

Chireshe, Excellent

## **‘Men must cry like Jesus’ : Discoursing Ezra Chitando’s call for redeemed and redemptive masculinities**

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## 7 'Men must cry like Jesus'

### Discoursing Ezra Chitando's call for redeemed and redemptive masculinities

*Excellent Chireshe*

#### Abstract

The paper seeks to analyse the views of Ezra Chitando on African masculinities in the context of 'crying', a theme in one of his writings. The aim is to rally readers behind the notion that harmful ways of being a man, often justified on religious and cultural grounds, can be transformed. As a man, Chitando inspires other men to adopt masculinities that promote the health and wellbeing of all by calling upon them to 'cry' because crying is the essence of being human. A 'crying' man is an embodiment of all that repels violence in all its manifestations. Through a number of publications, as well as his support for the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Chitando demonstrates that seeking gender justice is the responsibility of both men and women. Being aware of the role of socialisation in the internalisation of social norms and values, as well as character formation, he suggests a change in the 'social curriculum.' Although men must and can change, this is slow to take effect because of entrenched religious and cultural beliefs and norms. However, the collective efforts of men and women will gradually lead to a paradigm shift, wherein dangerous, hegemonic masculinities give way to redeemed and redemptive masculinities. While the springboard of the discussion shall be his analysis of the book '*When a man cries*' (by Sipiwo Mahala), his other writings and those of like-minded scholars and theologians are going to be taken on board.

**Keywords:** African masculinities, Ezra Chitando, Gender justice, Hegemonic masculinities, Redemptive masculinities, When a man cries

#### Introduction

The subject of men and masculinities, which is at the heart of this chapter, has captured the interest of researchers, especially those in the humanities and social sciences. The interest in men and masculinities has been

reinforced by gender-based violence and HIV & AIDS (Togarasei, 2012b). There is a plethora of research and data on the subject (for example, Chitando, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2012; Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012; Dube, 2012a, 2012b; Nadar, 2012; Oduyoye, 2006; Togarasei, 2012a, 2012b, 2013). This chapter focuses on Ezra Chitando and his desire to transform dangerous, hegemonic masculinities. Although there is some documentation on Chitando and his call for men to embrace redemptive masculinities (for example, John, Siwila & Settler, 2013), it appears not much has been documented (about him) in relation to masculinity and the notion of crying. Furthermore, since Chitando is a champion of gender justice, it is necessary to contribute to the body of knowledge on his views, with a view to influencing readers, particularly those who support and live out hegemonic, dangerous masculinities, to transform. To navigate the subject, the chapter will be organized as follows: definition and description of masculinity, a note on Ezra Chitando (one of the people at the centre of the masculinity discourse in Africa), conceptualisation of 'crying' and Chitando's quest to transform masculinities, the role of social institutions and individuals, and a conclusion which wraps up the chapter. The next section unpacks the notion of masculinity.

## **Conceptualising Masculinity**

Dube (2012:334) says masculinity is the 'construction of male identities which is a process which changes with time, and varies according to different classes, ages, places, races, and groups.' Togarasei (2012a:231) defines masculinity as a 'set of behavioural patterns that men ought to follow in each given society'. Thus, it is the qualities considered as normative for a man in a given society. To be regarded as truly masculine, one has to engage in certain activities and eschew others (Ratele, 2008). As Dube (2012:334) argues, there will be normative and less normative masculinities in any given society. Similarly, in every society, there is a masculinity that dominates women and other masculinities (hegemonic masculinity) (Togarasei, 2012b). In light of the definitions and descriptions provided, masculinity is socially, politically, and culturally constructed (see Togarasei, 2013:2). Since masculinity is constructed by a given society, it is a fluid, dynamic and varied concept. In this connection, Togarasei (2012a:241) asserts that masculinity is 'not a birthright but an achievement'. This finds a parallel in Simone de Beauvoir's (1942/2009:330) statement on women that 'one

is not born, but rather becomes, woman'. This is because expectations and expressions of masculinity are socially and culturally constructed. For, example, in the Karanga society, where I belong, a real man is expected to be a courageous leader, a risk-taker, a breadwinner, a heterosexual, one who marries and bears children, and is a decision-maker. However, some men do not perform this normative form of masculinity. As John, Siwila & Settler (2013:62) argue, 'men sometimes choose what kind of masculinity to perform'. This seems to hold true for men who choose to support gender equality in societies where this is considered countercultural. For example, supporting feminist ideals, as Chitando does, is a potential source of criticism since society, under the influence of religion and traditional culture, has not fully embraced the idea that men and women are equal in all spheres of life, notwithstanding that the Constitution of Zimbabwe upholds that.

Masculinity, brewed in a patriarchal culture, has been constructed in ways that give more power and agency to men and boys, leaving women and girls in a vulnerable position. Hegemonic masculinity, sometimes referred to in the plural (hegemonic masculinities) because it can be performed in various ways, is the most valorised form of masculinity. Given that it emphasizes male dominance and subordination of women and other men, it is largely oppressive (Togarasei, 2013). Thus, in any society there are dominant and subordinated masculinities. Because hegemonic masculinity entails some dangerous behaviours such as toughness, power, risk-taking, sexual prowess, and suppression of emotional expression (Togarasei, 2013:1), it is associated with various forms of gender-based violence. Such a masculinity is oppressive and endangers both men and women. Those of a feminist orientation (for example, Dube, 2012; Nadar, 2012; Oduyoye, 2006) consider hegemonic masculinity as dangerous because it insists on its way and emphasises control, and use of force to ensure compliance. It is a masculinity that induces fear in the subordinated, particularly women, children, and marginalised men, robbing them of a voice, thereby making them suffer in silence. The subordinated usually develop a low self-esteem and an inferiority complex, psychological states that impede human flourishing. In view of this, Ezra Chitando considers an alternative masculinity, a liberating one, as a must for a healthy society. Liberative masculinities set men and others free from discrimination and violence (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012).

In spite of legislative and other measures that have been and are being put in place by the government of Zimbabwe to ensure gender-equality

and eliminate gender-based violence, the two phenomena continue to wreak havoc because of the persistence of hegemonic masculinity. However, notwithstanding the prevalence of gender-based violence in both overt and covert ways, there is evidence of some change, particularly in men's attitudes related to gender equality, which is a necessary condition for the realisation of peace and just societies.

Although it is men and boys who enact masculinities, conceptions of masculinity are not the preserve of men alone, since women embrace them and use them in ways that are either oppressing or liberating (Chirovamavi, 2012:215). This is reiterated by Togarasei (2013:2) who states that women, actively and passively, also play an important role in the production and sustenance of masculinities. It has to be acknowledged that 'men are not what they are simply because of men. Women also play a role in moulding them into who they are' (Togarasei, 2012b:157). In a similar vein, Njoroge (2023:8) states that toxic masculinities collude with life-denying femininities, which should be interrogated. As such, the dislodging of harmful masculinities and promotion of life-affirming ones requires the concerted efforts of everyone in society, men and women.

Worth noting from the preceding discussion is that there are different forms of masculinity (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012), hence in this chapter the terms masculinities and masculinity are used interchangeably when talking about cultural expectations related to how men ought to behave and how they indeed behave. This is because while masculinity can refer to a way of being a man, it can also refer to a collectivity, that is, various forms of masculinity within one class, for example, redemptive masculinity finding expression in different forms (hence, redemptive masculinities).

The forthcoming section provides some background information on Ezra Chitando, particularly as it relates to his writings on masculinities and religion, with a view to situating the discourse to follow.

## **Ezra Chitando: A Brief Background**

As already highlighted, the thrust of this chapter is to discuss masculinities in the light of Ezra Chitando's clarion call for men to adopt redeemed (liberated) and redemptive (liberative) masculinities that promote dignified human existence, health and well-being for all. It is prudent at this point to give a brief background of Ezra Chitando.

Ezra Chitando is a Professor in History and Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Zimbabwe. He was also a theology consultant for the World Council of Churches (Sibanda, Muyambo & Chitando, 2022:i). He is one of the leading scholars in the study of masculinities and religion in Africa (John, Siwila & Settler, 2013:159). Chitando is well published. His work is far-reaching and well-known. He is socially engaged in projects that seek to influence men to adopt healthy masculinities (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012; John, Siwila & Settler, 2013). His support for the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians is testimony that Chitando walks the talk when it comes to support for initiatives to promote gender equality. His publications focus on a variety of issues in theology and religion. He has also been highly influential in feminist theology, and discourses this in relation to the subject of masculinities. It is this subject, whose definition and description has already been provided, which forms the core of this chapter.

Chitando challenges hegemonic masculinities which he regards as the most dominant and most dangerous form, which dominates women and other men (John, Siwila, & Settler, 2013). Instead, he advocates for redemptive masculinities, that is, ways of being a man that are liberating to all (Chitando, 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2012). Such masculinities are conducive to human flourishing and provide a fertile ground for men and women to work together for the betterment of society; a society that is characterised by gender justice, that is, equity and dignified treatment of all. Such a society shuns violence and enables all to live life to the fullest. Although this ideal is not completely achievable, Chitando believes that once men and women are freed from hegemonic masculinities, the world will be a better place for all. He does this through consciousness raising in his works. He seeks to influence change, to transform hegemonic, toxic masculinities into liberating ones which serve as the 'raw material' for peaceful coexistence between men and women. His is a quest for a prosperous and liveable life for everyone. Chitando is a remarkable academic mentor as evidenced by the researches and publications that he has accomplished in collaboration with others, particularly rising academics. To the extent that Chitando is an academic who seeks to transform society, he is an academic-cum-activist. To borrow Phiri & Nadar's (2006:6) terminology, he is 'bilingual', as he speaks the language of the academy and that of his society. It is necessary at this point to highlight that in Chitando's writings, terms such as redemptive, liberating, transformative,

life-affirming, healthy, and health-giving masculinities are used interchangeably to refer to positive ways of being a man. On the other hand, terms such as hegemonic, toxic, dangerous, and intolerant masculinities are used as synonyms. In this chapter, the terms are used in like manner. Since Ezra Chitando is the subject of this chapter, references to other scholars' writings will only be made when necessary and in light of his viewpoints.

After a brief description of what Chitando stands for, the next task is to unpack the notion of crying, which is a significant concept in this chapter.

### **Conceptualisation of 'Crying' in the Light of Chitando's Analysis of Sipiwo Mahala's *When a man cries***

Crying has traditionally been largely associated with women and children as an expression of pain and a sign of weakness. Men are socialised not to cry in many societies. Although crying can be an expression of anger, it is mostly associated with feelings of pain in the face of an unpleasant experience such as assault or loss. Crying can be done by one who is experiencing unpleasant conditions or one who is sympathising with those suffering. In the context of this chapter, crying signifies redeemed and redemptive masculinities.

The term 'crying', used in both literal and figurative terms in this chapter, emanates from Chitando's (2012) publication entitled, 'Redemptive masculinities, HIV, and Religion in Sipiwo Mahala's *When a man cries*'. The publication, based on a novel whose setting is Grahamstown in South Africa, is a chapter in a volume he co-edited with Sophia Chirongoma: *Redemptive Masculinities: Men, HIV and Religion* (249-265). Crying is depicted, by both the author of the novel that Chitando analyses, and by Chitando himself, not as a sign of weakness as traditionally held, but as a sign of being human; an indication that one has a heart. The capacity to cry is considered as a mark of a man who follows a redemptive masculinity script; one who groans with and on behalf of those who are suffering. In advocating for redemptive masculinities, Chitando uses the image of a 'crying man' and calls upon men to 'cry' like Jesus, an ideal model for men. By summoning men to cry, Chitando is demanding for a masculinity that is based on the principles of justice, equality and peace. I found the notion of crying intriguing, and hence decided to take it on board in

discouraging Chitando's call for transformation of masculinities, from dangerous to live-giving ones. The context of the novel Chitando analyses is the HIV & AIDS pandemic. The text maintains that men must be able to cry if women, children and men are to flourish (Chitando, 2012:249).

The novel, *When a man cries*, which is an 'exposition of the crisis of masculinity' (Chitando, 2012:249) shows how hegemonic masculinities can be dangerous as they tend to valorise sexual prowess which fosters the vulnerability of men and women to HIV & AIDS. The main character in the novel, Temba, initially follows a hegemonic masculinity template to the letter. He prides in being a sexual protagonist who abuses young women and schoolgirls (Chitando, 2012). He does so without feeling any remorse because for him it is manly to have multiple sexual partners. He looks down upon men who cry because crying, according to the hegemonic version of masculinity he has embraced, is at variance with being a real man who is associated with suppression of emotions. For Temba, power is not for service but for access to female bodies (Chitando, 2012:250). In this regard, he subscribes to a version of hegemonic masculinity that Chinganga (2012:270) refers to as 'genitalized masculinity'<sup>1</sup>.

Later, after things have gone wrong in his life, including infection with HIV, Temba has a rude awakening which engenders his transformation (Chitando, 2012). It is then that he realises that his pursuit of women has been fruitless, and that crying is an integral part of being human and that without crying a man is incomplete (Chitando, 2012:250). Indeed, he cries at the end of the novel. He gets 'redeemed' from a toxic masculinity to a redemptive one. Starting off with a conviction that 'real men do not cry' he ends up admitting that 'a man needs tears if he is to be complete' (Chitando, 2012:263).

The theme of the novel resonates with Chitando's conviction that masculinities can change, just as Temba undergoes a 'conversion' experience. To cry is to be sensitive, to identify with the needs and aspirations of others, particularly those in vulnerable positions, hence Chitando's call for men to cry; to abandon dangerous masculinities for healthy ones that promote justice and peace in society. Men who can cry, that is who feel and express pain, sympathising with those suffering, are, according to Chitando (2012:263), 'an invaluable resource to the struggles against gender-

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<sup>1</sup> A version of masculinity that is centred on the genitals. It values sexual prowess expressed in having multiple sexual partners, acquired using both persuasion and coercion.

based violence and the HIV & AIDS pandemic'. Men who cry, in Chitando's view, emulate the 'God-man' Jesus who in John 11:35 cries because he is touched by the death of Lazarus (Chitando, 2012:264) and feels for Martha and Mary for the loss of their brother. In the imperative mode, Chitando (2012:264) says men must cry, 'in practical and figurative terms'. This is a call for abusive men to embrace redemptive masculinities and abandon versions of masculinity that prevent them from 'crying', that is, being caring fathers, loving partners and sensitive leaders as well as taking practical steps to 'restore life, health and well-being' (Chitando, 2012:265). Seen from this perspective, 'crying men' are proactive. They do not merely refrain from violence, but are actively involved in ending violence and providing psychosocial, economic, and other forms of support that they are able to provide for victims of violence; they are not just peace lovers but peacemakers. They are each preoccupied with the following questions: What can I do? How can I make a difference? How can I make someone smile? In Lampe's (2020:122) words, such men make 'kindness and humanity the undercurrent of all acting'.

Chitando does not suggest that all men do not cry because, as already mentioned, there are different forms of masculinity, resulting in men behaving differently and following different masculinity scripts. Some men are already 'crying' by way of following a redemptive form of masculinity. Such men work side by side with women towards the achievement of gender justice. They are 'gender-equitable' men who have the following attributes: believe that men and women have equal rights, are opposed to gender-based violence, and 'help with some domestic chores' (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012:26), all of which are repelled by hegemonic masculinities. The forthcoming section discusses Chitando's quest for transformation of masculinities and the role that social institutions and individuals can play, bearing in mind that transformation entails a change from being insensitive to pain to expression of pain; a transition from a state of being unable to cry, to one of being able to do so without being remorseful or being told that 'men don't cry'.

## **Chitando's Quest for Transformation of Masculinities and the Role of Social Institutions and Individuals**

As already pointed out, Chitando challenges hegemonic masculinities and calls upon men to transform. He shares a critique of destructive ways of

being a man with many African women, as well as some male, theologians who are uncomfortable with ways in which masculinity is constructed in most African societies (for example, Dube, 2012; Leshota, 2012; Togarasei, 2012; Oduyoye, 2006; Maluleke and Nadar, 2002). He challenges hegemonic, death-dealing masculinities that have been reinforced by religious and cultural ideologies (Chitando, 2004, 2007a, 2007b 2009, 2012; Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012). In so doing, he is inviting men who have not been 'crying' to do so and those who have been 'crying' to continue doing so. To 'cry' signifies subscription to a redemptive form of masculinity. Like Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, a like-minded Black male theologian, Chitando argues for a more empowering view of masculinity that emphasises mutuality rather than domination and control (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012). This liberating masculinity, rooted in respect for women and responsible use of power, does not subscribe to male chauvinism, male privileges, patriarchy, and does not thrive on violence (Chitando, 2009:111). On the basis of the conviction that masculinities are amenable to change and that men 'can and do change' (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012:28), Chitando emphasises the need to inculcate masculinities that promote health and well-being in all aspects of existence. This quest for health-promoting masculinities and women's empowerment is also shared by other scholars (for example, Chinganga, 2012; Dube, 2012; Chitando, 2011; Oduyoye, 2006; Phiri, 2004; Maluleke and Nadar, 2002;) who call upon society to shun negative masculinities.

### **Chitando's redemptive interpretation**

In his interpretation of scriptures, Chitando distances himself from what Tamez (1994:197) refers to as 'macho' readings which reinforce male dominance and female subordination. He applies a hermeneutic of liberation with a view to liberating men from upholding dangerous masculinities, and liberating women from nurturing the dangerous masculinities, for example, the perception of the man as a sexual predator (Chitando, 2004:152), which results in tolerance of infidelity by married men and intolerance of the same when perpetrated by married women. This compromises the sexual and reproductive health of both men and women, particularly in the context of HIV & AIDS, hence Chitando's (2004:153) assertion that men are drivers of the pandemic. Chitando (2004) avers that the custom of bridewealth (*roora*) consolidates hegemonic masculinities, as

some men force themselves on their wives without protection in spite of their engagement in extramarital sexual affairs. Such men argue that they have unlimited sexual access to the sexual services of their wives on the basis of the bridewealth they have paid (Chitando, 2004). Chitando finds this unacceptable.

In his re-reading of Proverbs 31:10-31, Chitando challenges the traditional interpretation of the 'good wife' which promotes 'the gospel of docility and domesticity' (Chitando, 2004:157). The passage praises the wife for pleasing her husband all the days of her life but does not show reciprocity of the same. This has led to a skewed interpretation which demands wives to make sacrifices while not expecting to be served. On the contrary, Chitando embarks on a liberating re-reading of the text. He argues that the ideal of the 'good wife' can only be realised when women are given the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts (Chitando, 2004:157). His interpretation of the passage places emphasis on alternative family relationships that are grounded in mutuality and justice. This resonates with Masenya's (1997) views on gender roles, based on the same text. She suggests flexibility in gender roles whereby both males and females can choose to operate from home, without stigmatization on the part of males who undertake domestic chores and home management.

In an article he co-authored with Susan Mbula Kilonzo, based on the same passage, Chitando subscribes to the notion of the 'Proverbs 31 man', as articulated by Pentecostal preachers in Kenya (Chitando and Kilonzo, 2018). Such a man works in close collaboration with his 'Proverbs 31 woman' and is industrious like his partner, 'the Proverbs 31 woman' (Chitando and Kilonzo, 2018:73). The man pleases his wife and those around call her blessed, like the 'Proverbs 31 man'. The 'Proverbs 31 man is a 'crying' man in the sense that he is 'supportive, non-violent, hardworking, appreciative of his partner' and does not enact a traditional form of masculinity which places emphasis on male dominance and female subordination (Chitando and Kilonzo, 2018:75).

## **Masculinities as amenable to change, with men and women working together**

Given that masculinity is socially constructed, and changes in response to changes in society, it can be socially deconstructed and reconstructed (Togarasei, 2012b). In this regard, oppressive behaviour, informed by toxic

masculinities, can be 'unlearned' by both women and men (Chitando, 2009:139). Although it can be argued that men who have been used to dominating women face the challenge of social transformation (Chinganga, 2012:285), Chitando is hopeful. In his writings, Chitando leverages the fluidity of masculinity to make the case that men who have become accustomed to the potentially destructive hegemonic masculinity can change and adopt more sensitive, appealing ways of being a man. This, Chitando suggests, is possible with the involvement of the whole society through social institutions such as the family, religious organisations and educational institutions, and men and women working in partnership; a sentiment expressed by many African women theologians including Musa Dube who states that churches need to engage with men in order to challenge dangerous masculinities (Dube, 2012). It needs to be pointed out, however, that Chitando (2007b) acknowledges that change is a gradual process which does not occur overnight.

Realisation of healthy ways of being a man requires that men and women work as partners. In connection with this, Chitando proposes a multi-sectoral approach to combat violence against women. He calls upon various actors to work together to 'break the covenant of violence against women and to ensure that no woman will curse the day of her birth' (Chitando, 2004:158). Taking cognizance of the role of religion in shaping masculinities, Chitando (2007a, 2007b) turns to churches and calls upon them to reach out to men and persuade them, through sermons, to shun dangerous masculinities and adopt redemptive ones because this benefits them (men) as well. He also challenges churches to 'exorcise the unholy trinity of religion, culture and socialisation and promote mutuality and respect in marriage' (Chitando, 2007b:11). This is because, in his view, religion and culture have socialised men to embrace dangerous masculinities that make them look down upon women, especially in the context of marriage. As such, they need reorientation. It is worth noting that Chitando's (2007b) call to churches is for them to be prophetic; to denounce violence against women and advocate for harmonious gender relations. In a chapter he co-authored with Chirongoma, Chitando challenges women's fellowship groups in churches to interpret scriptures in ways that are empowering to women, and in so doing challenge hegemonic masculinities (Chitando & Chirongoma, 2012). In view of the preceding, it can be noted that Chitando perceives churches as the potential vanguard of the transformation of men and empowerment of women. Underscoring the role of

churches in transformation of masculinities, Chitando (2007b:45) invites the church to chant the slogan: 'Down with dominant masculinities...!'

### **Men and women to collaborate in home-based caregiving**

Chitando (2004, 2007b) is concerned about strict gender roles that leave women to do all the caregiving work, particularly in the context of HIV & AIDS. The tendency for men to shun caregiving on the basis that it is the duty of women also characterised the COVID-19 period. Chitando appeals to churches in Africa to socialise men to participate in home-based care, which has traditionally been a women's role. In so doing, he embarks on a health-giving subversion of culture and tradition. At present, not many men and women would buy Chitando's idea because of internalised notions of masculinity and femininity (Chitando, 2004). However, those who dare embrace it are set to bring warmth to their social spheres because it signifies justice, love and compassion (Chitando, 2007b:48).

### **Men as shouldering a greater responsibility to transform masculinities**

While calling upon everyone to participate in the fight against hegemonic, often toxic masculinities, Chitando places more responsibility on men, as 'partakers of the patriarchal dividend' (Chitando, 2009:68). He argues that boys and young men must be trained to embrace alternative, redemptive masculinities if men, women, and children are to thrive (Chitando 2007, 2012), that is, if they are to unleash their potential to contribute to Africa's economic growth (Chitando, 2009:139). Chitando's writings, therefore, demonstrate how important it is to engage males in programmes aimed at transforming masculinities. Such programmes can enable men to respect the rights of women and children by giving up patriarchal privileges. This has the effect of inculcating, in women and children, especially girls, a sense of self-affirmation.

Since religion can promote the adoption of redemptive masculinities, it is necessary to engage men in faith communities to serve as ambassadors for gender justice in the face of gender-based violence, so argues Chitando, in collaboration with Chirongoma (2012:6). In view of the notion of crying as articulated by Chitando, gender just societies that provide safe

spaces in which men, women and children can flourish, have men and women who 'cry'. Chitando suggests that giving up the patriarchal dividend by 'crying', that is, using power to serve and protect, being considerate and respectful of those with less power in society, does not diminish one's maleness. Jesus was a man who challenged hegemonic masculinity by crying, and in so doing serves as a role model for men.

### **Accusation that Chitando is privileging male agency**

While some may accuse Chitando of 'privileging male agency' (see John, Siwila and Settler, 2013:174) because of his emphasis on the need for men to change for gender justice to be realised, I do not subscribe to the same. Chitando is aware of the fact that masculinities are socially constructed and supported, hence he calls upon both men and women to promote redemptive masculinities. He calls upon women's fellowship groups to promote women's empowerment and challenge dangerous masculinities. He also upholds the notion of partnership between men and women and describes transformed men ('crying' ones) as those who do not feel threatened by gender equality. His emphasis on transformation of men is understandable, given that they have historically enjoyed the 'patriarchal dividend' by their domination over women and other (marginalised) men, thereby subjecting these under the 'yoke'. As such, women's liberation from the entanglements of hegemonic masculinity cannot be attained without the cooperation of men who have historically held the 'keys' to power under the banner of patriarchy which supports hegemonic masculinities. As Togarasei (2012b:157) asserts, 'The liberation of women cannot materialize without the cooperation of men'. What Chitando does, in challenging men to transform, is reminiscent of Jesus' saying in Mark 3 verse 27, 'No one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house'. In the same way it is necessary to persuade men to accept women as their equals for women to realise gender equality. When men have a buy in, it will be easier for women to assert their equality and to support redemptive masculinities, otherwise there is a tendency for resistance and a backlash when men are not taken on board. Influencing men to change is tantamount to 'tying up the strong man' in the biblical passage cited. Related to this is Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza's view that women's empowerment requires a two-pronged theology which seeks to influence men to give up some of their

patriarchal privileges and for women to be self-affirming. She asserts that feminist theology 'advocates for men a theology of relinquishment' and 'articulates for women a theology of self-affirmation (Schussler-Fiorenza, 1995:xy). As such, for real social transformation to materialise, the liberation of masculinities must go hand in hand with the liberation of femininities.

## Conclusion

Following the preceding discussion, it is evident that Chitando is a prophetic voice, calling upon men (and women) to reform by embracing redeemed and redemptive masculinities. By advocating a masculinity of love and care rather than one of power, he shares a feminist quest; a quest for gender justice which is only possible with a transformed 'social curriculum'. He mostly discusses masculinity in the context of HIV & AIDS. However, his ideas are transferable to different social situations that have challenges associated with toxic masculinities, particularly gender-based violence. Chitando is optimistic that men who are not yet transformed can change through re-socialisation. Men have over the years been socialised to dominate women and engage in ways of being men that endanger both women and men. In some men this hegemonic masculinity is so much ingrained that it is not easy to unlearn. However, with the concerted effort of men and women, working as individuals and through social institutions, transformation of such men, in Chitando's view, is possible. The proverbial wisdom saying which goes, 'habits die hard', implies that entrenched habits will eventually die though it might take time. The good news is that already some men are working in partnership with women to transform dangerous masculinities so that the world can become a better place for all.

Chitando, being a man himself, calling men to bid farewell to harmful ways of enacting masculinity, demonstrates that it is possible to rethink masculinities and assist other men to get enlightened on how toxic masculinities endanger their lives and those of everyone around. In using the idiom of crying, Chitando emphasises the need to be human, to express emotion, to feel for others, and to feel hurt when those around are suffer-

ing. A man who cries is an epitome of redeemed and redemptive masculinities. In calling for men to transform, Chitando is inviting them to 'live and let live' because most hegemonic versions of masculinity negate the health and well-being of both perpetrators and victims. To be alive is not only to be breathing and engaging in human activities, it is to be empowered to have a personal vision and have the opportunity and power to work towards realisation of the vision; to have agency. If society could take heed of Chitando's call, justice and true peace would prevail.

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