured interviews	December 2009 – January 2010 (2 months)	UoA, MMU, MuCo and UHAI groups
Stage Two	Transcription	March 2010 – May 2010 (2 months and 1 week)	Field Data (wav files)
			Emerging themes
Stage Three	Coding and analysis	June 2010 – July 2010 (2 months)	MS Word Transcripts
			Development of categories, refining of themes, culminating with analysis

Open coding

Open coding is the initial step in the process of data analysis. The term 'open' implies bringing to the surface analytic categories that have been hidden in the raw data. Open coding is connected to a constant process of taking notes, sorting them out, looking for meanings and comparing notes. Open coding does not end at this point; it proceeds with the creation of labels/symbols/codes/tags in an attempt to discover patterns of similarities or differences (Neuman 2000:422, Sarantakos 2005:349). While the researcher was engaged in the phase of data transcription, which took approximately two months, he was constantly comparing data. The categories included lecturers, students, PLWHAs, others in the academy, Males and females, and graduate and undergraduate students. So when the transcription was complete, the study had approximately 48 tagged MS Word files, of 240 pages. From that point the researcher went into open coding 'proper,' where I read the raw data intensively and categorised it into 3 labels namely, Research Question One, Research Question Two and Research Question Three. So in each labelled group there were responses from interviews and Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs). The second label (Research Question Two) was voluminous because this research question is the heart of the study. At this point, no data cleaning or reduction was done; what was done was the formation of the first analytic categories.

Axial Coding

Axial Coding is a second bridge towards data analysis. It entails a further refining of categories and creation of new ones if it is deemed necessary. Neuman (2000:432) argues that at this stage the focus is not on the organised data, but on initial labels or coded concepts. Sarantakos (2005:350) argues further that axial coding does not look critically only at the initial labels or codes, but seeks to establish interrelations within one particular label or code, thereby formulating themes. When the researcher began this phase of coding, he was surprised by the explosion of themes which he had no 'idea' of when the first chapter was being written. It should be noted that at this point of data analysis; the researcher began doing some data cleaning. Data cleaning means retaining of information that is relevant to the research objectives (Babbie 1995:372). Also data cleaning requires one to retain 'catchy' phrases or paragraphs that are 'heavily' loaded with meaning. The

researcher had trouble in the process of data cleaning, because he did not want to leave out valuable gems of thought. All in all, at the end of this process, the researcher was able to reduce 240 pages to 200 pages of loosely integrated data. The table below summarises the themes that emerged during axial coding.

Table 3.8
The development of categories and themes during axial coding

Research Questions	Categories	Themes
<i>To what extent have the academy and PLWHA adhered to stereotyping and social categorisation?</i>	Introduction	Stigmatisation (Major theme), Curriculum, Positions, Ignoring and Culture (Sub-themes)
<i>What are the pointers that the narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39 portrays in the context of HIV/AIDS?</i>	Amnon	Rape (Major theme), Identification, Curse, Clergy promiscuity, Peer pressure, Curriculum, Corruption, Culture, Church, Moods, Real-life stories and Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Tamar	Church, Culture (Major themes), Identification, Stigmatisation, Curriculum, Corruption, Economic power, Clergy promiscuity, Evading, Moods, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)

<i>What is the way forward towards an HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics?</i>	Jonadab	Peer effect (Major theme), Identification, Behaviour, Social Justice, Demonology, Church/State Accountability, Contemporary Jonadabs, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Servants	Blind obedience (Major theme), Identification, Setting, Class, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Reporters	False Reporting, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	King's sons	Non-involvement (major theme), Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Absalom	Struggle for power (Major theme), Identification, Revenge, Leadership style, Donor funding, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	King David	Moral failure (Major theme), Parenting, Leadership style, Gender imbalance, Polygamy, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Joab	Reconciliation (Major theme), Genuineness of reconciliation, Gender imbalance, Culture, Contemporary Story, Way forward (Sub-themes)
	Woman of Tekoa	Behaviour (Major theme), Reconciliation, Recognition, ARV use, Real-life stories, Way forward (Sub-themes).

	Epilogue	Reconciliation, Reader response Hermeneutics, Ordinary readers, Empowerment, Fictional versus non-fictional authorship, Narrator's point of view (Sub- themes)
	Additional findings	Unexpected Findings

Selective coding

Selective Coding is the last bridge to cross before reaching the final destination of analysis of the data. At this point, major themes have been identified, using the previous methods like working through notes, diagrams and categories. This also includes looking for regularities, generalisations, and levels of abstraction. Also during this stage of data coding, there is high extraction of raw data (Neuman 2006: 423, Sarantakos 2005:350). So when the researcher began this last stage, I was working on a loosely integrated document of 200 pages. Also at this point the major themes in each piece of research were already identified (See the chart above). One of the crucial components in this phase of coding is *selection*. So the researcher was supposed to select themes that are relevant to research questions, and these themes had to meet the criteria of being 'heavily argued.' Upon meeting this daunting task, he used a diagram which has 6 columns; each represented the following categories, Theme, Sub-theme, Direct quote or Paraphrase, Findings and References. This diagram helped to reduce the 200 pages of loosely integrated data to 33 pages of finely selected data. This data is the 'grey matter' for the next chapter. Below is a sample of the selective coding process:

Table 3.9
Sample of findings as a result of selective coding

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Direct Quotations/Paraphrases	Findings	References
Stigmatisation	-	<p>‘In my view I would say to a large extent the church has been an instrument of stigmatising persons with HIV, which is directly against its mission.’</p> <p>‘I think the church has been stigmatising persons with HIV through the use of the Bible.</p> <p>‘The current situation is that we are stigmatising the persons with HIV in our midst. I want to confess that this is a weakness on our part.’</p> <p>‘Sometime the preachers say if you do not respect yourself then your days to live will be few!’ ‘Sometimes, the preachers say those who are not settled, have been attracting the possibility to have the disease themselves.</p>	<p>Lecturers , students and persons with HIV all agreed that there is stigmatisation of the sick but the persons with HIV were more emphatic about this.</p>	<p>FGMMU (Married) S.1</p> <p>FGHIV/AIDS S.1</p> <p>FGMISSIONS. S.3</p> <p>FGPLWH As (Single) S.1</p>

In summary, the data analysis required 6 steps, beginning with reflection on my personal experience as informed by the body of knowledge. The next step was the formation of an interview protocol by adapting Gerald West's method of Reader Response. Further, after the collection of data, the researcher transcribed the responses and coded them (open and axial coding). After that, he re-read the data to discover major themes embedded in the data (selective coding). At that point he began the actual process of interpretation by comparing empirical evidence alongside abstract evidence in the body of literature. And finally the researcher drew conclusions and gave suggestions for further research. The table below gives a graphic explanation:

Table 3.10
Further steps in data analysis

Step 1	Reflection on my own experience and analysis of the literature that led to and provided confirmation of the research questions and issues that resulted from the case study.
Step 2	Development of the interview/focus group questions based on the contextual Bible Study method pioneered by Gerald West. My social location and exposure to the study also contributed to the formation of the instrument.
Step 3	Line by line of transcriptions interviews/focus groups were coded and later led to the development of themes and categories.
Step 4	Further checking of emerging themes to determine overlaps was done by re-reading the transcribed data and listening to the audio files.
Step 5	Comparing categories with one another to develop central findings that represent the lived 'interpretive experience' of the sample.
Step 6	Drawing conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

(Adapted from Weadon 2007:91)

3.9 Establishing the validity and credibility of data

Any integral research must be open to the scrutiny of a critic based on the validity and credibility of data. Oftentimes, qualitative data has been accused by some sectors of academic community as being non objective therefore not scientific. Randall Collins in Neuman (2000:417) argues in favour of qualitative data when he states:

Much of the best work in sociology has been carried out using qualitative methods without statistical tests. This has been true of research areas ranging from organisation and community studies to microstudies of face-to-face interaction of the world system. Nor should such work be regarded as weak or initial 'exploratory' approaches to those topics.

The researcher agrees with the above ideas, and for this reason he presents a case to authenticate the validity and credibility of the data in the study. This approach will help to reduce such criticisms. Neuman (2000:521) and Sarantakos (2005:434) define validity as the ability to generalise findings outside the study. This process must ensure precision and accuracy. On the other hand, Sarantakos (2005: 90) views credibility as trustworthiness, applicability and auditability that entails variability in a particular study. In this respect, the study cannot be replicated, but can be reproduced to bring more contextual solutions suited to a different geographical location. Below I present arguments to authenticate the findings of the study:

- *Triangulation* – This is the practice of using more than one methodology, method, sample or researcher within the context of the same study (Neuman 2006:434). This practice was fully utilised in this study. The study used a background of multiple theologies as a point of departure. These include Liberation and Feminist theologies under the umbrella of African theology. Moreover, the study employed multiple theoretical frameworks to gather and analyse data; these are the case study method, narrative approach and reader response method (Gerald West's model). Furthermore, the sample of the study entailed an ecumenical component. Respondents were affiliated to various

denominations, including Adventists, Baptists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, and Catholics. Finally the study employed more than one data collection strategy, which included focus groups, interviews and observations (to a lesser extent)

- *Creating a case study data base* – This strategy called for the formal creation of a formal, retrievable database in which all evidence that was collected and analysed in the course of research could be accessible (Yin 1989:100). So this factor has the ability to raise the credibility of case study. In this database the researcher stored all transcribed data. There are separate files of coded data, and in essence everything in the study is stored either in text or audio format. Furthermore, the researcher backed up all data on three different discs so that if the data is invaded by a computer virus, there was still another alternative source of data.
- *Thick description* – This refers to detailed explanation pertaining to settings, people, and interactions that are rich and natural, accurate and vivid enough to bring the reader close to natural life (Sarantakos 2005:434). This aspect is also important in authenticating the study, because the weight of raw data is 248 hours, which resulted in approximately 240 pages. The transcription process was slow because each audio file of one hour took approximately five hours to transcribe. The researcher was ‘tempted’ in the data cleaning process because every piece of data was pregnant with contextual meanings.
- *Generalisation* – This refers to the capacity of a study to extrapolate the relevance of its findings beyond the boundaries of the sample (Sarantakos 2005:98). This is perhaps one of the shining jewels of this project. The overall finding from the study indicates that ordinary readers can read the Old Testament narratives in the context of AIDS, thereby harnessing empowerment to minimise most stigmas of the epidemic. So these findings can be replicated anywhere in Africa or abroad with some minimal variations.

- *Analysis of unexpected findings* – Unexpected findings are referred to as negative experiences by both Neuman (2000:478) and Sarantakos (2005:90). Those findings which do not meet former theoretical expectations have been described in the chapter on presentation and discussion. This is a gesture of honesty in research, with the intention of showing that sometimes our profound biases can be challenged by empirical findings.
- *The role of the researcher* – In qualitative studies, the researcher is part and parcel of the collected data and his influence can shape the interpretation (Cresswell 1998:106). So the researcher's experiences and biases can have a profound effect on the final data. The researcher conducted a more or less similar study during a Masters Programme at the University of Botswana in 2006. He used the case study method as well as using different Christian denominations as respondents. He was also working on the same subject of AIDS. In the earlier study, the comparison was on the church's response to the pandemic, while in this study the researcher is comparing interpretations used in the pandemic.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In theological research methods that fall into the category of social sciences, ethical treatment of human subjects is a matter of crucial significance. Research without this component is liable to be categorised as unscientific and therefore its findings cannot be trusted (Madsen 1992:79). The dangers of doing unethical research go beyond what the researcher has stated earlier. Newman (2000:130) rightly says that 'an unethical researcher if caught faces public humiliation, a ruined career and possible legal action'.

Mauch and Birch (1983:141) define informed consent as the exercise of free power of choice on the part of the of human participant, without coercion, deceit, promise of future benefits or other forms of influencing the participants to act against their better judgment. In preparing the informed consent form, the researcher followed the above definition and he also attempted to answer the following questions and guidelines

which were put forward by Glatthorn (1998:8), Newman (2000:136) and Silverman (2005:258-259). These are;

- What will be studied?
- Why is it being studied?
- What methods will be used?
- Who will participate and why have they been selected?
- What are potential risks, if any?
- Is there any compensation anticipated?
- Is there any assurance of anonymity and confidentiality?
- How can the researcher be contacted?
- Is there any offer to provide a summary of the findings to the respondents?

In order to avoid such embarrassment and maintain the aim of research, which is all about empowering interpretations, this study identified its respondents through purposive sampling methods. Moreover, since the study touches issues of AIDS as they relate to biblical interpretation, it was expected that some respondents, especially academic theologians would give interpretations that contradict the mainstream theology of their particular denominations. In order to protect their privacy and careers, an Informed Consent Form was employed. And through this contract it was ensured that their names were going to be kept anonymous.

This study has included respondents who are living with HIV. Their perspective is critically important in establishing a balanced view of biblical interpretation. So this special group was requested to read the text and relate it to their experiences, in certain occasions they be willing to give the 'secrets' of their lives on how they have been marginalised on basis of their gender, financial status on their health condition. So in order to ensure maximum provision of information at the same time keep the norms of scientific research an informed consent form was provided (See Appendix D, p. 207)

3.11 Summary

This chapter has principally surveyed various sections that describe the rationale for gathering, storing data and analysing data. It has also discussed aspects of research validity and credibility as well as ethical considerations. This serves as the heart of the study, while the next chapters bears the analogy of its brain.

CHAPTER 4:

MY CONTEXTUAL RE-READING OF 2 SAMUEL 13:1-22

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has the purpose to analyse 2 Samuel 13:1-22 contextually by relating some of its basic characters in an AIDS context. Moreover, this reading was done before the fieldwork, so it is expected that the next chapters will have slightly different interpretations. This line of thought is supported by the reader response method, which endorses multiple meanings (West and Dube 2006). In addition to that, the chapter examines the trends of male power and how it negatively affects the disadvantaged, who are mostly females. It worth noting that it makes use of reader responses and more specifically African woman theology reading strategies, informed by reconstruction theology and contextual Bible study as proposed by Gerald West (see Chapter 2).

The intention of this approach was to use the case of Tamar in the Old Testament and its critical feminist reading to address current societal issues and thus explore its relevancy to people who live in the 21st century. The reason for using feminist criticism and narrative methods of biblical interpretation is because these were deemed the most appropriate since it is a narrative about a woman (Tamar) who was grossly violated sexually by a man (Amnon) for political ends.

The chapter goes on to deal with major and minor characters and with visible and invisible characters as they responded to the rape of Tamar by Amnon. Each character is explored in depth and a possible application is given to our current society in order to combat gender-based violence in our societies. Finally the chapter suggests the need to stop blaming each other because of unfair utilisation of male power in the past and even in contemporary times. Instead, it suggests the need to reconcile and build a better world of women and men who may live happily together in love, peace and justice.

The story of Tamar, who was raped by her half brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13:1-22) in the palace chambers of King David, is a well known biblical narrative, but who dares to interpret it? Doubtless, they are very

few! It is a story which is filled with horror, the quest for illicit sex, the use of food to seduce, a violent rape scenario, ruthless murder and power games between males and females, all playing off in the patriarchal field of biblical times. This narrative is truly pregnant with meanings awaiting their exposition: we cannot deny or abort this pregnancy. A child must be delivered, though not everyone will necessarily receive the baby with joy; a child must come to a world of hope, surrounded with love, security and affirmation.

As stated in Chapter 2 about reading strategies, we are going to use feminist hermeneutics (begun in the 1960s and 1970s) as modified by African woman theology to bring out meanings that may be hidden beneath the surface of the text (Scottroff, Schroer, & Wacker 1998; Tamez 1991:61-70). Feminist or womanist hermeneutics are used here in conjunction with narrative criticism, specifically by exploring characterisation as it was used by the narrator of the text. The employment of narrative theory focuses *inter alia* on how characters are used and portrayed in order to elicit meaning for people living in the 21st century. The story is assumed to be non-fictional as opposed to being mythological. After explanation of these grounds, the chapter turns to the characters depicted in the narrative.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this analysis is heavily dependent on feminist readings and its application by Gerald West in his contextual readings. This is a sensitive work; the life of the mother (Bible) must be preserved along with the baby (the meanings). The method has been chosen for the reason that it is a woman who has been oppressed by a man, therefore it is logical and worthwhile to use a method that is most relevant in addressing women's needs, which is feminist criticism. This aspect has been explained in Chapter 2 as one of the reading strategies employed in the study.

4.2 Discussion of characters in the text

Before we enter the delivery room, let us first get the life history of our patient. The narrative of 2 Samuel 13 comes against the background of David's murder of Uriah and confiscation of his wife Bathsheba. According to the prophet Nathan, God was not pleased with that, though David repented with sincerity, therefore the consequences of his sins of adultery and murder were that they would be replicated in his royal

household. Immediately the curtain is pulled back, five *visible characters* are seen. The most important of these the major characters are Amnon, Tamar and Jonadab. Amnon, the son of Ahinoam, the firstborn among the king's sons, shows immaturity and infatuation throughout the drama. He rapes Tamar, then comes to loathe her, and finally throws her out to die in silence. Two years later, he is killed by Absalom. Another character is Jonadab, a shrewd and cunning person. He participates in plotting the capture of Tamar. Jonadab is later seen before David reporting the murder of Amnon. Tamar the princess is the victim of rape, androcentric violence and the brutal power games of the Hebrew patriarchal culture. Furthermore, no one is there to facilitate her healing from the rape trauma.

Amongst the minor characters, the aging King David appears. He is not critical enough to discover the crafty plotting of his 'boys' to get hold of Tamar. Moreover, David also fails to bring about justice on behalf of Tamar. David's failure becomes an opportunity for Absalom to accomplish what the father failed to. Absalom brings about justice, but by taking the law into his own hands with brutal male violence by killing Amnon. It should be noted that Absalom's main desire was to inherit the throne, so Tamar is probably used as an excuse to carry him to national power.

Finally, there are two *invisible characters*. They are not shown on the stage, but we readers with the magnifying lenses of feminism can assume them, and not allow them to remain hidden. These are the silent Hebrew women, and the narrator.

The whole drama is played out in the royal family of the ancient Israel nation when it was in its golden age. The patriarchal culture, which had no place for women *per se*, permeated every aspect of life, from family life, to politics and even religion. In each case, we will consider the undeniable parallels between the text and its lessons for us in the 21st century. We will first deal with the three major characters in the narrative.

4.2.1 Amnon

Amnon was the first born son of Ahinoam and King David. According to Hebrew culture, Amnon was destined to be the heir to the throne after the death of his father. At the time of the drama, he was a mature young

man with a great desire to get whatever he wanted because the family traditions embraced patriarchy. He fell in 'love' with Tamar, his half sister, whose brother was Absalom. He in fact wanted her body, to use it the way he wanted; to strip it of its God-given dignity and thereafter throw it into desolation. But how could he get hold of her? That was the puzzle he could not unravel. The more he thought about it, the more he became infatuated. Amnon's body became haggard, his face wearing a mourners' mask, his eyes dim for the lack of vision how to trap princess Tamar – a virgin filled with virtue (as can be deduced from her later rejection of Amnon). Then came Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, who was also a nephew to David (vv 2-5). He was a crafty and very shrewd man, and he used his cunning to aid in the trapping of the innocent Tamar. Once trapped, she was to be seduced to bake cakes for the 'sick'. And that would be the opportunity for Amnon to use male power, backed up by patriarchy, to violently rape and dishonour her. Jonadab told Amnon to pretend that he was sick, keep to his bed and refuse to eat anything until his father paid a visit. When that happened, the father was told that Amnon cannot eat until Tamar comes into his room and bake cakes for him so that he could 'eat out of her own hands'.

The King came and things went smoothly, as planned. Tamar was commanded to go and nurse the patient. Tamar was obedient to the voice of her father. She did not think to be suspicious about any possible ulterior motives, she was the only chosen woman among the King's daughters. She began baking cakes, which were actually irrelevant to Amnon for he desired other 'cakes'. When the meal was spread before him he refused to eat and demanded that the manservant leave the room and get rid of all the other people inside the room with the exception of Tamar. The order was carried out successfully (v. 9). Then he commanded Tamar to bring the cakes into the bedroom, and because she was a woman with no power to say no, even in questionable circumstances, her only option was to obey at once.

After her entrance to the room, Amnon used his masculine power to grab her hand, and said to her, 'Come and lie with me' (v.11). She refused strongly, saying 'No my brother. Do not dishonour me! Such a thing is not done in Israel; do not behave so infamously. Where could I go and hide my disgrace? You would sink as low as the most infamous in Israel.' (vv 12-13 REB). She even went on pleading before her molester, 'Please you can even request the King's favour perhaps he will

grant it!’ (v.24) Amnon would not listen, being used to getting what he wanted. He overpowered her; raped her in the royal courts and finally commanded that she be thrown out, bolting the door on her disgraced face! She finally disappeared into her brothers’ (Absalom) house in clothes of mourning. Two years later, Amnon was killed by command of Absalom, at a sheep shearing festival (v.28).

Amnon represents all men and women of today (white or black, learned or unlearned, rich or poor), who cling to patriarchy such as is found in our gender-biased culture. Such people oppress women by their words; they misuse their power and the trust in them, derived from their leadership roles in religion, politics and the economy and deny women equal rights in the arena of life. These people are like thieves. They steal women’s God-given dignity and integrity and their ability to participate fully in the arena of life (Njoroge 2005: 1-19). Even now, in the 21st century, we still witness such misuse of male power. Surprisingly enough, this condition is accepted without question by most women in Africa. Consequently, it is no surprise that the prevalence of HIV is higher among women than men. Rape is widespread, even amongst married couples, in schools, in the workplace and even in the chambers of male clergy! For example, Denise A. Ackerman records a painful incident of misuse of male power in her paper:

He married me when I was only 18. He knew that he was [HIV] positive. I did not know until my baby was tested. Then I found out that I was also positive. I knew it was him. He married me because I was a virgin. He believed that if he slept with a virgin he would be cured... I walked out. Now I counsel women who are HIV positive. There is life after infection (2000:1).

Though this woman was violated and seduced by a man, she resolved to stand up and help other women to be aware and to oppose men who misuse their power after the pattern of Amnon. The Amnons of today must be confronted with words and measures of justice. Such men must pay the price of their injustices; they must be held responsible for the miseries brought upon the millions of women and orphans we have in Africa. They must be liberated to follow the example of Christ, who did not marginalise ‘the other’ by reason of his maleness. If the Amnons do

not change, let the women initiate change within them, bearing in mind that patriarchy is long outdated.

4.2.2 Jonadab

This character is vital to this narrative and is therefore quickly presented to the reader by the narrator at the outset of the drama. Jonadab will temporarily disappear but he will later reappear to report the murder of Amnon by Absalom his half brother (v.32). According to the narrator, Jonadab is the son of Shimea, and also the nephew of David. Jonadab was an adult man well endowed with intellect, but when he goes forth to meet the infatuated Amnon he misuses his intellectual powers. Jonadab hatches a plan to trick the King and ultimately land Tamar in the hands of the merciless and sexist Amnon. Jonadab is very sly, like the serpent in Genesis 3. He begins with a question, 'Why art thou, being the King's son lean from day to day? Wilt thou not tell me?' (v.5). The narrator does not tell us the intentions of Jonadab's probing, and perhaps, Jonadab was genuine in his concern at the beginning. But if Jonadab was genuine, then why did he suggest the deadly plan of tricking and ultimately getting hold of the innocent Tamar? The plan was to make Amnon pretend that he was sick, so that the King would order Tamar to come and give him food. Jonadab is also deeply infected with the virus of patriarchy. He acts treacherously, although he has a sound mind; he finds exhilarating fun in oppressing an innocent woman, who unfortunately had no voice although she was of a royal lineage.

Jonadab uses his age and experience to harass the young, the weak and the vulnerable. Jonadab, as a betrayer of women rights and all who love justice for all, acts like Judas when he betrays the innocent Jesus (John 14:22 NAB). Jonadab acts as a catalyst to stir the game of seduction for the sake of power. Then he stands away from the game and becomes a jolly spectator in a theatre of androcentric violence. Jonadab may in fact be seen as cheering the results of his experiment in the violation of human rights.

Jonadab represents the key perpetrators of both male and female violence in our society of today. He [they] begins by violating the value of truth, and proceeds to manipulate and rob Tamar of her dignity through the merciless hands of Amnon. Jonadab finally acts as a reporter of the murder of Amnon to David, who perhaps, if willing, would have halted

it! Jonadab is a clear representative of powerful western nations who have no mercy with Africa. They are daily hatching plans with good names like globalisation or a free market economy. But, who is it that really benefits? Is it Africa, which is slowly recovering from the ravages of the slave trade, the pangs of colonialism and the stigma of being a third world continent, or is it the Western world? Imperialism and patriarchy are still as rampant and persistent in our world as it was in the time of Jonadab. Africa needs to stand tall and confront, challenge and change all oppressive structures both regionally and globally. The struggle must still be waged, though our mother Africa, seems to use a crutch as she is walking ahead her children. Africa is calling: *Aluta continua* – who will heed the call? (Dube 2000:197-201, Njoroge 2005:1-19)

4.2.3 Tamar the princess

Princess Tamar was the daughter of Maacah and King David. She was a self-respecting woman, as can be inferred from her strong refusal of Amnon. Tamar had a sound character, until the time she met Amnon, who violated her virginity. She had a critical mind, as we shall see later in this section. Tamar was a sister to Absalom, who later used her as a way to get to the throne of his father after the death of Amnon. The entire narrative reveals the horror of her experience as a woman. Nevertheless, the narrative's point of view was not about her; she was merely used as a vehicle to be a victim in the power struggles within patriarchal culture of the ancient Hebrew nation. It is in this struggle, marked by family politics and sexual passions, that Tamar found herself. She is then seduced, raped, stigmatised and finally muted to speak no more – because 'where could she go to hide her disgrace?' (vv. 12-13 REB).

As the curtain opens on Tamar, she is seen holding a frying pan, a container of oil and some wheat flour. She comes to nurse the 'sick' Amnon. Princess Tamar is wearing a beautiful, long-sleeved tunic, which was the customary and respectable wear for virgins in Hebrew culture. The dress matched her beauty and chastity. But to Amnon that meant nothing apart from a desire to satisfy his desire for sex, without caring about her dignity or honour. Amnon calls Tamar into his bedroom and then refuses to eat the cakes she has prepared for him,

because he wanted 'another sort of cake'. Amnon grabs her hand, and the narrative is silent on whether she struggled for her freedom or not (vv. 12-14). He then suggests that they have sex.

Tamar comes to her senses; she discovers that she has been deceived and is right in the domain of a potential rapist. Because she had a sharp critical mind, she attempts to invoke the ethical codes of the Hebrew society as her sole weapon against the rapist. She cries out for mercy and pleads, 'My brother, don't do anything to me for such a thing has never been done in Israel!' Amnon refuses to reason. He cannot rise above his infatuation, therefore he proceeds to rape Tamar. Afterwards, to add insult to injury, as Tamar is violently evicted from the room because now Amnon suddenly 'hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated was greater than the love wherewith he had loved' (v.15).

This is the situation when love is mingled with lies; it breeds loathing, hatred and finally violent stigmatisation. This act broke Tamar's heart completely. 'She went away perforce displaying all signs of her grief, rent robe, ashes on head and loud wailing' (Howley 1977:102). Tamar had hope that her brother Absalom would console her; but to her bitter dismay he told her: 'Amnon is your brother; regard not this thing (v.20).' So she remained desolate in her brother's house. Why did the brother fail to console her? Where was King David to speak words of healing to her? Was she a motherless child? If her mother Maacah was alive, where was she to stay close to her daughter in this bitter season of her life? I can conclude that she was not only a victim of rape, but also an object of betrayal by her entire family (Ackerman 2004:50-57). I therefore firmly concur with the anonymous saying that 'the greatest pain in life is not to die but to be forgotten; to be left in the dust after another's great achievement.' After Amnon's 'great' and treacherous 'achievement' of raping Tamar, she is left alone in the dust of her wailing. She is literally forgotten by everybody, including her parents, her siblings, the leaders in Israel; even the women of Israel could not raise their voices for the restitution of Tamar! I believe that she must have felt that the only person who cared for her psychological trauma was herself – therefore she died inside while still living, because no one could aid her in breaking the silence about injustice.

Tamar may represent African women, particularly those living with HIV. Many of them have been infected with HIV not because they are great sinners, but in most cases because they have been seduced and

raped like Tamar, and became infected. It does not matter whether they were married or single, young or old, literate or illiterate – they can all be viewed as victims of patriarchy and male oppression. Their feminine bodies have made them subject to ridicule, envy, discrimination and stigma. In the article of Malebogo Kgalemang, entitled, 'John 9: Deconstructing HIV/AIDS stigma,' she says forcefully:

In most societies women have no voice and they are prone to contracting the virus, firstly because of their biological make-up and secondly because of the fact that they are powerless. They cannot stand for themselves and insist on fidelity from their partners nor can they insist that their partners should use condoms when having sex or even refuse sex when it's demanded from them (2004:153).

This is the situation we have in Africa, therefore the study urges African women to join hands together and fight for human rights because since the time of Tamar, men and even fellow empowered women have failed to speak for women's rights more effectively because patriarchy supposes an unfair superiority of men over women through a culture that is gender biased.

On the other hand, Tamar represents western women who belong to the colonising powers. Tamar being a woman in a royal family in Israel, a land which belonged to the Canaanites was only a victim of patriarchal oppression. But what of the Canaanite women who were victims of double colonisation – patriarchy and imperialism. These forms of male oppression do overlap but are not identical (Dube 2000:197-201). Their cry is deeper than that of Tamar, because Tamar was just inflicted with a half share of traumatising! No wonder that in her wailing she does not mention the suffering of Canaanite women, because she was part of the colonisers, she was just concerned for herself, not thinking there were 'other' women suffering a double measure of colonisation. This is true of western women today. Their feminist biblical interpretation only caters for the subversion of patriarchy while leaving the other more serious form of patriarchy that involve going beyond borders of the particular colonising nation. Thanks be to God, who hears the silenced voices of those who suffer a double colonisation, for revealing to us a new form of feminist biblical interpretation with a decolonising approach of Biblical texts. This method will cause the long silenced voices to be heard at last in all realms of life.

Next we will discuss some of the minor and invisible characters in the narrative.

4.2.4 King David

King David was the son of Jesse and he had many wives. To mention a few: he married Maacah (the mother to Absalom and Tamar), Ahinoam (the mother to Amnon), Michal (who was cursed by David for not being able to bear children), Bathsheeba (the mother of Solomon, who later inherited the throne from his father) and Abigail (conquered in war). David also married to satisfy male desires, which included having a large family, marrying for political and economic alliances, for military conquests, and sometimes he married because he had the power to get any woman – for no one would dare to stop him! That is how patriarchy worked; those with power had the right to seduce, to monopolise the economy, to rape and finally to murder.

As the curtain is drawn, we see King David in his royal robe and a golden crown approaching slowly. He is a conqueror among his own people and beyond the borders of Israel. The Canaanites and Philistines must bring taxes and tributes to Israel. At the time he comes to see ‘the sick boy’, his character had been seriously tainted by the earlier rape of Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba. He was brought to confession by a prophet of God called Nathan, and was exhorted that the sins he committed would surely be repeated in his own royal household (Sam.12:11). Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan (2003) says more about David’s unsavoury personality:

Sex politics, and militaristic pursuit go hand in hand in David’s dynasty: rape, adultery and incest result between various militaristic escapades and claims of victory. Sexual violence and wars help define Israel. The integration of politics and sexuality involve David’s public responsibilities, his private desires and his ability to galvanise more power, a power that grants David ownership of women’s sexuality (2003:54)

The King now enters the house of Amnon his son, tricked by the plan of Jonadab. Though he has conquered nations he fails to unravel the simple trick of Amnon and Jonadab. He now meets his son. The boy seems to be sick. David asks what can he do for the ‘sick boy’ Amnon says that he really needs Tamar to come and bake cakes for him –

perhaps that would encourage him to eat! (v.6). Because he had power over women sexually, David did not care if the coming of Tamar would risk her feminine innocence. Because he was a forgiven sinner, he did not know the pains of rape. Had he known that, he would never have exposed Tamar to Amnon. In verse 7, the command is given to bring Tamar with immediate effect. Tamar responds quickly, and she comes in the house of Amnon when the King is gone out to fulfil other royal responsibilities. She is seduced, raped and stigmatised by Amnon. David hears of the painful story, the narrative says he was very angry but he literally did nothing to vindicate the justice of Tamar. He did that because Amnon was his first born (v.21)

David represents all irresponsible male parents; all irresponsible male leaders in churches; governments, and other institutions. Because they are empowered through patriarchy and imperialism, they enjoy gender-based violence, they cannot speak for the justice of the Tamars. Though they have attained local and international prosperity like King David in his golden age, they literally do nothing to help the sufferings of women. If they do act, they just do it passively for the sake of appearances. They do this because the rapists are their firstborns and underground allies in the institution of patriarchy. In this narrative, David failed to speak for Tamar because he was vastly weakened by his past wrongdoings. Therefore he was no longer in a position to enforce the moral code for he was no model for it, just as androcentric leaders in various sections of life are (Buttrick 1990:201).

Where David failed, his son Absalom revenged Tamar by killing Amnon. This suggests that when there is delay for vindication of justice, people tend to act out of revenge – an act of taking the law into their own hands. No wonder, in Africa we have rampant civil wars, along with witnessed genocides in Rwanda, Burundi, and Darfur in Sudan, due to these irresponsible patriarchal leaders. To make it worse, on these occasions, women are raped, girls are molested or left to care for huge families while economically disempowered. Therefore the study urges women and men of Africa to subvert patriarchy and function in a non-dualistic relationship, a relationship that will give justice to all, beginning with the women and children of Africa

4.2.5 Absalom

Absalom was a sister to princess Tamar, and son to king David and Maacah. He was the first born to his mother. He was a very calculating person. He had great power of persuasion which he used later to convince the larger part of the nation of Israel to revolt against his father because he wanted to take over the throne. In summary, he was a person who thirsted for power and he would get it at any cost; even if it would mean to temporarily silence the voice of his raped sister; and later to murder his brother Amnon in the 'name of his sister' to accomplish his ends.

As the curtain opens, we see Absalom in his own home trying to work out how he can get into power without getting anybody suspicious! At a distance he sees Tamar coming; her wailing voice could be heard from far. She had rent her tunic for mourning; ashes were upon her body; hands clasped on her head; her red cheeks had streaks of dried tears due to a long walk in the sun. She seemed so weary and weak, even a dumb beast could sense that this female human being has been crushed. Absalom, her brother, runs down to meet his distressed sister. He embraces her. Without wasting time he asks, 'what is the matter?' (v.20). In deep sobs and mournful sounds she narrates that she has been seduced, raped and finally thrown away by Amnon. Absalom 'sympathises' and tells Tamar not to take the matter so seriously, after all Amnon was her brother, it would not bring any sense to bring any 'noise' about it! (vv. 20, 21).

As the days elapsed, Absalom returned to his quest for leadership. Suddenly a new idea flashed into his mind – to use Tamar's rape as a way to ascend to the throne! How was this to be done? Amnon is to be murdered, because he is the only rival to the throne. Two years down the line, Absalom gets his chance when he has Amnon murdered at a sheep shearing festival prepared in honour of Amnon. In this event, Absalom, depicts another side of patriarchy: he uses male power to attain power in the act of killing Amnon, using the misery of Tamar (a woman) to accomplish his false designs (Smith 1997:114-135).

Absalom represents male and female leaders in Africa who are power-thirsty and are not willing to speak for the marginalised, the discriminated and sexually oppressed. Sadly enough, they 'use' them to accomplish their ends in attempting to get positions of power. Male

church leaders are not exempt in this. No wonder there is a call for African church leaders to break silence and advocate justice for women and children in an endeavour to curb HIV and AIDS transmission. The ICASA Satellite Session on 'The role of Religious Leaders in Reducing Stigma and Discrimination Related to HIV/AIDS' reports:

Religious leaders have a unique catalytic role to play in addressing stigma and discrimination within communities. Religious leaders can influence a community's response. Unfortunately, many religious leaders have spoken in judgment against HIV/AIDS equating it to sin that afflicts unbelievers and those who have fallen short in their morals.

Ironically, religion is full of hope for those who suffer and this can be translated into action to support those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Theologian Musa Dube emphasised the need for the Church to understand issues that drive the HIV epidemic such as gender inequality, social injustice and denial of rights. Religion needs to address women as a social category of the population that is affected by HIV and AIDS. 'Religious writings predominantly come from a patriarchal culture, a fact that disadvantages women because it leads to gender inequality,' she says (2003).

4.3 Discussion of invisible characters

The invisible characters are participants who act behind the scenes. They are found in the shadows of active characters; they are only visible under special lenses. In this case, feminist lenses are preferred. These characters are as important as the visible ones. We actually need them badly, because their voices have been suppressed. The invisible characters speak as loudly as the visible ones if empowered (Exum 1995:65-85). Since our narrative was written within an androcentric culture, it naturally follows that the invisible characters were deemed unimportant because they do not meet the patriarchal point of view of the writer. In our narrative we can say we have two groups of invisible characters, represented by Hebrew women and the narrator.

4.3.1 Hebrew women

The women in the narrative are excluded. We do not see them mourning with Tamar. We do not see them confronting Amnon for the sexual violence he did to their daughter. We do not see them calling Absalom to

ask him when he is going to talk to Amnon to settle the matter. We do not see them approaching the King. The narrative says nothing at all about them. Nevertheless, this should not make us believe that there were no women in Israel when Tamar was raped! The reason for their silence is that the patriarchal culture they were living in had made them accept male dominance in all important institutions of the society, or at least keep quiet about it. Women were not only deprived of power in the marriage set-up, but also in religious and political arenas. Their work was to take care of their husbands, bear children and raise them in a culture that undermined women.

These repressed females represent African women in rural areas and in urban centres. They may be rich or poor, literate or illiterate. Due to their gender, they are sexually harassed and even raped and are not given equal opportunities as far as education is concerned. The researcher's own mother was prevented from continuing with her education because her uncle, who adopted her at a tender age eagerly needed a dowry in the form of cattle from my 'then to be father'. He needed compensation, because my maternal grandfather abandoned his children and disappeared into oblivion. But who could hear the cry of my mother, who longed for further education? Even my father embraced patriarchy, for he further denied her access to school, because he presumed she would be 'unfaithful' to her marriage vows! But who could listen to her cries? Thank God that I have recently heard her bitter mourning, long after my grandfathers and father have passed away. And I have vowed in my life to write and speak for women until their voices are heard. I will support their struggle for justice and equity; I will be on their side morally and materially.

4.3.2 Narrator

The narrator is the person who tells the story. He is the person who conveys a message either in oral or written form. The narrator of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 is a male, born, raised and trained in a patriarchal culture. He does very well to give us the narrative account. And if he might give it a title it would be 'Portraits of King David.' This is because, the main point of view is not about Tamar (a woman) but about the life of King David, who was vacillating between military conquest, adultery, rape, murder and confessions as the consequences of his weak

character. The narrative is a continuation of the consequences of David's character as prophesied and recorded in chapter 12. It is all about David stealing Uriah's wife and killing her husband, a thing God did not approve. In summary, the narrative was written for men by a man; it has a male point of view. Women's experiences are removed and those who are included have no hope of being heard. It is written to make women continue to believe that subordination is right even when feminine dignity is jeopardised. Nevertheless, we cannot abandon the narrative, the narrative was simply written to suit the fabric of patriarchy in its generation.

The narrator of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 represents all writers and researchers who live in the 21st century and are still writing their works in the old fashioned way – a gender-biased style! Such writers – it does not matter whether they are theologians, journalists, scientists, male or female, etcetera – are to be decolonised, are to be liberated, are to be emancipated in body, soul and mind. They are supposed to mainstream gender issues in their printed pages in order to convey human equality in the entire spectrum of the body of knowledge (Thimmes 1998:279-282).

4.4 Conclusion

To sum it all up, let me remind you that all along we have been in the labour room struggling to bring out the baby of meaning from its mother, the Hebrew Bible. We have used a combination of feminist and narrative procedures of interpreting the biblical narratives found in 2 Samuel 13:1-22. In the labour room, we saw two types of characters, namely, visible and invisible characters. The major character was Tamar, who was a victim of patriarchal oppression. Her muted voice is still crying out today to seek restitution of justice for women. Other visible characters were Amnon (the rapist male leader), Jonadab (the cunning male leader), Tamar (the masses of oppressed women because of gender), David (the irresponsible male leader), and Absalom (the power-thirsty leader at the expense of women). The other group of characters, named as invisible characters, include the Hebrew women (suppressed on the basis of their gender) and finally the narrator (writers who write for men because they are men).

All in all, it is not a time to find who has stolen the goat, or who has its skin or who heard its voice in the last moment. In other words let us stop 'scape-goating.' Let us reconcile and build a better world of women and men who live happily together in love, peace and justice. Because:

*Life is full of pain, but does it get better,
Will people ever care for each other?
And make time for those who are in need [like Tamar]
Each of us has part to play.
In this great show we call life.
Each of us has a duty to humankind to tell our friends we
love them.*

– Anonymous

CHAPTER 5:

STIGMATISATION OF PERSONS WITH HIV BY THE ACADEMY AND CHURCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first objective of the research, which is geared to establish the extent to which the church and the academy have adhered to stereotyping persons with HIV. Furthermore, the chapter does not deal with the text of Samuel, but sets a contextual background before the actual interpretative process done by the respondents. This objective is important because it sets all other remaining objectives in motion due to its preparatory nature. The overriding theme is stigmatisation. This theme is important because it prepared participants to enter a 'confession zone' before they could answer the proceeding research questions in an honest manner. This strategy worked well, because participants rarely contradicted what they answered to this question in later sessions. In connection with the major theme of stigmatisation, there are the other related sub-themes with regard to curriculum and culture.

When the first research question was asked, most respondents were not psychologically prepared for it. Most of them were suspicious of the researcher. This was made evident by leaders and lecturers who wanted to protect the reputation of their institutions. This was also clear from the fact that students too did not want to let down the denominations to which they are affiliated. Finally, persons with HIV wanted to protect their pastors, since they are the ones who 'own' and coordinate the UHAI group. But with much reassurance and probing, the respondents were willing to participate. It must also be noted that the findings were largely facilitated by asking probing questions. As far as possible, the reactions of participants are quoted verbatim, so that in Chapter Nine critical reflections may be engaged. Below is a summary of the findings from this particular question.

5.2 Stigmatisation:

To what extent do the church and academic institutions stigmatise persons with HIV?

In accordance with the findings, it is quite clear that lecturers, students and persons with HIV have been agents of stigmatisation to the sick. But persons with HIV were more emphatic in their expressions, since they happen most of the time to be the objects of stigma. This was measured by the number of sermons preached or not preached on HIV or AIDS and gender-based violence. One respondent confessed, *'In my view I would say to a large extent the church has been an instrument of stigmatising persons with HIV, which is directly against its mission'* (FGMMU Married S.1). Another student at graduate level concurred, saying, *'The current situation is that we are stigmatising persons with HIV in our midst. I want to confess that this is a weakness on our part'* (FGMISSIONS. S. 3). As noted earlier, persons with HIV were more emphatic in this, as is demonstrated by the following words:

Sometimes, the preachers say if you do not respect yourself then your days to live will be few! Sometimes, the preachers say those who are not settled have been attracting the possibilities to have the disease themselves (PLWHAs Singles S.4).

5.3 Curriculum:

Is HIV and AIDS study reflected in the curriculum?

This question was aimed at probing further in ascertaining the level of stigma because if it was identified that there are specialised courses on HIV and AIDS, then another question would be on the content and the methods of delivery. In contrast, the findings indicate that the selected institutions lack a curriculum that has integrated HIV and AIDS. In this respect, the Makumira University College is an exception because it has a structured graduate programme on Pastoral Studies with an HIV and AIDS emphasis. Nevertheless, this exception may soon disappear, because graduate students who joined in the last academic year were obliged to study a Masters Programme in Christian Missions. This programme is funded by the Lutheran Church in Germany. So as this chapter is being written there are no more intakes of graduate students with emphasis on HIV and AIDS (FGHIV/AIDS, FGMISSIONS)!

Now we will turn to findings collected from Mount Meru University. When the participants were asked to what extent the institution has engaged with HIV and AIDS in the curriculum, one lecturer asserted; *'To a large extent, biblical scholars have not been effective in empowering the PLWHAs, because they have been silent'* (MMU Lecturer 6). Another lecturer from the same University added, *'It appears that our education has not spoken much about human sexuality issues'* (MMU Lecturer 5). The same finding of lack of AIDS courses in the university curriculum was also found at the University of Arusha. In one focus group of married students, the following comment was given: *'There is non-involvement completely. Lecturers have always feared to engage in their daily work with HIV and AIDS'* (FGUoA Married S.3).

5.4 Culture: **Why is HIV and AIDS not fully reflected in the curriculum?**

This was a probing question after establishing that HIV/AIDS is not in the curriculum. The fact of its absence may indicate lack of interest or a lack of commitment and this phenomenon is directly attached to stigmatisation. So when this question was asked, most lecturers and students commented that our African culture has been a hindrance in discussing topics of human sexuality. So, each lecturer was afraid of talking about 'private things' heard behind closed doors. On this sub-theme, it was surprising that higher levels of education could not assist. It must be noted that most of these lecturers got their masters and doctorates abroad. This may suggest issues of context. In responding to this question, a lecturer from the University of Arusha had this to say: *'Our ethnic backgrounds may also contribute to hinder not speaking about topics regarding sex'* (UoA Lecturer 5).

5.5 Chapter summary

Therefore, the overall finding in this chapter is that the academy and the church are both guilty of stigmatising persons with HIV. This finding has been measured by lack of sermons on the subject, or stigmatising interpretation in relation to the sick. Furthermore, the academy, as indicated in the findings, has not fully integrated AIDS in the curriculum, and the reason suggested by respondents was mainly about

culture. So, in a way this is ‘another form’ of stigmatisation, because the issues of minorities are not given due weight. The finding is important because establishes the honesty of respondents right from the preliminary stages of the study.

CHAPTER 6: RE-READING 2 SAMUEL 13 AGAINST THE HIV AND AIDS CONTEXT – MAJOR CHARACTERS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the contextual reading of the Tamar text with emphasis on major characters. The major characters are Amnon (antagonist), Tamar (protagonist) and Jonadab (foil). While the first objective lays the background of data presentation, the second objective is the heart of the study. The second objective is concerned in establishing the interplay of power and gender politics in 2 Samuel 13 and 14. Therefore this chapter is concluded by a summary of what has been presented as well as establishing a link to the next twin chapter.

The characters were questioned by the participants through the facilitation of the researcher on how they used their male/female powers to influence the second research objective, which states, *‘To problematise issues of power and gender as interplayed in the selected narratives and how they impact indigenous communities in AIDS context.’* While the first objective was meant to set a background for the second objective, the latter is the heart of the study. It must be noted that approximately 90 minutes of interview time (or 80% of the total time) were devoted to this aspect alone. This indicates that the section extensively explored beyond other sections.

As a prelude to the later discussion, the participants were asked to open their Swahili or English Bibles and read 2 Samuel 13 for the first interview session, and 2 Samuel 14 for the second and last interview session. In each session of interviews or focus groups, a volunteer was asked to read the text out loud. The pattern followed here is consistent with the method of contextual Bible Study pioneered by Gerald West (2005). This method was widely used in South Africa during the Tamar campaign. The movement challenged gender-based violence using biblical texts by bringing together socially engaged scholars and ordinary readers. Although this study has several similarities to church and gender-based violence activism in South Africa, the focus of the current

research was gender-based violence in the *context of AIDS*. The other difference is that it deals with a different audience, based in north-east Tanzania. The respondents are university lecturers who teach theology and religion, undergraduate students who study theology and education and finally a group of persons with HIV. Each of these groups met separately to discuss the same text. Finally, this study carries contextual Bible study to further higher levels by being more comprehensive, as the presentation and analysis will make it clear.

After reading the texts in each group, the characters in the narrative were discussed in the order given above (see Appendix B p.200). The participants were asked to try to identify with the characters and try to find any relevancy in the context of AIDS. This strategy is in line with African biblical scholarship, which takes the context of readers seriously (Jonker 2001:81). The same order of presentation which was done in the first research objective was employed. Also, two main open-ended questions were posed to the group regarding each character in the narrative. These were interspersed by several probing questions based on the direction of the discussion. Here the presentation of characters begins, based on open-ended questions as follows:

- 1) *Who is the character? Why does she or he behave in a particular way?* (As can be appreciated, this question focuses on the text as a final product – see the methodology in chapter 3.)
- 2) *Do we have similar characters in the context of AIDS?* (This question explores the application of the text within the domain of the contemporary society.)
- 3) *Are there any true stories?* (These are relevant and factual stories.)
- 4) *What is the role of the church, legal authorities, police or community in helping such people?*
- 5) *What is the way forward?*

6.2 Amnon

Amnon is a character described by all respondents as the son of David who raped his half-sister, Tamar. Tamar shared the same father and mother with Absalom. On discussing Amnon, many themes surfaced

but one major theme became dominant – rape. Other interwoven sub-themes include identification, curse, contemporary Amnons, curriculum, corruption, church, emotional expressions, real-life stories and the way forward. These themes are presented in the order of appearance.

6.2.1 Rape: Why did Amnon rape his sister Tamar?

When this question was asked of the focus groups and interviewees, the participants gave several reasons. Some reasons given include the fact that Amnon had: no fear of God, uncontrolled passion, a poor father figure, a shrewd mentor, crippled thinking, behaviour of fornication, enmity to Absalom, polygamous family, demon possession, and psychological weakness. When respondents were asked if the same reasons could apply in the context of AIDS, there was a unanimous ‘yes’ from all groups and participants. So this brings to the fore the fact that the Old Testament text (and the selected chapters of 2 Samuel 13-14), could be utilised constructively to provide a message of empowerment to both PLWHAs (infected and affected). Next, participants were asked if there could be cultural reasons that would motivate rapists or potential rapists to violate women and hence risk infecting them with HIV.

Most participants gave the following reasons for rape: certain cultures justify rape, witchcraft, myths of sleeping with little girls with the assumption that it can heal AIDS, search for riches, effects of drug addiction, corruption in employment sectors, less strict punishments for rapists, and poverty. Other reasons included uncontrolled passions, alleged ‘rights’ of husbands over their wives’ bodies, assumptions that women are weak vessels and being victims of circumstances.

Then the respondents were asked, ‘do we have contemporary Amnons? The answer was unanimously ‘yes.’ Other responses included:

The Amnons are plenty although they are not publicly exposed, because of the following reasons; African culture has the tendency to shy away from issues related to human sexuality; the churches feel that it is the work of the Government to deal with ‘the Amnons’; government institutions like the police, the legal system and hospitals are plagued with corruption (FGUoA Unmarried S.1).

In support of the above respondent, a PLWHA asserted vehemently, '*We have people like Amnon in our contemporary time*' (FGPLWHAs Singles S.4).

Women groups also gave many reasons. Women's experience must be taken into account. There was therefore a unanimous agreement across all groups and participants that Amnons were also present in our contemporary society.

Therefore this section has brought out the following findings: there is a need to scrutinise contemporary reasons for rape incidents. This may help in halting or at least slowing down the pandemic through reading the Old Testament text in the light of the contemporary situation of gender violence and AIDS. Reading the Old Testament contextually is relevant to the AIDS era. This illustrates the fact that appropriate hermeneutics can address socio-economic issues, such as gender violence and AIDS.

6.2.2 Identification

Identification, for the purpose of this study, refers to the ability to approve or disapprove of the characters' traits. Usually, when the character has been presented negatively by the narrator, readers will also react with feelings of alienation or apathy. But when the character has been presented positively, then readers will tend to like and associate with him with either empathy or sympathy (Chisolm Jr. 2006:28-29). And when the character has been presented ambiguously, respondents will be divided in the way they perceive them. The respondents were asked how they viewed Amnon, based on the rape incident, and their responses showed that all participants felt a sense of apathy with the exception of respondents from Makumira University College, who showed some inclination toward sympathising with Amnon. Here are some of their comments:

I think Amnon is a human being like us, he is having sexual drives like us too, but do you also remember that his father David did the same thing to Uriah's wife? I think it was a kind of curse that was eating up David's family' (FGHIV/AIDS S.1).

Another graduate student from the same institution added: 'Apart from blaming Amnon, we need to blame the girl too. Perhaps she was responding to entertainment' (FGMISSIONS S.2).

These findings indicate that we will still have people in the academy who will give interpretations that promote gender-based violence and consequently the HI virus is spread.

6.2.3 Curse: Could a curse be a valid reason for the rape of Tamar?

In response to this question, some respondents, especially those from Makumira University College agreed that Amnon's senses were affected by a curse (in the mystical sense?). The FGHIV/AIDS and FGMISSIONS groups contended that Amnon (David's son) was cursed, based on the prophecy of Nathan, who cursed David after raping Uriah's wife and then killing him. So these particular groups believed that Amnon had no will-power to control his animal passions, which caused the tragedy with Tamar (2 Samuel 11). In confirming this standpoint, one male respondent argued: *'I think Amnon inherited the behaviour of rape from his father. This is in line with a statement that what goes around comes around.'*

In contrast to this viewpoint, other groups contended that Amnon had the will-power to overcome his sexual passions. He could therefore have listened to Tamar's argument, which roughly consisted of four parts: (1) She suggested that it was violence, something which was strange in Israel (2 Samuel 13:12); (2) the rape act would make both Tamar and Amnon outcasts in Israel (2 Samuel 13:13); (3) Tamar suggests union by marriage and that the correct procedures of first seeing the King ought to be followed; and (4) she fought physically against the rapist (2 Samuel 13:14). In support of this stand against the curse viewpoint one respondent said,

I can say that even though we can have some character traits from our parents, but I think everybody has a choice to make. So Amnon had a choice, and his choice was made stronger by the advice of his uncle Jonadab. (FGUoA Married S.4).

This finding suggests that when entertaining interpretations that are linked to curses, these may promote stigma in the context of AIDS. For example, there are several interpretations which say that people get HIV because they are cursed by God for their promiscuous behaviour. But how could this be true, seeing that the disease is not in all cases transmitted through promiscuity? If this were the case then God could be seen as unfair, so an alternative interpretation should be preferred.

6.2.4 Contemporary Amnons

After agreeing that contemporary Amnons are present in our society, the question was posed: 'how are these Amnons presented?' In response to this question, the theme of contemporary Amnons surfaced. It is interesting to note that the women focus groups were more vocal on this issue, suggesting that they are in a more vulnerable position than men, based on culture and physical strength. One member among the persons with HIV lamented:

Some pastors these days are merciless, and they have entered a business of eating their flock instead of feeding them. They may not necessarily be raping but through consent. This is especially when female sheep go to seek a word of counsel or a prayer for healing' (PLWHAs Married S.3).

In support of the former respondent, another married woman concurred:

Pastors are not talking at the issues relating to AIDS. I am really surprised. Maybe pastors are afraid! Pastors have no courage at all. Perhaps another reason is that they could be also perpetrators of gender-based violence. Pastors are also alleged for raping their church members' (FGUoA Married S.5).

6.2.5 Curriculum: Are the issues of rape and Amnons addressed fully in our curricula?

When the above question was asked, it was clear that all participants who work or study in the selected institutions agreed without exception

that our current curriculum does not grant sufficient weight to topics of human sexuality, which include rape and rapists. This in turn has caused our universities to fail to prepare future workers who would be competent enough to address rape and other related topics in the context of AIDS. A participant from the University of Arusha had this confession to make about the curriculum: *'Universities have not engaged adequately, as made clear in the curriculum and rate of activism.'* (FGUoA Unmarried S.3).

Another respondent, who is a graduate student at Makumira University College, gave a lengthy description, worthy of quoting in full. In his description he touched on many aspects which he claims to have made the curriculum irrelevant in the context of AIDS. The reasons included failure to contextualise present issues and remaining locked in the missionary past – entertaining a syndrome of dependency from abroad, viewing AIDS as a strictly medical problem and not as a complex disease. Here below are his elaborate viewpoints:

I think we need to change our curriculum, because what is applicable in the local churches is what was used by missionaries. So you find when the word of God is preached it is not really coming to the context of the local population, but it hangs somewhere. Time has come to make the word of God have contextual meaning. I think we need to change, that is why we see the church is still keeping silent, it has nothing to do with HIV/AIDS in a serious note. If it is doing something now it could be a pressure from our mother church abroad. These people do not have HIV/AIDS in same measures as us, but they are providing money to fund the projects. Another problem for the church is that it has been viewing HIV/AIDS as a medical pandemic and not as a social pandemic. So when you miss this perspective, the result you find all the funding is directed to hospitals for the medical professionals to deal with it. So if the church could have taken a view which I call as a broader view of social pandemic, then much could have been done! (FGMISSIONS S.3).

6.2.6 Corruption: According to the text, Amnon was not dealt with accordingly after the rape incident; do we find similar parallels in our context?

When the question was asked: ‘According to the text, Amnon was not dealt with accordingly after the rape incident, do we find similar parallels in our context?’ the issue of corruption came to the fore. Most respondents agreed that rapists have often escaped church discipline and the arm of the law. The reason for that is deeply entrenched corruption in the lives of both church leaders and government workers, especially in the police and judiciary sectors. It was also suggested that those who are poor have been failing to pay the price set by corrupt officials, and as a result Amnons have been ‘reigning with terror’ in our streets. They fail to pay the corruption charges because the means of economy belongs to the rich, who are few. In regard to this issue, an undergraduate student at Mount Meru University had this to say:

Corruption also applies to the rapists. Those of poor backgrounds will continue to suffer but those from rich backgrounds will continue to enjoy life. So the government needs to correct such breaches in the law of the country.’ (FGMMU Married S.1)

Another graduate student at Makumira University College lamented painfully:

I can say by 99% the legal system are not doing their work. We have heard several times when the Amnons are caught, [they] are thereafter left free. This is all connected to rampant corruption in the system’ (FGMISSIONS S.2).

6.2.7 Culture: Can rape be associated with culture, whether ancient or modern?

In response to this probing question, almost all participants said, ‘yes’, culture can promote or prevent rape. It was suggested that David’s polygamous life somehow contributed to the rape of Tamar, since Amnon belonged to another wife of David, and Tamar was the daughter of another wife. There it is legitimately assumed that there could have been feelings of hatred between the two families, probably a sign of struggle for power to attain the throne. These views are verified further by an undergraduate student:

David was having a number of wives; I think that had a negative effect on Amnon's behaviour. I think also Amnon was not forthcoming in learning what was good for himself and the society as a whole (FGUoA Married men S.4).

When participants were asked about the current Tanzanian culture and if it could be promoting rape, respondents agreed again, that it is true. In Tanzanian culture, like many other places in Africa, voices of women and the poor are not heard. Married women could be raped by their husbands simply because the man paid *mahali* (bride price). So, such tragedies are always kept behind the doors. In a focus group at Mount Meru University, one female respondent remarked that: 'it has become common for men to 'eat' housemaids. This usually happens when the legal wife has gone on a journey.' (S.2). Together with that, another female respondent gave a classic example on how rape is justified in some cultures, by citing particularly the Barbeig (Arusha natives). She said:

A woman would be proposed for marriage by a man, and she refuses. Upon this rejection the man will inform his peers and they arrange an assisted rape. So they will lie in wait for this lady and when they get her, she will be raped. According to Barbeig culture, a woman who is raped must be married to [the] man who raped her. Otherwise she will not be acceptable in the community, so this is how rape can be justified in certain African cultures (FGUoA Women S.4).

6.2.8 Church: Based on the internal evidence within the text, Tamar was not helped by her society. Is the Christian church following the same pattern?

In response to this question most respondents, with the exception of two from Makumira University College, acknowledged that churches have not dealt sufficiently with rape cases, but have left the burden to government. It is interesting to note that persons with HIV were more vocal in critiquing the church. In a private interview with a person with HIV, while sobbing she recalled a moment when a church pastor made the following announcement in one fully packed Sunday worship:

“Persons with HIV must not be allowed to take care of our kids. We need to pray for them so that they die.” I was crushed in the heart, since he did not know how I became sick. I’m really disappointed with this kind of a church governance, it is better I belong to a support group like UHAI than attending such church services (FGPLWHAs Married S.1).

While speaking along the same lines, another Person with HIV argued that:

The church needs to be within the society. It needs to learn the situations and the culture of the society. And after that, when rape occurs, it must do its part of counselling and restoration, but again it must give a full support to the legal system.’ (FGPLWHAs Singles S.1)

In support of these views, a graduate student expressed another comment in regard to church involvement in rape cases, *‘I think as a church we are lacking a suitable approach on how we can deal with rape cases’* (FGHIV/AIDS S.2).

6.2.9 Emotional expression

This theme arose as a result of keen observation on how participants of different sexes were emotionally responding. This was also connected to the aspect of checking the participants’ willingness to give personal stories in relation to rape. There were two distinct patterns. The first focus groups made of women were more emotional and had a lot of personal stories as compared to men’s focus groups and interviewed respondents. Secondly, lecturers were less emotional and lacked practical examples in relations to HIV/AIDS. This may suggest detachment from real world troubles.

6.2.10 Real-life stories

While participants were actively interpreting the biblical text contextually and when it was clear that they had fully engaged with the narrative of Tamar, they were asked to relate real-life experiences. The purpose of this was that, through sharing, healing could take place. Many testimonies were given, but only a few representatives will be quoted. The first example is given below:

I think I heard one story, it came in the newspaper. There was a certain man who was infected with HIV virus, he raped a young girl and told her not to disclose it to anybody. She was promised many gifts. So the girl tried to keep quiet for some time without revealing the matter to her parents. But her mother noticed how the daughter was always quiet and the way she was walking was unusual. So the mother had to perform a deep interrogation until the little girl disclosed. When she was taken to the hospital, it was seen that she was deeply injured and in fact she had begun rotting in her sexual organ. It was also found that she was infected with HIV virus. The rapist is presently in the hands of the police (FGMMU Women S.2).

6.2.11 Way forward

Since contextual hermeneutics has a communal nature, and to paraphrase the words of West (2007), the Bible begins and ends with the community consciousness, it was necessary to ask the respondents what is the future after such an encounter. As responses were given, the findings indicate that most respondents agreed that rape is a crime, and it must be punishable by law. Also it was observed that it is important for the church to work together with the government. It is surprising to note that women went further to suggest that rapists should receive severe penalties, even castration! Last but not least, one parent warned, *‘My advice is this: we as parents we should not allow our daughters and sons to venture in environments in which we are not sure of’* (FGMMU Married S.2).

6.3 Tamar

Tamar is a character who was described by all participants as the sister to Absalom and Amnon, who were the children of David. It was agreed that the entire story line revolves around the predicament Tamar faced after she was violently raped by Amnon. This episode further spiralled out of control with events like the murder of Amnon by Absalom, who then later became a fugitive. The story finishes when Tamar is no longer at the centre, but when Absalom is reconciled to the king through the work

of Joab. However, through most of the storyline she is the main protagonist.

While discussing the predicament of Tamar, many themes emerged, but there were two dominant ones, namely; church, and culture. Other sub-themes included identification, stigmatisation, curriculum, corruption, economic power, emotional expression, real-life story, and way forward. These themes and sub-themes are discussed in the order of appearance.

6.3.1 Church

The following question was then asked of the participants:

In an attempt to escape forced sex, Tamar suggests to Amnon not to make any further advance, or else she will be an outcast in Israel and that is really shameful. Based on this line of thought, how are rape survivors viewed today?

When this question was asked, the respondents without exception agreed that churches are viewing rape survivors negatively as was the case in the Old Testament. This phenomenon was also related to persons with HIV; these too are seen as outcasts in the church. In regard to this view, a respondent from Mount Meru confessed: *'The first impression is usually a negative one!'* (FGMMU Married S.1). After that, another question was asked on church involvement in supporting the Tamars. The response of all participants indicated that churches are not practically supporting the Tamars, something which contradicts their mission. While discussing this theme, a graduate student from Makumira spoke plainly:

I think a culture of silence should not be kept. The church needs to stand and rebuke such kind of a culture which discourages openness in sexuality topics. I think another move the church is to take is to teach people about sexuality so that people may know the issues involved. Through that way the community of faith will be empowered to reveal incidents of rape if they occur. This culture of not talking about human sexuality has existed from time immemorial, so it cannot go away in an overnight episode. The church which is [a] crucial organ in any society must be proactive in rebuking such a culture and replace it with a better alternative. When the church

shall stand and teach effectively and constructively about human sexuality, then the culture of silence will disappear (FGHIV/AIDS S.3).

In connection with the above, women groups and particularly persons with HIV were asked if the church is a safe place for disclosure, or if people are afraid to tell of their predicament whether rape, or HIV infection, because they will be ostracised? The response was again total agreement. Churches are in most cases not perceived as safe places for disclosure. While speaking along the same lines a female participant asserted:

If you tell the pastors of your misfortune you either are labelled as a morally loose person or you will be told to keep silent so that you may not bring shame to your family and the church of God (FGUoA(Women) S.3).

Responding to the same question, a person with HIV remarked:

Disclosing my HIV status never happened! It is simply not possible, based on the gravity of existing stigma. I think the same condition applies to raped victims too. It is not easy to stand in front of the church and declare that we are sick, or we were raped one day and that we are soliciting support – it is not easy (FGPLWHAs Singles S.4).

6.3.2 Identification

As narrated in the text of 2 Samuel 13, Tamar is described as a daughter of the king, as a virgin (the transliteration from Hebrew is '*betulah*' which in most cases refers to a virgin or at least an unmarried woman). She is further described by the narrator as morally upright, especially as she refused unacceptable sexual advances by Amnon. After she was overpowered and raped, she did not remain content; she made an outcry so that the community would know what has befallen her. In short, the narrator described her positively, and this is how it was communicated to the participants. The finding is crystal clear, respondents empathised with Tamar but cautioned that people ought to be careful lest they find themselves victims of circumstances. It was interesting to note that

some respondents identified fully with her predicament. Here is one response:

The story of Tamar is like my story. We were all once stigmatised and brutalised by men. I remember one time I had TB, grew very weak. So my husband did not want to confess that he was the one who brought this problem into our family. So he was harassing me with words that I had HIV. But I asked him how he knew that I had this disease, if he has not gone for testing. This man caused my life to be of deep suffering through repeated physical and verbal abuse. He finally decided to throw me out like Tamar! So I went away and began a new life. (FGPLWHA Married S.4)

While discussing the possibility of participants empathising with Tamar, a male participant from Mount Meru University commented;

She is a woman who should be emulated on the side of faithfulness and compassion but on the other hand it is a lesson to our women today, that they should not trust men beyond measure! (FGMMU Married S.5).

In addition to this, a female respondent was still puzzled about the real character of Tamar based on prevailing 'male' views. She asked and commented at the same time:

Tamar has always been viewed as a weak woman. But I have never found any strong reason to justify this based on the internal textual evidence. (FGUoA Women S.2).

6.3.3 Stigmatisation: Are rape survivors stigmatised?

When this question was asked of respondents, there was unanimous agreement that stigmatisation is an obvious phenomenon to both victims of rape as well as persons with HIV. Based on this finding of rampant stigma, one female participant revealed, *'The raped victims are not recognised by or identified in the church, so nobody is giving them compassionate care!'* While another respondent gave the following counsel based on the same theme:

I advise my fellow women to break the silence if they find themselves raped. Tamar was a victim of circumstances, it is also true that some of the PLWHAs are victims of circumstances. So there is no point of stigmatising the PLWHAs because you have no surety in which reasons we contracted the disease. If stigmatisation is not checked, we will continue to grow weaker and die early deaths. As for me, I was faithful but my husband brought the disease in our family. So if we remain silent, it will not help us neither the community in fighting the pandemic. (FGPLWHAs Married S.5).

6.3.4 Economic power

To clarify the power of Tamar the following question was asked;

‘From the way the narrator describes Tamar, there is every reason to believe that she did not have enough physical power, or economic power. What is your opinion?’

In answering this question, most respondents agreed that it true that Tamar was at a disadvantage economically and physically speaking. Tamar was in no position of power, while Amnon was expected to become the new king. That is the reason why David gave so much respect to Amnon, compared to Tamar. If Amnon and Tamar had the same high status, then the chances of being raped would be almost negligible. Respondents added that the same is true today for Tanzanian women. Most of them own practically little or nothing. This condition has made it possible for women to be frequently harassed sexually in the job market. As a result, some have been raped or forced into what is called ‘consensual sex’. Based on this matter one administrator said:

There is rampant gender harassment in the places of work, simply because somebody is a woman. Some are raped in the offices, while others are raped in the places of work, simply because they are women and voiceless for that matter. Some are quite decent church-going women. Some are forced by circumstances to do certain things, not that they like (MMU Lecturer 1).

6.3.5 Real-life stories

Just as in the case of Amnon, the respondents gave many personal narratives in relation to the tragedy of Tamar. The respondents were requested by the researcher to link those experiences with HIV and AIDS if it was possible. In many cases, the responses were astounding. The following is a lengthy but a classic example of present day Tamars:

There is one man who quarrelled with his wife and he chased her from home. Afterward he married another woman who was infected with HIV/AIDS virus (he did not know it). It did not take long [until] the wife he married grew weaker and finally she died. After many days the former husband began also to become sick. So he encouraged his children to convince their mother to come back, out of parental love she agreed. Upon coming she refused to resume the sexual relations with the husband. But one day he pretended to be very ill after some few hours two old ladies arrived to see him, he asked them to cook food for him. They declined the offer and promised to convince his wife to do that. After departure they went to his wife and besought her deeply until she was willing to go and cook for the bedridden husband. So she prepared the food and took it to the house, she knocked the door and she was asked to take in the food. Upon entering the sitting room, the husband jumped and closed the door. And he told her, your day has arrived, you ran away from me, but now you are in my hands. He did whatever he wanted to her body. He took her legs and tied them firmly on legs of the bed. He raped her all night long until morning at around 10 am. So he left her to go out. She was so weak in fact she was only able to drag herself away. So she called the neighbours and it was reported to the police too. When she was diagnosed in the hospital she had contracted AIDS (FGMMU Women S.2).

6.3.6 Way forward

Literally all respondents agreed that the narrative of Tamar is an empowering text in the context of AIDS, if read contextually. In confirmation of this finding, a University of Arusha lecturer said:

The story of Tamar empowers to know that there is a problem in the society. It was there in the OT and it is with us now. So the society must educate the community to be aware and specifically address the young people to know what are the proper channels to follow when rape happens (UoA Lecturer 1).

While the comment of UoA Lecturer 1 was directed to the general society, UoA Lecturer 2 directed his views to the community of academicians when he said:

Biblical scholars can be instrumental in restoring the dignity of Tamars if they read the text with eyes which have God given equity. If biblical scholars work has been felt in other areas why not in rape cases and HIV/AIDS in particular? (UoA Lecturer 2).

Another very important view is that of UoA lecturer 4, who said:

We need to move beyond cursing the incidents and people involved. Cursing the darkness will not help. We need to light the candle of hope. We need to be pro-active, we need to take preventive measures and not just be silent.' (UoA Lecturer 4).

6.4 Absalom

Absalom is one of the prominent characters, only trailing behind Amnon and Tamar. The text describes him as a brother to Tamar who took the law into his 'own hands' to eliminate Amnon from the face of the earth. Since the narrative of 2 Samuel 13 and 14 is one of the major building blocks of the succession narrative, it is understandable that Absalom was the prospective heir second to Amnon. In discussing the portraits of Absalom, the struggle for power dominated all other themes. Other sub-themes included identification, donor funding, real-life story, and way forward.

6.4.1 Struggle for power: Was the seeming intervention of Absalom motivated by genuine concern of love or something else?

In response to this question, the participants across the focus groups and individuals agreed that the murder was motivated by political reasons because Absalom wanted to be the next king. A participant from Mount Meru had this to say:

I want to say that Absalom revenged because he was power hungry. Absalom knew for sure that the next heir was to be Amnon, now he chose to use the circumstances to eliminate him so that he may become the obvious candidate for the throne' (FGMMU Married S.2).

Another question sought to discover the reasons that prompted Absalom to tell his raped sister to keep quiet. In unison, all respondents concurred that it was a strategy to conceal the premeditated revenge by Absalom. A participant from University of Arusha captures this finding when he said:

The statement, 'Keep quiet' indicates to me that there was a war between David's sons. So in this case, Absalom wanted to carry revenge in the underground fashion. That is the reason of telling [his] sister to keep quiet. In other words, Absalom was using the rape of Tamar to fulfil his hidden agenda (FGUoA Unmarried S.5).

A graduate student from Makumira University College was also in support of the former respondent, unmasking plans of revenge embedded in Absalom's words. He said, '*I am sure Absalom was not happy, but he told Tamar to keep quiet so that later he would do something which would follow that action*' (FGMISSIONS S.3).

6.4.2 Identification

The Hebrew narrator portrayed Absalom with some sort of ambiguity. This phenomenon brought about a heated debate that had a motion whether to emulate Absalom or not on the basis of 'defending' the rights and dignity of Tamar. Based on the findings, the respondents were divided. The statistic shows 60% endorsed that he should not be

emulated because of his revengeful heart. The other 40% of participants contended that Absalom's anger was understandable; after all it is human to be angry. In fact, some respondents added that he was a freedom fighter. Many participants from Mount Meru University defended Absalom. One of them contended passionately:

Verily, verily today if a certain man rapes my own sister, and I discover that she has contracted HIV/AIDS, then something must be done. I am not supporting Absalom's decision fully, but at least he acted on the delayed justice' (FGMMU Unmarried S.2).

As emotions were getting higher, another member from the same group added, '*I think he was a freedom fighter*' (S.3). Yet another participant could not hold his breath, and argued: '*For me I think this guy was not only a freedom fighter but a revolutionary man*' (S.5). By contrast, not all groups had the same line of thought, as indicated earlier. The following female respondent from University of Arusha presents a different line of thought when she argued: '*What I knew is that Absalom was a good man, but after this discussion I have come to conclude that he had a bad behaviour*' (FGUoA Women 2).

So this finding indicates that the text sometimes does not have one absolute meaning. Nevertheless interpreters ought to strive to aim for the ideal which tries to balance the intended meaning in the time of authorship and contextual meaning for our times.

6.4.3 Donor funding

After establishing these findings, another contextual question was posed to the participants. The question was asked, if we could be having leaders like Absalom in the context of AIDS. The response was a unanimous, 'Yes, we have leaders like Absalom in the context of AIDS.' Furthermore, it was added, some contemporary Absaloms spread HIV out of the motive of revenge, or use donor funding for their own political ends. A respondent from the University of Arusha gave a classic story. He narrated:

I know of a story of a person from University of Nairobi. Since he knew that he was HIV positive, he told a certain lady to have sexual relations with lecturers and students so

that they may be infected too. As a leader this person was showing a bad example through revenge (FGUoA Unmarried 2).

6.4.4 Real-life stories

Whenever the respondents were asked to relate the biblical story in harmony with the current story, it was a common phenomenon to see faces 'lighting up', each one trying to see if his or her story would be heard. So when the question was asked, 'Do you have a relevant story?' the response resulted in many stories! However, the following story was selected on the basis of relevancy:

I know one example, which happened in Kenya, where a civil servant went to borrow about KSH 80,000 from the bank. So he went to a tribe which happened to be enemies of his own tribe. After getting there, he almost slept with every woman, thereby infecting them with the disease (MMU Lecturer 6).

6.4.5 Way forward

As a custom, after discussing in depth about the character of Absalom and its impact in the context of AIDS, the general recommendation across groups was about the need for ideal leadership. A type of leadership that is meant to defend the poor but without breaking laws of the government or church. A UoA Lecturer 3 had this comment in regard to ideal leadership in the context of AIDS,

We need ideal democratic leaders with a compassionate heart to the PLWHAs. These leaders not kind of those who misuse donor funds for their benefits but in support of all PLWHA infected and affected. These leaders are ones who will push forward the agenda of the marginalised instead of silencing them (UoA Lecturer 3).

6.5 Chapter summary

The chapter has primarily presented the first part of the second research objective. This was geared to discuss how biblical characters in 2 Samuel

13-14 can be appropriated in an HIV and AIDS context through the eyes of ordinary readers. The characters that have been presented are major. These are Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. These characters are deemed to be major because of their dominant appearance in the narrative. The finding indicates that every major character in the narrative has relevancy in the AIDS context.

For example, Amnon was disliked by almost all respondents because of misuse of male power in the rape of Tamar. Amnon's justice was delayed until Absalom took matters into his own hands. Similar trends were seen in the contemporary context where the rapists often do not receive their lawful penalty. This was attributed to culture and corruption in government institutions. The church was seen also to have no strict discipline to Amnon. The suggested reasons included strange interpretations, out-dated theology and questionable morality of the clergy. Moreover, it was unanimously agreed by respondents that present-day rapists do not value life, therefore it is impossible for them to use condoms in rape encounters. Such blatant views of life by implication were attributed to the spread of HIV, although the text is silent on whether Tamar got any sexually transmitted disease from Amnon.

Based on the presented findings, Tamar was loved by all respondents through feelings of empathy. She is perceived to be intelligent and morally stable with a strong sense of justice in the midst of elements of oppressive Hebrew culture. All respondents agreed that we have people like Tamar in the context of AIDS. It was agreed by respondents that the ancient oppressive structures in the Hebrew culture to the female gender are equally found in Tanzanian culture. Moreover, it was observed by respondents in the text that Tamar's cry for justice was not heard; similarly many women in Tanzania, whether married or not are muted. This has resulted the spread of HIV and the continued 'usage' of the female gender to attain males' sexual, political and economic ends. In order to be more specific the respondents were in agreement that the church, legal institutions, hospitals and the community as a whole are equally guilty of not responding to the cry of justice. The reasons for this are set in four categories, questionable moral integrity of clergy, out-dated theology, corruption and oppressive elements of patriarchy.

On the other hand, Absalom was a unique character who made the participants have a hard time on whether to emulate him or not. Some

participant viewed him as truly patriotic and a defender of the weak, while another group saw Absalom as a cold blooded killer who had nothing to do with the plight of Tamar. So the participants of the latter group viewed Absalom as aggressive, in search of throne of his father David at any cost. Therefore this finding suggests that it is important to bring readers together so as to learn to negotiate a better interpretation. The next chapter is designed to continue with the presentation of minor characters.

CHAPTER 7:

RE-READING 2 SAMUEL 13 AND 14 AGAINST THE HIV/AIDS CONTEXT – MINOR CHARACTERS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter; it is set to finish the second research objective. As stated earlier the second research objective problematises power plays between characters of different gender and how that can be related with the AIDS context. So the characters who are presented here are minor but very important. I contend that they are important because without these minor characters the message in 2 Samuel 13-14 would not be understood. Someone has said, ‘there are parts of human body which are not visible by the naked eye, but their function is immensely vital.’ Based on this statement, the minor characters presented are Jonadab the son of Shemeah, David’s nephew (2 Sa 13:3), Servants (2 Sa 13:9b, 17, 28), Reporters (2 Sa 13:30), King’s sons (2 Sa 13:23,29, 35), King David (2 Sa 13:7, 21 and 2 Sa 14: 5), Joab, the son of Zeruiah, who was David’s commander in Chief (2 Sa 14) and the woman of Tekoa where prophet Amos once lived (2 Ch 11:6 and 2 Sa 14).

The chapter is finally concluded by remarks from participants in regard to the relevancy of HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics through the eyes of Tanzania’s ordinary readers. In response towards this aspect, this chapter will be essentially fulfilling the last objective which seeks ‘to contribute towards an HIV and AIDS Biblical hermeneutics. There is also a cursory presentation of unexpected findings, which are fully analysed in chapter seven.

7.1.1 Jonadab

Jonadab is one of the minor characters whose shrewd advice spins upside down the life of Tamar and cause the miserable death of Amnon. Strange enough after all this, he remains untouched by the arm of the law and continues to enjoy trust at King’s court. According to the

narrative and the findings, Jonadab was the son of David's sister; that is, a cousin of Amnon. When discussing Jonadab, the following sub-themes surfaced: peer pressure, identification, behaviour, social justice, demonology, church-state accountability, contemporary Jonadabs, real-life story, and way forward. These themes are presented in their order of appearance.

Behaviour: Who is Jonadab, as described by the narrator?

In response to this crucial question, most participants viewed Jonadab as, 'experienced rapist,' 'shrewd guy,' 'highly intelligent,' morally strayed fellow,' 'corrupt,' 'crafty,' 'cunning,' and hypocrite. This behaviour was manifested in sexual transactions which finally ruined both Tamar and Amnon. One respondent warned, *'This is a shrewd guy'* (MMU Lecturer 1), another one added, *"He is a master-mind of the whole rape scheme a really wrong guide."* (UoA Lecturer 10), while another respondent concluded that, *"He is a master-mind of the whole rape scheme a really wrong guide."* (FGMMU Unmarried S.1)

Peer pressure

Peer pressure refers the coercive power of friends on a person which in turn influences their decision on something whether good or bad. In the text of 2 Samuel 13:1-2, we see Amnon being literally lovesick and infatuated for failing to get hold of Tamar, who is a virgin. Then an opportunist comes in, and this person is Jonadab, the son of David's sister. Jonadab gives wrong advice to Amnon, he tells him to, 'pretend to be ill' so that the King would be summoned. After that the king would be requested to allow Tamar to come and nurse Amnon. All of those plans though immoral as they appear, they worked and Tamar was raped. So Most respondents argued that Amnon failed to resist peer pressure and this finally made him to rape his own sister Tamar. *'I think the one who gave him the skill and the knowledge of rape was Jonadab. So Amnon is a person who does not know how to choose friends.'*

Jonadab used wrongly his power of advice to influence Amnon to rape Tamar. Based on the findings, an experienced administrator had this to say:

You know your peers will always know what is good for you but they will always advice the opposite. There is a maxim which says, 'Tell me your friend, then I will tell you

who you are!’ So parents must endeavour to know the friends of their kids in order to help them (MMU Lecturer 3).

While speaking on the same lines, an undergraduate student from University of Arusha also underscored; ‘I think the one who gave him the skill and the knowledge of rape was Jonadab. So Amnon is a person who does not know how to choose friends (FGUoA Unmarried 4).’

So these findings indicate that if we read the text contextually we can discover that most of current issues including peer pressure are fully addressed in the Old Testament scripture.

Identification

According to the findings, most respondents except FGMISSIONS unanimously showed feelings of alienation (apathy) against Jonadab based on his wicked advice to Amnon. In fact some respondents went on to suggest that his society was unfair for not punishing him because he was the master-mind of the whole plan. Some respondents further argued that even in our present days Jonadabs are still crafty and it seems they continue being active for sometime while they are out of spotlight of justice system. While commenting on the reasons as to why most participants did not like him, one respondent remarked, ‘I can say that Jonadab was a corrupt guy. You cannot trust him. So both Jonadab and Amnon had the same mind, all of them were rapists.’ (UoA Lecturer 3). Another respondent evaluated Jonadab as, ‘a double minded guy who could switch sides at any moment.’ (MMU Lecturer 3)

As noted earlier, the graduate students at Makumira University College had a different view about the character of Jonadab. They saw him as a helping friend, a person who was willing to assist the prince to carry out his mission – this was quite an honour. Here are the comments, ‘Jonadab gave a wrong advice because he was trying to help his friend who was suffering.’ (FGMISSIONS S.2). Another respondent asserted, ‘I think Jonadab was feeling honoured to be a part of the project to help his friend get a beautiful girl.’ (FGMISSIONS S.1) So this contradiction in interpretation must bring scholars into accountability to value life above everything else. The fact that scholars irrespective of their school of thought must ensure morality that promotes human dignity, is the measuring rule of their interpretation. On this case it is hard to defend

Jonadab for what he did to Amnon, he ruined his personality and finally caused his death. Jonadabs advice ruined the virginity of Tamar and condemned Tamar to live a desolate life for the rest of her days. Jonadabs act set a chain of violent events in the house of David, which in the end also resulted in the death of Absalom. Although every scholar has a right to respond to the scriptural text according to their taking of it, ethics must be observed!

Demonology

Demonology refers to the study of the influence of wicked superhuman powers in the life of a person. This topic is rare in modern Theology since the days of Bultmann who came up with the idea of demythologisation of the Bible (Maluleke 2006). However, both the worldview of the Bible and that of African communities still believe in the existence of such powers but they are inferior to the power of Yahweh (Van Dyk 2010: 422-436). It was surprising that all lecturers alongside their students never made even a hint about the influence of Demons on personalities like Jonadab or any other in the story. This shows how western theology has taken root, evading even most obvious spiritual phenomena even within African soil. In contrast the least learned had this to say, 'I think Jonadab was influenced by the Devil to give a wrong advice.' (FGPLWHAs Singles S.2). Another respondent still cemented the above comment, 'I think he was possessed by the devil to plan such blatant evils.' (FGPLWHAs Married S.4).

Social justice: Have the church and the legal system brought Jonadab to arms of justice?

Upon answering this question, most participants commented that both the church and state have not fully dealt with Jonadab who appears to have both political and economic powers. But persons with HIV had a very strong sense of justice; I think this suggests that it is church leaders who have been drinking the cup prepared by Jonadabs; they rape or coerce some of their members into sex! One Person with HIV remarked, 'If a Jonadab comes my way, he shall know me!(FGPLWHAs Married S.3). Another one added,

I think they must be handed to the arm of the law. This may mean excommunicating them, taking them to [the]

police and finally serving a jail sentence (FGPLWHAS Married S.1).

While building on this theme of social justice, a respondent from Mount Meru University had this notable comment,

For example, if we have a rape case in the church, we need not only to deal with Amnon, but also Jonadab. My advice is this, the rapist and his advisor need to be put in the arms of the law, unless otherwise the advisors will continue boasting around. But before that all will need to be guided into repentance. They will need to face church discipline, all of them before handing them to the legal authorities (FGMMU Married S.2).

This finding indicates there is a need for Bible interpreters to approach the text with a strong sense of justice, when this is attained, the rights of the poor and the marginalised women, will be reclaimed.

Real-life Jonadabs: Do you think we have contemporary Jonadabs, and if so how do they manifest themselves?

If there was a simple question in all my interviews and focus groups, was the one of asking on contemporary analogies. In answering this question, there was a unanimous, 'yes, we have.' The respondents added that Jonadab has many faces these included relatives, parents, leaders, employers, rich people, peers, media, music, and the internet. An undergraduate student from University of Arusha compared the Jonadabs to church leaders and other elites, when he said:

The Jonadabs today are the influential people in the church. These are the rich and the elites. These are people with power and authority in making decisions. So what has been done when it comes to dealing with them is almost nothing. This is caused by the fact that they hold all the powers and they can do whatever they want! (FGUoA Married S.5).

Another student from Mount Meru University compared Jonadabs to close friends. He said:

I think most of our friends have the character of Jonadab; they oftentimes lead us into sex related problems. In conclusion I can say pastors can sometimes play the role of Jonadab, if they officiate weddings without encouraging unmarried spouses to test for HIV.(FGMMU Unmarried S.3).

Another student went further to comment:

I think also music lyrics and pornographic images through internet and other forms of media can pass the message of Jonadab. Listening [to] such songs, or viewing images may sexually arouse a person [to] seek gratification in unsafe ways. (FGMMU Unmarried S.2).

Real-life stories

Since the participants had internalised the story in their lives they were able to give many testimonies. The one presented below is meant to be representative:

In Njiro (a suburban of Arusha), we have a man who has money but he is HIV positive. So for young girls who come and search for job, certain women connect them to this fellow. So when they have slept with him, they get money but also leave with the HIV. The ladies doing the transactions are doing the role of Jonadab. Many girls have been infected and this man gives them money and he specifically tells them it is for preparation of their burials (FGUoA Unmarried S.2).

Way forward

After the participants had fully discussed the characteristics of Jonadab and how he contributed in the rape of Tamar, they were asked to give future recommendations. Here is a sample out of many recommendations which hinge on finding that readings must take into account the social location of readers and negotiate continuities and discontinuities of culture as found in the text in relation to them. One lecturer said: *'We need strong and faithful leaders who will not approve*

cultural practices which fuel the epidemic' (UoA Lecturer 4). Another lecturer had strong sense of justice in his comments. He argued:

As a church deals with the rapist, it must also establish any person who was behind the rapist and also punish him or her equally. When you educate people like that, some people will fear, so they may stop their evil actions. So dealing alone with the rapist is not enough, you have to look in the whole community or the whole system, everyone must be involved' (UoA Lecturer 5).

7.1.2 Servants

The servants in this context are made up of a group of minor characters who were in the service of Amnon and Absalom. In essence they were powerless as far as matters of decision making were concerned. The servants of Amnon, based on the narrative, appeared to do nothing to prevent the rape of Tamar. It appears that the matter was clear that Tamar was going to be raped, especially when they were told to leave the room and stay outside. When the rape was taking place there must have been a violent and loud argument, yet the servants did not intervene. Moreover, after Amnon had finished raping Tamar he commanded one of the servants to throw Tamar out and bolt the door behind her. He obeyed and participated in this act of violence. Furthermore, two years after that incident, the servants of Absalom followed the same principle of obeying. This happened when Absalom invited all king's sons to a sheep-shearing feast at Baal-hazor. At this feast, he intended to assassinate Amnon, who had sexually violated his sister Tamar. Absalom commanded his servants, 'mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, strike Amnon, then kill him.' (2 Sam 13:28).

This was the background given to respondents after reading the text, and in the course of discussion, and the following major themes emerged: blind obedience, identification, settings, socio-economic class, real-life stories, and the way forward.

Blind obedience: Can you describe the kind of obedience the servants displayed in relation to the rape of Tamar and murder of Amnon?

In response to this question, the participants described the servants as attendants working for either Amnon or Absalom. Their relationship to their superiors as explained by many respondents was a master-slave relationship, hence the pattern of behaviour was described as blind obedience. In ordinary circumstances, slaves had no right to dispute what their master had commanded or requested. That is why when they were told to throw Tamar out, they did it without question. This is also evident when they were told to rise and kill Amnon, they carried out Absalom's order faithfully. When the participants were asked why the servants behaved the way they did, the following responses came out: lack of fear of God, fear of death, the culture, fear of losing employment and also that it was directly connected to poverty. A participant from Mount Meru University, trying to capture the above reasons, said, *'I think the servants were obeying in the context of their culture which did not give freedom to servants to argue anything'* (FGMMU Married S.2).

When the participants were asked if there could be reasons for blind obedience today, there was a unanimous 'yes!' They attributed this to lack of fear of God, poverty, fear of losing employment, culture (widow inheritance), and fatalism. A participant from Makumira University College had this to say:

This situation is made worse when God is out of the picture, people will define life by pleasures enjoyed or by materials collected. All in all, the issue of economy is vital. If a person is not grounded in [the] Christian faith it becomes even worse. It becomes so easy to obey blindly when a person is poor, lacks self esteem and above all [when] he or she has lost faith in God (FGHIV/AIDS S.1).

Identification

A brief survey showed that 95% of the participants did not agree with blind obedience, while the remaining 5% sympathised with the servants by arguing that they were 'children' of their culture. In support of culture as reason for blind obedience, a participant from Mount Meru University said: *'I think it was a culture of these people that when a master has said something, then it must be obeyed, or else death could be inevitable'*

(FGMMU Married S.1). On the contrary, another respondent said, *‘These servants were not God fearing, they were more interested in protecting their employment than having faith in God.’*

In support of the former another respondent contended, *‘I think the servants of Amnon and Absalom were both cruel’* (FGUoA Unmarried S.2).

Settings

When participants were asked to name some example of locations where blind obedience is taking place in context of HIV/AIDS, they named work places, the home (housemaids) or in learning institutions like universities, secondary schools and even primary schools. It is in these places where women are forced into sexual relations for fear of losing or getting a job, grades or any form of allurements. It is also in these places where men could be sent negotiate for sex on behalf of bosses, and for fear of expulsion, women have always yielded. During this discussion, a female participant from Mount Meru University confessed: *‘Blind obedience is common. It has been used as a weapon to get good grades, employment, promotions’* (FGMMU Women S.1). Another participant from the same focus group added:

I am saying this behaviour of blind obedience is really there. And in many organisations, you will find some special people play [the] role of brokers between prospective female sexual partners and the bosses. These brokers are obedient to their masters and they are paid for the work done. So the brokers will never tell the ladies the real health condition of the boss, but with flattery words they convince them to take the ‘offer’ (S.4).

Socio-economic class: What class do you think the servants belonged to – high or low? And how is that affecting their decision before the sexual encounter?

The statistics show that 98% of the participants agreed that the servants of today belong to the lower class and are characterised by low economic power, influenced decision making and low self esteem. It was suggested that if these groups (lower class) will be empowered by training and ability to generate income then cases of blind obedience will be greatly reduced. However, the remaining 2% of participants

contended that some people would obey blindly to their sexual instincts, regardless of their level of education or income. The core issue, participants suggested, is fear of God. In harmony with these finding, a graduate student had this to say:

Poverty has taken big roles, for instance, in some part of Africa like Arusha, when you have sex without a condom, then you pay more. So our sisters and mothers opt for fatalism because of the burden they are carrying of caring for their families' (FGMISSIONS S.3).

While discussing the same sub-theme, a female participant had this to say:

One day I went to look for a job with a friend in the flower gardening offices around Arusha. When we went there my friend secured the job but I was told to wait for two weeks. When I went back after the said two weeks, the boss told me that I had to offer my body for employment and I refused and missed the job (FGPLWHAs Singles S.4).

Real-life stories

When we arrived at this sub-theme, the participants, had peace of mind and they could harness plenty of examples in relation to servants. It was also evident that the women's groups identified easily with servants because they belong to the same group of low class. The following example is meant to be representative:

I know one friend who was having sexual relations with a lecturer. She was threatened if she refused [that] she would be discontinued from her studies. She therefore yielded and deserted her former boyfriend. In order to ensure that the lecturer had free access to this student he ensured the male competitor is expelled from the university. This is how matters are critical in learning institutions (FGMMU Women S.5).

Way forward

After lively discussions on the servants' behaviour in the text, the respondents suggested that the church should work hand in hand with

the government to promote freedom of conscience, so that it may be accessible to all employees as well as improving their state of economy. A female participant from the University of Arusha in trying to amplify these findings, said:

I think everyone needs education. I think the church as a body of Christ has to instruct people to work effectively so that they may be well off economically. If the church has power to prepare its people for future life, then why shouldn't it prepare its people for the present life? So the church should encourage people to have education in order to improve their economic lives. It must work hard to challenge the government so that it may improve the livelihood of its citizens. The church should also not shy away in asking its members to lobby for political positions in the government (FGUoA Women S.2).

7.1.4 Reporters

The reporters in the narrative appear in 2 Samuel 13:30. These reported that 'Absalom has struck down all the king's sons and not one of them is left'. This information was flawed until Jonadab came later to correct the information before the king by saying, 'Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead.' (V.32). Surprisingly enough, Jonadab happened to have known the plan of the murder even before it was carried out. So, based on the internal evidence and comments from respondents, the reporters gave false information to David. Due to this, the observation of the findings indicates that all respondents showed feelings of apathy to the reporters. Upon discussion of the reporters of Amnon's murder, the theme of false reporting came out. Two other sub-themes were interwoven with the main theme, namely, real-life stories and the way forward.

False reporting: Why did the reporters relay wrong information about the death of Amnon to David?

In response to this question, most respondents commented that the reasons for this false reporting included arousing the attention of the king who had a tendency to take matters for granted, absence of fear of God, Hebrew culture, influence of the devil, missing facts, covering their

identity, a strategy to attract favour, influence of wine and a vengeful spirit towards Absalom. In line with these findings, an undergraduate student at Mount Meru University contended:

I think that, these people who gave a false report, could have done this because of two possibilities. First, they were seeking to be the first ones to notify the king, perhaps they knew there could be some benefits (FGMMU Married S.1).

A participant from Makumira University College, took a different line of argument, but essentially his group was discussing the same idea. This is what he said:

The reporters belonged to Amnon, since their master was dead; they wanted a revenge to be done to Absalom. So they delivered a highly exaggerated information so that the king could not even take a second thought but kill Absalom immediately (FGHIV/AIDS S.2).

When the respondents were asked whether there could be any false reporting in the context of AIDS; they made it clear that false reporting in the context of AIDS exists and it has a whole spectrum of reasons: to attract donor funding, avoidance of stigma (on the part of PLWHA), intergenerational sex, searching or maintaining job opportunities, widow inheritance, witchcraft, AIDS campaigns, Media coverage on AIDS information, Biblical interpretation, influence of alcohol, revenge, and burial services. In order to capture the reality of these findings, a participant from Mount Meru University had this to said:

Pastors are alleged of not speaking the truth in funerals especially if the deceased had HIV/AIDS. They fear to miss certain benefits from the relatives. Sometimes even their employment may be at risk. Speaking the truth is always good, but people bend truth for their own personal reasons. As we know today there are many NGOs, which are dealing with HIV/AIDS, but the main intent in many of these is to enrich themselves. So the PLWHAs are simply used as targets to ensure that money from abroad continues to flow (FGMMU Unmarried S.4).

Another probing question was given to the respondents, asking how false reporting affects the lives of PLWHAs. The participants unanimously responded that false reporting had an effect of triggering acts of stigma and discrimination, which in turn promotes opportunistic infections and early deaths. A participant from the University of Arusha refused to be locked in the dark past. Instead, he gave the following constructive comment to counter false reporting. He said:

I think enough knowledge needs to be given in regard to stigmatisation. People need to be informed that HIV/AIDS is not a result of either committing adultery, or any other reasons connected to promiscuous life. Moreover people need to accept that we have HIV infected [people] and people are continuing to get infected. We should not isolate people living with HIV/AIDS as an island that cannot be reached. We need to get rid of this notion that whoever has this disease must have committed adultery or was promiscuous. So stigmatisation will not come to an end unless we have a proper understanding of the disease. This understanding must be based on facts and a compassionate heart (FGUoA Unmarried S.2).

After the above question, another probing question was brought to the attention of participants whether false reporting in the narrative was associated with alcohol consumption. In response to this, there was a heated debate if the influence of alcohol can promote false reporting. Some groups claimed that false reporting had nothing to do with alcohol; the main issue is about the character of the reporter. On the other hand, other participants said some people have low self esteem, so unless they are drunk they cannot speak out. A female participant from Mount Meru University summed up the two positions, saying:

The answer to this could be yes or no. If I speak on the former, alcohol has usually a negative effect on the functioning of the brain. As a result people can give distorted information. On the other hand a person may drink more in order to gather the courage to disclose the information (FGMMU Women S.1).

Real-life stories

After I had observed that the respondents were satisfied with the direction of the discussion, I asked if there could be similar stories in the context of AIDS. Many respondents gave stories in relation to false reporting. The story below is selected from among many. It talks about a certain agency affiliated to a particular church. This agency was campaigning against AIDS by using people who claimed to be HIV infected, while in actual fact they were not:

I happen to see a certain group which was sponsored by a certain organisation. They selected this group which I knew for sure they were negative, and they were to pretend as positive. These people would say, 'You know I got the disease three years ago and I have been living with hope. I have abstained since then, I am taking care of my health and I am going on with my normal schedules.' While in actual fact these people were practically lying! When I asked one of them after the campaign, that person confessed that he was not positive. It was a way which was designed to encourage persons with HIV. They persons who were in the campaign were paid for that. This is what we call fooling donors in order to get money to help the actual PLWHAs, but when the money arrives it goes to the wrong targets (FGUoA Married S.2).

Way forward

As a custom, when all open-ended questions were asked and answered adequately by participants, there was an endeavour to ask for a recommendation to help in the future as far as the avoidance of false reporting is concerned. The finding on this response indicated that contextual theology ought to result from community reading of the biblical text where issues are clarified together. The comment below goes into specifics:

If we continue hiding the information about HIV, we are not going to defeat the disease. But also we need also to be careful on how to reveal information. Because that alone, might cause stigmatisation to the PLWHAs. First of all, we

need to contextualise our theology and also we need to live like Jesus, who lived with people who were stigmatised. Jesus touched the lepers who were not supposed to be touched, moreover, he healed them. As a church we need to go to people who are suffering and live together with them, share the word of God with them and then gaining confidence from them, then we can reveal the situation (FGHIV/AIDS S.3).

7.1.5 King's sons

The king's sons feature very briefly in our narrative of 2 Samuel 13 and 14. Their coverage is from vv.23-29. The king's sons were invited by Absalom to attend a sheep-shearing feast at Baal-hazor. Amnon was also invited after much persuasions of King David by Absalom. This feast was intended to end the life of Amnon through the arm of Absalom's servants. So when the day arrived, all the king's sons showed up for the feast and when Amnon was merry with wine, Absalom commanded his servants to kill him (v.28). After the ambush, all the king's sons fled upon their mules in all directions. None of the king's sons were willing to come back and rescue Amnon by fighting back or reconciling the rival princes. The principle theme here is non-involvement. Other sub-themes include identification, real-life stories, and the way forward.

Non-involvement: Why were the king's sons not brave enough to stand and rescue Amnon?

In response to this question, the participants across the groups and as individuals gave the following responses to account for the attribute of non-involvement. These include fear of death, letting the principle of *lex talionis* work (an eye for an eye), parental favouritism and struggle for power. A female participant from Mount Meru University contended:

I think all of the king's sons were having a revengeful spirit; that is the reason which made them not to stop the killing of Amnon. It was an eye for an eye encounter, a tooth by nail encounter, etc. (FGMMU Women S.1).

Still in trying to capture the reasons for flight of King's sons, a male participant from University of Arusha explained:

Another reason is this, whenever something dangerous has happened, there is usually a moment of panic and flight. It might be true that some of sons of the king were informed and aware. So they chose to run away trying to avoid being accountable. But for some might have not known the plot, they too had to run for their lives because the king's son was being murdered. Also based in the fact that the prospective heir was dead, nobody would want to be there as an eye witness!

Another question which was asked, probed if there could be pointers on non-involvement in the context of AIDS. As usual, the participants continued to sing their meaningful contextual song that, 'we have countless of cases of non-involvement.' The participants added that pastors and the church as well as the elite and government officials do not give full support to the fight against AIDS. So, they are like the irresponsible king's sons. A graduate student from Makumira, made the following confession:

I think this is true. Pastors and government officials are found in this category, they seem to have nothing to do with the disease, because they think it is meant for people who are promiscuous. Also they see the disease as ill health for people of low class, so there is no reason to get involved (FGHIV/AIDS S.2).

Real-life stories

Towards the end of discussion of the King's sons, the participants were asked if there were similar stories of non-involvement in the context of AIDS. There was a unanimous response again that there are many similar stories. It was strange to find out that the discipline of biblical interpretation was put into a basket bearing the label of non-involvement! A female participant from Mount Meru University tried to capture this finding too:

The church is not fully involved in AIDS issues because of false attitude towards the disease. I remember the first time I began seeing involvement is when a certain lady from US came to present this issue. We seem to wait people from abroad to solve our problems. Moreover, our

theology and methods of biblical interpretations appear to have problems. We are taking matters out of context and apply them out of context again. You know people are using even the book of Leviticus; this was a story of a wife who has been unfaithful and got sick. So they take that incident and fit it into the symptoms of HIV and people claim that surely this is a finger of God (FGMMU Women S.2).

Way forward

As a rule, there was a strategy to maintain the pattern of asking contextual questions for future advice in the context of AIDS. The responses were many, since in every character analysis participants were swimming in new and vast oceans of experiences. However, the voices of persons with HIV had a high tone, and there is a supposition that their concerns need to be listened to if we will ever get involved in eradicating the disease. One person with HIV had this to say:

I would suggest more education [be] given to people, then the senses will [be] aroused and there will be a mighty involvement. We need seminars in the churches on HIV awareness. It is sad to note that in the rural areas AIDS information is so scanty (FGPLWHAs Singles S.2).

Another person with HIV tried to capture the issue on non-involvement as follows: *'I think my message to Church leaders or government officials is that they need to follow God's standards in offering active compassion'* (FGPLWHAs Married S.3).

7.1.6 King David

King David is one of the crucial characters in the narrative of 2 Samuel 13 and 14. It is only him and Absalom who appear in both chapters. King David is the father to many sons including Amnon and Absalom. King David has many daughters who were virgins arrayed in royal apparel (2 Samuel 13:18); the only mentioned name of a daughter is Tamar. King David had many sons and daughters because he was polygamous. His wives' names include: Ahinoam (mother of Amnon), Maacah (mother of Absalom and Tamar), Michal (the daughter of Saul),

Abigail, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. Later, in the golden age of his reign he raped and married Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his army generals. The marriage happened after David had commissioned Joab to put Uriah in the battle-front so that he could die easily in the war against the Ammonites (2 Samuel 11: 14-17). This incident was met sternly by Nathan the prophet, who prophesied: 'This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to the one close to you. He will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this in broad daylight, before all Israel' (2 Samuel 12:11-12 NIV). So what transpires in chapters 13 and 14 is actually the beginning of fulfilment of the prophecy which ends with Absalom overthrowing his father, removing him from the throne and having sexual intercourse with ten of his father's concubines in broad daylight (2 Samuel 16:21-22).

After this background information, which was also narrated to the participants, we discussed the text contextually. As a result of this engagement, the following themes became evident: moral failure (major theme), parenting, leadership style, gender imbalance, polygamy, contemporary stories, and the way forward as sub-themes.

Moral failure: Why didn't David intervene in the rape of Tamar by Amnon?

The general reply from all participants is that David was plagued by his past moral failures especially the rape of Bathsheba. Therefore David lacked moral stamina to rebuke Amnon and give him necessary punishment. A participant from one university confirmed through his interpretation that:

Because David raped Bathsheba who was the wife of Uriah, so it was shameful for him to address the same matter. He could not rebuke immorality, because he was also doing immorality (FGUoA Unmarried S.1).

Gender imbalance

On the basis of this sub-theme, the question was asked whether David treated his sons and daughters equally? The response from all participants was that David favoured his sons above his daughters. However, one academic argued that David was acting according to his

culture. He contended: *‘David is an ideal parent according to Hebrew culture even in the time when Tamar was raped. We judge him unfairly if we use present day standards’* (MMU Lecturer 1). By contrast, other participants had these views:

I think he showed some favours particularly to his sons. For example when Tamar was raped he said nothing, but when Amnon is murdered he rends his kingly garments and mourns! (FGPLWHAs Married S.6).

Another female participant also contended:

Actually in Israel, the female gender was simply in the margins, and we can see similar trends in African culture. In our culture, children who are boys are much [more] valued than girls (FGPLWHAs Singles S.3).

The finding under this section is that gender can result in different interpretations of the biblical text. So it is imperative whenever reading the biblical text to have both genders in mind so that the messages would be gender inclusive.

Parenting in the AIDS era

Another probing question was asked of respondents: *‘Can we emulate David’s parenting style in the context of AIDS?’* There was a unanimous agreement that David’s style of parenting during the incident of rape was not approved by most participants. Therefore, for this exceptional event he could not be seen as a model parent in the context of AIDS.

A graduate student from Makumira University College argued,

David’s parenting style was not good. First of all, he was polygamous, and second he raped the wife of Uriah. So the children learn bad examples from their father (FGMISSIONS S.3).

During the same focus group discussions, an undergraduate student from Mount Meru University gave us a representative comment, as follows:

There are parents who do obvious segregation of their children like David, some will be perceived as outcasts.

Because of that, some will receive attention, and some will not. This alone has increased the transmission of HIV because the person is neglected in his or her own family. So in pursuit of acceptance a person may engage in sexual relations and finally get infected with HIV (FGMMU Unmarried S.1).

Therefore it is wise to read the biblical text with a conscious effort to find pointers in relation to present contexts. If this objective is achieved, the biblical text will continue carrying an enduring moral value as long as this world will last.

Polygamy

Polygamy refers to a type of marriage where a man marries more than one wife. Based on this sub-theme, a probing question was asked: *‘Could David’s polygamous lifestyle trigger hostility between children of different mothers so that as a result Tamar was finally raped by her half brother, Amnon?’* The responses showed unanimous agreement from all respondents, that polygamy was a pivotal issue that influenced Amnon to rape his sister from another mother (Maacah). Respondents also added that polygamy gave feelings of revenge between children of different mothers. A graduate student from Makumira University College captures these views very closely when he says:

He [David] was strong outside, but he could not control himself, that is why he continued gathering women. As a result of this he had many children, and they were also neglected. As a father he had nothing to do with his children, it was the business of his wives to undertake parenting, hence the rape of Tamar (FGMISSIONS S.3).

Real-life stories

After an intensive discussion about the life of David during the aftermath of Tamar’s rape, the respondents were asked to share similar stories in the context of HIV and AIDS. Many stories were aired, but on the basis of content it wise to include the following two as representative of the rest. The first tells about his father who is polygamous and uncaring to parenting needs, like David. The second story is about a

parent with moral failures sexually and also he demonstrates obvious favouritism to boy rather than girls. Here are the stories:

I would like to liken my dad as King David. I am a victim of such a parent [who] considers [some] children and forgets others. My dad has two wives, we belong to the first wife, he literally does nothing for me or my sister. Up to now, it is my mother who has been paying for my education, so I see that if it was not for self esteem I would be a victim of HIV. So David is clearly presented today in my family (FGMMU Unmarried S.3).

I have an example of one man who was having his sons and daughters; he favoured his sons more than daughters. So he took the sons to school and the daughters did not get this privilege. So this man was rich and how he got the wealth was related to witchcraft. So he was raping one daughter after another. He would do that a few days before his daughters were married. I remember one of them was my classmate in 2004. I am told there is a last born who is remaining, and he is still having sexual relations with her! (FGUoA Women S.5).

Way forward

While trying to follow the established pattern, the participants were asked if they had some constructive comments about the life of David especially in the selected narrative. They said that Bible characters like David can give us a lesson in responding to the epidemic. A participant from Makumira made a representative comment in regard to the life of David in relation to the HIV and AIDS era. He said:

So what we can learn from David is that as parents we need to be careful of how we love our children. Love should not be separated from discipline (FGHIV/AIDS S.2).

7.1.7 Joab

So far our presentation has covered four episodes out of five (McWilliams 2006). These are, first, the problem, where Amnon is in his sick bed desperate to get hold of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-2). Secondly, the rising action, where Amnon and Jonadab are in conversation, and this leads to the summoning of David (2 Samuel 13:3-7). Thirdly, the turning point, where Amnon rapes Tamar and throws her out violently (2 Samuel 13: 8-19). Fourthly, the falling action, where Absalom gathers the king's sons and kills Amnon, then runs away (2 Samuel 13: 20-38).

The final episode is the resolution, where Joab and the woman of Tekoa discuss and fulfil the reconciliation process by bringing Absalom back to David (2 Samuel 14:1-33). In essence, 2 Samuel 14 is a chapter with one dominant theme: reconciliation. The key players are Joab and the woman of Tekoa, who draft and fulfil a plan of reconciliation to bring back to King David one who is banished from his own people, namely, Absalom. So in this section, we begin by presenting discussions about Joab and then about our last character, the woman of Tekoa.

After reading the text, a narrative on the background was given. Then we engaged the text contextually and, in the process, reconciliation emerged as the main theme. Other linked sub-themes were gender imbalance, real-life stories, and the way forward. These themes are presented in order of appearance.

Reconciliation: Who was Joab and what was his role in the narrative?

All participants agreed that Joab was the commander in-chief of David's army. Apart from that, Joab was a friend to David who understood his joys and disappointments. All participants concurred that he was the architect of the reconciliation plan and its process. A probing question was the asked, as to whether Joab's reconciliation could be regarded as genuine. In response to this, there was a sharp gender divide. While men applauded Joab for the scheme, women saw him as a hypocrite. The women contended that the reconciliation was not genuine, because he did not use a straightforward means. This group described Joab as shrewd, hypocritical and cunning, a liar, manipulator and coward. The quote that follows exemplifies this finding: *'In my opinion, I think he was a hypocrite who was not wishing others good. That is why he was doing things without making them clear* (FGMMU Women S.1). By contrast, the male

groups viewed Joab positively and argued that he drafted a state-of-art reconciliation plan. Joab to the second group was perceived as a mind reader and keen observer, caring, intelligent, wise, strategic and practical. An undergraduate student from the University of Arusha said:

I like the spirit of Joab. He is a person we can follow his example today. You and me have the privilege from God to do the right things. In saying this I mean we need to bring people together by reconciliation (FGUoA Unmarried S.2).

Gender Imbalance: Why did Joab use a woman with no name and finally when the reconciliation process was successful, was she not given credit by David?

In response to this question, most participants agreed that there was an issue of gender imbalance in the reconciliation process. The woman of Tekoa, who risked her life, is not given due credit. Instead, it goes to the man called Joab. The participants also argued that patriarchy was deeply entrenched in the Hebrew culture and the same continuity could be seen in the New Testament. A classic example that was cited is when Jesus fed 5,000 men, beside women and children (Matt. 15:21). Also, participants contended that because the woman of Tekoa belonged to the poor, it was easy to use her. A female respondent from the University of Arusha clarifies this view further:

What I can say is that Joab was taking advantage of the woman of Tekoa, based on her gender and socio-economic status. It is like in these days, the politicians do not go to the rich and the learned women, they will always go to the poor women in rural areas who are thinking of food and clothing (FGUoA Women 1).

In connection with the above question, another probing question was asked: *‘Do we see similar trends between Hebrew culture and African culture, where women are sometimes “used” in a supposedly good cause?’* The response was, ‘yes’. The participants agreed that the culture displayed in the text has similarities to African culture on issues of gender. In harmony with this view, a respondent from Mount Meru University said:

We see similar trends in the churches. For example, church leaders who are often men are usually planners, but those who fulfil the plan are usually members and most of them are women (FGMMU Married S.4).

Another participant confessed: *‘This tells me about Hebrew culture as people who have been using women to accomplish their own ends’* (FGUoA Women S.2).

This finding indicates the importance of involving all genders in interpreting the scriptures. When this practise is carried out under a skilful biblical scholar, we open up new avenues of understanding in the minds of ordinary readers. This kind of experience could have never been felt, if it were not for the opportunity of reading together communally.

Real-life stories

In approaching the end of discussion about the portraits of Joab and his role after the aftermath of Tamar’s rape, the respondents were asked if we have Joabs in the context of HIV/AIDS? There was a unanimous agreement from all groups that we do have Joabs. This led to the narration of several stories. The one chosen below is representative:

We have modern day Joabs. For example, last year we were told to go and celebrate the World HIV/AIDS Day at Tengeru. We were also promised to get funds there to sustain our lives. But what really happened? We did not get any money apart from receiving soft drinks. The coordinator of the meeting took some of his fellows and drove to Usa River for more festivities. And it should be noted that they were riding in expensive cars while we had to take public transport. So I believe many leaders who are dealing with HIV/AIDS are corrupt, they are eating through our backs (FGPLWHAs Married S.2).

Way forward

Finally, the question was asked, *‘What can be learned from the portrait of Joab as seen in the narrative?’* The finding indicates that most participants

agreed that there is need for reconciliation between the sick and the healthy, but it should not be attached to any hidden agenda. Lastly, it was emphasised that it is women who know their issues in-depth. So biblical interpreters need to take note of this. Agreeing with this, a person with HIV contended: *'We can have reconcilers but not in the church setting. We need people like Joab because it will reduce stigmatisation'* (FGPLWHAs Married S.1). Another female respondent added:

The church must empower women in order to empower more other women in avoiding such traps. So the church must sponsor many women to get further education and in this way the problem will be highly solved. It is women who know women issues in depth (FGUoA Women S.3).

7.1.8 Woman of Tekoa

The woman of Tekoa is our last character to be presented. She occupies a prominent place in 2 Samuel 14 alongside Joab. Although her name is not mentioned by the narrator, she plays the role of engineering the reconciliation as planned by Joab. She comes from a remote place called Tekoa, a town which is few miles from Bethlehem, a place where the prophet Amos once lived (Amos 1:1). The narrator depicts her as a wise, creative and courageous lady by acting out a parable like the one Nathan gave to David in chapter 12 of the same book.

Events began unfolding after the woman of Tekoa was summoned by Joab to play the role of a mediator. The plan intended to bring back Absalom, who murdered Amnon for political reasons. So according to the Pentateuch, Absalom was supposed to share the same fate of dying by the edge of the sword (Num. 35:12; Deut. 19:11-13). Since Joab knew that there was a potential danger in bringing back Absalom to David without being tactical, he asked the woman of Tekoa to pretend to be as widow (a class of people that was an object of mercy in Hebrew society). Moreover she was asked to narrate a 'cooked story,' that she had two sons. These sons fought one another until the other was killed. This hypothetical incident created an uproar on the side of the kinsmen and women, who wanted the killer to be killed too. This matter would be unbearable to her as a widow, however wicked the boy had been. On this matter the woman of Tekoa believed it would be like, 'putting off the only remaining burning coal.' In constructing the parable, both Joab and

the woman of Tekoa believed that it had parallel attachments to David's family. And thus since the other part of David's heart was merciful, they 'assumed' he was going to offer a verdict of forgiveness to the undeserved son. And if that was going to happen then the goal to restore Absalom would be nailed right in the heart of David. So out of faith, compassion and courage the woman of Tekoa moved on to fulfil the risky mission of restoring Absalom. Thank God, it worked!

This is the background information which was narrated to the participants after our procedure of reading the text. Now we present findings on how the woman of Tekoa was viewed by the participants. The findings will be presented based on the following themes: behaviour (as a major theme), ARV use, real-life stories, and the way forward (as sub-themes).

Behaviour: How the woman of Tekoa is depicted in the narrative?

In response to this question, the respondents depicted the woman of Tekoa as brave, wise, courageous, a risk taker, and a model of Christ. The UoA Lecturer 3 tells more about her:

She is strong, courageous and wise. She is woman who had a feeling of compassion for Absalom. She risks her life for Absalom; it is amazing that I do not see Absalom appreciating her! She is not even given credit. All of this is amazing about her character. (UoA Lecturer 3).

However other two individuals had different opinions. It is noteworthy that all were women. One said she was cunning, while a female student contended that she had a weak thinking ability that is the reason she was 'used' by Joab (FGMMU Women S.4). Another view is quoted here: '*I consider this woman to be very weak, she had a right to say no, but she simply yielded. So she gave in, without knowing the consequences ahead*' (FGUoA Women S.5).

This indicates that sometime women undermine themselves and they try to find support for this from the Bible. Also the finding indicates that there are many heroines in the Old Testament, and they can provide empowerment to any person especially if he or she reads the text contextually.

ARV use

Since there are some churches in Tanzania that prevent people using medication, claiming that anyone who uses them is faithless, I asked the following question: 'If the woman of Tekoa were here today would she endorse the use of ARVs?' This is based on her statement:

Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged to him (2 Samuel 14:14 NIV).

Based on the findings, there was again a unanimous agreement that she would endorse usage of ARVs since she was a pro-life on the case of restoring Absalom. In harmony with this statement, a respondent from the University of Arusha had this to say: *'Based on 2 Samuel 14:14 I think the woman of Tekoa would accept the use of ARVs because she would need these people to live longer as we wait for a complete cure'* (FGUoA Women S.2). Another respondent added:

I think she would accept the use of ARVs and as people continue to use ARVS, who knows, down the line the cure could be found! Moreover, the use of ARVs lengthens life; a person is given a second chance to mend his or her life. I think the woman of Tekoa had a high view about life (FGMMU Married S.1).

Real-life stories

Towards the end of our discussion of the woman of Tekoa, participants were asked if we can find similar stories in the context of AIDS. As usual, the answer was, 'yes.' The participants gave many stories, but the one which is closest to the woman of Tekoa is narrated below:

We have many women who are like the woman of Tekoa. They bring people together who have wronged each other. I know one story where a husband had HIV but the wife had not yet contracted the disease. So this couple separated because this woman said that she was not willing to live with a husband who was HIV positive. There came a woman who was a friend to this woman who had ran away

from her sick husband. She advised her friend to go back based on marriage vows. She advised her to take precautions of whatever was necessary to protect her health. This strategy worked! So she stayed with her husband until he passed away (FGUoA Women S.5).

Way forward

Finally, the respondents were asked what could be the last application of lessons we can learn from the woman of Tekoa in the context of AIDS. All participants spoke in different ways but they were trying to echo that women recognition is vital both in interpreting the scripture and halting the epidemic. To make the argument specific, Lecturer 4 (MMU) asserted:

I think it is high time we recognise roles played by women who are taking care of PLWHAs. I think we must support women morally, materially and in training. I think this woman of Tekoa is a classic example for many women in rural areas (Lecturer 4 MMU).

7.1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the second part of research objective two, which was geared to problematise power and gender politics in the narrative of 2 Samuel 13 and 14. The focus of the interpretive method was not in other components of a narrative such as plot, setting, narration, dialogue and episodes, but in the characters. This was because the study was dealing with ordinary readers of the biblical text who have the assumption that the Bible is 'their' book. Although the focus is on the characters, nevertheless other aspects had a full bearing on the way ordinary readers perceived the story in the context of AIDS.

CHAPTER 8:

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARDS TOWARDS AN HIV/AIDS BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS?

8.1 Introduction

In this section, the final comments suggested by the participants will be presented. At the end of the sessions, all participants had gained full trust in the researcher, so any further disclosure was not a problem. In the earlier interviews, the respondents were somewhat suspicious, and several times they would spend a moment of silence before answering questions. But the trend continued to change, and bursts of laughter became a normal part of the interview sessions as I became better acquainted with the respondents. This atmosphere of trust made respondents more honest and transparent in their responses. In fact, in one incident with a FGMMU (Unmarried), I had to close the session after much pleading. The same event happened in the three focus groups of persons with HIV. These respondents felt relieved and respected by academics.

Here are the findings, which follow a linear pattern of agreements, since all controversies had been resolved in the earlier research questions. The themes which are going to be presented include reconciliation, reader response, hermeneutics, ordinary readers, empowerment, fiction versus non fiction, authorship, and narrator's point of view.

8.1.2 Reconciliation

When the participants were asked, *'Do we need reconciliation in the context of AIDS?'* all respondents agreed, except one lecturer, who said *'Perhaps we need awareness programmes and not reconciliation'*. The participants who were in favour of reconciliation between the sick and the healthy had these comments: *'We need reconciliation to a large extent'* (FGMMU Married S.2). Another respondent added, powerfully:

I think we need more reconciliation because in these days when you begin a project on HIV/AIDS, the natural

impression is that ‘you are after money.’ So there is a lot of mistrust. We need people who are ready to work even if there is no recognition. We need people from Tekoa (FGUoA Unmarried S.2).’

8.1.3 Reader response hermeneutics: Do we need to read the Bible in the context of HIV and AIDS?

In response to this question, there was unanimous agreement that both ordinary readers and trained theologians need to read the text communally and contextually. At this point, all participants were contented and convinced that reader response works quite harmoniously, for they believed proper interpretation has the potential to remove stigma. A participant from the University of Arusha observed:

When we read the Bible in the context of HIV/AIDS, we will stop stigmatising the PLWHAs. At the same time we will avoid illicit sex because God does not want that! So studying the Bible in the context of HIV/AIDS is something which is very crucial (FGUoA Women S.5).

Arguing on the same level, a graduate student at Makumira University College added:

I think we need proper biblical interpretation; this will help us to remove stigma. We need to remember Jesus when he touched the lepers. These were the people who were isolated in the society but he compassionately touched them. Even the woman who was bleeding, Jesus not only healed her but he touched her, this is something that was not allowed to happen in Israel. So we need proper biblical interpretation so that we can remove the stigma in HIV/AIDS pandemic (FGMISSIONS S.2).

8.1.4 Ordinary readers: Do we need to respect ordinary readers’ views (especially PLWHAs) as they read the text based on their experiences?

In response to this question, there was a consensus that the voices of ordinary readers (particularly PLWHAs) need to be heard, if we will ever

balance our interpretations. This question made persons with HIV to beam with satisfaction, since I had actually included them in the interpretation process. One of the participants had this comment: *'Our voices are important and we also need to be heard in our own perspectives'* (FGPLWHAs Singles S.4). Another graduate student from Makumira University College had this to say:

As for me I can say those who wear the shoe know where it pinches! So to my perception, they can come out with a good solution. Most of us who are dealing with HIV/AIDS pandemic are doing it on a theoretical ground, but the PLWHA have the practical knowledge with them. So they can air out what they feel (FGMISSIONS S.1).

8.1.5 Empowerment: Do ordinary readers and biblical scholars need to be empowered by the church and academy as they read the text?

In response to this question, all respondents said they would be happy if empowerment were accorded to those who have been excluded by scholars and churches to interpret the scripture. A graduate student from Makumira University College captures this finding very closely when he says:

I think theologians need to be empowered. In saying this, I am arguing that the church leadership has not recognised them. They need to be empowered in freedom of speech as well as economically. The current situation is that power and authority has been monopolised by the leadership. And also theologians need to be reminded to come to their senses that they are responsible for the welfare of the community. And that our profession is irrelevant if we will not be concerned and active to issues facing the church such HIV/AIDS (FGMISSIONS S.2).

8.1.6 Fictional vs non-fictional authorship: Is the narrative of 2 Samuel 13-14 a work of fiction or non-fiction?

When this question was asked, literally everybody was shocked. This indicates how highly the Bible is valued here in Tanzania. So all respondents did not expect a practicing clergyman to ask such a question. However, there was a unanimous agreement amongst respondents (male and female, PLWHAs and others) that the scripture under discussion was the true word of God and not fiction. A female respondent from the University of Arusha argued: *'I think if would be told that it is fiction, then the PLWHAs would lose all of their hope'* (FGUoA Women S.3). Discussing the same topic, a graduate student at Makumira University College added:

First, I don't think this is fiction, it is a real story! It has names and the names are historical and not metaphorical. So there is no way we can think of it as fiction, otherwise the PLWHAs infected and affected will learn nothing (FGMISSIONS S.1).

8.1.7 Way forward

When respondents were asked to give their final comments, they were moved with the experience for the better. They felt highly valued to be part of the interpretation process, so in their comments they unanimously recommended the idea of HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutics. One respondent said, *'It is timely'* (FGUoA Married S.2), while another from Mount Meru University concurred, adding: *'I think we need this kind of interpretation because it takes seriously the context of those who are suffering like Tamar'* (FGMMU Unmarried S.3).

8.1.8 Unexpected findings

Since all research, whether qualitative or quantitative, carries with it the researchers' bias, in order to be balanced I will present briefly some unexpected findings encountered in the process. Newman (2006: 478-479) describes unexpected findings as a form of negative case method. He explains it as 'a method of qualitative data in which a researcher focuses on a case that does not conform to theoretical expectations and uses details from that case to refine the theory.' Therefore, a negative

case method is just another way of describing negative findings. So here are my preconceived notions which have not been validated by the findings:

High expectation to find interpretations that support oppression of women, poor and powerless but was lacking

- Eurocentric interpretation was lacking;
- There was no sharp difference between learned and less learned respondents;
- There was no sharp difference in interpretation across denominational affiliations;
- There was a distinct trajectory of PLWHA's voices, especially on the issue of social justice.

8.1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has primarily presented the last research objective. This objective was geared to find constructive views in an attempt to construct an idea of an HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics. The summative response is '*We need an HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics, because it is inclusive, relevant and contextual.*' The last part of data presentation has touched briefly on unexpected findings, which will be further analysed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 9:

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN RELATION TO PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the interpretation and explanation of the findings presented in the preceding chapter in relation to previous scholarship. The aim of the data collection was to explore the stigmatisation of persons with HIV by the church and academy and then guide the respondents to read the text of Tamar contextually in order to provide empowering readings. The chapter begins by giving a standard definition on data analysis to be used, and thereafter the interpretation of data will follow in a systematic pattern as it appears in the preceding chapter.

9.1.1 Definition of data analysis

Data analysis is defined in Bagwasi (2003:93) as a strategy for interpreting empirical findings, which includes description, concept formulation, classification, content analysis, construction of measurement scales, generating empirical relationships, pattern recognition, derivation of empirical laws, causal explanation and prediction. Since the data is in a qualitative form of text (written words), this situation will necessitate the use of qualitative techniques of analysing data (Neuman 1991:417; Onyango 2002). Therefore, pattern recognition has been employed to *compare* the views within selected respondent or focus group discussions. This process has been fully utilised in the previous chapters (Chapters 5 to 8). Moreover, pattern recognition is augmented in this chapter by a conversation with previous scholarship. This will enable us to find contrasts and agreements that will highlight the need to have HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics (Neuman 1991:427).

This section discusses outcomes which arose in the course of focus group discussions and interviews (refer to Chapters 5 to 8). The discussion will follow the research questions' pattern.

9.2 Research question one

The aim of the first research question was to determine the extent to which the church, the academy and persons with HIV have adhered to stereotyping and social categorisation. Also, it had the objective of laying a background for forthcoming research questions. The findings under this research question have been categorised into three themes, namely, stigmatisation, curriculum and culture.

Stigmatisation: To what extent do the church and academic institutions stigmatise persons with HIV?

In response to this research question, it is clear that lecturers, students and persons with HIV have been either agents or recipients of stigmatisation to the sick on a level that ranges from moderate to high. But persons with HIV were more emphatic in their expressions, which indicates that they happen to be objects of stigma. The result was measured by the number of sermons preached or not preached on HIV and AIDS or gender-based violence. Similar findings have been expressed by Chitando and Masiwa (2007:184-197), who contend that stigma has remained a major challenge, where some churches have been using the Bible to justify the exclusion of PLWHAs. Moreover, another study done in Tanzania, surveying 438 parishioners of Catholic, Lutheran and Pentecostal churchess, indicates that 'shame-related HIV stigma is strongly associated with religious beliefs such as the belief that HIV is a punishment from God ($p < 0.01$) or that people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) have not followed the Word of God ($p < 0.001$)' (Zou *et al.* 2009:1). Still another relevant study that was conducted in Tanzania had the aim of measuring how religious beliefs play an important role in the lives of PLWHAs. In the end, the study concluded that there are missed opportunities by religious organisations to support persons with HIV, particularly the need to ensure that messages about HIV are not stigmatising (Watt, *et al.* 2009: 389).

So in order to create more positive attitudes towards persons with HIV, biblical hermeneutics needs to engage with AIDS knowledge by using the reader response method among other paradigms. Moreover, lecturers in Biblical Studies and other related disciplines need to know that little involvement in AIDS issues can be synonymous with stigmatisation of persons with HIV. So, upon understanding this assumption, lecturers may gather their scholarship skills and offer

considerable support in minimising stigma and providing more hope to persons with HIV.

Curriculum: Why is AIDS not reflected or rare in the curriculum?

This was a probing question which sought to know the rationale of not finding serious components of HIV and AIDS in the theological curriculum. As noted earlier, most participants were uncomfortable with the question. It appeared from observation that only one institution had a programme of HIV/AIDS up to Masters level. This institution is Makumira University College. However, it was critical to note that the programme was being, 'phased out', and was being replaced by another programme in Missions. Truly this question appears to unmask a failure of representing Christ in which all the selected institutions professed to follow his pedagogy. All in all, it was concluded by one participant that our ethnic backgrounds and institutional poverty may hinder our efforts to address topics on human sexuality. Sometimes institutions may want to implement contextual programmes, but if donor countries were not in favour of them, then nothing would come to fruition. The study agrees with the participant who argued that since 'most lecturers had their postgraduate training abroad, it is assumed therefore, that while they were studying; the curriculum did not prepare them to address Africa's cultural issues in relation to sex. Instead the curriculum prepared African scholars with a knowledge that was out of African context.' This may indicate the rationale for failure to mainstream AIDS in the curriculum. Kathide (2006: 3-4) rightfully contends that the time has come for African scholars to stop being obsessed with European theological debates while their kins(wo)men are battling several issues without hope, and this includes AIDS. Thus this study indicates a need for mainstreaming AIDS in the curriculum among other social issues. Moreover, this study has no intention to discourage people from studying abroad, but all that is needed is to remember to be critical of the working curriculum and try as much as possible to contextualise the knowledge gained abroad to suit the African context (Muyangata 2008:49-70).

Culture: Why does AIDS appear to flourish more in African culture than in other places?

This was a probing question, following an understanding that AIDS is not included in the curriculum and the preaching calendar. According

to the findings across all focus groups and interviewees, they addressed the issue of African culture as one of the sole problems in promoting the spread of HIV. However, the participants cautioned that they were speaking about negative components of African culture.

Culture is a way of life in a particular society. It is usually embedded with religious, social and economic values. Culture has many dimensions, which include endorsing certain things to be taboos, while other things are permissible. For example, in Tanzania like in many parts of Africa, talk about sex related topics is still a taboo. Talk about sex is usually restricted to sexually consenting adults and they must discuss such issues behind closed doors. Moreover, in Tanzania, the culture permits men to have many sexual partners outside wedlock, and surprisingly enough, such a 'right' is not accorded to women (Chitando and Togarasei 2008:9). And last but not least, in Tanzania there are taboos which endorse that the words of elders must not be questioned whatsoever. If you go contrary to this, you will be categorised as disrespectful and you could be visited by bad luck!

Dube (2003:89) gives a comprehensive view of culture entailing six components:

- Culture embraces all; no one exists outside one or another culture;
- Culture is a major framework of meaning, which guides how our relationship are formulated and lived out;
- Culture is different from people groups and times, etc.
- Culture does not always serve the needs and interests of all people who belong to it;
- Culture sanctions the suppression of certain members of society;
- Culture is not natural, it is a social product;
- Culture is not static, it is dynamic and changes.

In a private interview with an undergraduate student of the University of Arusha who hails from the Barbeig tribe, he indicated that culture is still a critical issue in the context of AIDS. The findings from the interview revealed two major issues, namely circumcision and forced marriage in the form of assisted rape. The participant confessed that he was circumcised using one knife, alongside another 118 age mates. The participant initially did not want attend such a traditional ceremony for

fear of contracting HIV, but he was warned that he would then never belong to his community. Moreover, he would not be permitted to go back to his village, otherwise he would be risking a forced circumcision or re-circumcision if he went to the hospital. So his rights were suppressed and he yielded! The participant also narrated that in the Barbeig community, circumcision is not restricted to males alone, females also are included. The same threats, sanctions and practices apply to women too.

Another cultural issue in the Barbeig community is forced marriage in the form of assisted rape. Such horrors are still practised today, regardless of the presence of AIDS. Here is his long narrative:

I will tell you of a certain example which happened in Singida (central part of Tanzania), here a certain girl was caught by force. It happened the prospective husband was staying in Mbeya (south-western part of Tanzania), so there were no girls to carry the traditional garment (made of skin) for such a long distance. So the solution was to use young men to carry her forcefully into the bus while she was struggling in cries. So passengers asked, why are you doing like that? The prospective husband replied, she has lost her parents, so I am going to take care of her. I plead with you to help me, because you do not know the details of the matter! The lady did not understand anything since she did not know Swahili. When they reached Mbeya, a group of girls were waiting with the skin garment, so they made her wear it and she was left alone for some time. It must be remembered that such a garment is usually attached to some rituals, so the moment you wear it, marriage is sealed whether you like it or not! Again once you wear it you will never be called a youth, you have moved [past] that stage into becoming a woman. Once you wear it, even if the husband dies even before sleeping with him, you will be called a widow of Mr so and so! So forced marriage is still happening even to our present times.

Based on this narrative, it is evident that a culture that is suppressing the individual rights of people ought to be addressed using the Old Testament text among other strategies. Although it is true that the Old Testament text has some portions which suppress certain people (Genesis 24, Judges 19, 2 Samuel 13), nevertheless a guided re-reading using a reader response method can help in reclaiming muted voices. In this way we will be able to change a culture which promotes the spread of HIV and hence enhance the dignity of human life. Based on the same argument, Dube (2003:96) concurs with the view by endorsing, ‘the joy of any culture is that it is not absolute or stable – windows of differences always exist. As agents of change, we need to find these windows and employ them for the creation of a better world.’ At this juncture we want to salute the World Council of Churches for outlining a Plan of Action that includes the aspect of culture as a site of struggle in the era of AIDS (WCC 2001). The components of the Plan of Action in relation to culture include:

- We will commit ourselves as a church to reflect on positive and negative aspects of culture, identifying harmful practices and working to overcome them. In particular, we will recognise the ways in which culturally supported behaviour can make women, girls and also boys more vulnerable to HIV;
- We will propose alternative rites and rituals in place of harmful practices;
- We will challenge our churches ourselves and structures to which we relate, to examine and address culture, traditions, and practices that enable the spread of HIV.

In response to the citation above, which was released approximately 8 years ago, there is little or no evidence to indicate active implementation of the plan. For example the Barbeig participant, who was a Christian at the time of his forced circumcision, did not see this policy in effect. If this policy had been in effect, at least his church would have defended him, or the church would have suggested or lobbied alternative circumcision done in the hospital to be accepted by his community. By the look of things, the participant was standing at a crossroads: either follow the church, which does not support him in a cultural conflict, or to follow his tribal values, which carry the risk of contracting HIV. The

conclusion of the matter is that he ended up being circumcised with a knife which was shared with another 118 age mates, and at the same time he managed to keep his faith, although the church did not support him. The same line of argument applies to the young girl who was forced to enter into marriage relations without her consent; her cries like those of Tamar were not heard. Therefore, this policy, although it has relevancy, has not been available in theological institutions (at least in the sample institutions in Tanzania) which serve as the factory of producing pastors and evangelists. So this policy will be of greater value if it were to be made available and implemented directly from theological institutions.

Section summary

This marks the end of discussion based on research question one; which was based on establishing the level of stigmatisation of persons with HIV using a biblical text. The overall finding is that there is stigma, ranging from medium to high levels. Therefore this has set a responsibility to interpret the Old Testament in ways which can promote healing from stigma and achieving a more bearable state of life in the state of human degradation (Lefa 2009:286). The next research question is an attempt to unearth life-affirming interpretations through the eyes of ordinary readers.

9.3 Research question two

The aim of the second research question was to explore reader response interpretations. Through interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher *'problematised issues of power and gender as played out in 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39 and how they impact local communities in an AIDS context.'* It is very true that the Bible says nothing about AIDS but it is noteworthy that the researcher and readers have found *links* through critical analysis of characters (Chitando and Togarasei 2008:8). Furthermore, whenever participants were asked whether the characters found in the narrative had implications for the HIV/AIDS era, the response was 'yes' in all interviews and focus group discussions. Therefore, these views continue to add to the relevancy and validity of the study.

The study deals with biblical characters because it is through them that we get the message of any narrative. Bar Efrat (1984:47) rightfully argues that characters are the narrators' mouthpieces and through their personalities and histories attract the readers' attention to a greater extent than do other components (explanations, plot, setting, etc.). Chisholm Jr (2006:28) further emphasises that 'Characters are necessary ingredients of any story. Without them, all we have is an empty stage or a still life devoid of plot.' Moreover the research participants to a large extent are not trained in biblical scholarship or having a mastery of sophisticated components of Biblical narrative such as plot, setting, structure, etc. Therefore due to the nature of study, the questions regarding other components were not pursued. However this remains a fertile ground for further research.

In an attempt to evaluate the characters, as explained earlier, I followed several questions adapted from the Contextual Bible Studies used at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (West 2002:335-344). Here below are the questions:

- Who is the character and why did s/he behave in a particular way? (On the text – focussing on the text as a final product);
- Do we have such characters in the context of AIDS? (In front of the text – focusing on the application domain for the contemporary society);
- Are there any true stories?
- What is the role of the church, legal authorities, police and community in helping such people?
- What is the way forward?

Finally, let us begin our analysis of the characters against the backdrop of previous scholarship, using the chronology of the narrative. These include the key characters of Amnon (antagonist), Tamar (protagonist) and Absalom. Thereafter there is a treatment of minor characters such as Jonadab, the servants, David, the king's sons, reporters, Joab and the woman of Tekoa.

9.4 Major characters

This section discusses the empirical findings in relation to the major characters in the text. As stated earlier, the major characters are Amnon,

Tamar, and Absalom. These characters are discussed according to the order of appearance.

9.4.1 Amnon

As stated earlier, Amnon is a character who has been described negatively by the narrator and hence most participants viewed him likewise. On evaluating Amnon, the following themes emerged: rape (major theme), identification, curse, corruption, church, contemporary Amnons, real-life stories and the way forward. These ideas are discussed in the order of appearance.

Rape

All participants reported that Amnon forced his half sister Tamar into sexual relations and later he threw her out. The reasons for the rape included: no fear of God, uncontrolled passion, poor father figure, a shrewd mentor, crippled thinking, fornication behaviour, enmity to Absalom, polygamous family, demon possession, and psychological weakness. Also it was found that we have present day Amnons who use more or less similar reasons for rape. The contemporary reasons include a culture which justifies rape, witchcraft, myths of sleeping with little girls with the assumption that this can heal AIDS, a search for riches, effects of drug addiction, corruption in employment sectors, lenient punishments for rapists, and poverty. Other reasons included uncontrolled passions, alleged 'rights' of husbands over their wives' bodies, assumptions that women are weak vessels and situations of being victims of circumstance. This finding is in line with other studies regardless whether they are diachronic or synchronic (Bar-Efrat 1984:239-282, Smith 1969:326-337, Gray 1998:39-54, Jacobson 2004:353-357). The difference between diachronic studies, which include Bar-Efrat (1984:239-282), Martin (1960:396-413), and Smith (1969:326-337), is that, they do not relate Amnon to contemporary experiences. By contrast, Evans (2004:220-229), Hawkins (1996:537-542) and Jacobson (2004:353-357), endeavour not only to focus on ancient views about Amnon but also contemporary encounters.

Therefore the study concurs with Chitando and Togarasei (2008:4), who argued that 'there is a need in Africa to promote readings with existential needs similar to those who use the Bible.' We need to

advocate such readings because if we know that Amnon raped Tamar and violated her and end up there, then this is like an unaccomplished mathematical equation. While reading the text in the tradition of historical criticism helps in understanding what the text meant in the past; nevertheless it appears that the paradigm is confronted with inadequacy in addressing contemporary issues such as AIDS. This reality will continue like this until further research findings prove otherwise. So, for the time being, contextual hermeneutics will continue to provide a platform for providing hope to AIDS sufferers and in other social and economic issues.

Identification

As indicated earlier, almost all participants showed feelings of apathy and alienation towards Amnon, based on the reason of raping and discarding his sister Tamar. However, there was an exception in the focus groups from Makumira University College. These participants showed some elements of sympathy towards Amnon, indicating that he is a human being like any of us. So based on this response, the participants were loath to suggest stern disciplinary measures to Amnon. The pattern of contradictory findings was also found in the survey of literature, indicating many studies abhorring Amnon, and few showing some elements of sympathy. Studies which showed apathy include (but are not limited to), Delitzsch *et al.* (1960:396), Gray (1998: 40), and Jacobson (2004:354). All of these selected scholars view Amnon as a person who not only committed rape but also incest. These studies further viewed Amnon as foolish, violent and a morally paralysed prince. On a very interesting note, of all the literature surveyed, Bar-Efrat (1989:240-282) appeared unique. Bar-Efrat's treatment of Amnon seems not to be severe and in essence he proposes that it was possible for Amnon to marry Tamar. On this Bar-Efrat argues, 'Thus it may be concluded that Tamar was not forbidden to Amnon and consequently, his crime was not incest but rape, which is reprehensible at all times, but particularly so when it involves a brother and sister'. In principle, Bar-Efrat (1989) is trying as much as possible to 'bear' Amnon who is 'unbearable.' All in all he ends up saying is that he raped his sister Tamar!

This clash of views indicates that we will always have multiple meanings as we read the Old Testament. Seeing that this is a fact that cannot be

avoided, all that is needed is to allow the dialogue to continue so that the end result will be a synthesis of empowering readings. Nevertheless, a person who commits either rape or incestuous rape needs to be disciplined by both church and state.

Curse

Half of the participants in this study reported that Amnon raped his sister because he was under a curse from his father's previous rape of Uriah's wife and his murder. The other half of the respondents, regardless of their gender or HIV status, agreed truly that Amnon was under a curse, but further argued that such a curse had no power to affect his choices. The first part of these findings is in line with Battenhouse (1982:53), who asserts that Amnon was a person who inherited the curse in the family. Evans (2004:220) further emphasises that 'Amnon, was following his father's steps (sins) on and on', and in the same vein Gray (1998:39) argues plainly that, 'Amnon seems to have inherited some of the lust which his father expressed in his desire for Bathsheba.' It was surprising that the body of literature surveyed supposes that a curse cannot affect one's ability in making intelligent decisions.

So this finding suggests that if the community of faith and its academics continue espousing interpretations that are curse linked, then we will continue to expect stigma, which is 'sanctioned' by the Bible. It is time to move from a theology of retribution as endorsed in the books of Moses (Deut. 7:12-15; 26:16; 28:27-29) because it appears problematic in the era of HIV and AIDS (Chitando and Togarasei 2008:9).

Contemporary Amnons

All participants in the study agreed with the contextual question that we have contemporary Amnons. The Amnons are people who are invested with power and they could either be men or women. The Amnons oppress the weak (women, men and children alike) and deny the rights of the marginalised. It appears that many of them are leaders but that they are dictatorial and uncaring like Amnon. The present day Amnons were also related to pastors and church leaders who are not vocal in addressing gender-based violence and the plight of persons with HIV. It was noticeable that the persons with HIV were bolder in answering this question. This suggests that their cry is similar to that of Tamar – it has

been suppressed for a long time. So the data collection process was their great opportunity to voice their silenced cry. This study is supported by Siwo-Okundi (2008:9), who contends: 'For many of us, the 2 Samuel 13:1-22 story of Tamar is enough to make us cringe with pain, because we ourselves have experienced such violence or know others who have been violated'. Another female scholar, Burt (2001:144) argues: 'Today in this country, four women will die at the hands of intimate partners. One in four American women will at sometime in her life be a victim of domestic violence'.

These two female scholars are giving their critical views in relation to the Tamar's story. Bearing in mind the fact that they are women and that it is they who are usually objects of male violence, this indicates urgency for interpretations that embrace the voices of the oppressed. Finally, we need to create a safe space for everybody to tell their stories because in doing so the Amnons will be disciplined, but more importantly this will be a deterrent to anybody who wants to be like Amnon (Haddad 2006:135-154).

Corruption

All participants reported that in Tanzania there is a high rate of corruption, not only in the economic and political sectors, but also in the legal system, the health sector, the police force, and the religious sector. Participants gave many instances of occasions where rapists like Amnon have been set free and are continuing to roam about in the streets. Moreover, it was added that rapists who are poor, are the ones who are normally held by the law. In contrast, rapists who are economically and politically powerful are usually beyond the arm of the law. It was also agreed that rapists have no sense of valuing human dignity; therefore to them it is unthinkable to use condoms during the sexual act. So due to this, the participants added, the rapists are another avenue of transmitting HIV.

A critical survey of religious literature indicates that there are very few studies which have problematised government corruption in relation to rape and even AIDS. Among the few studies that address corruption in the AIDS setting is Baleta (2002:1847), who contends that:

South Africa's Mpumalanga province has been rocked by allegations that public funds meant for HIV/AIDS projects

have been squandered on soccer matches, plays, prayer days, and a local chief whose unregistered charity requested more than 1 million rand (US\$108 000) to build houses on his property.

It is interesting that some of the funds dedicated for AIDS were misused in the name of 'prayer meetings'! This finding concurs with the established evidence in the study that corruption is also found in religious settings, among other areas. Therefore this study espouses a hermeneutic that confronts corruption head-on, regardless of its source. Another finding from the same academic journal addresses the issue of corruption and AIDS. Siringi (2002:1848) reports that Tanzania lost the opportunity to get global funds worth US\$ 12 million to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The funding opportunity was lost due to internal wrangling between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health, since each of them wanted supreme control over the money. It is again interesting to find leaders fighting for funds that are not destined to them! And as the fight goes on it is the persons with HIV along with their families who continue to suffer the casualties. This fraudulent occurrence is in harmony with the Swahili saying that: '*Mafahali wawili wakigombana, nyasi ndio ziумiazo!*' (When two bulls fight, it the grass that suffers.)

Therefore, there is a need to embrace a hermeneutic with a strong sense of justice. This kind of hermeneutic will be as bold as Nathan in reprimanding David when he raped Bathsheba and killed her husband (2 Sam. 11). We need a hermeneutic like that of the woman of Tekoa, when she spoke a judgement in the form of a parable to the undecided David (2 Sam. 14). It is in such circumstances the church and the academy will be fulfilling their prophetic role in the wider public arena.

Church

When the question was asked whether the church deals effectively with rapists, all participants with the exception of two individuals agreed that the church is not effective in this matter. Other participants added that the church appears not to be part of society and moreover that it has not given full support to the legal system. This study is in agreement with Chung (2004:53) who views church leaders as people who ask Tamar to 'forgive' Amnon and keep silent. Hawkins (1996) counsels the

community of faith to remember that Tamar is an advocate for all victims of gender-based violence.

Therefore, from the above comparative analysis, we see that the church needs become an advocate for Tamar. Time has taken enough toll to leave this matter in the hands of the government (which also appears to be corrupt). This will be made possible by promoting Bible readings that are gender sensitive, and AIDS courses need to be mainstreamed in the curriculum so that pastors and church leaders may be equipped with the tools necessary for this type of advocacy (See also Togarasei 2008:71-84, Chitando and Gabaitse 2008:85-102; Parry 2008: 13-21).

Real-life stories

This study has a total of 10 real-life stories representing each character. For example Amnon is represented by the story of a man who was infected with HIV virus, who raped a young girl. Tamar is represented by a wife who was violently raped by her husband who was HIV infected. Jonadab is likened to a certain person in Arusha city who was being used by a wealthy man (infected with HIV) to lure young girls and connect them to him. The servants of Amnon and Absalom have been likened to a female student who yielded sexually to her lecturer for fear of failing a course. The reporters in the biblical story have been compared to a certain NGO that hired people who were not infected with the virus but when presenting an AIDS awareness campaign pretended to be infected. King David's sons have been likened to the church, which is inactive in dealing with rape cases. Absalom is likened to an infected man in Kenya who went to borrow money from the bank, and used it to lure young girls into sex so that he could infect them with HIV. It appears that these young girls belonged to a rival tribe. King David is likened to polygamous parents who do not care for their children, hence exposing them to the risk of gender-based violence and even AIDS. Joab is likened to leaders of government and NGOs who squander donor funds intended for PLWHAs. And finally the woman of Tekoa has been likened to rural women who are offering care for many persons with HIV but who have been surviving without any recognition.

These stories therefore validate that the Bible is a trusted word of God in Africa as documented by Chitando and Togarasei (2008:8) and Ezeokana, Nnedum and Madu (2009:27). As the participants were able to relate the biblical text to their own contemporary experience, this aspect

made the focus group discussions and interviews very lively. Moreover, the participants felt a sense of satisfaction in discovering that the 'old' text now appears to them in lively scenarios. Therefore this study recommends communal readings of the scripture where the reader is allowed to engage with the text and produce contextual meanings (Dube and West 1997; Weems 1997; Lategan 1997).

Way forward

All the participants felt that rape is a crime and it must be severely punished by law. It was observed also that it is important for the church to work together with the government in dealing with rape cases instead of folding arms. Finally, another key comment on this section was that, parents were counselled to scrutinise all situations so that their children would not enter into the risk of Tamar.

9.4.2 Tamar

According to the findings of the study, Tamar is described positively by the narrator and hence most participants viewed her as such. In assessing Tamar, the following themes emerged: church and culture as major themes and several sub-themes that included identification, socio-economic power, and the way forward. These themes and sub-themes are discussed in their order of appearance.

Church

Almost all participants reported that rape survivors are viewed negatively, as was the case in the Old Testament. This is evident from the culture of not talking about topics of human sexuality, either in the family or the church. Furthermore, this silence is usually broken only by brief, stigmatising remarks such as, '*morally loose persons*' (FGPLWHAS Married S.2). When another probing question was asked, whether the plight of rape survivors and that of persons with HIV are comparatively similar, the response was 'yes' without exception. This indicates the legitimacy of linking the story of Tamar with issues surrounding AIDS. Moreover, when participants were asked to confirm if the church is a safe place for disclosure, the response was a unanimous 'no.' This is a radical finding where some sections of the church do not trust the leadership and the community of believers at all. The finding further indicates that the church is far short of fulfilling its mission as expected

by God. According to Exodus 34:5-7, Yahweh sets forth the ideal character to be emulated by the people (church). This includes mercy, grace, a longsuffering spirit (compassion), forgiveness, justice, goodness and truth. These are ideals that Yahweh expects of the church, especially in treating and viewing contemporary Tamars.

This is not meant to dispute what the church has been doing, but this study suggests that participants want the church to be more compassionate and welcoming to both rape survivors and persons with HIV. For example, Beckley (2006:393-408) argues in a case study conducted in the US, that the churches of Christ were found to be providing food, clothing, shelter, substance abuse education, as well as facilitating condom distribution! This is a model of a compassionate church. Again it is interesting to note that in Tanzania, regardless of the claims from participants, that the church is not compassionate. Digler (2007:59-83) contends that one of the biggest neo-Pentecostal churches in Tanzania, the Full Gospel Bible Fellowship Church (FGBFC), is thriving through providing structural reform programmes to address the AIDS epidemic. As part of its reform programmes, prayer has been given a central role, but at the same time medical services are not undermined.

The truth that the church has been stigmatising rape survivors and persons with HIV remains a mixed reality. A couple of scholars endorse the argument that the church has not been doing its duty as expected by Yahweh (Masenya 2006:486-499; Chung 2004:46-58; Hawkins 1996:537-542; Burt 2001:143-149; Evans 2004:223; Haddad 2006:135-154).

All in all, as we survive in the maze of mixed reality we still need to uphold Christian ideals. Where churches and academics have been falling short of the expected compassionate treatment of rape survivors and persons with HIV, more needs to be done. One way to strengthen or maintain compassion is to read the biblical text contextually while upholding a sense of human dignity as intended by Yahweh during creation (Gen. 1) and restored by Christ during redemption (Luke 4:16-19; Matt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17)

Identification

This theme meant to discover if participants in the study were willing to identify with Tamar or not. The finding indicates all participants showed strong attachments to Tamar, but female participants, especially those

living with HIV, felt particularly closely connected to her. This was evident from their willingness to provide real life stories with high emotional tones. Female participants, especially those living with HIV, claimed that women have been infected due to unavoidable circumstances in marriage, school and work settings. So in essence, according to the participants, one could get HIV as a victim of circumstances. Therefore, the reading of the story of Tamar in a contextual paradigm provided glimmers of hope to those who were hopeless. The female participants vowed to break the silence whenever oppressed on the basis of gender or socio-economic status. They further argued that they would never be silenced like Tamar until their cause for justice is vindicated.

This finding corresponds to two contextual studies done in South Africa. The first study is reported by West (2002:335-344). The purpose of that study was:

To facilitate the development of sustainable community-based support groups, which would provide support and enhance motivation and encouragement to people living with HIV/AIDS as they struggle towards positive living.

The text under discussion was John 8:1-11, where religious leaders ganged up against a woman allegedly caught in adultery. As the story shows, Jesus dismissed these hypocritical male religious leaders, asking that whoever was sinless should be the first one to throw a stone at the allegedly adulterous woman. In short, Jesus showed solidarity with poor and marginalised. And as a result of this effective contextual reading of the scripture, one female participant exclaimed, '*I would rather come to Bible study than go to church.*'

Although the text chosen for discussion was not like that of Tamar, it had similar effects of identification, as demonstrated in the study. As stated earlier, women found it much easier to identify with their fellow woman in the text. This indicates the importance of bringing different genders in reading the same text. It is under such settings that gender-based insights can be harnessed.

A second study which corresponds with the theme of identification is that which was done in South Africa by Haddad (2006:135-154). The aim of the study was to unearth faith resources and its sites through critical yet participatory learning with rural South African women. There were

two texts under study, the first being Tamar's story (2 Samuel 13:1-22). By the end of this study, the women were excited, as they saw the possibility of turning the narrative into a drama. Moreover, the women recognised that the text gave them an opportunity to mobilise women to act against rape. The second text that was chosen is in regard to the woman with a haemorrhage who was healed (Mark 5:21-43). From this study, the women discovered that their fellow woman was stigmatised because of her sickness but she did not give up until complete restoration came. So the rural women from KwaZulu Natal resolved to fight the stigma attached to AIDS until a complete cure for the epidemic is available.

On the basis of the discussion above, the study recommends that that whenever communities or individuals are reading the biblical text it is proper to put into practice whatever is moral and ideal. In this connection, issues of gender when reading the biblical text cannot be overemphasised; they are important. When the biblical text is read in a contextual paradigm; we shall be able to gather transformative energies to fight AIDS-related stigma and other social evils.

Socio-economic power

All participants agreed that Tamar, apart from being a young woman, (which is linked to physical and biological vulnerability), also had no economic power, unlike Amnon (Van Dyk and Van Dyk 2002:209). This lack of economic power also made her more prone to rape. The participants argued that if Tamar had been a rich woman or a queen, the chances of rape would have been minimal or non-existent. The participants added that the same is true today for Tanzanian women. Most of them own practically nothing. This condition has made it possible for women to be frequently harassed sexually in the job market. As a result, some have been raped or forced into what is called 'consensual sex'.

This finding is in harmony with the study by Van Dyk and Van Dyk (2002:11), who argued that the lower status of women makes them dangerously vulnerable in sexual relationships, since they have no authority to enforce their needs. Furthermore, women are unable to negotiate safer sex. The study concluded that women need to empower themselves economically as well as in education. Also there was a recommendation to seek cooperation of people in power. In agreement with the above, a study was done in the UK by Vaughan (2003:101-105),

revealing that there is a relationship between an offender's socio-economic status and the survivor-offender relationship in rape cases. The findings also indicated that more rapes were committed against partners by high status offenders than by low status offenders. Similar findings were reported by Muir and Macleod (2003:345-355). These researchers did a social contextual analysis of 172 rapes and attempted rapes that occurred in a large metropolitan area in the UK. The main focus of the study explored the demographic characteristics of rape survivors and offenders, including their age and ethnicity, vis-à-vis their relationship. The study was able to establish the patterns of geographic distribution of such offences and their relationship to ethnicity and socio-economic status. In other words, rape offenders were often from high socio-economic status, living in expensive places, whereas rape survivors appeared to come from poor locations, and were poor themselves.

Therefore, this discussion presupposes that it is important to read the biblical text contextually because rape and AIDS are contextual issues. Moreover women need to be empowered economically and in education levels. The economic empowerment will give ability in negotiating for safer sex as well as deterring potential rapists. In connection to that women need education which will add to their social status apart from having the ability to read the biblical text critically and contextually. It is noteworthy to caution that radical women empowerment will come from women themselves; therefore they ought to continue being pro-active in establishing their rights and concerns (Chitando 2009:84).

Way forward

When discussion about Tamar was drawing to an end, the participants were asked if the text is empowering in the context of AIDS. The response from all participants was literally, 'yes', as noted earlier. The participants argued that it was important for biblical scholars, to begin reading *'the text with eyes which have God-given equity'* (UoA Lecturer 2). So in essence, biblical scholars are advised to demonstrate a sense of gender equity when approaching the biblical text from whatever interpretive paradigm. All the participants commented that it is important to stop blaming the past and begin building a better future. The study therefore suggests the need to move forward in rebuilding individuals and families. We need to enhance empowering communities

and nations. We need to revamp government systems to render justice to the marginalised, and finally, we need to reconstitute gender relations in order to stop the rapid spread of HIV in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Chitando 2009:105-109).

9.4.3 Absalom

As stated in Chapter Five, Absalom is one of the prominent characters, only trailing behind Amnon and Tamar. The narrator has described him ambiguously, leading the participants to be divided into two groups. While the earlier group endorsed him as a revengeful person, the latter group viewed Absalom as truly patriotic and in solidarity with the poor. In evaluating Absalom, the following themes were discussed: struggle for power (major theme), and others are identification, donor funding, and the way forward (sub-themes).

Struggle for power

More than half of the participants agreed that Absalom's murder of Amnon was not solely due to the rape offence but that he had the intention to be the next king after David. Therefore the murder was more politically charged than a brother-sister relationship. In other words, Absalom used the rape of Tamar as a springboard to the throne. The finding took this pattern because some of the participants understood the text as part of the meta-narrative of succession (Frolov 2001:85; Gunn 1976:214-229). The other group did not agree that Absalom was vying for power when he murdered his older brother Amnon. This group simply said it was the brother-sister relationship that was at stake, and Amnon had to pay with his life for causing such dishonour.

The struggle for power of Absalom has also been raised by various authors (Battenhouse 1982:53-57; Anderson 1989:172; Dube 1998:316-325; Ackroyd 1977:117-136; Smith 1969:331; Evans 2004:225) The phrases used include: usurping son, tragic hero, massacring all competitors to get the throne, ambitious prince, the ideal king, wider context for the struggle of succession; opportunist and many others. While many authors address Absalom's intent to kill Amnon as politically motivated, other authors dispute this line of argument (as

indicated also by many participants). For example, Bar-Efrat (1984:274) argues:

Both the narrator and Jonadab indicate that the motive for the murder was not Absalom's desire to get rid of his older brother as a rival for succession, but Absalom's hatred for Amnon 'because he forced his sister Tamar.' Thus it was family affairs, not a political objective which according to the narrator led to Amnon's murder.

The pattern from which the author derives his line of argument is strictly contained within the selected chapter of 2 Samuel 13-14. This approach could be justified in its own right, but it has serious contradictions when placed in the wider context of the succession narrative. The wider context discloses Absalom as a usurping son who later overthrew his father and committed grievous incest with his father's concubines. But later in the struggle for power he found himself in the hands of Joab, who finally murdered him in order to restore David to the throne (2 Samuel 13-18).

Therefore this study hesitates to support Bar-Efrat (1984), some of the respondents and other scholars who maintain the line of argument that Absalom was not a usurping son, but was simply defending his sister Tamar. On the contrary, the study supports the empirical evidence from the field alongside all scholars who maintain that Absalom used the rape of Tamar as a means to gain the throne. The major premise of the argument lies in reading the chapters based on both immediate and wider contexts. So it is imperative for biblical interpreters to consider contexts within the text and how they relate to its intended meaning. If this is done, it will be possible to derive meanings intended for the implied reader by the narrator.

Identification

When the participants were asked if they were satisfied by Absalom telling Tamar to keep quiet and later murdering Amnon, they were divided. The first group of participants (60%) argued that Absalom cannot be condoned for his revengeful behaviour. The participants added that Absalom was familiar with the proper channels to bring about justice, or to work for reconciliation, but he closed his eyes. The other group (40%) contended that Absalom was absolutely right to

murder his older brother Amnon, since he is human and that their father David failed to do his part.

This finding indicates that the text sometimes does not have one absolute meaning. Nevertheless, interpreters ought to strive to aim for the ideal, which tries to balance the intended meaning at the time of authorship with a contextual meaning for our times. The study proposes that any hermeneutic that promotes violence, murder or discrimination based on gender or race is out of the domain of authenticity, therefore not to be emulated (West 2002: 336).

Donor funding

When the participants were asked a contextual question, as to whether we have leaders who act like Absalom in the context of AIDS; the answer was, 'yes', without exception. A familiar example was given of a man who was relatively educated but chose to spread HIV revengefully to a community of intellectuals. This man designed a stratagem which involved luring a certain young lady whom he knew to have been infected as well. So her new work was to infect a number of lecturers and students at the University of Nairobi. Since the contemporary Absaloms are economically as wealthy as their prototype, the young lady was paid a lump sum of money so as to fulfil a mission of revenge. The young lady did her work and the news was all over the media. It is noteworthy that the participants could find such analogies in contemporary society. This is clearly an effective way of reading the biblical text, for it does not simply tell the ancient story but also engages with contemporary life. In such encounters, it is close to impossible for participants to forget the lessons. The field of educational psychology validates that if learners (readers in this context) are exposed to relevant examples they can appropriate information easily and retain it longer for future use (Renkl *et al.* 2009:67-78). Since the readers were able to find a relevant example in the life of Absalom, it is rightly assumed that the knowledge gained will be employed in stopping AIDS.

A survey of Biblical Studies literature indicates inadequacy in relating Absalom's life to the context of AIDS. Therefore, this study serves as one of the early ice breakers to read the Bible contextually in order to find new solutions using the old biblical text. This recommendation is in line with Lefa (2009:286), who contends that the Bible is an important interpretive tool and that extra efforts must be made to discover and

reclaim texts that will foster healing from a stigmatised life. For this reason, interpreters ought to continue striving to explore methods that can squarely address Africa's socio-economic problems and the stigma attached to AIDS.

Way forward

When the discussion got to the end of the life of Absalom in the selected text, the participants recommended a type of leadership that is meant to defend the poor but without breaking the laws of the government or church. On the basis of this claim, Absalom is deemed not to be an ideal leader. He claimed to defend Tamar, but the narrator betrays him by saying that Tamar remained *desolate* in the house of her brother Absalom (2 Samuel 13:20). It is noteworthy that one of Absalom's children was the namesake of Tamar, but nothing more is recorded to console Tamar (2 Samuel 14:27). Therefore this study indicates the need to read the biblical text contextually for the purpose applying lessons in real life situations such as responding to AIDS issues.

9.5 Section summary

This marks the end of the discussion of the major characters, Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. This part is a further analysis of Chapter Five. The discussion employed the reader response method of biblical interpretation in the context of AIDS. A deliberate effort was made to compare and contrast empirical findings vis-à-vis previous scholarship on the subject. The overall finding is that the major characters discussed here can find relevancy in the context of AIDS, thereby helping to end it. Now the discussion shifts to minor characters, a section presented earlier in Chapter Six.

9.6 Minor characters

This section discusses empirical findings in relation to minor characters in the text. The minor characters described earlier are Jonadab, Servants, King's sons, David, Joab and the woman of Tekoa. These characters are described according to their order of appearance.

9.6.1 Jonadab

As presented in Chapter Six, Jonadab is one of the minor characters. The narrator has described him negatively as shrewd (2 Samuel 13:3 NIV). He emerges at Amnon's sickbed and designs a stratagem which aids in the rape of Tamar. Jonadab then disappears into the shadows, only to emerge much later and confirm before David that the only one who was killed was Amnon, for he claimed to know the assassination plot fully (2 Samuel 13:35 NIV). In evaluating Jonadab in the light of previous scholarship, the following themes are discussed: behaviour and identification as major themes, while other minor themes include: peer pressure, demonology, church and state accountability, and the way forward.

Behaviour and identification

Most of the participants (90%) described Amnon's behaviour as: an experienced rapist; shrewd guy; highly intelligent (for evils); morally strayed fellow; corrupt; crafty; cunning; and as a hypocrite. This description led the participants to have feelings of alienation and distrust. On the contrary other participants (10%) refused to blame Jonadab whatsoever. The smaller group represents participants from FGMISSIONS who viewed Jonadab as a helping friend. Furthermore the smaller group added that Jonadab saw himself granted a lifetime opportunity to help the son of the king – who would refuse that! So in essence there contradicting findings about the life and the character of Jonadab.

Previous scholarship also indicates similar patterns of contradiction. The study begins by presenting findings that disapprove of the behaviour of Jonadab. These authors view Jonadab as: good friend (ironically), crafty, shrewd, clever, a person who employed wisdom for base uses, unethical, skilful in wrongdoing, wanting a place in the new kingdom (Hawkins 1996:540; Smith 1969:328; Ackroyd 1977:121; Anderson 1989:174; Evans 2004:221). On the other hand, Bar-Efrat (1989) among other scholars gives an ambiguous portrait of Jonadab. On the one hand, he concurs with rabbis and other traditional exegetes that Jonadab was clever in evil doing, but on other hand he seems to clear him of guilt. This is demonstrated by the long quote below:

There is another possible explanation for Jonadab's advice, and that is that it was not his intention that Amnon should rape Tamar. All he tells Amnon is to pretend to be ill and ask his father to send Tamar to him to prepare him food and feed him with her hand. Jonadab does not say either explicitly or implicitly how Amnon should behave and what he should do once Tamar is in his house. We as readers, draw conclusions about Jonadab's intentions from what actually happens afterward.

This quote indicates that the author is contradicting himself in his own writing. At one point Bar Efrat says that Jonadab is evil, and at another point that Jonadab should not be blamed because he does not say openly that Amnon should rape Tamar and throw her out. However, this study chooses to base its argument not only on what happened after the rape of Tamar, but even before the event itself. The narrator describes Amnon as wise (*chakam*), and although this seems to be a neutral word, the context renders it negative, based on the consequences that befell both Amnon and Tamar. The same word is used in by Jeremiah with a qualifier when he says: *'My people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise (chakam) to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge'* (Jeremiah 4:22 KJV). Moreover, although the word *chakam* is not used to describe the serpent in the Garden of Eden (but *aruwm*) the study suggests that we cannot assume the term 'wise' (*aruwm*) was used in a positive sense (Genesis 3:1 KJV).

Although every interpreter has a right to respond to the scriptural text, there must be guidelines to be observed! Therefore, in this case, it is not wise to ignore the context before and after the rape of Tamar. Based on the above discussion, it appears that Bar-Efrat ignored the context before and after the rape of Tamar. Therefore, regardless of the interpreter's school of thought, he or she must be sure to engage an interpretation that promotes human dignity. On this case, it is hard to defend Jonadab for what he did to Amnon; he ruined his personality and finally caused his death. Jonadab's advice ruined the virginity of Tamar and condemned her to live a desolate life for the rest of her days. Jonadab's act set in action a chain of violent events in the house of David, which in the end resulted in the death of Absalom (2 Samuel 18:9-11). If we

defend Jonadab in the context of HIV, more disaster will be unleashed. It will mean that people who do sexual transactions that lead to others being raped or contracting HIV will be cleared of guilt, and if that is the course of interpretation, there will be no life-transforming appropriation of the text in either church or the academy.

Peer pressure

The findings indicate that most participants agreed that Amnon failed to resist the peer pressure exerted by Jonadab. As a result Amnon raped his sister and finally threw her out. When a probing question was asked whether there could be incidents where peer pressure could contribute to the spread of HIV, the response was, 'yes,' from all participants. They warned that it important for parents to watch out who befriends their children, as a lot of harm can be reduced thereby. The participants also contended that David did not care to advise Amnon about the behaviour of Jonadab, otherwise he would have not consented to his wicked advice.

A survey of literature in biblical interpretation and the book of Samuel indicate inadequacy in addressing the issue of peer pressure and the spread of HIV. Nevertheless, other disciplines from the social sciences have approached the theme of peer pressure and HIV in their own right. For example Mwale (2009:460) argues that peer pressure and other psychological factors influence behavioural change among adolescents at certain selected schools in Zomba, Malawi. Similar findings were also found in Nigeria, where it was observed that adolescent children were becoming increasing involved in sex work because of many factors, one of them being peer pressure. The study concluded that if immediate measures are not taken, the future aspirations of adolescent children would never be achieved (Aderinto and Samuel 2008:39).

Therefore, this is a challenge to the discipline of Biblical Studies to explore deeper into texts that talk about peer pressure and how it relates to rape, early sex life and even transmission of the HI virus. The present study indicates that if we read the biblical text contextually we can discover that peer pressure and other social economic issues can be fully addressed by the Old Testament text.

Demonology

When the participants were asked to state the reasons which influenced Jonadab to give wicked advice, persons with HIV gave a special

response compared to the others. Regardless of being in a marginalised position, regardless of being women with low levels of education, they gave a unique response. These persons attributed the behaviour of Jonadab to demon possession. In essence, these female participants meant that if any person today is influencing others to commit sex outside marriage they are demon possessed. By contrast, the other participants seemed not to touch at all on this aspect. This finding suggests a possible drift in biblical interpretation, where the spirit world is divorced from everyday reality (Maluleke 2003). This study argues that it is almost impossible to divorce the interpretative practice of the Bible from the spirit world, especially if you are in Africa. Although the Tamar story and its aftermath does not have a strong tone of spirit manifestations (good or bad), it is implied in the lives of the characters. For example, it is legitimate to say that both Jonadab and Amnon were influenced by a bad spirit (demon), whereas it is right to say Tamar and the woman of Tekoa had the spirit of Yahweh.

This study concurs with Musa Dube, who conducted a study in Botswana among women who were leaders of various African Independent Churches (1997). The interpretative framework that was used is *Semoya* (of the spirit). The study concluded that reading relies on the agency of the Spirit, which its revelations and power equip different people to participate creatively in the daily process of restoring and bringing God's diverse creation to fulfilment.

Therefore, this study suggests that it is important to involve people of different academic levels in the interpretative process. It must be noted that having a broad knowledge of biblical interpretation does not imply that one knows it all. Sometimes, help comes from those who belong to the margins.

Church and state accountability

This theme was meant to investigate the reasons for not bringing Jonadab to justice in time when Tamar was raped by Amnon. The participants argued that Jonadab was not brought before the law in the text because he was both male and crafty. Moreover, the participants added that David was morally paralysed by the dark history of raping Bathsheba and killing her husband. When a probing question was asked on the reasons for the failure of the church and state to have legal measures against contemporary Jonadabs, the response was fear,

because Jonadabs are wealthy and crafty. An undergraduate student from Mount Meru University gave the following comment: *‘The Jonadabs will need to face church discipline before handing them [over] to the legal authorities (FGMMU Married S.2).*

The above finding is consistent with Burt (2001:144) and Hawkins (1996:541). These authors have argued that the church and the government has a sole duty of ensuring that justice prevails by bringing to accountability the Jonadabs and all who behave like them. It has taken a long time for the church to have this complementary function, so the time has come rekindle and sustain this mutual relationship.

The study therefore indicates that there is a need for Bible interpreters to approach the text with a strong sense of justice. Bible interpreters need to have the boldness of the prophets of old like Nathan (2 Samuel 12), Micaiah (1 Kings 22:1-35) or Amos (Amos 1). When this is attained, the rights of women, the poor and the marginalised will be reclaimed and to large extent social evils in relation to AIDS will be minimised.

Way forward

When the discussion about Jonadab was drawing to an end, the participants were asked what the way forward is. The overall response is that Jonadab is a bad example for the present generation in the context of AIDS. The participants contended that it is unfair to deal only with the rapist and leave out the advisor. This person needs to be disciplined and rehabilitated by the church, but this is not enough. The Jonadabs need to be handed over to the arm of the law.

In Tanzania, there is a well-known phrase that says: *‘serikali haina dini’* (literally, ‘the government has no religion’). This phrase was coined by the late Julius Nyerere, meaning that the government does not favour or identify with any religion for the sake of peace and security. All in all, this same phrase appears to have more than one meaning. Another one could be that the government has no interest in religious issues and concerns. And if this assumption is true, it could define the loose relationship between the government and the church. Therefore interpreters are advised to use their discipline so as to work together with the government in promoting social justice and other health issues such as AIDS.

9.6.2 Servants

The servants in this study, as referred to in Chapter Six, are a group of attendants to Amnon and Absalom. The servants are categorised as one group because the narrator describes them as persons who obey the commands of their masters without question. This group forms part of the minor characters because they appear in roughly two verses (2 Samuel 13:19b; 28) but the consequences of their violent actions span the remaining 10 verses of chapter 13 as well as covering the entire 14th chapter of 2 Samuel. In discussing the servants, the following themes are considered: blind obedience (a major theme), with other sub-themes including identification, places, socio-economic class, and the way forward.

Blind obedience

According to the findings, all participants agreed that the servants of Amnon did not help Tamar. Instead, they ignored her cry when she was struggling to escape from the hands of Amnon the rapist. Moreover, the participants across their differences agreed that the servants of Absalom did not do anything to stop the assassination of Amnon, but instead they participated fully. Furthermore, the participants qualified their answers that the servants chose to obey blindly because they were living chiefly under a master-slave relationship. Other subsidiary reasons for their blind obedience included: lack of fear of God, fear of death, their culture, fear of losing employment and also it was directly connected to poverty. When a contextual question was asked whether there could be blind obedience in the context of AIDS, the response was a unanimous, 'yes.' The reasons for blind obedience in the contemporary era seem to be closely related to the reasons found in the text. The contemporary reasons suggested by participants include: lack of fear of God, poverty, fear of losing employment, culture (such as widow inheritance) and fatalism.

These findings are not adequately reflected in the discipline of Biblical Studies, which may suggest that the minor characters have not been given appropriate priority. There are several authors who have discussed 2 Samuel 13-14, but gave only cursory treatment to servants (Bar Efrat 1989:239-282; Gray 1998:39-59; Anderson 1989:171-191; Acroyd 1977:116-136; Smith 1969:326-337). This indicates that more is to be

done in reclaiming the hidden messages of the minor characters. Interpreters ought to strive to get a complete picture by bringing the minor characters to the centre of creating meanings. For example, the servants in this section are not to be emulated because regardless of living in an era of slavery, they could have the opportunity of resisting orders from their masters. We have examples of slaves and servants in the Old Testament narratives that resisted orders from their masters, and we study them today as heroes and heroines. The first example is the one of Joseph who refused to yield to the sexual advances of the wife of Potiphar (Genesis 39:8). Another example is in regard to the servants of Saul, who refused to kill the priests of the Lord at Nob under the accusation of siding with David (1 Samuel 22:17b) and last but not least there was Vashti the wife of King Xerxes, who was required by the order of the King to appear before the royal guests and display her beauty, but refused (Esther 1:12). So for a person to make a firm stand against unethical orders, the prerequisite is faith in God who delivers. Moreover the socio-economic status of a person is also vital, and cannot be underestimated.

If these findings are discussed in the context of AIDS, another picture comes to view. This portrays the need for the church and the government to empower people of low socio-economic status so that they may be able to negotiate safer sex. In other situations, it appears that when people, especially women and girls, are empowered by education and property ownership they are able to deter rapists or sexual harassers. This is consistent with the work of Aderinto and Samuel (2008), who conducted a study in Nigeria on the lives of adolescent children and their growing involvement in sex work. Since adolescents are not well equipped academically and financially, this situation incapacitates them to resist advancing males. Furthermore, another study was conducted in a large metropolis in the UK, which indicated that women who were poor and of African descent were more likely to be raped by rich or poor men of the same race or a different race (Muir and Macleoid 2002:345-355; Vaughan 2003:103-105).

Therefore the study suggests that biblical interpreters ought to reclaim the hidden messages carried by minor characters and try to appropriate them in the present contexts such as AIDS. When this is attained, the communities of Tanzania and Africa as a whole will get a complete

picture of major and minor characters in response to life challenging situations.

Identification

This theme refers to the strength of engagement the participants (ordinary readers) and the character under discussion servants. According to the findings, a large percent of participants (98%) disapproved of the violent actions of servants, while another smaller group (2%), argued that the servants were the children of their culture, so we do not need to blame them.

Since the servants fall under the category of minor characters, many authors have not covered them fully to the extent of determining the bond of attraction as being weak or strong (Hawkins 1996:537-542; Burt 2001:143-149; Evans 2004:220-229; Keil and Delitzch 1960:396-413).

Therefore this study continues to suggest the importance of reading the biblical text by further reclaiming the importance of minor characters. When minor characters are discussed contextually, there is the possibility of arriving at messages of empowerment especially for people who belong to the margins of society, such as women, the poor and the marginalised.

Settings

Setting refers to the geographical locations where rape or sexual harassment takes place in real-life situations. The questions under this theme were contextual, emanating from the setting where the rape of Tamar took place, or the environments in which blind obedience took place. Based on this explanation, the participants (the females were the most vocal) reported that rape or sexual harassment happens in places like: work environments, home (housemaids) or in learning institutions like universities, secondary schools and even primary schools. One classic example of blind obedience in schools was voiced by a female student from Mount Meru, when she said: '*Blind obedience is common. It has been used as a weapon to get good grades, employment, promotions.*' (FGMMU Women S.1).

This finding is in harmony with other studies outside the realm of Biblical Studies. For example, Lichty *et al.* (2008:607-616), did a study in America among primary and secondary school pupils and found that four out of five reported sexual harassment in their school life. Matters

were serious in some incidents, leading to their withdrawal from school. Finally, the study suggested greater attention to policy accessibility and comprehensiveness should be promoted by the US government. Another study which is also consistent with these findings was done in the navy in South Africa. Van Wijk *et al.* (2009:169-183) reports that there is widespread sexual harassment in shore based fleets as well as on navy ships, due to fear of males towards gender equality in the workplace.

Based on these findings, the discipline of Biblical Studies needs to explore further biblical settings of narrative and strive to ascertain if they have similarities in our contemporary times. This study has attempted to involve a community of ordinary readers, and asked them to compare the ancient settings with real-life settings. In this way, the story of servants' behaviour of blind obedience was appropriated in AIDS contexts.

Socio-economic class

This theme emerged as probing questions problematised the level of income of servants. The findings indicate that 98% agreed that the servants were undoubtedly of lower socio-economic status – a reason that greatly contributed to their blind obedience. On the contrary, the other 2% of participants indicated that the level of income has nothing to do with a person's obedience to higher authority. This smaller group further argued that although the socio-economic level of a person may contribute to blind obedience, the major issue is belief in God. So when the same question was asked in relation to HIV/AIDS contexts, the responses were more or less the same, that is, people of socio-economic status are more prone to infection than those of average and high socio-economic status. Nevertheless all participants concurred that a person's belief in God cannot be disputed.

The above discussion conforms well with research findings done in South Africa, though it did not touch the variable of religion. Shishana *et al.* (2010:39-48) conducted a study that sought to examine the relationships between sex, gender, age, HIV status, and *socioeconomic characteristics* (my italics), focusing on heads and non-heads of households. A total number of 6,338 men and 10,057 women were interviewed. The finding indicated that young women were more likely to be HIV infected, especially heads of households. Moreover it was

argued that young women were more likely to live in poverty due to the consequences of gender inequalities, thereby being more prone to HIV transmission (cf. TACAIDS 2010).

Therefore it is important to scrutinise the level of income of people when interpreting the biblical text. This means that interpreters should strive to merge (if possible) the socio-economic status of biblical characters with that of real-life characters (implied). This strategy will enhance both spirituality and the ability to earn and own income, thereby minimising the risk of HIV infections through unsafe sex.

Way forward

Here the participants concluded that the time has come for the church and the government to work together in promoting freedom of speech. If that is done, the participants added, the economy will be improved and HIV infections will be greatly reduced. Biblical interpreters ought therefore to continue promoting social justice in their interpretative endeavours. This suggestion is consistent with the findings of Hinga (1997), who endorsed that we need liberation hermeneutics whose starting point gives the poor 'an epistemological privilege.' This strategy, Hinga adds, will engage multiple and intersecting oppressions that prevail on the continent. So this study continues to stress the importance of including the poor (such as servants) in the interpretive work as one form of empowerment to fight the oppressions related to AIDS.

9.6.3 Reporters

As little as the servants have been presented by the narrator, so are the reporters. As explained in Chapter Six, the reporters were the people who brought King David the bad news about the murder of Amnon by Absalom. But the way, the news communicated by the reporters was that all the King's sons were dead! This is to say the information was highly exaggerated, and it caused the King and his servants to perform a ritual mourning. Thus, the narrator implied that the reporters were not ethical people. Because, had it not been for the clarification of the shrewd Jonadab that it was only Amnon who was dead, the King would have even fainted due to the gravity of the matter. The servants are mentioned in only one verse (2 Samuel 13:30), but their impact creates a ripple

effect in the remaining chapters. Below, two themes are discussed, namely, false reporting and the way forward.

False reporting

When the participants were asked for the rationale of the reporters relaying wrong information, the answers included: the Hebrew culture, the influence of the devil, lack of facts, hiding their identity, a strategy to attract favour, the influence of wine, and a revengeful spirit towards Absalom. Another probing question was asked, whether we have wrong reporting in the context of AIDS. The answer was a unanimous 'yes'. Furthermore, the participants argued that false reporting is manifested in the following aspects: a desire to attract donor funding, avoidance of stigma (on the part of PLWHA), intergenerational sex, searching or maintaining job opportunities; widow inheritance; witchcraft; AIDS campaigns; media coverage of AIDS information, biblical interpretation, the influence of alcohol, revenge, and burial services.

As the study indicates, false reporting did not have a positive impact on the life of David and his friends. It can be rightly argued that David and his servants felt themselves fooled. When false reporting occurs in the context of AIDS, there appears to be a mismatch between what is real and what is not. As a result, people seem to minimise the consequence of death by 'playing cheap rationalisations'. It is noteworthy that many reasons were brainstormed by participants, but those that have a direct bearing on the study include biblical interpretation and culture. Therefore if biblical interpretation and cultures are checked to ascertain their enduring reliability and authenticity, it is possible to dream of halting multiple AIDS deaths.

A survey of the literature in Biblical Studies indicates cursory descriptions or no coverage at all about reporters and their work. For example, Bar-Efrat (1989: 241-285), Berkeley (1998:315-325) and Anderson (1989:180) give scanty attention to the reporters. This study cautions that the selected authors have been chosen to serve as examples that may reflect a larger tendency to ignoring the minor characters. Therefore this study sets out to be one of the early icebreakers (especially in contextual perspectives) in reclaiming closer attention to the minor characters.

Although there is inadequate literature in Biblical Studies, other disciplines such as Psychology have discussed the effects of false

reporting, at least in the context of AIDS. This description is consistent with the research findings conducted by Mwale (2010:460-467). This author conducted a study among adolescents in Zomba, Malawi. The results revealed that a culture of silence, disdain towards AIDS messages and retrogressive practices as the rationale for the mismatch between behavioural change and AIDS knowledge. In essence, the components of the findings have been perceived to create wrong information about the fatality of AIDS, and as a result some adolescents take pride in having multiple sex partners. In the same study, the participants gave the following sentiments about the disease: *'death is inevitable and one can even die from an accident or any other disease, hence there is no need to fear HIV'*. Another participant argued: *'AIDS is just a Eurocentric endeavour to discourage sexual intercourse'*. Yet another participant contended: *'AIDS is not real'*!

So what is the role of biblical interpretation in all of this information that hinders appropriate prevention messages? The role of biblical interpretation, which has been attempted in this section of the study, is to ensure that interpreters relay consistent and contextual information about AIDS. This dire responsibility may sometimes go contrary to cultures and personal values, so that the lives of persons with HIV may be sustained.

Way forward

When the discussion was drawing to an end about the role of reporters who did their work wrongly; the participants concluded that we need to stop the culture of silence about AIDS. The participants further suggested that one of the ways to attain this objective is to have regular practices of inviting communities of faith to read the biblical text together. This strategy will disclose issues which are sometimes considered as taboos, thereby clarifying them. This suggestion from participants is exactly reflecting one of the aims of the study. Therefore the study continues to suggest that it is important to read the biblical text contextually; in addition to that to revive the role of minor characters (Patte 1997; Mosala 1997 and West 1997).

9.6.4 King's sons

The King's sons form another group of characters that feature very little in the narrative of Tamar and its aftermath. As indicated earlier, the coverage of King's sons is in 2 Samuel 23-29. The narrator describes the King's sons as brothers who did not stop the murder of Amnon by the hand of Absalom, but simply fled from the scene. In discussing their flight, the following themes emerged: non-involvement and the way forward.

Non-involvement

When participants were asked whether the king's sons were involved in stopping the murder of Amnon by Absalom; there was a unanimous response that they did not get involved – hence the theme of non-involvement. The participants added that the reasons for their non-involvement included the spirit of an eye for an eye, meaning that since Amnon had violated Tamar, he therefore deserved death. Another reason given by participants was connected to parental favouritism. It is arguably clear that all the King's sons knew that Amnon was David's favourite son. Therefore, in order to let David know that favouritism is bad, his sons let the murderers do their work on Amnon. Last but not least, the participants argued that the King's sons fled because they did not want to be reckoned accountable. In addition to that, the King's sons ran away because of emotions of fear. The King's sons were afraid of meeting their death, therefore it was natural for them to run away!

After discussing what the text meant, a contextual question followed: do we see certain privileged people being uninvolved in the context of AIDS? The answer, as usual, was 'yes' from all participants across their differences. A graduate student from Makumira contended that pastors and government officials can be likened to the King's sons, who know more about the epidemic, but for reasons similar to those mentioned above, do not get involved.

A survey of biblical literature indicates that there is inadequacy not only on dealing with the King's sons but also in relating them to the context of AIDS (Bar-Efrat 1989:241-285; Tribble 1984:37-62; Chung 2004:46-58). Nevertheless, the study concurs with the participants that people who are privileged with education, power and economic means should be in the forefront in the fight against the epidemic. Furthermore, the study

agrees that some people are not helping persons with HIV out of motives of revenge. Other reasons could be that the privileged persons are afraid of contracting the disease when giving home care.

All in all, this study contends that biblical scholars who are endowed with the skills of reading the text critically and contextually ought to rise from their seats and rescue the situation (Fowler 1985). If this call is headed, then communities would be able to work against the forces of death in the form of the AIDS epidemic (West 1997). However, the study wants to make it clear that the involvement referred here does not end only with doing research, publishing and presenting papers but includes taking the initiative to study the text with ordinary readers (including persons with HIV).

Way forward

When the discussion was reaching a conclusion about the role of the King's sons in stopping the death of Amnon, the participants were asked to propose the way forward. The suggestions from participants can be summarised as follows: more seminars on HIV awareness ought to be held and all pastors and government officials should be active. The study concurs with the participants' observations, only to add that much more should be done. Various readings have tried to consider the biblical text contextually, but this study proposes a move from individualistic readings to communal readings. This is in harmony with a Swahili saying, *Penye wengi haliharibiki neno* (literally, 'Where there are many people, there is sustainable wisdom') (Van Dyk and Van Dyk 2002:209-224; Nadar 2003:343-357; Dada 2007:586-600; Manus and Bateye 2005:155-169).

9.6.5 King David

King David is one of the minor characters in the narrative of Tamar and its aftermath. As described earlier, King David features in both chapters (13 and 14) at least on a smaller scale. He is introduced in chapter 13 after being tricked by Amnon to the extent of sending Tamar to cook for him. After Tamar is raped, King David appears not to intervene, only to show signs of anger. But when Amnon, his favourite son, is killed by Absalom, he mourns greatly. Later in Chapter 14, King David is 'tricked' again by the woman of Tekoa to the extent of taking back his son

Absalom, who deserved death for killing his brother Amnon. The narrator also describes King David as a polygamous person, which indicates that he had a large family to attend to, apart from his national responsibilities. The study now discusses the following themes in the light of previous scholarship: moral failure (major theme), parenting, leadership style, gender imbalance, polygamy, and the way forward as sub-themes.

Moral failure

When participants were asked to give the reasons which prevented King David from reprimanding Amnon, there was a general response that it was due to moral failure. This aspect was connected to his past history when he raped Bathsheba and killed her husband Uriah. Therefore, King David lacked the moral stamina to rebuke Amnon and give him necessary punishment.

The above findings conform with various authors who agreed that King David was plagued by his moral past and thus failed to punish Amnon for the rape of Tamar (Burt 2001:147; Battenhouse 1982:53; Siwo-Okundi 2008:12; Gray 1998:39). It is noteworthy to observe the harmony between previous scholarship vis-à-vis empirical findings. This indicates that communal readings of the biblical text need not be undermined as unscientific. Therefore, as much as other forms of reading the biblical text are seen as peculiar in their own right, so it should be for communal readings. This stance is consistent with Jonker (2001:83-84), who summarised the components of communal readings to include:

- Fostering of communality with other interpreters of the Bible in other contexts. Such an approach can assist African biblical scholarship to take its ranks in the global interpretative community;
- Assisting African scholarship to focus its research energy and resources on critical areas (such as AIDS);
- Promoting diversity in biblical interpretation as well as engaging the benefit of global scholarly community;
- Being open to constructive critique in order to refine interpretations;

- Engaging the three publics of theological and hermeneutical discourse (the church, the academy, and the wider public) by taking the context of biblical interpretation seriously.

Therefore, from these components of communal readings, it is evident that the study has attempted to meet all of them to some extent. Consequently the study still suggests the importance recognising such readings in the global scholarly community.

Gender imbalance

When the question was asked whether King David treated his sons and daughters equally, the participants said ‘no’ unanimously. But the voices of female participants were more vocal, seeing that it is women who were not treated fairly. Furthermore, participants said that there is still gender imbalance even in African culture. The study suggests that this phenomenon has resulted in males being favoured above females by the system to receive education and property ownership. Consequently, this parental favouritism makes females more prone to HIV infection compared to males. So when gender imbalance is related to biblical interpretation, it becomes imperative to be sensitive to the emotional tones of all genders. When that is achieved each reader will appreciate contextual lessons derived from a biblical narrative.

Most of these issues in relation to gender and the biblical text were also reported by various authors in the field (Burt 2001:144; Tribble 1984:37-62; Jacobson 2004: 353-357). There are also numerous studies done by women on related texts addressing the issues of gender and AIDS (Masenya 2006:296-308; Masenya 2006: 486-499; Nadar 2003:343-357; Lefa 2008: 285-305).

With regard to engaging biblical texts by being sensitive to gender and AIDS; the area has been extensively explored, especially by women scholars (Hadebe 2009:9-15). Nevertheless, it is always possible to critique available scholarship, thereby harnessing new insights to advance knowledge. Therefore, this study suggests that as much as both women and men are engaging the biblical text by being sensitive to gender, it is wise also to be close to ordinary readers. The importance of being close to ordinary readers, gives the opportunity of obtaining previously unknown perspectives, and so balancing those that are known. This study has gained from that ‘privilege’ by attempting to bring about readings that are relevant to both the church and the

academy. This analysis is consistent with Patte (1997), who argued: 'Critical readers can do nothing more than show the diversity of legitimate readings ... it is the community of ordinary readers which has the last word!'

Parenting in the AIDS era

Most participants indicated that they would not be satisfied with the parenting style of King David in the context of the AIDS era. The participants contended that David was not only violent towards his fellow men, but also to women. This was demonstrated by the rape of Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah her husband. David was not a good parent because he showed more favouritism to his sons than his daughters. Moreover, King David was polygamous, a type of marriage which has a greater risk of HIV infection compared to monogamy. In addition, a polygamous parent does not set a good example for his children because it appears that the practice encourages multiple partners.

Since the question based on this theme was contextual, most authors have addressed David's poor parenting style indirectly. For example, Delitzsch and Keil (1960:396) assert that: 'David was himself to blame partly because of his indulgence and partly by [the] bad example he had set to them (children)'. This concern has also been raised by other authors, who seem not to approve of David's parenting style (Evans 2004:220; Burt 2001:147; Siwo-Okundi 2008:12; Jacobson 2004:355).

It is interesting again to find a similarity between previous scholarships and the empirical findings established by this study. This is another validation that the interpretive insights grained in the study can be employed in establishing empowerment readings to help parents be models in AIDS era. If this objective is achieved, the biblical text will continue carrying an enduring moral value as long as this world lastd.

Polygamy

As described earlier, King David was polygamous. When the participants were asked what the effect of polygamy was, especially on the behaviour of Amnon and Absalom, the participants unanimously answered that polygamy led to feelings of hostility between the rival sons, so that Tamar was raped by Amnon as a result. When this was done, the hostility increased, resulting in Amnon's murder by Absalom's servants.

Another probing question was asked to ascertain the need for polygamy in the AIDS context. The response from all participants was that it was not needed.

This finding is consistent with Delitzsch and Keil (1960:396), who contend that David's polygamous marriage ruined the behaviour of his children by causing great hostility between them. Other studies outside the realm of Biblical Studies capture the fact that polygamy is not only bad in creating feelings of hostility between children of different mothers, but that it is risky in the context of AIDS. For example, both Jacobowski (2008: 87-97) and Wendo (2004:716), writing from the contexts of Indonesia and Uganda respectively; contend that wherever there is polygamy, there have been high rates of HIV infection. Such empirical studies cannot be taken lightly. Biblical interpreters must move ahead and be campaigners against polygamy and other related lifestyles.

This study, apart from discouraging polygamous marriage, therefore emphasises the need to continue learning from past narratives by applying reader response methods among other paradigms. This learning ought to promote longevity of life, cherishing of our common brotherhood and sisterhood as well as advocating for the voiceless.

Way forward

When our discussions about King David were drawing to an end, the participants were asked about lessons that could be learned in the context of HIV/AIDS. The response from all participants were that contemporary parents should neither be polygamous nor entertain favouritism among their children. Moreover, parents should continue to administer discipline, but out of love. The study concurs with these findings because they are meant to promote life in the context of HIV and AIDS. The study argues that everybody needs his or her life to be protected and promoted; hence the stance of advocacy has been maintained throughout this analysis.

9.6.6 Joab

Joab is one of the last characters described in this study. The narrator describes him as an architect of the plan for reconciliation between David and Absalom – a son who deserved death for the murder of

Amnon. In analysing the character of Absalom, the following themes are discussed: reconciliation, anonymity and the way forward.

Reconciliation

When the participants were asked about the role of Joab in the narrative; all of them principally agreed that he was the architect of the reconciliation plan, using the woman of Tekoa. A probing question was then asked, whether the reconciliation plan was genuine. The responses led to a division between the genders. As stated earlier, the female participants judged Joab to be a hypocrite because he did not use a straightforward means. This group further described Joab as shrewd, cunning, a hypocrite, a liar, a manipulator and a coward and said that due to this the reconciliation was not genuine. On the contrary, the male participants viewed Joab as a strategic hero. Other traits they associated with Joab included that he was caring and wise, and a keen observer.

The contradiction between the views of females and males is not fully developed in the literature, in fact, it is actually almost one-sided – on the female side. Various authors have raised concerns that Joab's reconciliation plan was fictitious, cunning and bore all the marks of self interest (Anderson 1989:186-191; Smith 1969:334; Evans 2004:225; Delitzsch and Keil 1960:405). This comparative analysis refutes the prevalent unwritten myth among African societies that '*Women never have a point.*' This study verifies that women have a 'point', and this is consistent with previous scholarship (at least in this study).

Therefore, this study contends that whenever ordinary readers engage with the text, their subjectivity is always evident, based on gender, among other factors. The male participants were content to identify with Joab because he belongs to their gender. On the contrary, the female participants were against Joab reconciliation's plan. So in a strategy to get an empowering hermeneutic in the context of AIDS, interpreters need to be conversant with subjectivities connected to gender before the intended meaning is lost (Dube 1997).

Anonymity

This theme originated from a question which asked for the reasons that prompted Joab to use a woman with no name. The response from most participants agreed that although on the surface the narrator describes the woman of Tekoa as wise, the more deeply entrenched issues are

gender marginalisation and socio-economic status. The participants argued that the trend of character anonymity in the Hebrew Scriptures as well as in the New Testament is always connected to the female gender and the poor. This is because such people are considered to have no direct bearing in the politics of the society. When another contextual question was asked, whether such trends of anonymity are also reflected in Tanzanian culture, the response was 'yes.'

This finding is consistent with the argument of Reinhartz (1993:117-138), although from a different point of view. While the present study approaches anonymity through the eyes of ordinary readers; Reinhartz's views are based on the role of characterisation. While speaking on this aspect, the author contends that: 'anonymity in mimetic interpretation of biblical narrative allows us to focus on what is naturally ignored and indeed, what has been overlooked by many scholars. In essence, the centre of argument hinges on the fact that anonymous characters have a capacity to contribute *positively* (my italics) to both characterisations of major and secondary characters'. The intersections with this study are in the choice of women who happened to have low socio-economic status. These unnamed women include the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Samuel 14:1-24); the wise woman of Abel (2 Samuel 20:14-22) and the medium of Endor (1 Samuel 28:3-25).

The study has therefore attempted to discuss with ordinary readers an area which has been inadequately covered by many scholars. Moreover, the study has been able to ascertain that anonymous biblical characters have a major contribution in conveying the intended meanings of biblical narratives; but this is based on focussed attention. It is also interesting to note that as much as named characters have contextual meanings, so do the unnamed characters like the woman of Tekoa.

Way forward

When the discussion about Joab was drawing to the end, the participants were asked if Joab's character can be employed in the AIDS context. The general response from all participants across their genders is that we need only Joab's positive traits such as being keen observer, and reconciling person. But on the other hand, negative attributes such as 'using' the woman with no name to accomplish his ambitions were not appreciated. The female participants cautioned to be careful of Joabs who empower themselves to do great things. This finding

indicates that women readers regained a moral courage which they never had before. At the same time, the male readers were challenged to reconsider their chauvinism. Therefore in order to bring about transformative interpretations in the context of AIDS, neither of the genders ought to be used to accomplish certain ends. Empowerment should be reciprocal across and within both genders, through the backdrop of biblical narratives (Ezeokana, Ndendum and Madu 2009:46; Chitando and Togarasei 2008: 14).

9.6.7 Woman of Tekoa

As indicated earlier, the woman of Tekoa is an anonymous character but her impact on the reconciliation plan is phenomenal. The woman of Tekoa is the last character to be discussed in this study. The following themes emerged during data collection: behaviour (major theme), ARV use, and the way forward (sub-themes).

Behaviour

Most participants agreed that the woman of Tekoa had a good character which included courage, wisdom and Christ's sacrificial heart. However, two female participants viewed the woman of Tekoa negatively. For example, one of the female participants contended: *'I consider this woman to be very weak. She had a right to say no, but she simply yielded. So she gave in, without knowing the consequences ahead'* (FGUoA Women S.5).

The above contradictory finding was observed in similar ratios when compared to previous scholarship. There are various authors who view the woman of Tekoa as wise, diplomatic, and having a strong sense of justice (Coats 1981: 368-382; Bellefontaine 1987:47-21; Camp 1981: 14-29). Nevertheless, other scholars associate the woman of Tekoa with cunning behaviour (Delitzsch and Keil 1960:405).

So the comparative analysis in both the empirical findings and previous scholarship indicates that more 'votes' go to the woman of Tekoa as a role model for both ancient Israel and Tanzanian communities. The reason for this could be attributed to the context of the story, which describes the woman of Tekoa as a person who risked her own life on behalf of an unthankful Absalom. The study contends that Absalom was unthankful because he did not show any appreciation to either the woman of Tekoa or Joab; instead he was merely thinking about

overthrowing David. Therefore, the study proposes that the woman of Tekoa is one of the heroines in the Old Testament, and that she can provide empowerment to any person especially if they read the text contextually.

ARV use

There have been some church leaders in Tanzania who prevent their members who are living with HIV from using ARVs. So, based on this prevailing problem, the study sought to find views from the participants based on the selected text. The participants were asked, if the woman of Tekoa was living in the 21st century, would she accept the use of ARVs? There was a unanimous response from all participants, that the woman of Tekoa would accept the usage of ARVs. This stance would be in harmony with the reconciliation plan she fulfilled under the guidance of Joab.

Since readings of the biblical text in the context of AIDS are still rare, there are a few readings which have related the woman of Tekoa and ARVs usage (Gatumu 2008: 1-19). However (Muneja, *in print*) has tried to associate the woman of Tekoa with the idea of ARV use. It is obvious that the Bible does not speak of either HIV or ARVs, but the principle of being creative in order to prolong life has been observed as applicable. The author suggested reasons to view the woman of Tekoa as:

- A woman who is unnamed, she receives no credit, but praise goes to the aristocratic member, Joab. Socially engaged scholars may not be recognised by other disciplines of scholarship but they should not be discouraged, they must continually promote usage of ARV to enhance life and reconciliation;
- A woman who risked her own life for the cause of promoting life. Socially engaged scholars may risk not only their lives and their professions, but they should never stop promoting the sanctity of life in the context of ARV treatment;
- A woman who was trained by Joab how to speak and employed her ingenuity to effect the reconciliation process. Likewise, socially engaged scholars should use their interpretive tools combined with their God given creativity to unleash life-affirming interpretations;

- A pro-active woman in a culture in which women were marginalised, she was committed in the task of forgiveness and promoting life. Likewise, female biblical theologians like the Circle theologians must emulate her role by calling for other women as well as men to promote ARV usage;
- A rural woman, yet she went to the town to effect the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a call to ordinary men and women regardless of their physical or social location to move and advocate the use of ARV before church leaders and civic leaders.

Therefore this study proposes the need to be creative as we read the biblical text. As much as the HI virus keeps changing its morphology, so do biblical interpreters need to maintain their creative abilities in unearthing life-affirming interpretations. Usually each era has its challenge, so we need a hermeneutic that addresses social issues competently.

Way forward

When the discussion was drawing to the end, the participants were asked again to give concluding comments in the context of AIDS. There was a unanimous response from participants that we need the ‘Women of Tekoa.’ Moreover the participants argued that the time has come to honour women and men who are taking care of persons with HIV. This study has attempted to take one of the initiatives of honouring the ‘Women of Tekoa’ especially by involving women who are living with HIV and those who are not in interpreting the selected text. Through this strategy, the study imparted educational and moral empowerment to fight stigma thereby prolonging life.

9.6.8 Section summary

This marks the end of discussion of minor characters, namely, Jonadab, the servants, the reporters, the King’s sons, King David, Joab and the woman of Tekoa. This section is a further analysis of Chapter Six. In order to maintain consistency, the discussions employed the reader response method again in the context of AIDS. An intentional effort was made to compare and contrast empirical findings vis-à-vis previous scholarship on the chapter or subject. The overall finding is that the

minor characters discussed can hereby find relevancy in the context of AIDS and thereby assist in halting the pandemic. The discussion now shifts to the last research question.

9.7 Research question three

The study now goes on to discuss the last research question, which is geared to contribute towards an HIV and AIDS biblical hermeneutic relevant to both the church and the academy. In order to maintain the same procedure of analysis, the study continues to employ the reader response method. Moreover, there is a decided effort to engage both empirical findings and previous scholarship to meet the intended objective.

As stated earlier, the findings in the last research question took a linear pattern of agreements. That was because all controversies had been resolved in the earlier research questions. The themes presented hereby include reconciliation, reader response hermeneutics, ordinary readers, empowerment, fictional versus non-fictional authorship, and the narrator's point of view. Finally there will be a brief discussion of unexpected findings and their impact on the study.

Reconciliation

When the participants were asked if there is a need for reconciliation in the context of AIDS, there was a unanimous response with the exception of one lecturer who seemed not to agree on the need for reconciliation. This lecturer argued that what is needed is more effort in awareness campaigns.

A survey of the literature indicates that there is still inadequacy in pushing the interpretive agenda to enhance reconciliation in the context of AIDS. The available pockets of scholars who have re-read the text in the context of AIDS also did not arrive at the idea of reconciliation (Van Dyk and Van Dyk 2002:209-224; Nadar 2003:343-357; Dada 2007:586-600; Manus and Bateye 2005:155-169). According to the participants in the study, they indicated that Tanzanian communities need reconciliation, because some people have been infected out of motives of revenge. Other persons living with HIV have been under the constant heat of stigma from church leaders, members and academics in higher institutions. Moreover there is widespread mistrust toward AIDS

activists, NGO workers and government officials for misusing donor funds (Baleta 2002:1847; Siringi 2002:1848). The participants have therefore raised a legitimate concern which needs to be heeded not only by biblical scholars but also church leaders.

This concern for the need of reconciliation was also raised by an editorial in *The Lancet* (2006, cf. Waetjen and Mare 2009:63-81; Robins 2008:411-427). The article was based on South African President Jacob Zuma's legal battle concerning the rape of an HIV-positive woman. Since the legal authorities acquitted the President, the stance has caused the entire nation to be divided on the issue. Opponents of the President claimed that all the efforts geared toward fighting the epidemic have been set back by years. On the other side, supporters of the President have voiced deep hostility to the lady in question, a factor that caused her to leave the country. The editorial concludes with the following words:

A nation (South Africa), previously divided by race, now threatens to be destabilised by gender inequality, violence, and disease. *A truly African solution would be to set up an HIV truth and reconciliation commission* (my italics), where under a strong health policy and scientific leadership, everyone could come together and reach consensus on how best to draw a line under past misguided views and to move forward with convincing strategies. Only then can South Africa's leaders give hope to future generations. (Lancet 2006:1629)

While the above quote calls for a strong health policy and scientific leadership as pointers towards reconciliation; this study ventures to invite biblical interpreters to employ the text for the same work. Therefore this study further contends that the time has come to reconcile persons with HIV and those without. The time has come to stop stigmatising others based on whatever reasons. And finally the time has come to stop squandering funds donated for AIDS work. Biblical interpreters are strategically placed for this grand work

Reader response hermeneutics

This theme arose out of the question, *Do we need reader response hermeneutics?* As stated earlier, at this point of discussion, the study had already won the confidence of all participants because they observed the

relevancy. So the response was that we do need reader response hermeneutics. It is understandable that there are myriads of methods of biblical interpretation, but since the reader response method was employed in the study, it was found extremely useful. The concern that other methods of biblical interpretation may also be suited to address AIDS is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the issue of employing other methods of biblical interpretation in the context of AIDS remains a fertile ground for future research.

This study does not claim to be the first in using the reader response method in the context of AIDS, but there has been pioneering work done by Gerald West who teaches at the school of Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa (Lefa 2008:296). In an attempt to employ reader responses, West divided the types of readers who come to the biblical text into two groups. The first group is made up of ordinary readers – those who read the text pre-critically. This group is comprised of the poor and marginalised. The second group identified by West is that of critical readers. This group reads the text critically because they are equipped with resources in biblical scholarship (Lefa 2008: 296; West 1997:6). Alongside West, there have been many authors who have also joined the trade and this is another reason that reader response works among other paradigms ((Van Dyk and Van Dyk 2002:209-224; Nadar 2003:343-357; Dada 2007:586-600; Manus and Bateye 2005:155- 169).

This study therefore recommends the use of reader response hermeneutics because it finds support from both empirical findings and previous scholarship. The pioneers for propelling this agenda are should be biblical scholars living in Tanzania and other parts of the world that have been heavily affected by the epidemic.

Ordinary Readers

West (1996) defines ordinary readers as a group of people who read the biblical text pre-critically. According to West, this group is usually comprised of the poor, working class and the marginalised. As stated earlier, this study has adopted West's method, so in this context, ordinary readers include students of all genders who participated in the study. Moreover, the group includes lecturers and persons with HIV who participated in the study. So when the question was asked, do we need ordinary readers (especially persons with HIV) to read the text? the

finding was a unanimous 'yes'. One female participant who lives with HIV stated: *Our voices are important and we also need to be heard in our own perspectives*' (FGPLWHAs Singles S.4).

This finding is consistent with the *Semeia Journal* 73 under the editorship of Musa Dube and Gerald West. This journal bears the title, 'Reading with an Exploration of Interface between Critical and Ordinary Readings of the Bible'. This journal is considered by the study as a landmark in the reader response method in African contexts. Many of the ideas which have been quoted directly or paraphrased here are a result of this monumental work.

Since there is undisputable harmony between empirical findings and previous scholarship in regard to ordinary readers, the study suggests a continual engagement with ordinary readers. The time has come for biblical scholarship to continue valuing the contribution of ordinary readers. When this stance is taken in the context of AIDS, the study shows that persons with HIV will be empowered, thereby prolonging their lives.

Empowerment

This theme emerged from a question which asked, *Do we need ordinary readers and critical readers to be empowered by the church and academy?* In response to this question the participants gave a unanimous response, 'yes.' The participants contended that reading the biblical text is not enough; the established institutions must be willing to accord empowerment especially when the 'common sense' ethics of interpretation have not been violated.

Empowerment in AIDS has many faces; it can be in form of education, advocacy, life skills, political engagement and more. Concomitantly to that, Moyo (2009:25-52) explores the theme of sexual empowerment among women of Malawi. These women, like many others in African countries are caught in the maze of cultural symbols and practices which make them more vulnerable to HIV. For example the *Chinamwali* socialisation in Malawi is meant to prepare young girls and women for the sexual enjoyment of men. While this seems to be a noble idea, it has a serious bearing on AIDS issues. Moyo further suggests that there is a need for cultural *reinterpretation* (my italics) of symbols and practices that foster the spread of HIV. When this is done, Moyo concludes, there will be liberation of both women and men.

Therefore this study shows consistency between its empirical findings and previous scholarship. However, the study further suggests to all interpreters to use the biblical text as an enduring resource for empowerment in all aspects of the AIDS pandemic. The church and the academy need to promote freedom of response (expression) as people read the text. When that is done (especially in AIDS contexts), we shall witness a massive reduction of stigma towards persons with HIV.

Fictional versus non-fictional authorship

This theme originated from a question which asked: *Is the narrative of 2 Samuel 13-14 a work of fiction or non-fiction?* In response to this question, there was a unanimous reply from all participants across their educational levels that the narrative is not fictional. The participants further contended that if it were fiction, the implied message would lose meaning and be irrelevant in the context of AIDS.

It is evident that scholars in biblical studies are divided on the issue of whether biblical texts are fiction or non-fiction (Atler 1981). It is not within the scope of this study to cast blame on the 'camp' that is not in harmony with its empirical findings. But the study contends that the participants were able to respond that the narrative is not fiction because it is the way they have been philosophically groomed. It is noteworthy that no person is immune from using his or her preconceived philosophical understanding when reading the biblical text. The position of the participants is in harmony with Detweiler (*Semeia* 31) as well as Hinga (1996) who both argue that African Christians have been viewing the Bible as a resource for inspiration and a frame of reference for living since the introduction of Christianity to Africa. So, based on this fact, African Christians read the Bible diligently and aggressively while maintaining a 'faithful attitude', because to them it is a sacred text. The use of Africans or African-ness in the study is not meant to discredit other races as 'unbelieving'. The aspect of African-ness is solely a matter of context, since the study was done in Africa and all the participants were Africans.

Therefore this study suggests more *appropriation* of the narrative message since there is a partial harmony of empirical findings and previous scholarship. Furthermore, since the study has found that interpreting the Bible 'faithfully' and contextually has brought sense to the HIV and AIDS setting. Other studies could be done with a sample

of those who believe that the Bible is fiction, thereby making a comparison.

9.8 Unexpected findings

The theme of unexpected findings came as a result of encountering evidence that was not intended. The finding indicates five unexpected components. Each of these is analysed and the rationale of their impact on the study is given.

There was a high expectation to find interpretations that reveal oppression of women, the poor and the powerless. Earlier in the study it was expected that there will be extensive coverage from participants indicating oppression of women, the poor and the powerless; but the findings indicate otherwise. The assumption that motivated this expectation was informed by the literature. Nevertheless, the reality from the field indicates that sometimes not everything found in the literature is valid, so getting physically involved with people is critical. Moreover, the findings may indicate that the levels of oppression in Tanzania might be low, at least in the domains of the study. All in all, this finding has not affected the overall findings of the study, which was meant to engage ordinary readers in reading the biblical text in the context of AIDS, thereby bringing empowerment.

Eurocentric interpretations were lacking in the participants' responses. The aspect of Eurocentric interpretation was strong at the beginning of the study because most of the literature the researcher was able to access was written by authors who have been affected by colonialism, racism or apartheid. To the surprise of the researcher, the participants in the study have never been involved in any sort of racial oppression. So this experience meant that the participants shared views that were far removed from racial sentiments. This experience indicates again that not everything in literature can be trusted. It is context sometimes that determines the reality of matters. There the researcher was able to adjust accordingly to avoid sentiments that might cause racial confrontations.

There was no sharp difference between learned and less educated participants. Moreover, earlier in the study, the researcher was informed by common sense that persons with high experience in learning always display brilliant ideas, whereas, less educated persons give less insightful ideas. These preconceived notions have been refuted by the findings in

the study, when it was seen that all participants, regardless of their educational levels, were able to make critical contributions to the study. It was noteworthy in the study to observe that persons with HIV as well as women gave deeply experiential comments as opposed to lecturers, who were far more abstract in their comments. This finding therefore indicates that it is important to allow our common sense to be challenged by realities in the field. In addition to this, it is necessary not to underestimate the contributions of people who have not previously been given a 'voice'.

There was no sharp difference in interpretation across denominational affiliations. It is also true that earlier in the study; the researcher expected that there would be sharp differences in interpretation based on denominational affiliations. Common sense informed the researcher that since each denomination has its distinct theological thought, the same differences could be expected in the findings. On the contrary, the finding indicated differently. This could be attributed to the fact that none of the denominations support gender oppression and other forms of violence, at least explicitly. Therefore again, the study suggests the importance of gathering participants of different denominational affiliations to read the biblical text. When this stance is taken, HIV and AIDS will be attacked from all fronts, thereby ensuring early success in reducing stigma and maximising deeds of compassion.

There was a distinct trajectory of PLWHA's voices especially on the issue of social justice. This finding was also not expected at the beginning, because the researcher had not encountered persons with HIV. Nevertheless, through semi-structured interviews with persons living with HIV, it was evident from their sentiments that they need to be heard. In fact, there was an honest cry for social justice. This indicates that persons with HIV need to be helped with skills of reading the biblical text in order to harness resources for social justice in the world that is full of oppression.

The above analysis is consistent with Newman (2000:435), who argues that many researchers have a tendency to emphasise only positive data and ignore what is not explicitly in the data. Newman further says that non-appearance can provide a great deal of valuable insights. Concomitant to these comments, it is evident that the study has met the proposed benefits. Moreover, the study has attempted to be honest so

that readers could establish the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

9.9 Chapter summary

The chapter has analysed three research questions against the backdrop of previous scholarship. The overall pointer is that there is a need for an HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics. This reading strategy is reader oriented as well as gender sensitive, and upholds social justice for all humanity. The next chapter concludes the study as well as giving recommendations for implementation in the church, academy and government. Areas for future research are also suggested.

CHAPTER 10:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Conclusion

The research was preoccupied with the goal to answer the possibility of reading the biblical text in the context of AIDS, seeing that the pandemic is not mentioned in the Bible. Based on that fact, it is also arguable that there has not been a well expounded interpretive method to deal with misinterpretations that cause stigma. So the study selected 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 on the assumption that it has themes that are compatible in relation to the pandemic.

The study employed the reader response method in the context of African theology to re-read the selected text with Tanzanians who were selected purposively. The study chose to discuss the characters that appear in the narrative and endeavoured to see if they have relevance in AIDS contexts. The general finding is that biblical characters from relevant texts can provide an empowering message in the context of AIDS. Therefore, as much as the biblical text has been misused to promote stigma, this study confirms that it possible to use the same text to unearth redemptive and empowering interpretations. The study therefore recommends that the move towards an HIV/AIDS biblical hermeneutics calls for socially engaged scholars along with ordinary readers to read the text together for transformative purposes (Ackerman 2004:50-57).

10.2 Recommendations

The study's findings have recommendations and impacts for: church leaders; church affiliated universities, government leaders, socially engaged scholars and future researchers. Based on the findings, the recommendations for each of these groups are now explained.

10.2.1 Recommendations for church leaders

It is recommended that church leaders continue to involve people of different academic levels in the interpretative process. It must be noted that having a broad knowledge in biblical interpretation does not imply that one knows it all. Sometimes, help comes from those who belong to the margins.

It is recommended that when church leaders formulate relevant policies on AIDS they need to ensure that these are available to both academic institutions as well as their church members. In this way, the policy will be practical and useful.

It is recommended that church leaders strategise to launch a reconciliation plan to bring together persons with HIV and those without, as a gesture of repairing the church of God.

It is recommended that church leaders capture the vision that reading biblical texts contextually has the capacity to enhance compassionate activities done by the church.

It is recommended that church leaders exhibit a spirit of tolerance towards multiple meanings as the Old Testament is read. Seeing that this is a fact which cannot be avoided, all that is needed is to allow dialogue so that the end result would be a synthesis of empowering readings.

It is recommended that church leaders encourage their members to move from a theology of retribution as endorsed in the books of Moses (Deut. 7:12-15; 26:16; 28:27-29) because it appears problematic in the era of AIDS.

10.2.2 Recommendations for church affiliated universities

It is recommended that departments of Theology and Religion begin promoting Bible readings that are gender sensitive. Also there is a need to introduce AIDS courses which have the capacity to interrogate the biblical text.

It is also recommended that departments of Theology and Religion endeavour to contextualise biblical scholarship, which appears in most cases to be unsuited to African audiences.

10.2.3 Recommendations for government leaders

It is recommended that government leaders continue empowering women and the poor, economically and in education. Economic and educational empowerment will give them the ability to negotiate for safer sex, as well as deterring potential rapists

It is recommended that government leaders ensure that all rapists are brought before the law and justly punished.

It is recommended that government leaders continue to tighten the laws against corrupt people who defend rapists.

10.2.4 Recommendations for socially engaged scholars

It is recommended that scholars should confess their biases and discuss how these have affected the overall analysis of their interpretations.

It is recommended that there is a need for scholars in Africa to promote readings which have an existential bearing on human needs.

It is recommended that scholars need to embrace a hermeneutic that has a strong sense of justice.

It is recommended that scholars need to create more positive attitudes towards persons with HIV and AIDS, thereby engaging with them in order to further scholarship.

It is recommended that the time has come for African biblical scholarship to continue valuing the contributions of ordinary readers.

It is recommended that scholars reconsider the hidden messages carried by minor biblical characters and try to appropriate them in present-day contexts such as AIDS.

It is recommended that scholars should always aim at relaying consistent and contextual information about AIDS by engaging the biblical text.

It is recommended that scholars should not only do research, publish and present papers, but also opt to study the text with ordinary readers (including persons with HIV).

It is recommended that scholars need to continue ascertaining the importance of anonymous characters of the biblical narrative, since they have proven in the study to have a major contribution to make to our understanding.

It is recommended that scholars need to maintain their creative abilities in unearthing life-affirming interpretations of the Bible.

It is recommended that scholars ought to continue striving to explore methods that can squarely address Africa's socio-economic problems as well as the stigma attached to AIDS.

It is recommended that scholars need to engage major characters of the biblical narrative and try creatively to associate them with AIDS contexts.

It is recommended that scholars need to try employing communal readings of the scripture where readers are allowed to engage with the text and produce contextual meanings.

10.2.5 Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that follow-up qualitative research to this study is undertaken with a larger and broader sample of lecturers, students and persons with HIV to develop the concept of reader response in the context of AIDS.

It is recommended that other follow-up qualitative research be done, using a different theoretical framework in order to check the credibility of the present study.

It is recommended that other follow-up qualitative research be conducted using entirely different means of research besides case study, but employing reading of the biblical text with either ordinary or critical readers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackerman, Denise M. "Tamar's Cry: Re-reading an Ancient Text in the Midst of HIV/AIDS Pandemic." In *Grant Me Justice: HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible*, edited by Musa W. Dube, 50-57. New York: Orbis Press, 2004.
- Ackroyd, Peter R. *The Second Book of Samuel: A Commentary*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Aderinto, Adeyinka, and Etuk Samuel. "Adolescents at Risk: A Qualitative Study of Adolescent Sex Workers in Ibadan." *South African Review of Sociology* 39,1, 2008: 38-50.
- Aina, L.O. and I.S.Y. Ajifureke. "Research Methodologies in Information Sciences." In *Research in Information Sciences: An African Perspective*, edited by L.O. Aina and I.S.Y. Ajifureke, 32-62. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Inc., 2002.
- Airhihenbuwa, Collins. "CODESRIA Initiative on Social Sciences and HIV/AIDS: Towards a Political Economy of Patient Welfare and Rights." Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of CODESRIA. Dakar, October 2004.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1981.
- Amanze, N J. "African Conceptions of Human Sexuality in the Era of HIV/AIDS: An Appraisal." *Boleswa Journal of Religion and Theology*, 1, 2, 2006: 48-66.
- Anderson, A.A. *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Samuel Vol. 11*. Dallas: Word Books, 1989.
- Anglican, Communion. "Our Vision, Our Hope: The First Step." A Report Presented at All Africa Anglican AIDS Planning Framework Conference. Johannesburg, August 2001.
- Atler, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1981.
- Bagwasi, B.B. "Prophetic Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Botswana since Independence: A Case Study." Unpublished Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of Master of Theology and Religious Studies, 2003.
- Baleta, Adele. "South Africa Rocked by Allegations About Squandered Funds." *The Lancet* 360, 2002: 1847.

- Barbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research 7th ed.* Toronto: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1995.
- Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989.
- Barnhart, Joe E. "Acknowledged Fabrications in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1-2: Clues to Wider Stories of Composition." *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 20,1, 2006: 229-236.
- Battenhouse, Roy. "The Tragedy of Absalom: A Literary Analysis (2 Samuel 13-18)." *Christianity and Literature* 31,3, 1982: 53-57.
- Baur, John. *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History*. Rev and enl. 2nd ed. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1998.
- Beckley, Robert E., and Jerome R. Koch. "Under the Radar: AIDS Ministry in the Bible Belt." *Review of Religious Research* 47,4, 2006: 393-408.
- Bediako, Kwame. "Understanding African Theology in the 20th Century." *Themelios* 20, 1, 1994: 16-17.
- Bellefontaine, Elizabeth. "Customary Law and Chieftainship: Judicial Aspects of 2 Samuel 14:4-21." *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 38, 1987: 47-72.
- Bellis, Alice Ogden. "Walter Brueggemann and James Barr: Old Testament and Inclusivity." *Religious Studies Review* 27, 2001: 1-7.
- Berman, Sydney. "Botswana Men's Interpretation of Hosea 1-3: A Case Study of Africa Evangelical Church." MA (TRS) Dissertation, School of Graduate Studies, University of Botswana, 2007.
- Birch, Bruce C. "Biblical Hermeneutics in Recent Discussion: Old Testament." *Religious Studies Review* 10, 1984: 1-8.
- Birch, Jack W., and James E. Mauch. *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Concept to Publication*. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1983.
- Bless, Claire, and Craig Higson-Smith. *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective*. Rev. and enl. 3rd ed. Cape Town: Zebra Publications, 2004.
- Bongmba, Elias. "Restoring Justice as a Public Virtue in the Context of HIV/AIDS." *Religion and Theology* 14, 2007: 28-46.
- Bossman, David M. "The Shape of Biblical Theology Today." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 37, 2007: 88-89.
- Bowie, Fiona. "Enculturation Debate in Africa." *Studies in Christianity* 5,1, 2001: 67-93.
- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996.
- Brueggemann, Walter. "Review of John Hayes on Old Testament Criticism." *Religious Review* 1,1, 1975: 8-13.

- Brueggemann, Walter. "Trajectories in the Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, 2, 1979: 161-185.
- Brueggemann, Walter. "Trajectories in the Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, 2, 1975: 8-13.
- Buchel, Adriana Jacoba. "The Leadership Role of the Principal in Dealing with the Impact of HIV/AIDS in South African Schools." Unpublished PhD dissertation, UNISA, 2006.
- Burt, Wava. "Tamar: Girl Next Door." *Journal of Religion & Abuse* 3,4, 2001: 143-149.
- Buttrick, George Arthur *et al.* *The Interpreters Bible Vol 2*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Byang, Kato. "History Comes Full Circle." *ERT* 28,2, 2004: 130-139.
- Camp, Claudia V. "The Wise Women of 2 Samuel: A Role Model for Women in Israel?" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43, 1981: 14-29.
- Canale, Fernando. *Scripture Replacing Tradition: Basic Elements of Christian Theology*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005b.
- Canale, Fernando. *The Cognitive Principle of Christian Theology: A Hermeneutical Study of Revelation and Inspiration of the Bible*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Lithotech, 2005.
- Chipunza, Linda. "What Women Say, How Men Say: An Exploration of Interactional Mechanisms at Play in Management Meetings." Unpublished PhD Dissertation in Linguistics, UNISA, 2007.
- Chisholm, Robert B Jr. *Interpreting Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006.
- Chitando, Ezra, and Lovemore Togarasei. "'Woman, where are they?'" John 7:53-8:11 and Stigma in the Context of HIV/AIDS." *Missionalia* 36,1, 2008: 4-15.
- Chitando, Ezra, and Rosinah Gabartse. "Other Ways of Being a Divine Healer: Musa W Dube and African Church's Response to HIV/AIDS." In *Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations*, edited by Ezra Chitando, 85-102. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.
- Chitando, Ezra. "HIV/AIDS, Stigma and Liberation in the Old Testament." *Exchange* 36, 2007: 184-197.
- Chitando, Ezra. *Troubled But not Destroyed*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.
- Christiansen, Catrine. "Agenda on HIV/AIDS." *News From the Nordic Africa Institute* 1, 2004: 6-8.

- Chung, Hee-Sung. "An Exploration of a Feminist Pastoral Method from the Perspective of a Korean Woman." *The Journal of Pastoral Theology* 14,1, 2004: 46-58.
- Circle, Proposal. "The Girl Child, African Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS: Gender Perspectives." A Proposal for the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians 4th Pan African Conference. Younde, September 2007.
- Clements, Ronald E. "The Enduring Value of the Old Testament: An Interesting Quest." *Biblical Interpretation* 16, 2008: 25-42.
- Clines, David J.A. "Images of Yahweh: God in the Pentateuch." In *The Studies in Old Testament Theology*, by Robert L. Hubbard et al, 82-83. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992.
- Coats, George W. "Parable, Fable and Anecdote: Storytelling in the Succession Narrative." *Interpretation* 35,4, 1981: 368-382.
- Code, Lorraine. "Why Feminists Do not Read Gadamer." In *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, edited by J.W Robertson et al, 1-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Creswell, John. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods*. Rev. and enl 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Culpepper, Allan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: a Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Culpepper, R, Allan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.
- Dada, Adekunle. "Rereading the Naaman Story (2 Kings 5:1-7) in the Context of Stigmatization of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Africa." *Old Testament Essays* 20,3, 2007: 586-600.
- Daiute, Colette, and Cynthia Lightfoot. "Theory and Craft in Narrative Inquiry." In *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society*, edited by Colette Daiute and Cynthia Lightfoot, VII-XVIII. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004.
- Daube, David B. "Absalom and the Ideal King." *Vetus Testamentum* XLVIII, 3, 1998: 315-325.
- David, Stern. "Recent Trends in Biblical Source Criticism." *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 36, 3, 2008: 182-188.
- Davidson, Richard M. "The Bible, Revelation and Authority." In *Christ in the Classroom: Adventist Approaches to the Integration of Faith and Learning*, edited by Humberto M. Rassi, 17-57. Silver Spring: Institute for Christian Teaching in the Adventist Church, 2000.

- Denzin, Norman K. *Interpretative Biography: Qualitative Research Methods Series 17*. London: Sage Publications, 1989.
- Di Cesare, Danatella. "Stars and Constellations: The Difference Between Gadamer and Derrida." *Research in Phenomenology* 34, 2004: 74-105.
- Digler, Hansjorg. "Healing the Wounds of Modernity: Salvation, Community and Care in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37, 2007: 59-83.
- Dostal, Robert J. "Gadamerian Hermeneutics and Irony: Between Strauss and Derrida." *Research in Phenomenology* 38, 2008:247-269.
- Doucet, Andrea, and Natasha Mauthner. "Qualitative Interviewing and Feminist Research." In *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods*, by Petri Alasuutari, Leonard Bickman and Julia Brannen, 333-335. London: Sage Publications, 2008.
- Dube, Musa W. "Culture, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Understanding and Acting on Issues." In *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, edited by Musa W. Dube, 84-100. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003.
- Dube, Musa W. "Current Issues in Biblical Interpretation." In *Theological Education in Contemporary Africa*, edited by J. Galgolo and G. Marquand, 42-58. Eldoret: Zapf Publishers, 2004.
- Dube, Musa W. "In the Circle of Life: African Women Theologians Engagement with HIV/AIDS Discourse." *A Paper Presented at 4th Pan African Conference of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians*. Younde, September 2007.
- Dube, Musa W. "Readings of Semoya: Batswana Women's Interpretations of Mathew 15:21-28." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc.,2006.
- Dube, Musa W. "Who Do You Say I Am?" *Feminist Theology* 15,3, 2007: 346-367.
- Dube, Musa W. and Gerald O. West. "An Introduction: How we Have Come to "Read with."." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 2006.
- Dube, Musa W. interview by Mussa S Muneja. *Church Involvement in HIV/AIDS Era* (September 26, 2008).
- Dube, Musa W. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. Missouri: Chalice Press, 2000.
- Editorial. "South Africa Needs an HIV Truth and Reconciliation Commission." *The Lancet* 367,9523, 2006: 1629.
- Evans, Mary J. *Message of Samuel: Personalities, Potential, Politics and Power*. Leicester: Inter-varsity Press, 2004.

- Exum, Cherry J. "Feminist Criticism: "Whose Interests are Being Served?." In *Judges and Methods: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, edited by Gale a Yee, 65-90. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.
- Ezeokana, JO, OAU Nnedum, and SN Madu. "Influence of Religiosity and Religious Teaching on High Risk Behaviour of the People Living with HIV/AIDS." *Theologia Viatorum* 33,1, 2009: 25-52.
- Fewel, Dana Nolan. "Feminist Reading of the Hebrew Bible: Affirmations, Resistance and Transformation." *JSOT* 39, 1987: 77-87.
- Fiorenza, Elisabeth. "Feminist Theology and New Testament Interpretation." *JSOT* 22, 1982: 32-46.
- Foster, Claire. "Disease, Suffering and Sin: One Anglican's Perspective." *Christian Bioethics (Routledge)* 12, 2, 2006: 157-163.
- Foster, Mick. "United Nations Development Programme." *Macro Effects of scaling Up Aid: A Case Study of Tanzania*. June 1, 2007. http://www.ipc-undp.org/aids/eng/ppt/Mick_Foster.ppt (accessed March 2, 2009).
- Frolov, Serge. "Succession Narrative A "Document or Phantom?" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 2002: 81-104.
- Gatumu, Kibiro wa. "The Bible and HIV/AIDS: A Christian Response to HIV/AIDS Pandemic Using the Bible." *Africa Theological Journal* 31, 2008: 1-19.
- Gichaara, Jonathan. "Women, Religio-Cultural Factors and HIV/AIDS in Africa." *International Journal of Black Theology* 6.2, 2008: 188-199.
- Gichaara, Jonathan. "Women, Religio-Cultural Factors and HIV/AIDS in Africa." *Black Theology: An International Journal*, 2008: 188-199.
- Glatthorn, Allan A. *Writing the Winning Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Gottwald, Norman K. *Tribes of Yahweh: The Sociology of Religion of Liberated Israel*. London: SCM, 1979.
- Gray, Mark. "Amnon: A Chip Off the Old Block? A Rhetorical Strategy in 2 Samuel 13:7-15; The Rape of Tamar and Humiliation of the Poor." *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 77, 1988: 39-54.
- Gressman, Hugo. "Amnon and Absalom (2 Samuel 13:1-14:33)." In *Narrative and Novella in Samuel: Studies by Hugo Gressman and Other Scholars 1906-1923*, edited by David M. Gunn, 31-38. Sheffield: Almond Press, 1991.
- Gunda Masiwa, Ezra Chitando. "HIV/AIDS Stigma and Liberation in the Old Testament." *Exchange* 37, 2007: 184-197.
- Gunda, Masiwa Ragies. "African Theology of Reconstruction: The Painful Realities and Practical Options!" *Exchange* 38, 2009: 84-102.

- Gunn, D.M. "Traditional Composition in the " Succession Narrative."." *Vetus Testamentum* XXVI,2, 1976: 214-229.
- Gupta, Geeta Rao. "Gender, Sexuality, and HIV/AIDS: The What, the Why and the How." *A Plenary Address at the XXI th International AIDS Conference*. Durban, July 2002.
- Haddad, Berveley. "Gender, Violence, and HIV/AIDS: A Deadly Silence in the Church." *Journal for Theology in Southern Africa*, 2002: 93-106.
- Haddad, Beverley. "Living It Out: Faith Resources and Sites as Critical to Participatory Learning with Rural South African Women." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 22,1, 2006: 135-154.
- Hadebe, Nontando. "Introduction." In *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, by Ezra Chitando and Nontando Hadebe, 9-15. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.
- Harris, Harriet A. "Fundamentalism(s)." In *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, edited by J.W Robertson *et al.*, 841-859. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Hart, Chris. *Doing Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*. London: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Hassel, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. Rev and enl. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.
- Hawkins, Charles S. "Galatians 5:22-23 and 2 Samuel 13--Remembering Tamar." *Review and Expositor* 93, 1996: 537-542.
- Heather, Joy. "The Theory and Practice Interface: A Case Study of Experienced Nurses' Perception of their Role as Clinical Teachers." Unpublished PhD Dissertation in the Subject of Education, Australian Catholic University, 2001.
- Hinga, Teresia. "'Reading With': An Exploration of the Interface Between 'Critical' and 'Ordinary' Readings of the Bible: A Response." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc., 2006.
- Holter, Knut. "It is Not Only the Question of Money: an African Old Testament Scholarship Between the Myths and Meanings of the South and Money and the Methods of the North." *Old Testament Essays* 11, 1998: 11-18.
- Holter, Knut. "The Current State of Old Testament Scholarship in Africa." In *Intepreting Old Testament in Africa*, by Mary N. Getui, Knut Holter and Victor Zinkurature, 27-40. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001.
- Howley, G.C.D. eds *et al. A Bible Commentary for Today*. Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, 1971.

- ICASA. *Role of Religious Leaders in Reducing Stigma and Discrimination Related to HIV/AIDS*. April 9, 2005.
<http://www.coreinitiative.org/pub/ICASAsymposiumstigmareport.doc>
 (accessed October 12, 2009).
- Jacobson, Diane. "Remembering Tamar." *Word & World* 24, 4, 2004: 353-357.
- Jacobson, Jeff C, *et al.*. "Religio-Biography, Coping and Meaning Making Among Persons with HIV/AIDS." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, 2006: 39-56.
- Jacobson, Jeff Jr, *et al.*. "Religio-Biography, Coping and Meaning Making Among Persons with HIV/AIDS." *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, 2006: 39-56.
- Jacubowski, Nadja. "Marriage is not a Safe Place: Heterosexual Marriage and HIV-related Vulnerability in Indonesia." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 10,1, 2008: 87-97.
- Jonker, Louis. "Communal Approach for Reading the Bible in Africa." In *Intepreting the Old Testament in Africa*, by Mary N Getui, Knut Holter and Victor Zinkurature, 77-86. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001.
- Kathide, Agrippa G. "Teaching and Talking About Human Sexuality: A Means of Combating HIV/AIDS." In *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in the Theological Programmes*, edited by Musa W. Dube, 10-23. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003.
- Keil, C.F, and F. Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*. Grand Rapids: W.M.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960.
- Kemirere, Babugura Fidelis. "The Impact of Forced Migration on Women in Northern Uganda." Unpublished PhD Dissertation in the Subject of Literature and Philosophy, UNISA, 2006.
- Kirk-Duggan, Cherly A. "Slingshots, Ships, and Personal Psychosis: Murder, Sexual Intrigue, and Power in the Lives of David and Othello." In *Pregnant Passion: Gender Sex and Violence in the Bible*, by Cherly A. Kick-Duggan, 37-70. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Landman, Christina. "A Theology of the Older, Female HIV-Infected Body." *Exchange* 37, 2008: 52-67.
- Lategan, Bernard C. "Scholar and Ordinary Reader: More Than a Simple Interface." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc., 2006.
- Lefa, Mmapula. "Reading the Bible Amidst the HIV/AIDS Pandemic in Botswana." In *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue: In Quest for Shared Meaning*, edited by Hans de Wit and Gerald O. West, 285-306. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

- Liamputtong, Pranee, and Douglas Ezzy. *Qualitative Research Methods*. Rev. and enl. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Litchy, Lauren F *et al.* "Sexual Harrasment in Policies K-12 Schools Examining Students' Accessibility to Content." *Journal of School Health* 78,11, 2008: 607-615.
- Longmann, Tremper III. "Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory and the Evangelical." *Westminster Theological Journal* 45, 1985: 46-67.
- Lugaganya, Elias Yeronimo. "The Interplay between HIV Pandemic and the Christian Community in the Northern Diocese ELCT." Unpublished MA dissertation. Makumira University College, 2007.
- Lutheran, Federation World. "Breaking Silence." A Paper Presented at the Pan African Lutheran Church Leadership Consultation in Response to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic. Nairobi, May 2002.
- Lyamuya, David N. "The Ministry of the Church to HIV/AIDS orphans with the Reference to the ELCT, Northern Diocese East Kilimanjaro." Unpublished MA dissertation, Makumira University College, 2003.
- Macleod, Malcom, and Grant Muir. "Demographic and Spatial Patterns of Recorded Rape in a Large UK Metropolitan Area." *Psychology, Crime & Law* 9,4, 2003: 345-355.
- Madden, John. "An Exploration of the Relationship between Teacher Leadership and the Principalship in Nurturing Student Learning." Unpublished PhD Dissertation in the Subject of Education, Australian Catholic University, 2007.
- Madsen, David. *Successful Dissertations and Theses: A Guide to Graduate Student Research from Proposal to Completion*. Rev and enl. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.
- Malebogo, Kgalemang. "John 9: Deconstructing HIV/AIDS Stigma." In *Grant Me Justice: HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible*, by Musa W Dube, 84-89. New York: Orbis Press, 2004.
- Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam. "The Challenge of HIV/AIDS for Theological Education in Africa: Towards a HIV/AIDS Sensitive Curriculum." *Missionalia Journal* 29, 2, 2001: 125-155.
- Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam. "Towards an HIV/AIDS-Sensitive Curriculum." In *HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum: Methods of Integrating HIV/AIDS in Theological Programmes*, by Musa W Dube, 59-76. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2003.
- Manus, Ukachukwu Chris, and Bolaji O. Bateye. "The Plight of HIV/AIDS Persons in West Africa: A Contextual Rereading of Mark 1:40-45 and Parallels." *Asia Journal of Theology* 20, 2005: 155-169.

- Marman, Suzzane. "HIV-Positive Women Report, More Lifetime Partner Violence: Findings from a VCT in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania." *American Journal of Public Health* 92, 2002: 1-18.
- Martin, C.J. "Womanist Biblical Interpretation." In *Methods of Biblical Interpretation*, by Douglas A. Knight, 335-340. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.
- Martin, John A. "The Text of Samuel." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 7,9, 1984: 209-224.
- Masanya, J. Madiapoane. "African Womanist Hermeneutics: A Suppressed Voice From South Africa Speaks." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 11, 0.1, 2006: 149-155.
- Masanya, Madiapoane J. "African Womanist Hermeneutics: A Suppressed Voice From South Africa Speaks." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 11, 0.1, 2006: 149-155.
- Masanya, Madiapoane J. "Killed by AIDS and Buried by Religion: African Female Bodies in Crisis." *OTE* 19,2, 2006: 486-499.
- Masanya, Madiapoane J. "The Optimism of the Wise in Israel and in Africa: Helpful in the Time of HIV/AIDS?" *Old Testament Essays* 18,2, 2005: 296-308.
- Mashau, T.D, and Martha Fredericks. "Coming of Age in the African Theology: The Quest for Authentic Theology in African Soil." *Exchage* 37, 2008: 109-123.
- Mathewson, Daniel B. "A Critical Binarism: Source Criticism and Deconstructive Criticism." *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 98, 2002: 3-28.
- Merril, Eugene. "Who Do You Say I Am? The Chronicler: What Kind of the Historian Was He Anyway." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165, 2008: 397-412.
- Morrow, William S. "Is There a Redactor in the House? Two Views of Biblical Authorship." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, 2008: 112-121.
- Mosala, Itumeleng J. "Race, Class, and Gender as Hermemeneutical Factors in the African Independent Churches' Appropriation of the Bible." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems, 2006.
- Mouton, Johann. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2001.
- Moyo, Fulata. "The Making of the Vulnerable, Gyrating and Dangerous Menstruating Women through Chinamwali Socialization." In *Compassionate Circles: African Women Theologians Facing HIV*, edited by Ezra Chitando and Nontando Hadebe, 35-52. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.

- Mpinda, Joas Eliaza 2007. "Ministry to the Married Couples in the ELCT, Pare Diocese Tanzania. Unpublished MA dissertation." Makumira University College, 2007.
- Muileburg, James. "Form Criticism and Beyond." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, 1, 1969: 1-18.
- Muneja, Mussa S. "Analysis of Clergy Views on Human Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Case Study of Mainline Churches in Gaborone." MA (TRS) Dissertation. School of Graduate Studies, University of Botswana, 2007.
- Muneja, Mussa S. "Cakes, Rape and Power Games: A Feminist Reading of the Story of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-22)." *BOLESWA Journal of Theology, Religion and Philosophy* 1, 2, 2006b: 62-74.
- Mutaki, Mishael C. "'HIV/AIDS in Tanzania: Towards Reinforcement of Integrated Christian Ethics in Combating the Pandemic.'" In *Ethics and HIV/AIDS in Africa*, by James N Amanza, Fidelis Nkomazana and Obed N Kealotswe, 150-171. Gaborone: Bay Publishing, 2007.
- Muyangata, Joseph. "Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Theological Education: A Case of Evangelical Institutions in Malawi." In *Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations*, edited by Ezra Chitando, 19-32. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.
- Mwale, Marisen. "Behavioural Change Vis-a-vis HIV/AIDS Knowledge Mismatch Among Adolescents: The Case of Adolescents in Zomba, Malawi." *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, 4, 2006: 460-467.
- Nadar, Sarojin. "Re-reading Job in the Midst of Suffering in the HIV/AIDS Era: How Not to Talk of God." *Old Testament Essays*, 2003: 343-357.
- Nadar, Sarojin. Module 3: Studying Hebrew Bible in HIV/AIDS Contexts: HIV/AIDS Curriculum for TEE in Africa CDROM. Geneva, WCC, 2008.
- Nelson, Richard. "Double Redaction of the Deuteronomic History: The Case is Still Compelling." *Journal for the Study of Old Testament* 29,3, 2005: 319-337.
- Neuman, Lawrence W. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.
- Njoroge, Nyambura. "Too Many Thieves and Rapists: Africans Yearn For Abundant Life." A Paper Presented at Circle of Concerned Women Theologians Conference. Nairobi, July 2005.
- Nkansah-Obrempong, James. "The Contemporary Theological Situation in Africa: An Overview." *ERT* 31,2, 2007: 140-150.
- OAIC. "Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC): Building Community Support Systems for HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care and Support." *Policy Recommendations Presented on the Compendium of Christian Projects on Diseases of Poverty*. Lagos, August 2001.

- OAU. "Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Other Infectious Diseases." *A Resolve Presented at the African Summit*. Abuja, April 2001.
- Okaalet, Peter. "Some Religious Responses on HIV/AIDS and Children in Africa." *Religion & Theology* 14, 2007: 94-104.
- Omenyo, Cephas. "In Remembrance of the Late Professor Dr. Kwame Bediako." *Exchange* 37, 2008: 387-389.
- Onyango, Richard A.O. "Data Collection Instruments in Information Sciences." In *Research in Information Sciences: An African Perspective*, by L.O. Aina, 61-109. Ibadan: Stirling-Holden Publishers (Nigeria), 2002.
- Osborne, Grant. *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* Rev and enl 1st ed. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2006.
- Ottati, Douglas F. "Reflections on the Sixth Commandment in Time of War, Terror, Torture, Starvation and Disease." *Network News*, 25 (2) 2005: 21-26.
- Pamela, Cooper-White. "The Rape of Tamar, the Crime of Amnon 2 Samuel 13:1-22." In *Tamar's Campaign – Contextual Bible Study: Manual on Gender Based Violence*, edited by Fred Nyabera and Taryn Montgomery, 1-6. Nairobi: FECCLAHA Publications, 2007.
- Parry, Sue. *Bacons of Hope, HIV Competent Churches: A Framework for Action*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2008.
- Patte, Daniel. "Biblical Scholars at the Interface Between Critical and Ordinary Readings: A Response." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc., 2006.
- Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods 2nd ed*. New Barry Park: Sage Publications Inc., 1990.
- Reinhartz, Adele. "Anonymity and Character in the Books of Samuel." *Semeia* 63, 1993: 117-141.
- Renkl, Alexander *et al.* "Example-Based Learning in Heuristic Domains: A Cognitive Load Theory Account." *Educational Psychology Review* 21, 2009: 67-78.
- Riser, James. "Barth and Gadamer: Reading the Text." In *the Continental Philosophy IV: Gadamer and Hermeneutics*, by Hulg J. Silverman, 93-105. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Robins, Steven. "Sexual Politics and the Zuma Rape Trial." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34,2, 2008: 411-427.
- Sarantakos, Sotirios. *Social Research*. Rev. and enl. 3rd ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Schmid, Barbara. "AIDS Discourse in the Church: What We Say and What We Do." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 7, 2000: 91-103.

- Seloiwe, E, and Ntseane P.G. *Situation and Response Analysis in the City of Francistown*. Gaborone: UNDP Botswana, 2000.
- Setel, Philip, Eleuether Mwangeni, Namsifu Mndeme, and Hemed Hemed. *International Encyclopaedia on Sexuality Vol I-IV*. August 9, 2002. <http://www.zhu-berlin.de/sexuology/IES/tanzania.html> (accessed February 3, 2009).
- Shishana, Olive *et al.* "Gender and Poverty in South Africa in the Era of HIV/AIDS: A Quantitative Study." *Journal of Women's Health*, 19 (1) 2010: 39-48.
- Silverman, David. *Doing Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2006.
- Siringi, Samuel. "Tanzania Loses Global Fund Money Because of Internal Wrangling." *The Lancet* 360, 2002: 1848.
- Siwo-Okundi, Elizabeth J. A. "Violence Against Women and Girls: Where is God in This?" *Journal of Religion and Abuse*, 8 (4) 2008: Available Online at: <http://jora.haworthpress.com>.
- Ska, Jean-Louis. "A Plea on Behalf of Redactors." *Studia Theologica*, 59, 2005: 4-18.
- Smith, Carol. "Challenged by the Text: Intepreting Two Stories of Incest in the Hebrew Bible." In *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Methods and Strategies*, by Athaliya Bremen and Carole Fontaine, 114-135. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.
- Smith, Henry Preserved. *The International Critical Commentary: A Critical Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*. Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1969.
- Smith, Taluwai Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indegenous Peoples*. Rev and enl.2nd ed. London: Books Ltd, 2001.
- Snyman, Desiree. "A Fully Human Spirituality: A Gendered Response to the HIV Pandemic for the South African Church." Unpublished PhD Dissertation in the Subject of Christian Spirituality. UNISA, 2006.
- Stenmark, Lisa. "Feminisms and Science." In *the Encyclopaedia of Science and Religion*, edited by J. Wentzel, Vrede van Huyssteen and James I. McCord, 323-325. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003.
- TACAIDS. *Tanzania Commission for AIDS*. June 17, 2008. <http://www.tacaids.go.tz/hiv-and-aids-information/drivers-of-the-epidemic.html> (accessed November 18, 2010).
- Tamez, Elsa. "Women's Readings of the Bible." In *Voices from the Margins: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, by R.S Sugirtharajah, 69-70. London: SPCK, 1991.

- Tan, Randal K. "Recent Developments in Redaction Criticism: From Investigation of Textual Pre-History Back to Historical Grammatical Exegesis?" *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44,4, 2001: 599-614.
- Thimmes, Pamela. "Making Boundaries Inside and Outside: The Ongoing Task of Feminist Hermeneutics." In *Escaping Eden: New Feminist Perspectives on the Bible*, edited by C. Harold, 279-282. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Thomson, Allan. "Learning the African Experience: Bediako and Critical Contextualization." *ERT* 30,1, 2006: 31-48.
- Togarasei, Lovemore. "Fighting HIV/AIDS with the Bible: Towards HIV/AIDS Biblical Criticism." In *Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in Theological Education: Experiences and Explorations*, edited by Ezra Chitando, 71-84. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2009.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Uchegbue, Christian O. "Liberation as Double Polarity." *Asia Journal of Theology*, 22 (1) 2008: 14-24.
- Ukpong, Justin S. "Reading the Bible in the Global Village: Issues and Challenges from African Readings." In *Reading the Bible in the Global Village*, by Justin Ukpong *et al*, 30-52. Cape Town: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002.
- UN. "Declaration on Commitment on HIV/AIDS and Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS." *Report Presented at the 62nd Session of UN General Assembly*. New York, April 2008.
- UN. "Declaration on Commitment on HIV/AIDS and Political Declaration of HIV/AIDS: Mid Way to Millenium Goals." *New York*. April 2008, Report Presented at 62nd Session of United Nations.
- US. *US Embassy in Tanzania*. February 6, 2009.
http://tanzania.usembassy.gov/pr_02062009.html (accessed April 6, 2009).
- Van Dyk, Alta C. and Van Dyk, Peet J. "HIV/AIDS in Africa: Suffering Women and the Theology of the Book of Ruth." *Old Testament Essays* 15,1, 2002: 2009-224.
- Van Dyk, Alta C. *HIV/AIDS Care and Pastoral Counselling: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Rev. and Enl. 4th ed. Cape Town: Pearson Education, 2008.
- Van Dyk, Peet. "Creation, Temple and Magic: A Magical Mythical Reading of Genesis 1." *OTE* 20, 2, 2009: 422-436.
- Van Schalkwyk, Annalet. "On Healing Spirituality and Culture." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, 2006: 4-19.

- Van Wijk, Charles *et al.* "Sexual Harrassment of Women in the South African Navy." *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, 2, 2007: 169-183.
- Vaughan, A.E. "The Association Between Offender Socio-Economic Status and Victim-Offender Relationship in Rape Offenses (Revised)." *Sexualities, Evolution & Gender*, 5 (2) 2003: 103-105.
- Waetjen, Thembisa, and Gerhard Mare. "Traditions Desire the Politics of Culture in the Rape Trial of Jacob Zuma." *Theoria: Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 56 (118) 2009: 63-81.
- Waterhouse, Surrey. *The Philosophical Approach to Religion*. London: Epworth Press, 1960.
- Watt, Mellisa H *et al.* "Missed Opportunities for Religious Organisations to Support People Living with HIV/AIDS: Findings from Tanzania." *Aids Patient Care and STDs*, 23,5, 2009: 389-396.
- WCC. "Plan of Action: The Ecumenical Response to HIV/AIDS in Africa." *Global Consultation on the Ecumenical Response to the Challenge of HIV/AIDS in Africa*. Nairobi, November 2001.
- Weems, Renita J. "Reading Her Way Through Struggle: African American Women and the Bible." In *Stony Road we Trod: African American Biblical Intepretation*, by Hope Felder Cain, 57-77. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.
- Weems, Renita. "Response to 'Reading With': An Exploration of the Interface Between Critical Readers and Ordinary Readers." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc., 2006.
- Wendo, Charles. "African Women Denounce Bride Price." *The Lancet* 463, 2004: 716.
- West, Gerald O. "Rape in the House of David: The Biblical Story of Tamar as a Resource for Transformation." *Agenda* 61, 2004: 1-6.
- West, Gerald O. "Reading Across Boundaries: Reading 2 Samuel 21:1-14 with Rizpah." *Scriptura* 63, 1997: 527-337.
- West, Gerald O. "Reading the Bible Differently: Giving Shape to the Discourses of the Dominated." *Semeia* 73, 1996: Logos Research Systems Inc., 2006.
- West, Gerald O. "Reading the Bible in the Light of HIV/AIDS in South Africa." A Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of SBL on African Biblical Hermeneutics. Toronto, November 2002. 335-344.
- West, Gerald O. *Doing a Contextual Bible Study: A Reseource Manual*. Pietermaritzburg: Ujamaa Center, 2007.
- Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 1989.

Zou, James *et al.* "Religion and HIV in Tanzania: Influence of Religious Beliefs on HIV Stigma, Disclosure and Treatment Attitudes." *BMC Public Health* 9,75, 2009: Available online at: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/9/75>.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographic Data Protocol

Date.....Phone.....

Name.....

Gender (Tick where appropriate)

☐ Male

☐ Female

Age Range (Tick where appropriate)

☐ 15-29

☐ 30-49

☐ 50-Above

Marital Status (Tick where appropriate):

☐ Married

☐ Never Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Divorced

☐ Widow/widower

Educational level (Theological Training)

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma

☐ Degree

☐ Masters

☐ Doctorate

☐ Other (Please Specify).....

Profession

☐ Clergy

☐ Religious worker

☐ Peasant

☐ Small business entrepreneur

☐ University Student

☐ Lecturer

☐ Other (Please Specify).....

Responsibilities in the church.....

Which committee(s) are you a member of in your church?.....

Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol

I. To what extent have the academy and PLWHA adhered to stereotyping and social categorisation?

Have you ever preached/heard/taught a narrative on Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-22) or any other text which is related sexual violence (Judg. 19:1-30; 2 Sam. 11:1-27, John 7: 58-8:11, Gen. 19:1-11, etc.)

II. Was there any occasion in this year when you heard a biblical text used against gender-based violence?

What theology/perspective was used?

How did you respond to this, and why?

III. What pointers does the narrative of 2 Samuel 13:1-14:39 portray in the context of HIV/AIDS? [Use probing questions]

Read the passage together.

Who are the main characters in the story and what do we know about them?

[Here Begins Phase II]

What are the main themes in the text? Can we relate them to our HIV/AIDS era?

Are there characters whose voice(s) is not heard? If so, why do you think they are not heard? (How do Tamar and the muted respond throughout the story?)

What is the narrator's point of view.[Male/female] Do we have such narrators today?

God is not seen in this text. Does it still communicate? If so, explain.

If we view this narrative as fiction what will be its impact to PLWHAs?

Can a culture which disempowered women and servants in the narrative be similar to African culture? What is the way forward in the context of HIV/AIDS?

What are the political implications of the narrative? Does HIV/AIDS displays the politics of power struggle? Can we find this in our institutions, churches, hospitals, etc?

Are there indications of reconciliation in the narrative? Can we employ reconciliation in institutions, churches and community as a whole? How do we begin?

Do we know women like Tamar in our community? How are they viewed?

What is the way forward towards a HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics?

What can the community of PLWHAs do to help communities read the bible to empower people who are marginalised for the reason of their ill-health?

What can the community of socially engaged scholars do to help the community of believers and the general public to read the biblical text to render empowerment to those who are marginalised?

What training do academic theologians and PLWHAs need to deal with gender based violence?

What can institutions of higher learning do to equip students with skills of proper biblical interpretation in the context of HIV/AIDS?

Appendix C: Probing Questions

Amnon (rape, dictatorship)

Why did he behave like that?

Why did he not listen to his sister?

Why did he decide to lie to his father?

Why he was not suspected?

Do we have people like Amnon in the context of HIV/AIDS? Can you share an example?

What should the church, community and legal system do to such people?

Jonadab (bad advice, sexual transactions)

Who is this person and how does he participate in the entire plot? (Meeting Amnon and later meeting David)

Can you comment on his character in the context of HIV/AIDS?

What is your message to such people?

Servants (blind obedience, poverty)

Why did they treat Tamar and Amnon in that way?

Why their names are not mentioned, what is the narrator trying to tell us?

Do we have such people today in the context of HIV/AIDS? Can you share an example?

What should the church, community and the legal system do to them?

Reporters of Amnon's Murder (Stigmatisation)

Why did they report falsely?

Do we have false reporters in the context of HIV/AIDS (Reporting on the PLWHAs), any example

What message do we have for such people?

King's sons (non involvement)

Why did they flee? (Were the king's sons collaborators? assistance & influence of wine)

Are we doing the same in the context of HIV/AIDS?

What is your message?

Absalom (revenge, dictatorship)

Who was Absalom and how did he react in the aftermath of Tamar's rape?

Why did he tell his sister to keep silent? Was that a better option?

Do we need to tell people to keep silent if they are sexually violated?

Why did he need to cheat the king?

Why did he need to run away?

Comment on Absalom's leadership style

Do we have leaders and brothers like Absalom today in the context of HIV/AIDS? Give an example.

What should the church, community and legal system do to them?

Tamar (victim of circumstances)

How does Tamar react throughout the story?

How does the church and society react to such raped victims? Are there similarities?

Why did she tear her robe? Are there cultural ways today to demonstrate a woman's predicament?

Why was Tamar's cry not listened to by Amnon, the servants, Absalom, her mother and even her father?

Does the church and biblical scholars encourage women to break the silence of cultural taboos which are harmful in relation to gender based violence?

In what ways does the story of Tamar empower us in the context of HIV/AIDS?

Do you find the legal system, police, courts, and hospitals helping in reporting and dealing with rape cases?

Do you find the church to be a safe sacred space for rape victims to find rehabilitation?

What is your message to people like Tamar in your community?

King David (poor parenting, laissez faire, polygamy)

How does he respond throughout the story and why?

Comment on his parental style.

Comment on his Leadership style as far justice mitigation is concerned.

Why does he take long to reconcile to his son Absalom?

Did David treat his sons and daughters in equity?

Do we have people like David today? Share an example in the context of HIV/AIDS

What is your message to them?

Joab (Power hunger, use of women, reluctance in finishing projects)

Who is this person and what is his role on the whole story?

Comment on his educational strategy.

Comment on his commitment to reconcile.

Why does he receive all the credit? What is the narrator trying to communicate?

Do we have people like him in HIV/AIDS context? Share an example.

What is your message to such people?

Woman of Tekoa (Courage, ARVs, Non Recognition)

Who is this woman and what is her contribution in the whole story?

Why do you think she didn't get a credit after such a great and risky job?

What does this tell us about the role of unrecognised women in halting the HIV/AIDS pandemic? Can you give an example?

What would be her advice on ARV based on 2 Sam 14:14 (Read)

Appendix D: Consent Form

Informed Consent Agreement

Title of Study: Re-reading 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 in a Tanzanian Context: Towards an HIV/AIDS Biblical Hermeneutics.

Problems to Be Studied: Misuse of human sexuality, stigma and discrimination, revenge and reconciliation as seen from the text and its application in the context of HIV/AIDS era.

Rationale of the Study: This study is important because there has not been adequate empowerment use in reference to the Old Testament text in the context of HIV/AIDS. While there has been many attempts in addressing HIV/AIDS issues in Systematic Theology and Pastoral Theology, this is an opportunity for better understanding of the biblical text in the context of HIV/AIDS. The study will be completed as a basis for a doctorate degree in Old Testament Interpretation.

Methodology: 30 Lecturers who are teaching in universities will be interviewed because it is they who train pastors. 36 pastors (or education students) in training because they largely reflect what they are taught. 30 people who are living with HIV/AIDS will share their experiences because their perspective is important in understanding the issue. The interviews and focus groups will be done in December 2009 and January 2010.

Anonymity of Participants: No name of participants will be disclosed or included in the report unless requested and signed in writing.

Benefits: The study should add knowledge base for an important development in biblical interpretation.

Risks: Inquiries to give personal interpretations which may differ with mainstream theology could be expected. You may also be requested to give secrets of personal life which could involve any unforeseen risk. Nevertheless, it should be noted that every information shall be used for academic purposes and it shall abide to ethics of research.

Time Commitment and Compensation: the total time commitment from respondents will be 60 minutes and there shall be no financial compensation since this is an academic exercise (Some follow-up focus group might be scheduled)

Summary of Findings: Any request in need of the summary of findings shall be granted.

Contact address: Pastor. Mussa S Muneja, University of Arusha, P.O. Box 7 Usa River.

Therefore, with clear conscience I am signing this document. I consent to be interviewed willingly without any coercion.

.....

Date

Respondent's Signature

.....

Date

Interviewer's Signature

Appendix E: World Council of Churches Statistics of TEE

World Council of Churches which has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, has so far trained more than 740 church leaders according to available statistics. Here below is the summary of the work that has been done mainly through the service of Prof Musa W Dube.

No	Workshop & Place	Place and Date	Attendants
1.	English Speaking West Africa Regional TOT, Accra Ghana	Accra, Ghana, 5-11 July, 2005	40
2.	Northern Nigeria, TOT,	Jos, May 31- June 5, 2004	55
3.	Southern Nigerian TOT, Abba State	Umahia, 6-12 June, 2004	35
4.	4 th French Speaking Africa Regional TOT, Central Africa	15-21 June 2004 Kinshasa, DRC	46
5.	All Africa TOT for Instructors of Distance Learners (Theological Education by Extension)	Limuru, Kenya, July 1-6, 2004	37
6.	All Africa TOT for Associations for Christian Educations	Limuru, Kenya, 7-11 th July, 2004	40
7.	Lesotho National TOT	Thaba Bosiu, July 12-17, 2004.	34
8.	Botswana National TOT	Tlokweng, August 1-6, 2004	40
9.	3 rd French Speaking Regional TOT	Rwanda, October 27- November 1, 2003	24
10	East African Regional TOT	Limuru, Kenya, 12-18 November, 2003	110
11.	LUCSA Regional HIV/AIDS TOT, RSA	Pietmaritzburg, August, 2003	23
12.	Central Africa TOT on a theology of compassion	Congo Brazzaville, May 2003	66
13.	2 nd French Speaking Regional TOT in Benin	Porto Novo, April 2003	43
14.	Mozambique National TOT	Maputo, March 2003	23
15.	1 st French Speaking Africa Regional TOT, Central Africa	Yaoundé, Cameroon February, 2003	55
16.	Namibian National TOT	Windhoek, October 2002	15
17.	Zimbabwe National TOT	Harare, September, 2002	30
	Grand Total		740

It is arguably clear that the AIDS epidemic has infected and affected our world in radical ways. Although every sector, including Biblical Studies, has come to its 'senses', by realising the urgency to respond; there still appears to be inadequate contextual engagement with the biblical text to stimulate empowering and transformative readings of the Bible. This case study took the challenge and was aimed at contributing to scholarship by determining the extent to which the church, the academy and Persons with HIV have adhered to stigmatising interpretations. The overall findings showed that characters from 2 Samuel 13:1-14:33 can provide an empowering message in the context of AIDS.



The Author

Mussa Simon Muneja was born in Bariadi District, in the country of Tanzania. He is married to Joyce Eliamini Msangi and has two daughters, Sharon and Minza. Muneja holds a B.A in Theology awarded by the University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Kenya (2003). He got his MA in Theology and Religious Studies at University of Botswana (2006). His research was funded by UNDP. He also holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education awarded by the University of Dar es Salaam (2011). Muneja did his doctoral studies at UNISA (2011). He received a postgraduate bursary on the basis of academic merit to complete his studies. His research interests are on the Bible and its relevance in the contemporary society.

ISBN 978-3-86309-116-3



www.uni-bamberg.de/ubp/