

Practices of Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church Theology that Address Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Zambia: A Case Study of Bread of Life Main Pentecostal Church in Lusaka District

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Abstract: The researcher sort to establish practices of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that address Gender Based Violence. The study was exploratory in terms of design. The study sample consisted of two (2) Pastors, two (2) church elders, four (4) church deacons, two (2) representatives from the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ)- a mother body of all Pentecostal churches in Zambia and ten (10) lay members from the church under study. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques for participants were used to sample participants from the population under study. The key finding of the study was that the church's intervention in addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) came through couples' meetings, premarital and post-marital counselling, participation in campaigns against GBV and being an active voice against GBV. Based on the findings, this study recommends that the church should introduce awareness and rehabilitation programmes specially designed to help both perpetrator and the victim of GBV. Secondly, the researcher recommends that the Church should employ strategic plans to curb the vice by forming more support groups with the help of the government in order to address GBV. As a suggestion for future research, the study recommended that a study in the future be undertaken to determine the success and challenges of the Church's anti-GBV activities.

Key Words: Gender Based Violence, Theology, Church

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a common problem in many countries today, and it is on the upswing in Zambia (Musune, 2015). According to the World Bank (2018), 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. It is also estimated that of the 87,000 women who were intentionally killed in 2017 globally, more than half were killed by intimate partners, meaning 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their family every day and more than a third of the women killed in 2017 were killed by their intimate partner (UN Women, 2017). GBV has historically been understood to largely affect women because of the differentiation of roles between men and women which has existed since time immemorial. Based on the nature of the family and professional roles, society has for long perceived men's roles as being superior to those of women and as such,

the status of men is given a superior position that results in power imbalances and consequently gender related abuse (Sampaet al, 1994).

As stated by the Canadian Panel on Violence against Women (CPVAW) (1993), GBV is the epitome of unequal power relationships between women and men. It results into huge costs to the individuals, who experience it, to society and to the many services and sectors, including the health care system, that have to respond to its consequences (Rosen et al., 2003). Even though it is more pronounced in women, GBV has for a long time been as injurious to the welfare of men as it is to that of women. For some reasons, GBV against men was ignored and not considered as a violation of men's fundamental rights.

Regionally, evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) showed high rates of GBV in educational institutions. Results from the Global Based School Survey (GBSS) revealed that the magnitude of physical and sexual violence in five African countries ranged from 27–50% and 9–33%, respectively (Brown et al., 2009). In Africa, studies of female domestic violence against men are rare. But this is not surprising because it is in this part of the world where discourses of patriarchy and male-dominated cultures are most common and thus female domestic violence against men is theoretically farfetched. In Botswana however, a study by Raditloaneng (2010) acknowledged that both men and women are victims of GBV. Furthermore, Botswana Police Service reports (2012) and statistics on GBV from the Ministry of Labor and Home affairs indicate that in 2003, there were fifty-four passion killings, which claimed forty-six women and eight men.

In Zambia, the annual survey released by the Victim Support Unit (VSU) (2017) of the Zambia Police Service revealed that in 2016, the country recorded 18,540 cases of GBV as compared to 18,088 cases recorded in the previous year of 2015, showing an increase of 452 cases in a year. Similarly, the GBV third-quarter reports indicate that the total number of GBV cases in just one quarter countrywide was 16,090 compared to 13,092 cases in 2016 during the same period signifying an increase of 18.6 percent. Arguably, these

statistics imply that barely a day passes without the Zambian communities witnessing about fifty cases of GBV. According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO) (2014), the current Zambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013-14 indicates that 9 percent of women induced violence on their spouses, which entails that not only women have been victims of GBV, men too have had their own experiences.

According to Londt (2004), the nature of GBV experienced in the communities today can take various forms. It can take on the form of visual, verbal and physical assaults. In the context of an abusive relationship, GBV is often in the form of physical assault. Londt adds that some perpetrators of GBV use sexual violence as a primary choice of intimidation and harm to batter their victims. In other related instances, psychological and emotional abuse is predominant. Some literature on the subject confirms that psychological and emotional abuse is also a prominent feature in GBV, which is often dominated by the theme of manipulation, intimidation and control.

Over the years, Zambia has demonstrated its commitment and political will to suppress GBV at various levels. At the international level, Zambia has signed and ratified all the major international instruments and is a signatory to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) which has signified a huge step in making efforts to mitigate GBV (Jere, 2013). At national level, the condemnation of various acts which cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and children is enshrined in the Republican Constitution. Various other stakeholders have come on board to fight GBV. For example, the Church has been instrumental in ensuring that the root-cause and the effects of GBV are addressed. However, while some churches have strongly condemned GBV, some churches still remain silent on the issue. According to Nason-Clark (2004), refutation and silence in some religious communities about wife abuse, not only immobilizes religious victims, but inadvertently encourages the behaviour of the perpetrator. Other literature recognizes that religious teachings and clergy members have helped to establish non-violence in relationships (Rotunda et al., 2004).

Rotunda et al. (2004) reveals that GBV is constantly on the rise and remains an escalating problem globally. Although many dramatic cases have been reported in the media, the issue is still viewed with little interest by the general public. Being largely a Christian nation, it would be expected that religious principles would contribute to ending GBV and ensuring prevalence of peace in families. Literature suggests that the Church all around the world has a major role in ensuring social justice including GBV. Fortune & Enger (2005) argue that religion is a personal and institutional reality in the lives of the majority people, and religious teachings and affiliations provide a significant context for many men and women as they address experiences of violence.

According to Sande (2016), the problem is that GBV has some long-term effects of hatred, psychological trauma, and even death. Regardless of these, some Christian churches often do not recognize this violence. What is alarming from the statistics is that, when it comes to GBV, it is generally women and girls in the church who are on the receiving end of the violence. Sande adds that theologians and scholars in religious studies have come up with an array of causes ranging from socio-economic, religious and cultural perspectives. Since time immemorial women have experienced the evil of violence from a broad spectrum of life. The most cunning one is GBV. The complexity is how it is dealt within Pentecostal churches is a subject worth investigating.

The role of the Church in addressing GBV cannot be overstated. Fortune and Enger (2005) postulate that, through texts, traditions, teachings and doctrines, religious communities and institutions convey values and belief systems to their members which influence their cultural beliefs and overall behavior towards fellow human beings. Scholars have shown that religious leaders are usually one of the first, if not the first persons to be approached for counsel on family problems and domestic violence issues (Rotunda et al., 2004). Additionally, religious leaders are not only asked for sought on family problems, but they have the opportunity to teach families on the right values of relations during pre-marital counselling sessions. Historically, religious leaders have played an important role in the guidance of their parishioners (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2005). But the question is, how has the Pentecostal church in Zambia addressed the raising cases of GBV in Zambia?

II. AIM OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to establish practices of Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church Theology that address Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Zambia.

Research Objectives

- i. Describe the causes of GBV among members of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches.
- ii. Establish aspects of Pentecostal Assemblies of God church Theology that address GBV

Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of GBV in the membership of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches?
- ii. What aspects of Pentecostal Assemblies of God church Theology address GBV?

Statement of the Problem

Studies by Sande (2016); Sande (2019); Rotunda et al., (2004) have indicated that the source of GBV in the church is both embedded in how the marriage institution is conceptualized in both the African indigenous culture and Pentecostal theology. However, with the rising cases of GBV,

generally in Zambia, the researcher sort to investigate practices of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that address GBV. Doing this research was a demonstration that church has a role to play in addressing GBV.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by the social-ecological model. Heisse (1998) defines the social-ecological model as a set of theoretical principles for understanding the dynamic interrelations among various personal and environmental factors. According to Heisse (1998), in the social-ecological model, the source of domestic violence is demonstrated into four major co-existing factors, namely the individual perpetrator, relationship, community and society. The social-ecological model opens an understanding of the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence.

Dahlberg and Krug (2002) explain the four levels of intervention in the model. The first level identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Some of these factors are age, education, income, substance use, or history of abuse. Prevention strategies at this level promote attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that prevent violence. Specific approaches may include conflict resolution and life skills training. The second level examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator. A person's closest social circle-peers, partners and family members influence their behavior and contribute to their experience. Prevention strategies at this level may include parenting or family-focused prevention programs and mentoring and peer programs designed to strengthen problem-solving skills and promote healthy relationships.

The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, churches and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence. Prevention strategies at this level impact the social and physical environment. For example, by reducing social isolation, improving economic and housing opportunities in neighborhoods, as well as the processes, policies, and social environment within social settings. The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited. These factors include social and cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable way to resolve conflicts. Other large societal factors include the health, economic, educational and social policies that help to maintain economic or social inequalities between groups in society (Dahlberg and Krug, 2002). Besides helping to clarify these factors, the model also suggests that in order to prevent violence, it is necessary to act across multiple levels of the model at the same time. In the study, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology and

GBV were analyzed in light of the mentioned co-existing factors of the social-ecological model.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative in nature and used an exploratory research design. The study sample consisted of two (2) Pastors, two (2) church elders, four (4) church deacons, two (2) representatives from the EFZ and ten (10) lay members from the churches under study. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques for participants were used to sample participants from the population under study. Primary data was collected using personal semi-structured interviews. In this study, the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews provided flexibility to the interviewees by not limiting them in the way they answered the questions asked by the interviewer. To start the Data Collection Procedure, appointments were made with the church administrators for interviews in the two churches under study as well as the EFZ. This gesture was further extended to other participants. Consent from participants was obtained and conducive time for the interview was agreed upon by the participants and the researcher.

Semi-Structured Questionnaires were first distributed among the participants of the study, for collection of demographical data, and on a later scheduled date, the researcher collected the questionnaires and conducted the semi-structured interviews with each participant of the study. The researcher chose to use interview technique so as to directly obtain information from the participants. The interviews were conducted with twenty participants of the study. The interviews were held at the respondent's convenient place and time. For the Pastors and the representatives from the EFZ, the interviews were conducted in their offices while the church premises were used as interview site for church leaders and lay church members. In order to capture all the information from the interviews, the researcher made use of a sound recorder. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

V. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that address GBV

The researcher was also interested in knowing the aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that address GBV. When a question was asked to state the aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church that addresses GBV, the following themes emerged; Couples' meetings, Counselling, Campaigns against GBV and Active voice against GBV.

Couples' Meetings

Participants of the study were asked to reveal what the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church was doing and its role in addressing GBV among members and in the community. Most of the participants cited special church couples'

meetings as one of the measures that the church had employed to address GBV.

One of the Pastors (P2) during the interview said:

We have a great role to play in addressing the scourge of GBV. Therefore, as a Pastor and leader of this church, I have made it clear to our leaders that we need to take deliberate moves in addressing this issue, especially among our members because we cannot deny that GBV is not in church. Therefore, we hold couple's gatherings where couples are allowed to express themselves regarding these issues and table some solutions which we can start implementing at church even before we even go out to sort it out in our various communities. Lastly, I want to emphasize that churches should hold married couples summits for a minimum of three times a year. These meetings should be open to the community so that they also benefit.

In the same vein, Pastor (P2) also added that:

We as a church believe so much in seeing, first, our members living peacefully in their homes. Therefore, we have special meetings for couples where we discuss issue related to living a happy life as husband and wife as well as with our children. The meetings have so far being beneficial to all of us and we hope we help more people in our communities as well.

This view was further supported by the church Deacon (D5) who established that the church conducted special meetings to help couples deal with the causes and effects of GBV. This is what D5 had to say:

The church has created special meetings to help couples deal with the causes and effects of GBV and this has helped us a lot to know what people think about it and how we can involve them to address this problem. I also think that the church should improve helping the victims especially carrying out home visitations to those who are experiencing marital problems.

Counselling

Participants of the study were also of the view that the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church's role in addressing GBV was to counsel those wanting to get into marriage and those who are victims of GBV.

One of the church Deacons (D6) who participated in the study was happy that their church was working hard to curb the effects GBV through counselling sessions. This is what D6 said:

Well the church is working so hard to be part of the fight against GBV. We, as the leaders should lead by example so that even when people come for counselling they will be able to be helped. GBV has come into the church and therefore we cannot ignore

it as leaders and as a Pentecostal church, we need to come up with counselling sessions both for those getting into marriage as well as those who are already in marriage. This way we contribute greatly to fighting this problem that has befallen us.

Similarly, one of the lay church members (M5) agreed to the assertion that the church was working hard to curb GBV. This is what M5 had to say:

I think our church is doing a good job indirectly to help us address GBV. I, as a newlywed, went through pre-marital counselling together with my partner because it is well-known that GBV is not just a problem of one sex, it affects both sexes.

Campaigns against GBV

Campaign against GBV also emerged as one of the themes under aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that addressed GBV. The study also indicated that the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church can have its place in the fight against GBV by participating in campaigns against this scourge.

A church deacon (D7) who participated in the study indicated that:

We as a church need to understand that GBV is real and it is not only happening outside the church, but also inside as we might know. It is for this reason that we need to identify campaigns that are going on against this vice so that with our concerted efforts, we can be able to address this issue. We have a number of organizations, including some of our church mother bodies that are implementing such campaigns. Our job is to identify such, join hands and allow them to use our platforms to reach a wider audience.

Similarly, one representative from EFZ (EF1) also indicated that their organization was ready to support every good cause initiated by the churches. This is what EF1 had to say:

I think as churches, we are expected to support every good cause. It is for this reason that every project out there that is helping in addressing such issues like GBV should have the support of the church. The majority of people are found in the church, therefore, allowing campaigns against GBV and other issues of interest will not only help us as a church, but it will help the communities from where our members come from.

Active voice against GBV

The study further revealed that the role of the church, in this case the Pentecostal church, is to be an active voice against GBV. Data collected from some of the participants of the study gave rise to this theme.

One of the representatives from the EFZ (EF1) said:

Generally, the Church is supposed to be the voice proclaiming the goodness of God and at the same time pointing out what is wrong and correcting it. Therefore, it is expected of the churches to feature in as many GBV programmes as possible using every medium. That is why we encourage the churches to use the media to spread the messages of goodwill including the dangers of GBV and how it can be addressed at all levels of the society.

In the same manner, another representative from the EFZ (**EF2**) believed that the church is a voice of hope correction and support. This is what **EF2** said:

We as a church mother body delight in seeing churches adding a voice to any vice that we are fighting against as a nation. We as churches are supposed to be a voice of hope, a voice of correction and a voice of support. We regard church as a place where people get to find solutions when they have problems. And in our quest to make the church relevant, we advise them to engage in helping people, especially starting from the family settings.

Furthermore, the participants were also asked to indicate what help the church rendered to the victims of GBV in the church and also in the community.

To give answer to the question, Pastor (**P1**) mentioned that the church gave spiritual, moral and financial help to the victims of GBV. This is what **P1** said:

To those who have been victims of GBV, especially those who have reported it to the church, we help them spiritually, morally and sometimes financially, depending on the need. We acknowledge that families nearly break due to GBV and it is for this reason that we keep helping our members going through such trying times.

Similarly, Elder (**E2**) said that their church visited families to offer them hope. This is what **E2** said:

We as a church help many who pass through abuse resulting from GBV. We as leaders visit homes of the affected and offer them consolation and hope. Further, we are there to teach families how to live with each other, therefore, our goal is to ensure that after our visitations the couples get to reconcile and learn how to not resort to violence every time that there is a misunderstanding.

However, to the contrary, one lay church member (**M6**) was of the view that the victims of GBV were rarely helped by the church. **M6** indicated that:

The church is supposed to help in addressing GBV and also help the victims especially the members. But what I have seen in the 14 years that I have been a member of our church is that not many are helped in that area. We have a number of women who are

suffering because of violence in their homes but the church has not done much to help them and their family. And am sure it is not only our church, other churches too are not helping us much.

V. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that address GBV

This section presents a discussion in line with the following theme: Couples' meetings, Pre-marital and post-marital counselling, participation in campaigns against GBV and being an active voice against GBV.

Church Couples Meetings

The findings of the study indicated that the Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches under study conducted couples' meetings and summits in order to address the issues of GBV within the church and the community. Church resident Pastors were of the view that meetings for couples acted as measures to curb the vice. The implication of this finding is that one of the main goals of the couples' meetings was to teach couples on how to live in harmony so as to reduce any form of antagonism between them that may give rise to GBV. Furthermore, the findings of the study brought to light that religious teachings obtained through couples meetings and summits are a step toward having healthy and grounded relationships in the church as well as in the communities.

The findings of the study are consistent with (Rotunda et al., 2004) who established that religious teachings and clergy members have both helped and hindered efforts that seek to establish non-violence in relationships. Many government and non-governmental societies have attempted to offer programs to mitigate violence. So yet, GBV on both men and women remains unchallenged in all its forms in the Pentecostal churches. Therefore, the forms of GBV should be interpreted within a specific institutional context. Violence is not only physical but also include emotional and psychological harm. Theologians and scholars in religious studies have come up with an array of causes ranging from socio-economic, religious and cultural perspectives. Since time immemorial women have experienced the evil of violence from a broad spectrum of life. The most cunning one is GBV.

Couples' meetings are tailored to meet the needs of married couples spiritually, socially, culturally, financially and sentimentally. It is there to help couples grow together in the understanding of love. It also brings married couples together through fellowship in a well-structured Christian environment. Most married couples do not often get away together without children, which is vitally important for the health of a marriage. Getting away together with the specific intention of building a marriage can work wonders. Therefore, as a church, facilitate this kind of retreat and marriage summits once or twice a year and it will be a life-changing weekend for the couples who attend. If a church decides to put together a

marriage conference or retreat, it is always a wonderful time of marriage-building and friendship-building among the couples in the church and hence help in addressing issues of GBV. It is through the couples' church meetings that marriages are imparted with knowledge on how to communicate effectively and how to apply the fundamental principles of marriage as scribed in the Bible.

Furthermore, through couples' church meetings; old married couples are able to share their experiences with the new marriages as they act as models. Married couples today play an important role in marriage preparation. They serve as models, witnesses, mentors, and guides for engaged or co validating couples. In these specific capacities they offer practical examples of marital issues, and utilize their experience to pose appropriate questions for consideration. Married couples, by living the reality of marriage, are in a position to share their day to day experiences of 'for ever after,' specifically in regards to the cultural myths about marriage that both married and engaged couples must face. As role models, couples offer their journey of faith. They flesh out what it means to be sacrament by sharing their daily experiences of creating an 'us.' Additionally, married couples are vulnerable. When they present themselves as examples to the engaged couples, they are openly offering themselves. Through this they create a line of communication with others and encourage the engaged couples to be vulnerable as well.

Counselling

The study further revealed that counselling was one of the theological aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church that addressed GBV. The study showed that one of the aspects of Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that addressed GBV included providing counsel to those wanting to get into marriage and those who are victims of GBV. The implication of this finding is that premarital and post-marital counselling sessions conducted in the church by trained leaders has the potential of produce positive results in terms of addressing GBV. The findings of the study align with Lowe (1986) who found out that education and training made a difference in the counselling and referral practices of clergy. The effectiveness of counselling be measured when clients are able to clarify and rank-order their needs and options, clarity and affirm perceptions, roles and strategies, want to learn and apply relevant new information, dissolve impasses respectfully, facilitate effective communication, and lend temporal emotional, spiritual and social support (Rosenthal, 2013). This criteria is useful in that it enables one to measure the effectiveness of therapy and if need be compare with other therapies.

According to Rosenthal (2013), attempts have been made elsewhere to measure the effectiveness of therapies. For example, psychoanalytic therapy has been tested in the United Kingdom with results showing that dream analysis has very short term gains while cognitive behavioural therapy has been found to be useful with certain psychological disorders.

Counselling focuses on the peculiar need of an individual. It is about trying to find a solution to an individual's need. Counselling cares for people who may be passing through some storms of life or the drums beats in their lives sound discordant chords and they are tired of them. For example, some people go to the counsellors when any of the pillars that hold up their marriage covenants are under threat, shaking, broken or destroyed (Rosenthal, 2013).

One's partner in marriage determines how happy and successful one will be in their life. Married couples invest money, time and energy into building meaningful relationships that they hope will stand the test of time as well as bring benefits to them. However, trouble starts when a spouse sees his efforts outweighing the benefits. Couples come to counsellors because they are having challenges in or want to improve on their relationships. Some marriages and homes are breaking. The role of the Christian counsellor is to see ways of resolving all these challenges until God's faithfulness is established.

While the Christian counsellor points people to the word and love of God, he still understands that this God is the author of reconciliation and has entrusted this same ministry to His. Of course, it is to be recognized that no marriage is completely perfect because no person is perfect and there are no instant cures to all of life's challenges. Counselling may be prolonged over a period of time. At times, the process may be painful but very necessary for the maturity and stability of the couples. Marriage partners who willing go through always come out winning in the wars launched against their marriages and homes.

Nobody can say he or she completely knows his spouse. As individuals, we know in parts. Through counselling sessions, the couples learn a lot. Counselling sessions bring to the surface those little foxes that cause disharmony. If they are not properly handled, they can destroy homes. Aririguzoh (2013) writes that Christians also pass through conflicts. Counselling is beneficial to the individuals, the church and the nation. Couples do not need to stay unhappy with each other if they can learn to apply the beneficence of counselling. There are behaviours that are peculiar to Christians including how they resolve issues. Marriage counselling makes the partners to acquire the necessary knowledge required in settling conflicts. The word of God is the fountain that teaches knowledge. In this regard, marital misunderstandings that might lead to GBV are addressed. It is clear from the findings that premarital and marital counselling work to ameliorate marital discord and improve marital satisfaction.

Premarital preparation is typically designed to help couples maintain relatively high levels of functioning. Since premarital programs are provided to couples seeking to strengthen their relationships, premarital preparation can be described as preventative. Prevention efforts may be particularly important given the argument that once dysfunctional interaction patterns develop within a marriage,

they become more difficult to change. The serious effects of GBV to partners in marriage call for a need to establish prevention strategies such as premarital preparation to improve marital quality and reduce the current rates of marital distress, violence and divorce.

Campaigns against GBV

Furthermore, the findings showed that campaigns against GBV were also a relevant aspect of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theologies that addressed GBV. Participants of the study revealed that the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church's role was to be a stakeholder in campaigns against GBV. This finding implies that church leaders and community leaders such as politicians should be holding joint enrichment seminars regarding GBV. This includes holding conversations on GBV and exploring joint ways in which churches and communities can partner to address the problem. The findings of the study are consistent with Osmer and Schweitzer (2003) who maintain that practical theology includes a public dimension in its work. The Government of Zambia has been very assertive and committed, to reduce and eliminate all forms of GBV while promoting gender equality. The National Plan of Action on GBV (2010-2014) provided for domestic violence against men and women to be recognised as a fundamental violation of human rights. It is a well-known fact that the needs of many victims of GBV remain unmet and prevention efforts are diminished due to limited resources and coordination among the various sectors. This means GBV remains a matter of great concern in Zambia.

While efforts to meet the needs of survivors are inevitable, dealing with the root causes and major drivers of GBV should take precedence. Such root causes include patriarchal practices, religious practices that oppress women, social norms, cultural norms and values that promote gender inequality. Furthermore, implementation of government policies remains hampered by, 'a lack of multi-sector intervention that work together to deal with GBV'. Those involved in the multi-sector interventions should not be guilty of harbouring the root causes because this would impinge on their effectiveness. This argument resonates well with Magasu, Muleya & Mweemba's (2020) observation that engagement in community affairs is considered to be a vital component in the effective transmission of democratic ideals, and the fight against GBV being such.

From the findings of the study, it can be noted that the church is a subsystem of society and has often been blamed for its ambivalent response to GBV both within and beyond the church's sphere of influence. Further, the study also revealed that attaining an active voice against GBV is one of the aspects of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church theology that addressed GBV. The Church is to participate in social campaigns and add its voice against GBV as initiated by the government and other stakeholders. Bridging the gap between the church and social issues is indeed the task of public

pastoral care as a form of public practical theology. Practical theology is interconnected with public issues. Dreyer (2004) added that the days are long gone when the practices of the church and clergy were the main or the only focus of practical theology. The vision has broadened to include the context of everyday life on a local community, national and global level. The Pentecostal Assemblies of God churches should further add its voice against GBV by holding community seminars.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the church, in particular, the Pentecostal church is alive to the fight against GBV through various programmes. The study has also shown that lack of proper communication, financial challenges, alcohol abuse, infidelity and perceived infidelity and lack of knowledge of the biblical foundations of love and marriage were the major causes of GBV. Essentially, this study has established that some aspects of the church theology that addressed GBV include couples' meetings, premarital and post-marital counselling, campaigns against GBV in sermons and meetings.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Since most marriages are consummated in church, the church should introduce awareness and rehabilitation programmes specially designed to help both perpetrator and the victim of GBV. This will minimize the adverse effects of GBV on the family and prevent future escalation of the vice.
- ii. The Church, being positioned as an active voice of influence, should employ strategic plans to curb the vice by forming more support groups with the help of the government in order to address GBV.

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