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Togarasei, Lovemore

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Re-Reading the Old Testament with Christian Men in Southern Africa in the Context of Gender-Based Violence: A Proposal

Lovemore Togarasei

Introduction

The Bible forms the basis upon which Christians think about and practice their religion. Thus, even their thinking of and (unfortunately) practice of gender-based violence (GBV) is to some extent influenced by their reading of the Bible. Indeed, our suggestion of the re-reading of the Old Testament (OT) in the context of GBV, assumes already that just a reading of it may be a source of GBV. Togarasei (2013a) has discussed how Christian men's understanding of male headship of families promotes GBV. In a study in Namibia, Hubbard (1998) established that men justified spousal abuse by quoting the creation story of Adam and Eve and the interpretation that women need to submit to men. Thus, some critics (e. g. Wanjiru and Chitando 2013) think that instead of being 'good news,' the Bible has caused havoc on the African continent. A few other examples of the havoc it has caused are worth mentioning here: the use of the Bible in the dispossession of African resources, particularly land, the use of the Bible to justify apartheid and the contemporary use of the Bible by gospreuneurs[1] to financially and socially exploit fellow Africans.

Although the whole Bible can be accused of causing havoc in Africa, when it comes to GBV, the OT part of the Bible is the major culprit. Writing in 1984, Phyllis Trible identified four texts from the OT that she described as "texts of terror." We discuss these below. Trible's description of these four texts can be extended to most OT texts. Be that as it may, the Bible still holds tremendous influence in Christian practice in southern Africa. It is, therefore, important for scholars to rethink Bible interpretation for social transformation including such issues as GBV. Indeed, a number of

[1] A term used to describe the contemporary young preachers of the prosperity gospel for their own benefits (see Togarasei 2013).

scholars are doing this. For example, Gillham (2013) underlines the Bible's teaching on gender complementarity, while Togarasei (2013a) defines male headship in a way that promotes love and peace in Christian marriages. As shall be discussed later, feminist scholars have suggested other ways of engaging the Bible in light of GBV. Compared to all other biblical methodologies, feminist criticism has done more in taking the Bible from its world of more than 2000 years ago to the world of the contemporary reader. More work, however, needs to be done to address texts that seem to provide Christian men with a 'divine/scriptural' justification for acting violently against women, among them those that Trible calls texts of terror.

In this chapter, I shall, therefore, identify some of the texts in the OT that have been read in a way that fuels GBV. Using a biblical theological approach and an appreciation of feminist criticism, the aim of the chapter is to suggest a reading approach that promotes gender equity and equality. The proposal is aimed at men as perpetrators of GBV in light of the view that gender equity is only achievable when both men and women are empowered intellectually, economically and socially. The chapter acknowledges important steps that governments at international, continental and national levels have taken in legislating[2] against GBV and also the efforts and resources put in educating women about their rights. However, as Gillman (2013) has also correctly observed, ". . . legislation alone will continue to prove powerless to stem the tide of violence and discrimination" and a focus on educating women only is not adequate. Thus, besides legislation and educating women on their rights, there is need to equally educate and empower boys and men on the rights of all and the importance of peaceful coexistence in families and societies. Herein comes the role of the church and the importance of biblical interpretation for social transformation. But before making the re-reading proposal, it is necessary to define our scope of GBV, to consider some statistics on GBV that justify the need for mitigation and to consider how the texts have been read by other scholars.

[2] Most southern African countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) and its Addendum on Violence against Women and Children, the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women and have in their constitutions embodied the principles of gender equality and equity. Several of these countries have developed specific acts of Parliament like the Domestic Violence Act and the Children's Act (e. g. Zimbabwe and Botswana) which address GBV.

Gender based violence and its extent

By definition, GBV is "violence against women based on women's subordinate status in society."[3] Generally, the term is used as a synonym for violence against women. This is mainly because GBV is rooted in gender inequality. It is also given many other names such as "wife abuse, marital assault, woman battery, spouse abuse, wife beating, conjugal violence, intimate violence, battering, partner abuse" (Poling 2003:9). I need, however, to point out that while the overwhelming victims/survivors of violence are female, there are also increasing cases of men facing violence from women. There are chances that in the years to come we shall deal with ways of mitigating violence against men by women. But for now, the reality is that it is many women who report GBV, and we should focus on this.

The chapter treats GBV as any act or threat by men or male dominated institutions that inflict physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender. Such acts include domestic violence; sexual abuse, including the rape and sexual abuse of children by family members; forced pregnancy; sexual slavery; traditional practices harmful to women, such as female genital mutilation, bride price-related violence; violence in armed conflict, such as murder and rape; and emotional abuse, such as coercion and abusive language and professional gender related segregation such as the denial of female ordination in churches. Trafficking of women and girls for prostitution, forced marriage (especially in some African Initiated Churches), sexual harassment and intimidation at work are additional examples of violence against women. The chapter also observes that GBV does not only take place in families; neither is it limited to individuals. Rather, GBV occurs in both the 'public' and 'private' spheres. Thus, we can talk of perpetrators of GBV as individuals as well as institutional structures, including national laws. Further, we observe that such violence does not only occur in the family and in the general community, but sometimes it also occurs through state policies or the actions of agents of the state such as the police, military or immigration authorities. Generally, GBV happens in all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know.

Gender-based violence is the most pervasive human rights abuse. On average, three in every five women experience GBV in southern Africa. In

[3] http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/svaw/advocacy/modelsessions/what_is_GBV.PDF.

Botswana, for example, the *Gender Based Violence Indicators Study* (GBVIS) published in 2013,[4] noted that 67% of women reported experiencing some form of gender violence in their lifetime. 29% of the women who participated in the study said they had experienced intimate partner violence in the past year. However, only 1.2% of these women reported cases of GBV to the police. This suggests that the levels of GBV in Botswana are much higher than has been recorded. It may also indicate that women are not confident that their grievances will receive redress, confirming our suggestion that sometimes GBV is perpetrated through weak structures of governance. The study, however, suggested that women may not be aware of their rights or are too fearful and powerless to assert them.

In a review of literature on gender-based violence in 2008, the Population Council gave the following statics of GBV in the sub-Saharan African region:[5]

- In Zambia, 27% of women who had ever been married reported being beaten by their spouse/partner in the past year; this rate reaches 33% of 15–19-year-olds and 35% of 20–24-year-olds. 59% of women reported havingever experienced any violence by anyone since the age of 15 years.
- In South Africa, 7% of 15–19-year-olds had been assaulted in the past 12 months by a current or ex-partner; and 10% of 15–19-year-olds were forced or persuaded to have sex against their will.
- In Kenya, 43% of 15–49-year-old women reported having experienced some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime, with 29% reporting an experience in the previous year; 16% of women reported having ever been sexually abused, and for 13%, this had happened in the previous year of the study.
- In rural Ethiopia, 49% of women who had ever had partners had experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, rising to 59% ever experiencing sexual violence.
- In rural Tanzania, 47% of women who had ever had partners had experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, while 31 per cent had experienced sexual violence.

[4] UNFPA, countryoffice.unfpa.org/botswana/.../GBVIndicatorsBotswanareport.pdf, accessed 21/09/2015.

[5] http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/AfricaSGBV_LitReview.pdf

Violence against women is even more prevalent in politically unstable states such as in Zimbabwe in the past decade or so. RAU (2011) chronicles acts of violence against women in Zimbabwe showing that culture, patriarchy, politics and religion are the factors behind high rates of GBV in the country. It is not only in Africa where GBV is prevalent. Studies conducted elsewhere, for example, by Minnesota Agents for Human Rights, show that it is a persistent and universal problem occurring in every culture and social group.[6] GBV is therefore, a universal phenomenon. In the USA, J. N. Poling (2003:1) says one in every one-half of all girls and women is physically or sexually abused at some point in their lifetime. He also notes that battering causes 35% of all emergency room visits by young adult women.

In line with the argument of this chapter, it is important to note that in all the contexts of violence cited above, Christianity commands a high following. WCC estimates put Christianity at about 80% of the total population in most sub-Saharan African countries (www.oikumene.org). Worldwide, estimates are that Christianity has around 2.1 billion adherents representing nearly one-third of the world's population and is therefore, the largest religion.[7] It then logically follows that a number of perpetrators of GBV are Christians. In all the contexts as well, there are very good laws to deal with GBV, with some countries such as Botswana having clear-cut GBV management policies from reporting to clinical treatment and legal redress. However, GBV cases remain high, with many of them going unreported. As mentioned earlier, it is clear that legalisation on its own does not fully address the problem. We, therefore, suggest that the use of Christian teaching may take us a long way in mitigating it. But before suggesting ways of mitigating GBV using Christian values, we need to note that the major source of Christian theology (the Bible) presents problems. The first approach in using the Bible to address GBV is to accept that it is in itself (particularly the OT we are focusing on) a factor in encouraging GBV.

6 http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/svaw/advocacy/modelsessions/what_is_GBV.PDF

7 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_and_domestic_violence

Gender-based violence in the Old Testament

Among many reasons suggested for the prevalence of GBV in Africa, religious and cultural reasons have topped the list.[8] In churches, the Bible has been described as a "weapon of mass destruction" (Wanjiru and Chitando 2013:245). Some men who perpetrate GBV justify it on the basis of their own reading of the Bible (Togarasei 2013a). The OT provides many of those texts used for justification of GBV as divinely or scripturally sanctioned. Texts that seem to justify GBV in the OT can be classified in two different ways: texts that are explicit on violence against women and texts that present women in a way that promotes violence against them. I shall discuss a few examples under each of the two categories of texts.

Texts that are explicit on violence against women

Among these texts are those that Trible calls 'texts of terror.' Trible discusses **the first text** of terror as the Genesis account of Hagar, the maid servant of Sarah (Gen. 16-21). In this story we encounter serious emotional abuse of the servant. Gender, race and power are at play in Hagar's abuse. We find the hand of another woman behind this GBV.[9] As Trible (1984:11) correctly observes, in the eyes of Sarah, Hagar is an instrument, not a person. Sarah acknowledges that her barrenness is caused by Yahweh, but what the deity had prevented, she wanted to accomplish through Hagar, whom she sees just as a childbearing instrument. Hagar represents the stories of many abused young women in southern Africa who suffer at the hands of married men and women, often due to their social and economic statuses.

The second text of terror that Trible discusses is the story of the rape of Tamar in 1 Sam. 13:1-22. The story recounts the sexual abuse of a young woman by a person she trusts, her own brother. This is a story that triggers painful memories in the minds of many in southern Africa. Cases of girl child sexual abuse by known close family members abound in our

[8] For some causes of GBV see, Togarasei (2013a) and Wanjiru and Chitando (2013).

[9] Gen. 16:6b is explicit about Sarah's abuse of Hagar as it states, "Then Sarai dealt harshly with her..." The Hebrew word translated "dealt harshly" in the RSV also means afflict, harsh treatment or torture. There is no doubt that this is what we call GBV in contemporary parlance.

societies. For want of protecting the 'name' of the family, many such perpetrators are not reported or if reported, the cases are later withdrawn by family members.

The third text of terror explicitly showing violence against women in the OT is found in Judges 19:1-30. Trible (1984:65) says the following about the story:

> The betrayal, rape, torture, murder and dismemberment of an unnamed woman is a story we want to forget but are commanded to speak. It depicts the horrors of male power, brutality and triumphalism; of female helplessness, abuse and annihilation. To hear this story is to inhabit a world of unrelenting terror that refuses to let us pass by the other side.

The story shows how often GBV is perpetrated to protect the interests of men. This woman, whose name is not mentioned (a possible indication of her supposed 'worthlessness'), is murdered and dismembered in the name of religion and to protect male 'dignity' as the Levite states, "And I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and I sent her throughout the country of the inheritance of Israel; for they had committed abomination and wantonness in Israel" (Judges 20:6). The story also shows how GBV is a result of men's contest for power. This is reflected by the response of the men of Israel who wanted to revenge the killing of the unnamed concubine. Women and children bear the brunt of males' quest for power and domination.

The fourth and last 'text of terror' identified and discussed by Trible is that of the unnamed daughter of Jephthah in Judges 11:29-40. It is not surprising that the violence shown against this girl seems to have been undermined as the tradition has been to remember Jephthah for his demonstration of faith and fidelity to Yahweh.[10] Religion here plays a role in the violation of women. Together with the other three other texts, these are texts of terror. They, indeed, present horrific stories and, as John L. Thompson (2001:3) correctly observes, their horror is compounded by the apparent refusal of the biblical narrator to add a single word of condemnation or moralism or even explanation. The Bible's stark silence may actually heighten the impact of these sad stories. Consciously or sub-consciously, a Christian man who reads these stories may be influenced to think of women as means to men's ends.

[10] Jephthah is remembered as an exemplary judge (Judges 11:7).

Texts that present women in a way that promotes violence against them

Besides the texts that explicitly show violence against women, the OT generally presents women in a way that promotes violence against them. These are too many to mention in a work of this nature. We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to a few examples. We begin right at the creation. Although the first creation story presents God as creating both a man and a woman at the same time (Gen. 1:26-27), Jewish and Christian traditions have chosen to highlight the second creation story that presents a woman as having been created after man as a helpmate when God noticed the loneliness of the man. In this story, the woman is not at the centre of God's plan of creation, as she is only created from the rib to address the man's loneliness. Following this line of interpretation, women are, therefore, considered to be of lower status compared to men both biologically and socially. As Mary J. Evans (1983:14) observes quite candidly, this text teaches the subordination of the woman in four ways: her creation after man, her creation from the man, her being named by the man and her description as a helper.[11] No wonder, the same tradition continues to interpret the 'fall of humanity' in Gen. 3 as a result of a woman, Eve, who gave in to the tricks of the serpent. With this fall, the tradition goes, came male domination, death and pain to the world.

From Eve, the OT also presents other women in this negative light. Women are portrayed as promiscuous and leading men into sin. The books of the law generally present women as unclean, especially due to the menstrual cycle and childbirth. For example, after giving birth, a woman is considered unclean for double the period if she gives birth to a girl as compared to a boy (Lev. 12:4-5). Coupled with the fact that they were not circumcised (the physical mark of Israel's covenant with God), women could not be appointed priests and in the Jerusalem Temple, they sat in the outer court separated from men and further away from the priests (who were men) and the Holy of Holies. Even most of the attributes of God are masculine.[12] Although feminist scholars have highlighted some feminine attributes of God found in the OT,[13] their views are not common in communities of faith.

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11 Evans (1983:15-17) shows the fallacies of these arguments. However, in Christian circles the traditional interpretations have continued.

12 God is the Father (Hosea 11:1), the Shepherd (Prov.23), a Husband (Hosea 1-3), among many other male attributes.

13 For example, God as Lady Wisdom in Proverbs (Mills 1998).

Throughout the OT, women are considered, not in their own right, but in relation to the man under whose authority they were placed: from the father to the husband and to the son. As Evans (1983:24) observes, women were generally regarded as possessions of men, which explains why adultery and divorce laws are found in the category of property laws in the OT. Generally, women were seen as child-bearers, thus, even in New Testament times, the author of 1Timothy (2:14-15) says women will be saved through childbearing.

The historical books of the OT are not an exception in presenting women in ways that would promote GBV. They also contain many texts that can perpetuate GBV. An example is the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Sam. 11. As J. Cheryl Exum (1996:19) argues, Bathsheba is portrayed as the object of sexual desire and aggression. This is how some men involved in GBV view the bodies of women.[14] The story echoes themes that we are quite familiar with: men's abuse of power and privilege to violate women at workplaces, in schools, in church and such other institutions where men use their power to abuse women sexually. Exum (1996:21) explains the violence in this text:

> ... only five actions - three on David's part and two on Bathsheba's part are minimally described. He sent, he took and he lay: the verbs signify control and acquisition. In contrast, only her movement is described: she came and she returned.

Thus, Exum is correct in arguing that the narrative is set in a context of aggression and violence. A man reading such a story by a man who was beloved by God (2 Sam. 7:16ff) would surely feel nothing wrong with behaving in the same manner that David did.

In the historical books, as in many other OT stories, the rape and humiliation of captive women is taken for granted (Judg. 5:30, Lam. 5:11, Amos 4:2-3, 7:17). In the case of wars, married women are the major victims of death, while unmarried ones are forced to marry the murderers of their mothers and sisters. Thus, besides the rape of Tamar that we discussed under texts of terror above, there are several other texts on the wanton raping of women often as men strive to demonstrate their powers. The rape of Dinah (Gen. 34), and of David's ten wives (1 Sam. 16:21-22), the abduction of the dancers of Shiloh (Judg. 21:19-23), are examples.

[14] Musa Dube (2007) provides a detailed discussion of men and women's bodies in contexts of HIV & AIDS.

Apart from these real cases of violence against women, the OT also uses figurative/metaphorical language in which God himself perpetrates violence against women. This does not come out as clearly as it does in the book of Hosea where God is the husband and Israel his wife. Like a typical violent man whose wife has cheated him, God says,

> Therefore, I will take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season, and I will take away my wool and flax, which were to cover her nakedness, Now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one shall rescue her out of my hand (Hosea 2:9-11, RSV).

Exum (1996:105) captures the GBV in this text accurately:

> The punishment for sexual 'transgression' or 'wantonness' is sexual abuse, which is also crudely fantasized in terms that conjure up the atrocities inflicted upon women prisoners of war. It is a male's job to restrict the female's freedom/wantonness and to punish the woman whose behavior brings dishonor upon him. God here seems to accept GBV if it is assumed justified by women's guilt.

Isaiah uses the same language against women (57:3-13), as does Jeremiah (4:20, 22:20-23, 2:33-3:20, 13:22). The most abusive language is found in Ezekiel where it is insinuated that unfaithful women should be put to death (16 and 23). The texts appeal to female fear of male violence in order to keep female sexuality in check (Exum 1996:110). In Lamentations (1:8-10), the woman even blames herself. Here, "the rape imagery builds upon the correspondence between body and temple and between genitals and inner sanctuary" (Exum 1996:111). These texts use language that places blame on women. This is a perspective developed in detail by Caroline Blyth (2010) when she interprets the story of the rape of Dinah. "She asked for it" is one of the titles of her chapters.

The texts we have analysed tell the story of GBV in the OT. In fact, in reading the OT, readers come across men's stories. Apart from a few women who play some roles of prominence in their own right, the majority of the women facilitate the men's stories. This is exemplified in the story of Moses (Exum 1996:81). In the early days of his life, women dominate his life: the midwives, Moses' mother, his sister, Pharaoh's daughter. However, all of them fade out of the picture as Moses' story develops. Unfortunately, these OT texts continue being influential, especially in communities that look up to the Bible for ethical principles and moral guidance. The texts teach men to exert their authority and women to be submissive. Male abuse becomes a means of correction, thus promoting GBV. How then should such texts be read and retold among men in our

communities of faith? Before proposing a reading approach, let us first consider how feminist scholars in particular have proposed to deal with the texts.

Some suggested re-readings for GBV mitigation

Feminist scholars have put a lot of effort to come up with suggestions on how to deal with the above discussed texts for gender equity and equality. There is, unfortunately, no consensus as to the proper response to the Bible's engraved patriarchy. Feminist responses range from those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God and that should be interpreted for gender justice to those who think the Bible is so patriarchal that it cannot be reformed.[15] In fact, four approaches to re-reading can be identified from the works of feminist scholars. We discuss these below.

Re-reading by refusing to read the Old Testament (or the Bible in general)

This is an approach taken by radical feminist scholars such as Mary Daly. For Daly (1985), there is no freedom for women in the whole Judeo-Christian tradition. With her declaration, "If God is male, then the male is God," Daly problematises patriarchy which she describes as a creation by men to serve the interests of men. For this reason, she believed women cannot get liberation from the Bible. Similarly, Daphne Hampson (1990) asks why anyone should have interest in these OT stories that have caused such harm to women.

Re-reading by only highlighting those texts that present women in good light

This approach is sometimes called soft feminism. Instead of rejecting the biblical texts, this approach seeks positive roles of women in the Bible to identify with. Scholars such as Mary Evans (1983) take this approach. They

[15] This is also a result of the nature of feminist criticism. As M. Jacobs (2001) correctly describes it, feminist criticism is complex, multifaceted and diverse that it is perhaps proper to speak of 'feminisms.'

focus on positive roles of women like Sarah, the mother of nations and Deborah, who became a judge.

Reading against the Bible

This is the most common approach used by feminists to read the Bible for gender justice. According to this approach, biblical texts should not be taken as authoritative texts with universal meaning. Rather, "...they should be read against the grain of their patriarchal rhetoric and their traditional interpretations, that is, with suspicion and resistance" (Jacobs 2001:85). This reading interprets against the narrator, plot, other characters and the biblical tradition that have shown women neither compassion nor attention. Exum (1996:82) calls it, "...a reading strategy that would expose and critique the ideology that motivates the biblical presentation of women."

Reading the Old Testament to learn what not to do

This is an approach taken by those who want to continue with the tradition of valuing the biblical texts as the Word of God. The approach takes the 'texts of terror' as teaching Christian men what not to do. For S. Gillman (2013) the texts show the effects of sin following the fall in Genesis 3. Before the fall, Adam represented caring and responsible manhood, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh . . ." (Gen 2:23-24). He says it was only after the fall that the husband, in response to God's punishment, was to rule over his wife. Texts of terror should, therefore, not be read positively, but negatively as results of sin. This kind of reading, according to Ewusha (2012), will produce a real man (redeemed manhood) from God's original design of manhood.

Re-reading the Old Testament texts for Gender-based Violence mitigation: our suggested approach

Some approaches discussed above, border on the rejection of the Bible in addressing gender inequality and the resultant GBV. This would be completely unacceptable in faith communities where the Bible continues to

be considered the Word of God and, therefore, the basis for ethical principles and moral guidelines. We, therefore, have to re-read the OT texts of terror with the believing community in mind.

The approaches by feminist scholars have also focused mainly on how women should 'read' the Bible without engaging men. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is not quite helpful to continue empowering women to know their rights and resist GBV without involving men in the process. Educating women on their rights without educating men to respect women's rights may actually exacerbate GBV. Men in Christian communities need to be exposed to ways of reading 'texts of terror' for gender justice. We suggest an approach to be used in what has come to be called Contextual Bible Study (CBS). CBS is, so far, the best approach for using the Bible for social transformation in communities of faith (West 2011, Wanjiru and Chitando 2013). Wanjiru and Chitando (2013:247) define and describe CBS as follows:

> ...methodology entails reading the Bible within the community setting, acknowledging the equal status of all readers of the text and reading the text closely (and slowly) to understand the dynamics within the text. CBS approaches the text as a resource that can contribute towards social transformation. It facilitates questioning and problematising the dominant and socially accepted interpretations of the text. One may therefore, argue that CBS is in fact subversive: it equips the community to challenge the status quo and to envisage new realities.

We suggest CBS for engaging men to read the Bible for gender justice because the approach respects the Bible as the Word of God. It, therefore, respects the Christian belief in the centrality of the Bible as the source of teaching. For reading 'texts of terror' for GBV mitigation, we suggest that the reading should begin with an acknowledgement that GBV was a problem in the OT, as it is in our societies today. There should be a serious consideration of the historical, cultural, religious and all other important contexts from which biblical texts arose and developed.

There should also be an acceptance that biblical texts are active stories with a bearing on our contemporary societies. Guided by what is of interest to women and girls, the re-reading should, therefore, be unapologetically interested. Accepting its subjectivity, the re-reading should declare its interest from the onset. The interpretive interests should be, among others, to save and promote life, to seek justice for all and to promote love and peaceful co-existence of all human beings, including the whole of the created order. It is suggested that in the process of re-reading, men should

replace the violated women of the OT with the names of their daughters, their mothers, their wives, women friends or any other women close to their hearts.

Conclusion

Gender-based violence is the most prevalent human rights abuse found across different societies. It is an evil that needs to be addressed from different angles. In this chapter, we have considered how the Bible contributes to GBV as it bears several texts that seem to present God as justifying violence against women as a form of punishment for their wrongdoing, or God as not punishing men who perpetrate violence against women. The chapter has presented how feminist scholars have interpreted these texts. It has demonstrated the need to involve men in re-reading OT texts for GBV mitigation. Arguing that legislation against GBV is not enough to address the problem, the chapter concludes that, considering the influence of the Bible in shaping Christian beliefs and practices, it is important to continue thinking of Bible reading approaches that can help construct redemptive masculinities.

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