

## **Confronting Misogyny, Pastoral Care, and the Sacred Community**

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*Intimate Partner Violence is a major problem world-wide. One in four to one in three women in the US and world-wide experiences physical abuse in their life. This does not include sexual assault, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse. The statistics are staggering. However, clergy are many times the first ones sought by victims for help. Unfortunately, most seminaries/graduate schools have little or no training for students to prepare them to engage this issue in their communities. In 2012 the Sojourners released a survey of two-thousand pastors indicating that clergy were inadequately addressing IPV in both their congregations and communities. The Biblical texts have also been used by abusers and clergy to further oppress women and require that they stay in these oppressive relationships. Even more, our culture presents images that encourage females to “submit” to males without question. This “misogyny” also allows space for men to oppress women and find a space that sometimes reinforces their abuse. In my work as a minister and abuse trainer to those in abuse, prostitution, and sex trafficking; I have found that pastoral theology provides a powerful opportunity to provide care for these victims (as well as the oppressors), engage the community advocates, and help others reorient their views of themselves, God/Jesus, and the church. Christian leaders, especially those in Missional Churches, also have an opportunity to create safe and sacred spaces that protect victims, empower survivors to heal, and hold men accountable for their views and treatment of women and other men. Through Biblical texts and practical ministry churches can provide powerful opportunities for healing, when applied correctly to the lives of those in oppression and those abusing power. These Missional congregations also become outposts of social justice for IPV advocates in their communities.*

Misogyny always confronts women with the same dilemma. Whether they are ‘good’ girls or ‘bad’ girls, they are forced into the same conundrum, they still arouse lust in men for which they, not those who desire them, are held responsible.<sup>1</sup>

Jack Holland’s quote, after a historical discussion of misogyny, suggested that this attitude toward women has existed for many millennia. From the early Babylonian texts, which glorified the hypersexual and hyper violent masculinities of the gods, to the Epic of Gilgamesh, where the prostitute *civilized* the man-beast, females have been the objects of oppression from

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Holland, *Misogyny: The World's Oldest Prejudice* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2006), 40.

males in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Western cultures linked female virtue to appropriateness as well as the strength and purity of the family.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, “gender slippage” was viewed as destructive to manhood and an additional opportunity to oppress femininity.<sup>4</sup>

The Hebrew and Greek texts developed and were written among these misogynistic cultures, sometimes affirming while other times condemning the struggle between masculinity and femininity. However, my belief is that the divine voice behind the sacred texts sought to move the holy people beyond their cultural views of women, femininity, and vulnerable others.

### Misogyny

The Greek word misogyny means, “a hatred of women/femininity.” While this literal translation may be offensive to some, or an over exaggeration of its application, misogyny is manifested in “general attitudes one takes toward femininity.” Jacob Anderson-Minshall suggests, “The fact that men can’t be feminine without being punished by our society is proof that we still don’t value femininity: It’s treated as reprehensible—at least when it appears in men and boys.”<sup>5</sup>

*First, the object of misogyny may not be limited to females.* While females are typically the focus of misogyny it can also apply to characteristics whenever *gyne* (feminine) is compared to *aner/andros* (masculine). RK Harris has suggested that *aner/andros* not only represented males but male behaviors. Male behaviors refer to active/aggressive behavior that was culturally attributed to “real men.” *Gyne*, therefore would represent the opposite or “passive” behaviors

<sup>2</sup>For a more thorough explanation of this attitude toward misogyny and masculinity see, Ron Clark, *Am I Sleeping With the Enemy? Males and Females in the Image of God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), 1-4.

<sup>3</sup>Holland, 40. David D. Gilmore, *Misogyny the Male Malady* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 66-67.

<sup>4</sup>Colleen, M. Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (NY: Oxford University, 2008), 18.

<sup>5</sup>Jacob Anderson-Minshall, “The Enemy within: On Becoming a Straight White Guy,” *Men Speak Out: Views on Gender, Sex, and Power*, ed. Shira Tarrant ( NY: Routledge, 2008), 35.

culturally ascribed to females and those labeled “non-males.” Non-males represent those in a culture considering them as men who have “slipped” out of the “male role” and become feminine. In the ancient world this class was also represented by the poor, elderly, disabled, immigrants, slaves, and children. This did not represent a third gender of human but one located in the *gyne* zones of society. Misogyny, therefore, can affect both females and males.

*Second, hatred is not the limit of the word.* Often in trainings males indicate that they don’t “hate” women, but we suggest that they are still unconsciously part of complex systems which continue to oppress *gyne* and enhance *andros*. These systems exist to separate masculinity and femininity and make one submissive to the other.<sup>6</sup>

Misogyny occurs when *gyne* is directly oppressed, devalued, and degraded for the enhancement of masculinity. Misogyny also supports institutions and cultural views which aid others in creating a climate of oppression where behaviors which are deemed “feminine” are labeled negatively. Misogyny involves reinforcing behaviors which prevent femininity from being empowered and viewed as a valuable partner in the development of *andros*.<sup>7</sup>

### The Dilemma of Anger, Aggression, and Intimate Partner Violence

Families caught in Intimate Partner Violence (hereafter referred to as IPV) and faith communities addressing this issue face a dilemma in confronting the abuse. Due to a lack of understanding of the dynamics of IPV it becomes difficult to confront abusers who have been taught to use texts to subordinate females and their families. The problem is further compounded when we associate IPV with anger, rather than power and control. Anger is an emotion and a

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<sup>6</sup>Minshall also indicates that misogyny exists even in female to male transpeople. Those becoming “male” find power in oppressing their female partners, even though as “trans” they once identified as female. Ibid., 33.

<sup>7</sup>“Until being called pussy, girl, fag, and pansy isn’t the worst thing in the world, we won’t eliminate misogyny.” Ibid., 35.

response one displays when anxious. Anxiety creates many emotions but anger can be one that is used to intimidate and control others. When anger is used to control others the problem is not anger itself but the need and desire to control others.

Intimate Partner Violence is a growing problem in the United States as well as other parts of the world.

- In America two to four million women have indicated that their spouses or live-in partners physically abused them during the year.<sup>8</sup>
- Twenty to twenty-five percent of all women reported that their partners abused them at least once.<sup>9</sup> One out of four American women report having been raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, live-in partner, or date at some time in their life.<sup>10</sup>
- Twenty-five to forty percent of dating couples experience physical violence.<sup>11</sup>
- Hospital emergency rooms indicate that twenty to thirty percent of women seeking treatment are victims of battering.<sup>12</sup>
- Every day in America at least three women are murdered by their husband or intimate partner.<sup>13</sup>
- Throughout the world, one in three women have confessed to having been beaten, coerced into sex, or experienced other forms of abuse.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>The statistics vary but each year the range of reported statistics falls between two and four million women. Angela Browne, *Violence against Women: A Majority Staff Report*, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate (Oct. 1992): 3; P. Tjaden, and N. Thoennes, *Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey* (NCJ 183781). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2000; Lundy Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* (NY: Berkely, 2002), 7.

<sup>9</sup>Evan Stark and Anne Fliteract, "Spouse Abuse," *Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence and Public Health Source Book*, 1985; Sarah Glazer, "Violence Against Women," *Colorado Researcher* 3 (1993): 171. For a more statistical analysis of domestic violence in America and other countries see: "Physical Assault on Women by an Intimate Male Partner, Selected Population-Based Studies, 1982-99, Table 1," *Population Report Series L: Number 11*, n.p. Online: <http://www.infoforhealth.org/pr/l11/l11tables.shtml>.

<sup>10</sup>*Ending Violence Against Women: Population Reports*, Series L. Number 11, 27:4 (Dec. 1999). See also the *Population Report Series L*; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, *Intimate Partner Violence* (Oct. 2003), n.p. Online: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm>; Samantha Levine, "The Perils of Young Romance," *US News and World Report* (Aug. 13, 2001): 46. National Women's Health Information Center, *Violence against Women* (Sept. 2001), n.p. Online: <http://www.4woman.gov/violence/index.htm>.

<sup>11</sup>Sherry L. Hamby, "Acts of Psychological Aggression Against a Partner and their Relation to Physical Assault and Gender," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 (1999): 968.

<sup>12</sup>*International Journal of Health Services* 20 (1990): 21; and Mary Susan Miller, *No Visible Wounds: Identifying Nonphysical Abuse of Women by Their Men* (NY: Random House, 1995): 7.

<sup>13</sup>Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief, *Intimate Partner Violence from 1993-2001* (Feb. 2003). In 2000, 1247 women were killed while 440 men were killed, by intimate partners. Estrella suggests that every 15 seconds a spouse kills his wife. Rosa Emily Nina Estrella, "Effects of Violence on Interpersonal Relations and Strategies that Promote Family Unity," lecture given at *LaFamilia Unida: La Fuerza Del Futuro 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Power in Partnership Bilingual Conference*, June 20, 2003, Portland, OR.

<sup>14</sup>*Population Report Series L*. Estrella reports that 50% of women of the world are abused by a spouse and that four million women are involved in sexual trafficking. The statistics vary from country to country. Estrella

- Domestic violence is estimated to be much higher within the United States military than within civilian families.<sup>15</sup>

IPV not only affects the spouse who is targeted by the abuser, but it also affects the children in the home.

- One-third of abused women indicate that they were abused the first time during pregnancy.<sup>16</sup> Research suggests that this may contribute to low birth weight of infants and other negative effects for infants.<sup>17</sup>
- In a study done by Boston Medical Center over one-third of children reported seeing violence by fathers against mothers when a parent reported that no violence occurred.<sup>18</sup>
- Children brought up in abusive homes have a higher risk of being abused.<sup>19</sup>
- It is estimated that three to five million children per year witness an assault on their mothers.<sup>20</sup>
- “Around forty percent of abusive men extend their pattern of behavior to other family members.”<sup>21</sup>

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indicates that 20.8% of women in the Dominican Republic report having been physically abused while Palacios reports that in El Salvador four out of five women live with violence in their families. Maria Aracely Linares Palacios, “Strategies for Working with Latinos Who Have Experienced Family Violence,” lecture given at *LaFamilia Unida: La Fuerza Del Futuro 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Power in Partnership Bilingual Conference*, June 20, 2003, Portland, OR.

<sup>15</sup>Christine Hansen, “A Considerate Service: An Advocate’s Introduction to Domestic Violence and the Military,” *Domestic Violence Report* 6 (2001). The study suggests that in 1985 one in three military spouses were victims of abuse. In 1987 research indicated that military victims were four times more likely to be choked into unconsciousness. A study done at the Pentagon from 1992 to 1996 also indicated that domestic violence in the military occurred at a rate five times higher than that among civilians. While serious incidents decreased from 1997 to 1999 the amount of moderate to severe domestic violence incidents increased. The results suggest that domestic violence in the military is much higher than in civilian families. Also see: Marianne Szegedy-Maszak, “Death at Fort Bragg,” *US News and World Report* (Aug. 12, 2002): 44.

<sup>16</sup>Jacquelyn Campbell, “Correlates of Battering During Pregnancy,” *Research Nursing Health* 15 (1992): 219-26; Campbell et al, “Why Battering During Pregnancy?” *Clinical Issues in Perinatal and Health Nursing* 4 (1993): 343-49. As many as 324,000 women each year experience intimate partner violence during pregnancy. J.A. Gazmararian, et al., “Violence and Reproductive Health: Current Knowledge and Future Research Directions,” *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 4:2 (2000): 79-84.

<sup>17</sup>Carol J. Adams, *Woman-Battering* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 12.

<sup>18</sup>Boston Medical Center Pediatrics, “Child Witness to Violence Project,” n.p. Online: [http://www.childwitnessstoviolence.org/care\\_givers/for\\_aregivers\\_facts.html](http://www.childwitnessstoviolence.org/care_givers/for_aregivers_facts.html).

<sup>19</sup>A national survey of more than 2000 American families reported that fifty percent of the men who abused their wives also abused their children. Jennifer Talbot, “Children Witnessing Domestic Violence,” Lecture presented at the *Working with Abusive Men* workshop, Portland State University, Portland, OR, May 2002.

<sup>20</sup>Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?*, 8.

<sup>21</sup>Bancroft, *When Dad Hurts Mom: Helping Your Children Heal the Wounds of Witnessing Abuse* (New York: GP Putnam’s Sons, 2004), 53.

The dynamics of abuse and IPV involve power and control rather than anger. This power and control includes coercion, fear, terrorism, and intimidation.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately anger is commonly associated with abuse. Those who are not aware that anger is a response to anxiety or the fear of losing control over others, suggest that the problem with abuse is anger. Therefore treatment for the abuser has traditionally been focused on *anger management* or *drug and alcohol* counseling. This method of therapy suggests that the abuser should focus on controlling or managing his anger and supposes that this is the major cause of his abusive behavior.<sup>23</sup>

The harder we try to pin down one explanation, the more certain we are to fail. The reason, I will argue, is that anger is not a disease, with a single cause; it is a process, a transaction, a way of communicating. With the possible exception of anger caused by organic abnormalities, most angry episodes are social events: they assume meaning only in terms of the social contract between participants.<sup>24</sup>

We tend to view abusers as angry people who are *out of control*.<sup>25</sup> One reason for this misperception is that we have come to believe that only angry, violent people abuse others. Media reports focus on the violent or lethal cases of domestic violence. This suggests, to many, that abuse must only involve physical violence. Therefore, we do not take seriously the concerns of those who are verbally, emotionally, and psychologically controlled and question whether or

<sup>22</sup>The Oregon Domestic Violence Council has defined IPV as: *A pattern of coercive behavior used by one person to control and subordinate another in an intimate relationship. These behaviors include physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. Tactics of coercion, terrorism, degradation, exploitation, and violence are used to engender fear in the victim in order to enforce compliance.* Multnomah County Health Department, *Domestic Violence in Multnomah County* (February 2000): 2.

<sup>23</sup>Females make up 85-90 percent of reported abuse in IPV. Callie Marie Rennison and Sarah Welchans, *Intimate Partner Violence*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report (May 2000): 1. Due to the prevalence of male perpetrators I have chosen to refer to the abuser in the masculine gender. While we acknowledge that females have been convicted of abuse (both in the heterosexual and Gay-Lesbian communities) the high majority of reported abuse still involves men battering women.

<sup>24</sup>Carol Tavris, *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*, rev. ed. (New York: Touchstone, 1989), 19.

<sup>25</sup>“The emotionally abusive person has an agenda, and that agenda is to be in control. In his attempt to be in control he will dominate, suppress, tyrannize, persecute, and attempt to conquer anyone he relates to on a consistent basis. Among his repertoire of control tactics are insults, denigrating comments, derogatory words, threats, and constant criticism, along with an extensive array of other intimidating behavior designed to make others feel inadequate and helpless.” Beverly Engel, *The Emotionally Abused Woman: Overcoming Destructive Patterns and Reclaiming Yourself* (New York: Fawcett, 1990), 47; Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?*, 112.

not they are being abused. Yet, abuse involves controlling behavior. The goal of abusers is *control*. Abusers react to anxiety in a dysfunctional manner. They may use anger or other emotions to gain control of a situation or another person. Abusers can also use apologies, self-pity, and sympathy to control a situation.

In the United States the public outcry toward the National Football League's actions concerning the Baltimore Raven's running back Ray Rice, has been expressed both in support of Rice as well as in anger against him. The media's continual showing of the video where he assaulted his fiancé (at that time) in an elevator and left her unconscious along with public anger not only created an unsafe environment for Rice in his attempts to receive help, but his wife's healing as well. Her desire to stay married created a sense of anger from the public which responded with a "why doesn't she leave him?" question. The NFL's decision to "punish and fine" Rice did not solve the issue but offered the masses of angry citizens a sense of vindication, yet others stood by Rice and called out for mercy. In addition to this other reports of athletes using physical and emotional abuse on their spouses and children continued to fuel the fires of community justice. However, little was done to understand, offer help, and discuss accountability and making amends to past victims.

Victims find themselves caught in a cycle that is reinforced by guilt, fear, intimidation, and unfortunately love.

One of the earliest lessons I learned from abused women is that to understand abuse you can't look just at the explosions, you have to examine with equal care the spaces *between* the explosions. The dynamics of these periods tell us as much about the abuse as the rages or the thrown objects, as the disgusting name-calling or the jealous accusations. The abuser's thinking and behavior during the calmer periods are what cause his big eruptions that wound or frighten.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?*, 137-38.

The Power and Control Wheel, developed by the Duluth Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota (figure 1) illustrates how abusers use various tactics of power and control to subordinate others.<sup>27</sup>

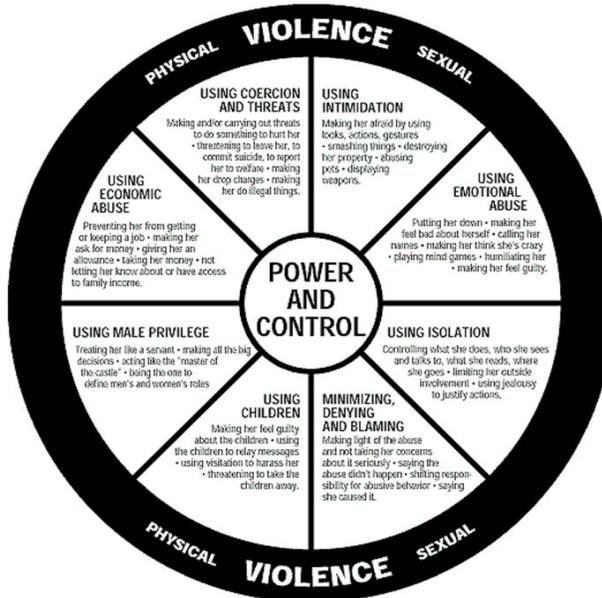


Figure 1: Power and Control Wheel

Abusers use various methods to control their partners and close friends/relatives. Anger is only one of many methods that an abuser uses to engender fear and coerce their partners into submission. They use intimidation, male privilege, coercion, emotional and psychological abuse, children, or minimize their abuse so that their partner may continue in an emotional bond or relationship with them. This causes the victims to develop what is known as *traumatic bonding*. Traumatic bonding creates an emotional dependence that a victim has on their captor, or one who terrorizes them, which causes them to seek validation, support, love, and emotional strength from this abuser. Abusive individuals use power over others to control them and enforce compliance.

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<sup>27</sup> [Caption]Figure 1: Abuse Power and Control Wheel  
Copied with Permission, Domestic Abuse Intervention Project  
202 East Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802.

They may use anger to control others but when this becomes ineffective, they try something else.

Those victimized by the abuser find themselves caught in a relationship that becomes cyclical. The abuser seems to control the cycle and victims become powerless in this swirl of emotion and violence (figure 2). The abuser expresses anxiety over losing control of those in relationship with him, causing him to try to become more controlling and abusive. This also causes the family to become *tense* and afraid. The abuser begins to act out in order to control the family and terrorize them. This is considered the violent *storm* phase of the cycle. After this the abuser expresses remorse and guilt for his actions. This *calm after the storm* phase may be short lived or extend over a period of months but continues when the abuser blames the victim or victims for the tension and storm. The cycle then begins again and many times escalates unless intervention occurs. “It seems absurd that a relationship that is supposed to be based on love can become violent and demeaning. The incredulity is stretched even further when the relationship does not dissolve but instead continues in a cycle of apparent forgiveness and sentimental love followed by increased violence.”<sup>28</sup>

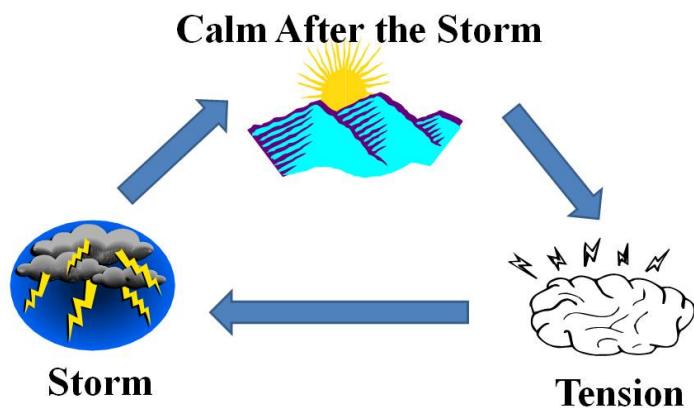


Figure 2: Cycle of Abuse

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<sup>28</sup>David J. Livingston, *Healing Violent Men: A Model for Christian Communities* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 7.

Since anger and aggression have been effective for abusers, in controlling others, they develop a worldview that supports intra-relational competition, hostility, control or domination of others, inequality, and negation or neglect.<sup>29</sup> Abusers lack the desire or ability to encourage equality, partnership, mutuality, intimacy, and validation in their partners.

### Abuse, and the Biblical Texts

Those who abuse others, who are involved or familiar with teachings from within the Judeo/Christian faith communities, have found weapons to control their partners in some of the sacred texts. While these texts in no way support abuse or power over intimate partners, they are used by abusive men (and sometimes the community itself) to further subordinate women.

### Divorce

In Mal 2:16 *Yahweh* states:

I hate divorce, says *Yahweh* the God of Israel, and one who covers himself with violence, says *Yahweh* of hosts.<sup>30</sup>

Many, especially clergy and abusers, have used this text to tell victims that God does not approve of divorce. Therefore, victims have no other option but to stay in the relationship, accept the abuse, and hope for change. The text seems to be difficult to reconcile if we take the view that God is opposed to any divorce. But is the text meant to enslave spouses in violent relationships?

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<sup>29</sup>Patricia Evans, *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize it and How to Respond*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation, 1996), 42.

<sup>30</sup>There is an alternate translation of this verse suggested by other language versions of the Hebrew text. Some versions read, “If you hate her, divorce her.” For more information on the validity of this translation one can consult Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible: Tanakh Translation* (NY: Oxford, 2004), 1272.

The setting of the book of Malachi suggests that the nation of Judah has returned from Babylonian/Persian captivity. As time passed, they began to return to the ways of their former generations by neglecting the sacrifices and practicing idolatry (Mal 1:1–6). While *Yahweh* was the offended husband in Hosea, *Yahweh* became the offended wife in Mal 2:11–16.<sup>31</sup> Israel had married a foreigner and begun to practice injustice. The people of Israel again practiced the same behavior that caused the previous divorce. How was God to respond to this behavior? “Judah has acted treacherously [or faithlessly] and committed an abomination in Israel and Jerusalem. Judah has profaned what was holy to *Yahweh* and loved the daughter of a foreign God” (Mal 2:11).

First, *God practiced divorce against those who profaned the holy covenant* (Isa 50:1; 54:6–7; Jer 3:8). In Ezra 10:11, Ezra and the Jewish leaders encouraged the Jewish men, who were married to foreign women, to divorce their foreign wives. If Mal 2:11 suggests that the Jewish men may have been married to foreign wives, then what are the implications of this text?<sup>32</sup> In Mal 2:16 God was displeased with divorce. However, this does not suggest that God was not willing to practice it.

Second, *the Malachi text may not be discussing literal marriages.*<sup>33</sup> The term covenant was used throughout Malachi to refer to the Jewish nation’s relationship to *Yahweh*.

1:2 I have loved you

<sup>31</sup>For texts that suggest God as mother/wife/female see Isa 42:14; 46:3; 66:9-13. While John 4 suggests that God is spirit, female imagery is used of God as well as male imagery. Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (NY: Oxford, 2001), 90.

<sup>32</sup>Mal 2:11 states, “Judah has married the daughter of a foreign god.” This can have two interpretations. First, the text can suggest that the Jewish men were married to foreign women. Second, the text can mean that the Jewish nation is again involved in idolatry. Biblical scholars support both interpretations.

<sup>33</sup>For further discussion on this debate see: Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible (NY: Doubleday, 1998): 422-43; David Clyde Jones, “A Note on the LXX of Malachi 2:16,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 683-85; Beth Glazier-McDonald, “Intermarriage, Divorce, and the *Bat-’el Nekar*: Insights into Mal 2:10-16,” *JBL* 106 (1987): 603-11; David Peterson, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995), 195-206. Against this interpretation see Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 27-47.

- 2:4 Warning about breaking the *covenant* with Levi
- 2:5 *Covenant* of life and peace, Levi respected me
- 2:8 You have turned from me
- 2:10 Why do you profane my *covenant*?
- 2:11 Judah has *broken faith* and married the daughter of a foreign god
- 2:12 The Lord will cut him (Judah) off
- 2:14 False tears, remember the wife of your youth (*Yahweh*)  
*Broken faith* with your wife (*Yahweh*)
- 2:10 One God made them both
- 2:16 I hate divorce so *do not break faith*

These texts indicate that the Jews were dishonoring their master, father, and wife.<sup>34</sup> The wife of their youth was to be *Yahweh*. Judah had left *Yahweh* and cleaved to another woman or god (probably the goddess Asherah).<sup>35</sup> *Yahweh* was challenging Judah in court, like an angry hurt wife, and warning Israel that they were about to be divorced, something God did not wish to do. The final statement was: “Guard yourself in your spirit and *do not break faith*” (Mal 2:15b). This interpretation is more in line with God’s view of divorce (an aggressive action to protect the sanctity of covenant), but it does not suggest that God will not allow divorce.<sup>36</sup>

Another interesting point in this text is found in Mal 2:16. “I hate divorce,” says *Yahweh* the God of Israel, “and one clothing/covering themselves with violence/lawlessness,” says *Yahweh* Almighty, “so guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.” While God may not wish to divorce the people, God equally hates violent/lawless individuals. Malachi indicates that the Jews were showing partiality in the law (2:9), committing injustices (2:17), oppressing the

<sup>34</sup> In some cases *Yahweh* is referred to as the female partner. See Peterson, *Zechariah*, 203; and Mark Smith, *The Early History of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 97-103. In Proverbs, wisdom is seen as feminine and is also the first creation of God (Prov 8-9).

<sup>35</sup> In Jer 44 the Jews who were left after the third Babylonian captivity turned from God to worship the *Queen of Heaven* (Asherah). It seems that the Jews in Malachi’s day are again returning to this deity. Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 294-95; Smith, *History*, 109-10. Julia O’Brien also believes that the Jews have again been involved in idolatry to Asherah. Julia M. O’Brien, *Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 300-302.

<sup>36</sup> Clark, *The God of Second Chances: Finding Hope in the Prophets of Exile* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 152-54.

poor (3:5), and practicing evil (3:15).<sup>37</sup> Many abusive men have failed to read these sections of the text. In my work with abusers and survivors this text is commonly used to control victims and promote that God is angry with the wives for leaving, divorcing, and filing a restraining order. Few, however, admit that God would be angry with them for their violence, controlling behavior, and oppression.

Mal 2:16 does not suggest that God is angry with divorced people. The text also does not suggest that people cannot divorce their abusive spouses. The text is a warning to those who are unfaithful *and violent* in their relationships with *Yahweh* and *other humans*. The text also suggests that *Yahweh* calls for relationships to promote peace, respect, and honor for both parties.

### Submission and Marriage

#### *Ephesians 5*

One concept in the Biblical texts is that God seeks to develop relationship with humans. I find that in domestic violence, the victim, usually the woman, is blamed for causing the marriage to fail. Faith communities suggest that she needs to keep the marriage together by forgiving and enduring the abuse and oppression her husband manifests. Many churches and leaders attack the victim because they feel that the burden falls on her. This is a misunderstanding of covenant. In many cases the burden falls on the husband. One passage that seems to illustrate this is Eph 5:21–33, which is built around this fundamental principle: submit to one another out of fear/respect for Christ. Christian marriage involves shared power. Both partners respect and submit to one another because they have a deep love for each other. Whether the text is attributed

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<sup>37</sup>Clark, Ibid., 153-55. “Submit or Else! Intimate Partner Violence, Aggression, Abusers, and the Bible,” *A Cry Instead of Justice: The Bible and Cultures of Violence in Psychological Perspective*, edited by Dereck Daschke and Andrew Kille (New York: T and T Clark, 2010), 95-96.

to Paul or a Deutero-Pauline author this verse suggests that husbands are called to be “counter-cultural” in their relationships with their wives. However, the text is used by abusive men as well as some male church leaders who suggest that a woman has no option but to submit to her husband—regardless of his oppression. “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Eph 5:22–24). The text does not support abuse or oppression in a marriage. First, this text was written to the women, therefore it should not be quoted by husbands toward their wives. It is likely that this is a short section because women in the first century were typically submitting to their husbands. However, in light of evidence concerning Roman women, the plea only suggests that the wives continue to respect their husbands.<sup>38</sup>

This does not teach that women are doormats; it suggests that men and women mutually submit to each other (5:21). Additionally, the Spirit (1 Cor 14:32) is submissive to the prophets. God’s Spirit can be controlled and silenced by human beings.<sup>39</sup> This does not indicate that the Spirit or God is less than human beings. Submission says nothing about status; it is only an act of giving, support, and encouragement. Women and men submit to each other (Eph 5:21) in the ways God has shown them through love, peace, compassion, and joy.

Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the

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<sup>38</sup>For more information on the New Roman Wives, their rebellion in the Roman culture, and Paul’s encouragement for the female Christian community see Bruce Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 17-30.

<sup>39</sup>Clark, “Submit or Else!,” 99-100; *The Better Way: The Church of Agape in Emerging Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2010), 128-29.

church—for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (5:25–33)

This longer section was written to husbands. In domestic violence the problem is that husbands do not act like Jesus or God. A man, who hits, humiliates, rapes, or verbally abuses his wife is acting contrary to the God who created him. When talking with men, we use this passage of scripture and discuss their behavior as compared to Jesus. In the early church, God/Jesus was the model for husbands and fathers. It should be the same today. Husbands should initiate love and practice compassion toward their wives. They should not use Biblical texts to subordinate their wives, rather men should serve their spouses. Since God initiates covenant and seeks to bless those in covenant, husbands must reflect this nature in their covenants, marriages, and relationships. The church needs to call these men to repentance and accountability. God does not maintain a relationship through force, coercion, or control but by love, persuasion, and forgiveness. Men must practice love, compassion, honor, and mercy in their relationships with others, especially their partners (Exod 34:6–8).

The city of Ephesus also had as its “head” Artemis, a hybrid goddess whose worshippers focused on her fertility blessings. Jesus as “head” was one who united Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:11–20; 3:4); the cosmos (1:10); the Church (1:22); husband and wife (5:32); nurtures the body (3:15; 5:29); and gives himself up for others (5:2, 25). This sacrificial, unifying, and nurturing nature of Jesus seems to be parallel to Artemis the head and great mother of Ephesus. Likewise husbands were also challenged to imitate this maternal nature of Jesus as they also nurtured their wives and children (5:29; 6:4). Abusive and controlling men are called by the text to treat their

wives with respect, honor, and gentleness. Men, like Artemis and Jesus, are expected to be concerned for women and children and do not demand submission from them.<sup>40</sup>

Maintaining a relationship means that men and husbands should act righteously. To oppress the poor and weak is a sign of unrighteousness. Marriage involves empowerment rather than power and control. In I Peter 3:7, the text states that husbands who are not considerate with their wives may not have their prayers heard. Marriage should help both partners become better and feel better about themselves. “If mutuality is one of the aims of love between adults, then people need to ask themselves how their own acts of self-sacrificing love either further mutuality or reinforce roles and structures of domination and subordination.”<sup>41</sup>

### Theological Obstacles to Leaving Abusive Relationships

The dilemma for victims in faith communities is further magnified when their communities contribute to the problem by enabling abusers to continue to subordinate their partners through the sacred texts. In my work with faith communities I have, sadly, found that many encourage women to change their abusive husbands by submission and staying in the marriage.<sup>42</sup> This fear of divorce and unwillingness to accept divorce as an option seem to provide fewer resources for women seeking safety from their abusive husbands. It is also important to note that women who leave their abuser and are married are at greater risk of being murdered compared to those escaping who are cohabiting with or divorced from their abuser.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Clark, *Freeing the Oppressed: A Call to Christians Concerning Domestic Abuse* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2009), 73-74.

<sup>41</sup>Brita L. Gill-Austern, “Love Understood as Self-Sacrifice and Self-Denial: What Does It Do To Women?” in *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care* (ed. Jeanne Stevenson Moessner; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 317-18.

<sup>42</sup>For a more detailed discussion of marriage and divorce, interpretations of these texts in light of abuse, and a defense for abuse victims leaving their abusers see chapter 6 in *Setting the Captives Free: A Christian Theology of Domestic Abuse* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005).

<sup>43</sup>Fleury, Ruth E., Chris M. Sullivan, and Deborah I. Bybee, “When Ending the Relationship Does Not End the Violence,” *Violence Against Women* 6:12 (2000): 1363-83.

Another theological roadblock involves *children and parenting*. The negative statistics on single parent homes, the current emphasis on the traumatic nature of divorce on children, and the fear of raising children alone create an environment where the woman feels compelled, for the sake of the children, to keep the marriage together.<sup>44</sup> Faith communities also struggle to treat divorced women and single parents as part of their spiritual community. Our society as well still attaches a stigma to those who are divorced. While Biblical texts such as 1 Cor 7:12–16 and Matt 18:5–6 encourage spiritual adults to do what is best for children, the fear of divorce continues to encourage women to stay with their abusers. The abuser also continues to terrorize the children during visitation and while he is separated from his partner.<sup>45</sup>

### Confronting the Issues of IPV

Abusive men have developed a personality that further contributes to their abusive tendencies and their view of themselves. Characteristics of abusers involve narcissism, low self-esteem, emotional immaturity, compulsive tendencies, and emotional distance from both females and males.<sup>46</sup> They tend to believe that relationships are a competition and increase their emotional distance from other men. They lack any male accountability and search out those who can be controlled. These men not only control their partners, they control how others see them.

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<sup>44</sup>“Children are far better off—as a number of studies demonstrate—living in peace with their mother than being exposed to a man who abuses her. In fact, the studies indicate that children are better off living with a single parent than being around parents who fight frequently even *without* abuse. . . . The research that purports to show how damaging single mothering is to children has failed to control for income and for prior exposure to abuse, so that the difficulties observed are actually the effects of poverty and of the fact that many children witnessed abuse while their parents were together—and that is why the mother is now single.” Bancroft, *When Dad Hurts Mom*, 321.

<sup>45</sup>This has led many batterer intervention specialists to now require abusers to have supervised or no visitation rights with their children when the partner leaves them. Bancroft is one of these specialists as well as Jack C. Stratton, “What is Fair for Children of Abusive Men?” *Journal of the Task Group on Child Custody Issues of the National Organization for Men against Sexism* 5 (2001): 1-10.

<sup>46</sup>Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That?*, 42, 72; James Newton Poling, *The Abuse of Power* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 27.

Many abusers have been given a negative view of females due to their environment and childhood issues. Below is what we call an illustration of the *Manhood* box defining what a Real Man is assumed to be (figure 3).

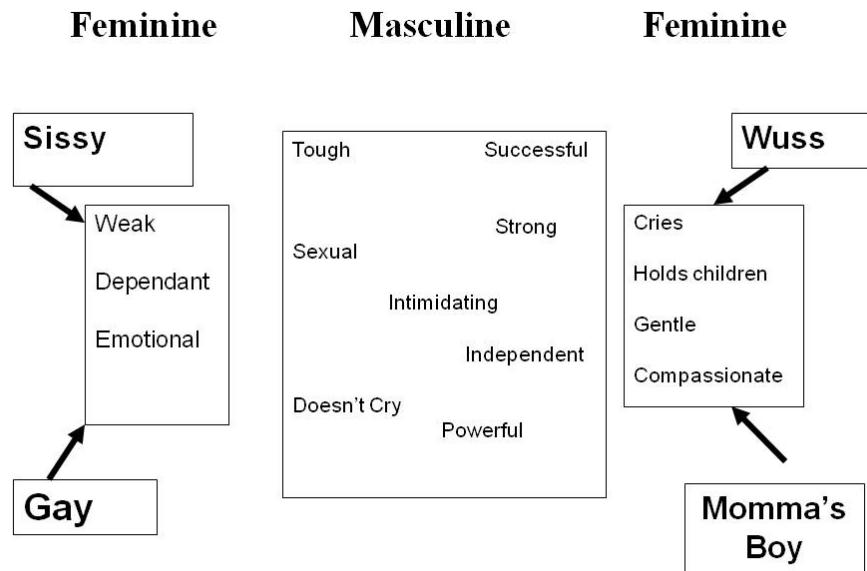


Figure 3: A Real Man Is...

The characteristics listed above involve the current societal view of manhood. In figure 4 those terms opposite of what constitutes *a real man* are terms used to describe women or homosexuals. Female and homosexual terms are used on young boys/men who display behavior that is not “manly” or is opposite the nature of a “real man.” Therefore, young men grow up viewing women as opposite or exhibiting behavior that is unacceptable for a man to display. In other words, men are raised to hate, fear, and disrespect women and others who exhibit *non-manly behavior*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Clark, *Am I Sleeping with the Enemy? Males and Females in the Image of God* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010), 26-29.

Abusers are men who have deep insecurities not because they hate women, but because they have not been taught (by family, culture, or society) to be in touch with their true feelings. Those behaviors within them, which they have been taught are *feminine* are suppressed or rejected. In some faith communities, men have not been given permission to feel the vast array of emotions placed within them by God and modeled by both *Yahweh* and Jesus Christ. These men, instead of seeking to become intimate and emotionally close with women, tend to compete, dominate, and/or distance themselves from those who hold qualities they have been taught are inferior.

Young men are commonly taught that anger is a socially acceptable emotion. Anger is also an emotion which young men are encouraged to practice. However, anger is a response to anxiety but is practiced and accepted in the culture of the *Real Man*. This stereotype is prevalent in media, music, and many cultures.<sup>48</sup> Abusive men use anger because it has become effective in manipulating others, controlling their partners, and continuing to mask their true feelings and lack of self-esteem. In confronting abusers issues of power and control, self-esteem, and views concerning women need to be addressed both Biblically and sociologically.

### Misogyny and IPV

#### *Applied Misogyny*

Misogyny is enforced in western culture. I will limit this work to my experience in North America as a minister, educator, and domestic, sexual, and trafficking advocate, and expert witness.<sup>49</sup> My involvement has been with victims of abuse and prostitution, as well as males who

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<sup>48</sup>Two excellent resources for this are the video by Jackson Katz, *Tough Guise* (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1999); and Paul Kivel's book, *Men's Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears Our Lives Apart* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1992).

<sup>49</sup>While I have conducted IPV trainings in Albania, Mexico, and Malawi, I find that there are similarities with US populations. However, faith communities in those countries tend to be more protective of victims than those in the US.

support that oppression through their involvement as solicitors of prostitution, pornography, and other sexual forms of oppression. I see firsthand the damage this does to both victim and consumer.<sup>50</sup> Misogyny not only directly damages victims it indirectly damages those related to victim and consumer, by scarring those in relationship with these individuals. Misogyny also damages future relationships of victim and consumer and those on the receiving ends of their relationships. “Rather than being a model for healthy relationships, patriarchy is actually the very force responsible for their demise.”<sup>51</sup>

### *Gyne Zones*

Misogyny creates a climate of oppression and shame for those considered *gyne* by limiting their emotional and physical development. Jeffreys has indicated that the beauty industry continually limits women’s normal growth and development through fashion, cosmetic surgery, dieting, and portrayal by the media.<sup>52</sup> The fashion and cosmetic industries continually support the reduction of females’ bodies, hair, or other body parts to encourage them to become smaller. One can visit a store where boys’ and girls’ toys are sold and observe that male action figures are becoming larger and more muscularly defined, while female dolls become smaller and more enhanced in breasts. Females are expected to cut, tear, bleed, wax, and walk on smaller shoes in the name of fashion.<sup>53</sup> Females are expected to remove body hair, excluding the scalp, in order to appear feminine.

While females are restricted males become uninhibited. Pornography has continually increased with the explosion of the internet. Themes in pornography continue to mix violence

<sup>50</sup>Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 25.

<sup>51</sup>Ewoare X. Osayande, “Redefining Manhood: Resisting Sexism,” *Men Speak Out*, 37.

<sup>52</sup>Sheila Jeffreys, *Beauty and Misogyny: Harmful Cultural Practices in the West*, (NY: Routledge, 2005), 6.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid, 2.

with pleasing and serving males.<sup>54</sup> Pornography suggests that all women want sex from all men, that women desire the sex (even if it is degrading to women) that men want, and that force can help women who resist become compliant<sup>55</sup>. While there has been an important discussion concerning the distinction between pornography and erotica, pornography continues to grow in the number of products and in the male market, which further supports male privilege. As with the beauty industries, male size becomes larger, while women as free individuals become restricted in their movement and ability to resist unwanted sexual encounters in pornography. Pornography serves to satisfy males and continues to create a climate that is unsafe for women both on the camera and off.<sup>56</sup>

Prostitution continues to increase in North America. In addition to this, under aged prostitution has also increased in numbers and financial value. Police and FBI agencies are reporting that underage prostitutes bring substantially more income to a pimp while aged prostitutes and strippers have decreased in value. I see these statistics manifest as an everyday reality. In my neighborhood strip clubs continually post “cheap nights,” “cheaper dancers,” and earlier hours in the day. Those we are working with in/leaving prostitution inform us that “quick” money is possible on the streets since costs have dropped. As costs decline, pimps use victims more frequently and work longer hours. The role of the victim is to serve and enhance the “male ego.” Males are taught to be in control, on top, and must penetrate others in order to be real men. <sup>57</sup>Pimps also break the spirits of the victims so that they will obey them.

<sup>54</sup>Ann Simonton and Carol Smith, “Who Are Women in Pornography? A Conversation,” Christine Stark and Rebecca Whisnant, ed., *Not For Sale: Feminists Resisting Prostitution and Pornography* (N Melbourne, Australia: Spinfex, 2004), 352-62. Robert Jensen, “Just a John? Pornography and Men’s Choices,” *Men Speak Out: Views on Gender, Sex, and Power* (NY: Routledge, 2008), 64-69.

<sup>55</sup>Jensen, 66.

<sup>56</sup>Avaren Ipsen, *Sex Working and the Bible* (Oakville, CA: Equinox, 2009), 91.

<sup>57</sup>Rus Ervin Funk, :What Does Pornography Say About Me(n)?” How I Became an Anti-Pornography Activist,” *Not for Sale: Feminists Resisting Prostitution and Pornography*,ed. Christine Stark and Rebecca Whisnant, (North Melbourne, Australia: Spinnifex, 2004), 339-40. “In prostitution, the john performs the sex act

Finally, work with batterers and sex offenders indicate that males who oppress females do so, not out of anger, but misogyny. These males are deficient in empathy and compassion and struggle to respect those in *gyne*.<sup>58</sup> US News recently posted research with “Johns” and those viewing pornography as compared to males who have done neither.<sup>59</sup> Those in the first group saw women as “non-human” objects. While male privilege is a common attitude of many batterers, it is also common in elder, child, and abuse with people having disabilities. Misogyny can also be re-enforced by other females. While they are still victims, their support of others who oppress women is an act of collusion with male oppression rather than female oppression of males, neither is it justification for misogyny.<sup>60</sup> Yee suggests that ideologies against females exists when the dominant group secures support in the loser’s opinion.<sup>61</sup>

*Gyne* are oppressed through industry, sexual objectification, sexual abuse, and IPV. Males have privilege to oppress those considered *gyne* because we live in a culture that permits not only this behavior, but many times encourages it.<sup>62</sup> Males have power to also choose femininity as cross dressers, however those in *gyne* are typically forced into passive and submissive roles by these males.<sup>63</sup> Misogyny does not only involve male attitudes toward

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with the unwilling victim, but subcontracts the intimidation and violence to another man, the pimp. The john would like to believe he is paying for sex, but the person he has sex with gets little or none of the money. The money goes to the pimp to pay for the force needed to keep prostituted women and children working.” Joe Parker, “How Prostitution Works,” *Not For Sale*, 7.

<sup>58</sup>Lundy Bancroft, *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men* (NY: Putnam, 2002), 42; Clark, *Setting the Captives Free: A Christian Theology for Domestic Abuse* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005), 39-51; Jackson Katz, *Tough Guise*, (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1999); Paul Kivel, *Men’s Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears Our Lives Apart* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 1992), 21, 44.

<sup>59</sup>Leslie Bennetts, *The John Next Door*, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/07/17/the-growing-demand-for-prostitution.html>.

<sup>60</sup>Walter S. DeKeseredy, *Violence Against Women: Myths, Facts, Controversies* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2011), 43-58.

<sup>61</sup>Yee, 16-18.

<sup>62</sup>Clark, *Am I Sleeping With the Enemy?*, 1-8.

<sup>63</sup>Jeffreys, indicates that “men can choose femininity but women can’t...” 65.

females, it operates in systems, institutions, and underlying attitudes that support the elevation of *aner/andros* to the degradation and expense of those considered *gyne*.

Ideologies against females are not only circulated by the dominant culture (oppressor/males) they are legitimated or naturalized by mistreating the oppressed.<sup>64</sup>

#### A New Paradigm: Zone Offense

Biblical studies and pastoral care can have a tremendous effect on the prevention of abuse, power, control, and IPV. The issues that abusers face are prevalent in all forms of relationships, leadership, and cultures. Power and control lie at the core of many dysfunctional relationships and need to be addressed in all human beings. In the faith community a new paradigm, one of mutuality, peace, and compassion can be presented to families caught in abuse.

First, clergy, faith community leaders, and academicians *must publicly speak out concerning intimate partner and sexual abuse in institutions, faith communities, and the community at large*. In my work with churches, Christian leaders, and students I have found that the public proclamation of the Gospel as healing and confrontation of these forms of violence and misogyny is key to addressing abuse, pornography, prostitution, and other forms of misogyny. As with the Biblical text (especially Ezek 37:1-14) the “Word of the Lord” has tremendous healing power. Even more victims and survivors of these forms of violence will also be supported and strengthened through these statements from leaders. “When they heard that Yahweh was concerned (observing) them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped” (Exod 4:31). Victims and survivors can never truly worship until they feel safe, protected, and heard in their pain.

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<sup>64</sup>Yee, 10-18.

Power and control must also be transformed to *empowerment*. In my work with Community Against Domestic Violence, a non-profit organization committed to creating awareness in the Portland, Oregon community; we have begun to train faith community leaders to address power and control issues in sermons, lectures, and classes. People are to be empowered and empower others. The fruit of the Spirit involves self-control as well as love, peace, patience, gentleness, and kindness (Gal 5). The book of Proverbs was a collection for future leaders, possibly in a school, who were taught to practice righteousness and justice (Prov 1:2–6).<sup>65</sup> The leaders were taught that patience, a willingness to accept rebuke, and being slow to anger were qualities deeply respected by the community and *Yahweh* (10:8, 17; 13:1; 15:31–32).

The relationship of husband and wife, in the Christian community, is one of mutual submission (Eph 5:21) where the wife submits to the husband by loving and respecting him, and the husband equally submits to the wife by loving her with a passion that empowers her to feel safe, respected, and loved. This is modeled by Christ's love for the Church. *Yahweh*, in Ezek 16, also displays this love, for the people of Israel. Since the Spirit also submits to the human prophets (1 Cor 14:32) we understand that submission includes a mutual relationship where both work together out of respect and community. God does not display power over, but empowers the creation and humans. Empowerment is seen in mutuality, respect, and encouragement in intimate and other relationships.

Second, the Biblical texts *redefine masculinity*. In a world where gods were both male and female, *Yahweh* claimed to be one God. *Yahweh* was a warrior but most often reflected

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<sup>65</sup>These terms (righteousness and justice) apply to social justice in the community. See: J. Bazak, "The Meaning of the Term 'Justice and Righteousness' in the Bible," *The Jewish Law Annual* 8 (1988): 5-18. "When the prophets refer to *mishpat* and *tsadeq* they do not mean merely that the judges should judge accurately. They mean primarily that the officials and landowners should act on behalf of the poor." Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 44. For more on Proverbs and wisdom schools see my article: "Schools, Scholars, and Students: The Wisdom School *Sitz-im-Leben* and Proverbs," *Restoration Quarterly* 47 (Fall 2005): 161-77.

compassion, love, was slow to anger, and was gentle (Ezek 34:6–8). While these characteristics were typically feminine in the ancient East, *Yahweh* claimed to reflect these in the divine nature. It was for this reason that Jonah refused to go to Ninevah. “I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Jonah 4:2). In Isa 66:10–14, *Yahweh* offered to carry Israel in the bosom and nurse them. *Yahweh* gave birth and comforted the children of Zion. *Yahweh* is neither male nor female but is Spirit (John 4) and reflects a nature that lies in both men and women from the creation. Gen 1:25–27 indicates that both men and women are in the image of God.

Feminine language is used also in the Greek scriptures. Jesus’ touching of women and children, using eunuchs as models of the kingdom, and leaving his family would have made his masculinity suspect in the Roman world.<sup>66</sup> The characteristics of the Spirit also were considered feminine in the Roman world (Gal. 5:16–24). Paul’s use of feminine and masculine family terms in 1 Thess 2:6–12 indicate that the ministry of the church carries the nature of God to both male and female.

### Redefining Masculinity in Faith Communities

While many in the *gyne* zone have opposed misogyny the painful truth is that misogyny must also be confronted by those in the *aner/andros* zones of society. Males must join their partners in the *gyne* zones to oppose these forms of oppression and call for radical shifts in male privilege and definitions of masculinity and femininity. As ministers and academicians this shift must also be reinforced in our own faith communities, seminaries, and academic institutions.

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<sup>66</sup> Ron Clark, “Kingdoms, Kids, and Kindness: A New Look at Luke 18:15-17,” *Stone Campbell Journal* 5 (Fall 2002): 235-48; Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

*First, misogyny begins at childhood.* Feminine and homosexual terms are used to teach boys to live in “the man box.” Boys who do not represent the qualities ascribed to *aner/andros* are labeled and warned to change their behavior. Those who do not live in the “man box” are accused of gender slippage and called to “man up,” “grow a pair,” or “act like a real man.” In childhood boys not only learn what “masculinity” is they learn that those “*gyne*” are the enemy and to be oppressed. As the boy suppresses emotion he learns to suppress those who show these emotions.

He also is given a very stunted and unrealistic model of manhood. Males should broaden their understanding of masculinity. Sacred texts suggest that Yahweh displays compassion, love, and gives birth. Jesus also displays compassion, love, and nurtures (*ektrepho*) the “church/bride” (Eph. 5:25-33). The apostle Paul called males to nurture their wives and children and be involved in their families.<sup>67</sup> Fatherhood has the role of teaching children, especially boys, that *aner/andros* and *gyne* work together in maturity and adulthood.

*Misogyny is also reinforced in adolescent males.* As young males develop they are introduced to “male privilege” through pornography, some sports, media, and other male clubs that provide misogynistic peer pressures. Pornography consumption is highest among males this age as males are introduced to objectification of women through sex, masturbation, and their sexual development. Boys who do not “man up” are labeled, not only by their fathers/care providers, but their peers and other adult males. Instead of women and those in *gyne* being the enemy, they are now objects for rights of passage. Dating violence, sexual abuse, coercive sex, pornography, and gendered violence become proving grounds for masculinity.

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<sup>67</sup>Clark, “Family Management or Involvement: Paul’s Use of *Prohistemi* in 1 Timothy 3 as a Requirement for Church Leadership,” *Stone Campbell Journal* 9 (Fall 2006): 243-52 .

Empathy and compassion are also qualities that are suppressed in adolescent males. These young males also experiment with at risk behaviors to prove that they are not *gyne*. For many males this becomes a time when they are identified as belonging to *aner/andros*. Shame, guilt, and confusion are experienced by males who have “failed to man up,” as well as those who “man up” and struggle with the painful cost of “being a real man.”<sup>68</sup>

“In pornography, the pimp is called a publisher or a video producer, and the john is called a fan or a pornography consumer. But that doesn’t change the nature of the relationship: It involves one person (usually a man) selling another person (usually a woman) to a third person (usually a man). What this means is that pornography is a mass – mediated conglomeration of pimps and johns. When you masturbate to pornography, you are buying sexual pleasure. You are buying a woman. The fact that there are technologies of film or video between you and the pimp doesn’t change the equation. Legally, it’s not prostitution and, legally, you’re not in trouble. But you are still a john.”

Adolescent males have the opportunity, in safe environments, to learn critical thinking

skills which challenge cultural views of masculinity. In Proverbs, the *na’arim* (young male apprentices) were taught to resist violence, gangs, drunkenness, dishonesty, and sexually exploiting females. Wisdom (*hokmah*) was portrayed as a beautiful woman who both taught these males life and provided them with advice to become responsible adults. It is interesting to note that Proverbs is unique among ancient Wisdom Literature in that only here, was a female allowed to teach the young scribes.<sup>69</sup>

The apostle Paul also encouraged his young apprentice to treat women and the elderly with respect and honor. Sexual purity was a challenge in the ancient Roman world yet Timothy was expected to resist “cultural manhood” for a life devoted to helping others (1 Tim. 5:1-7; 2 Tim. 2:22-26).

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<sup>68</sup>Robert C. Dykstra, et. al., *Losers, Loners, and Rebels: The Spiritual Struggles of Boys* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 42.

<sup>69</sup>Clark, *Am I Sleeping With the Enemy?*, 100-102; “Schools, Scholars, and Students: The Wisdom School *Sitz im Leben* and Proverbs,” *Restoration Quarterly* 47 (2005): 161-78.

*Finally, misogyny does damage to males as they surpass midlife.* Many batterers have high levels of drug and alcohol use not because they become violent under the influence, but because they are ashamed of their behavior. Violent males struggle in relationships with those to whom they “are attached” as well as with other males. Shame and control prevent them from having healthy non-violent and non-sexual relationships with other females. Those addicted to pornography or have sexual addictions become unable to maintain relationships that provide empowerment, love, and value to their lives and the lives of others. Their addictions to sex, power, or control drive them further into isolation (something internet pornography suppliers appreciate). These males no longer fit in the “man box” because the box was a myth. They have become damaged men, broken not only by their unrealistic/unhealthy abuse of others and themselves, but by their cultural definitions of a masculinity that males could not live. “Defensive posture leaves us detached from our feelings. Society sees us as predator and prey we must always be on guard and develop protective postures, manifested by hyper masculinity and dominance, which sees violence as primary option to resolve problems.”

While the Biblical texts do discuss male violence, war, executions, and revenge; the Christian scriptures contrast the Caesar of God’s kingdom with the Roman Caesar. Roman Caesar was a warrior, king, and god.<sup>70</sup> Jesus, however, was a victim (slaughtered lamb), executed Messiah, and bringer of peace and justice. His justice was one that was extended to the poor and oppressed. Matthew’s Gospel suggests that the righteousness of Jesus involved compassion, acts of mercy, loving enemies, and reaching out to the poor (Matt. 1:19; 5:17-20; 19:20-21; 23:23). Jesus’ was located among the poor, oppressed, prostitutes, and sinners (Matt. 25:40; Luke 1:53; 4:16-19; 5:30; 7:34). The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus was willing to cross zones of power to

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<sup>70</sup>Compare Jesus’ portrayal in John’s *Revelation* (before the mighty war) as compared to the Roman Caesar who would have been viewed as a conqueror of land, sea, and heaven.

live among the humiliated (*tapeinos* Greek, ‘*ani* Hebrew) and expected the Christians to be patient and caring for those on the margins of society (Phil. 2:1-11; Rom. 12:16). The early Church focused energy on reaching those in the *gyne* zone and indicated that those who lived this way manifested spiritual maturity, also known as Agape (Matt. 5:43-48; 1 Cor. 13).<sup>71</sup>

Adult males have the opportunity to develop empathy and compassion for others through the sacred texts. These texts represent a divine will that not only manifests love, empowerment, and compassion; they represent the struggle of others who try to resist cultural views of masculinity to be “real men” in the eyes of the creator. Misogyny creates dissension, abuse, and destruction to relationships and those created to “complement” the first human. In Genesis 2:18 humans were to complement each other (Hebrew *naged*, usually translated suitable, meet, etc.). Unfortunately, cultural views of masculinity have taught males to compete with, oppress, and control our partners, intimate lovers, and friends.

“At the same time, sex is said to be the ultimate act of intimacy, the place in which we expose ourselves most fully, where we let another see us stripped down, not just physically but emotionally. Certainly sex can be all those things to different people at different times. But isn’t that a lot to ask sex to carry? Can one human practice really carry such a range of meaning and purpose? And in a male – supremacist culture in which men’s violence is still tacitly accepted and men’s control of women is often unchallenged, should we be surprised that sex becomes a place where that violence and control play out?”<sup>72</sup>

Male and female were to support, complement, and work together as a team. However, time and culture have changed the behaviors which could enhance one another into emotions to be suppressed and attacked. This suppression enables males to reject the *gyne*, something they need to be complete. It is not good for the *aner/andros* to be alone nor is it good for him to oppress his complement.

<sup>71</sup>For more on 1 Corinthians, maturity, and agape see, Clark, *The Better Way: Paul's Letter to the Corinthians in Emerging Corinth* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009).

<sup>72</sup>Jensen, 68.

Therefore, misogyny not only hurts males, it affects our ability to have healthy relationships with women and vulnerable others. It truly is at the root of much evil. Faith communities, and leaders, are in an important position to confront misogyny in males (and females) who encounter our pulpits, classes, and spiritual sphere of influence. While Genesis suggests that males are not to be alone, misogyny suggests that males do not need females. In Genesis 2:25–28 male and female were complements (*ngd*) rather than opposites. Masculinity is diverse and should be open to acceptance of others and the willingness to use one’s giftedness to empower others to be what they were created to be. Humans are called to help others rather than to be alone. Men and women were created to be together and live in harmony. Humans were not created to dominate but to care for the creation (Gen. 1:25–30). The new paradigm, based in the nature of *Yahweh*, revealed to the Christian community in Jesus and the scriptures, and supported by the Spirit is meant to empower men and women to reflect the glory of the creator. Divine power is shown by patience rather than control. Empowerment is the model for human relationship rather than abuse, control, and manipulation.

### Missional Outposts

The Missional Church originally was designed to integrate the church’s mission within the surrounding culture, while providing a pipeline for community transformation. As the Missional Church evolved into the Missional Incarnational or Emerging Church movements, IPV continues to be one area where this movement struggles to transform culture. In addition to the earlier mentioned interpretations of scripture and male attitudes toward females and “femininity” the Missional Church has also struggled to provide leadership within the community. My experiences as both a missional leader and community advocate have led me to acknowledge that the church, in all its forms, needs strong and compassionate leadership.

At the Agape Church of Christ our strongest witness within the IPV and Sexual Assault communities occurred as we developed missional outposts. The “outposts” were communities which practice Safe and Sacred Spaces. My Pastoral Counseling students who embraced an IPV form of ministry developed worship which protected victims and females, while calling men to a compassionate form of existence alongside their partners and other members of congregations. This also provided males who were willing to serve in IPV agencies and later hold positions of leadership which modeled equity and partnership. Many of these students also partnered with agencies to train clergy, advocates, and survivors in how to help faith based IPV victims heal and find hope within congregations. This also increased the number of resources that agencies could use in helping women heal and males find accountability and transformation. These “Safe and Sacred Spaces” reflect the values of the Reign of God, while witnessing to the local community that congregations were a necessary component in this area of social justice. Advocates had always shared with me that they believed the faith community was an important partner in their work but had been discouraged by the church’s lack of support for victims.

Hopefully, creating more and more awareness, Sacred and Safe Spaces, and missional outposts such as these will help in advancing mission and reflecting the transformation of culture through Jesus.