Chapter 8

Curriculum development with victims of violence and abuse

Maake J. Masango

Abstract

The process of education in Africa, especially in rural areas, has always centred on storytelling, idioms, proverbs and songs. These are used as a way of educating young people in the community.

This chapter uses idioms and storytelling as a way of entering into the lives of those abused and violated by others. It concentrates on the process of developing a curriculum that will equip clergy students to address the problems associated with violence and abuse by men in South Africa

The major educational tool used in the chapter is based on Tshegofatso's story. Tshegofatso Pule, who had worked as a make-up artist and wanted to pursue studies in marketing, was eight months pregnant when she was found dead in Durban Deep in June 2020. Tshegofatso Pule's love for fashion and beauty will be brought to life in a new crime documentary that documents her murder. The focus of this chapter is to create a way of pastorally addressing violence and abuse.

The narrative and process of educating students

The problem of violence and abuse upon women and children has become a pandemic that needs pastoral intervention. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa refers to the problem as the second pandemic (the first being Covid-19). The teaching not only needs the development of a curriculum that will equip clergy students to deal with this epidemic, but

the Theological Department needs to develop a way of dealing with this issue pastorally.

During a master's and PhD class contact week, we heard news that a boyfriend had killed an eight-months pregnant woman, and finally hanged her. This news shocked all of us attending that class of trauma in counselling. This class was composed of a mixture of clergy women and men. These people are dealing with the issue of trauma in ministry. As the class was focused on trauma issues and counselling, I felt it was important to analyse the story of Tshegofatso (Blessings) Pule, the one murdered and burned. We started discussing how pastorally we can deal with this issue. The emotions were high and very volatile. In our general discussions, I saw students attacking each other with anger, in particular women clergy. They were more knowledgeable about men killing women. As discussions continued, I realised that we needed a process of how to enter into the space of this case study of Tshegofatso Pule.

The story of Tshegofatso Pule

A man has been sentenced to 20 years in jail for the brutal murder of a pregnant woman whose death galvanised protests in South Africa and prompted a speech by the state president. In June 2020, the body of 28-year-old Tshegofatso Pule was found hanging from a tree with multiple stab wounds. Mzikayise Malephane, 31, pleaded guilty at a court in Johannesburg. He accused her ex-boyfriend of paying him to carry out the killing. Police said that a man was now in custody. In a plea agreement read out in court by his lawyer, Malephane said he had been offered R7 000 by the ex-boyfriend to carry out the killing but had declined. The offer went up to R70 000 before he accepted. Tshegofatso Pule was 8 months pregnant when she went missing on 4 June. Her stabbed body was found four days later, hanging from a tree by a member of the public in the Johannesburg suburb of Roodepoort. Local police confirmed that they arrested a 32-year-old suspect on Thursday evening 'on suspicion of being an accomplice in

the murder'. They did not give his name but told local media that he was expected to appear in magistrate's court early the following week.

Murder suspect Muzikayise Malephane appeared in the Gauteng High Court on 22 January 2021 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Muzikayise Malephane implicated Ms Pule's ex-boyfriend as the one who asked to commit this murder. There was a wave of outrage in South Africa after Ms Pule's death and the hashtag #JusticeForTshego trended on Twitter. In response, President Cyril Ramaphosa released a statement denouncing gender-based violence, (GBV) saying the pandemic had made it more dangerous for women because 'violent men are taking advantage of the eased restrictions on movement to attack women and children'. The president's statement said that as many as 51% of women in South Africa had experienced violence at the hands of someone they were in a relationship with.

Gender-based violence in South Africa

The era of 2019–2020 saw the rate of gender-based violence (GBV) rise at a concerning rate worldwide. Botswana, a small country with a population of 2 441 162 people, was ranked second highest in the world with 92.9 rapes per 100 000 people per year. Botswana is rated second after South Africa on GBV, Lesotho is rated 3rd, and Eswatini is 4th (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). This compares to Australia at 91.92 (population 26 068 792) Lesotho at 82.68 (population 2 175 699) and South Africa at 72.10 (population 60 756 135) (World Population Review, 2024).

Class discussions

After reading the story of Tshegofatso Pule, I asked the students to work individually on a treatment plan. Later they shared their thoughts with the rest of the class. I finally divided them into two groups to discuss how they would share their way forward. They had to focus on how they would tackle the issue of violence, as recounted in the story.

We then began with class discussions.

I read the story again to refresh the memory of the students. Anger, rage and shouting started in our analysis of this story. I asked the class to pause for a minute and then asked each one to share what they were feeling. After the process, I asked them to discuss the story again.

This is what followed:

One of the youngest women in the class posed a question to male clergy who were in the class: 'Why do men kill the womb that has given birth to them?' The discussions moved us in the direction of whom we pastorally care for amid the violence. Their response divided them further into two camps: Men vs Women. There was no progress until I asked them to follow a new system. I asked all the women to be in one group and all the men in another.

They then discussed:

- How they feel about the man who killed the womb that brought them to birth?
- The issue of the pregnancy of Pule.
- The issue of Tshegofatso's parents.
- The issue of the community engagement about this story.
- How they felt about the man who killed Pule.

Report back

The women concentrated on not being safe in South Africa, while the men focused on the murderer. Again, women challenged the men not to protect the male. It was important to be reminded of this issue. The main question was, should we pastorally concentrate on those who violate alone? Note that the men reminded the women that they also have rights. The women reminded all that only few men are murdered, and, therefore, we should face the issue of femicide, which is a pandemic in South Africa. They also warned us that in this process we should avoid silencing women's voices. I was reminded of the following words: 'Death of a loved

one disrupts usual patterns of interaction, resulting in a restlessness, an inability to remain in one place, an aimless moving, or a continued search for something to do' (Wimberly, 2008:34).

I understood what was happening in the class and had to be careful not to interrupt the process; my educational process at that moment was to help the class to produce knowledge that would help them pastorally to heal those violated. Nouwen captures this idea in the following way: 'The wounded healer is a person who must look after his (her) own wounds, but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others' (Nouwen, 1972:84). In other words, as a healer you must use your wounded experience to enter into the space of the troubled souls. This space needs to be respected irrespective of whether you believe in what the living human is saying. It is also important to note that we live in a community of South Africa, which is violence.

This issue has become a painful wound, especially to women and children. The latter lived in fear in their own country, because of violent men. Therefore, as theologians (like our Lord Jesus Christ) we are called not only to care for our wounds but also the wounds of others. The central theme is to use our wounds to heal others. That is what the Lord did during his ministry in the world. The process leads us to enter the space of mourning. It also acknowledges and highlights that the interruption of death is part of our lives.

The class was divided into two groups: women who were feeling the pain of being killed by men daily in South Africa and men who were vulnerable and feeling the shame and guilt of being associated with killings. The women in the class were preoccupied with the image and memory of the death of Tshegofatso (as their own because they were also targeted as women). As a result, they observed men in the class as being in the denial stage of violence, hence – anger. The process in the class allowed them to start grieving, which in the end will lead them to deal with the issue of healing. At that point,

they will be able to care for those who have experienced the same violation.

Nouwen then guides us into a process by saying: 'the minister (or caregiver) is called to speak (or address) the ultimate concerns of life, birth and death, union and separation, love and hate' (Nouwen, 1972: 87). In short, theologians and caregivers are called to enter the space of those wounded in order to give meaning to their lives.

Back to the class. The men in the class were dealing with the issue of shame and guilt because the murderer (who is a male) represented them wrongly in a violent South Africa. Wimberly had this to say about the issue of shame and guilt: 'Psychologically, shame or guilt is an attempt to acknowledge that shame has occurred and to relieve it by going to others and telling them about it' (Wimberley, 1999:73). At this point, I was aware of the withdrawal of men in the discussions because these issues of shame and guilt affected them. Lewis developed the above concepts further by saying: 'The difference between shame and guilt is that shame involves global attributions of fault to the entire self, while guilt is attributed to a specific act' (Wimberly, 1999: 78).

A beautiful story came to mind recorded in the Gospel according to Luke 7. It shares the story of the woman anointing Jesus' feet with her tears and her precious ointment. She was also dealing with the issue of shame and guilt. I said to the class, what an excellent way in which Jesus responded graciously to another person's shame and guilt. I also reminded them about Jesus' pastoral approach, which was gentle, tender, and caring – in contrast to the host of that home. I asked them to apply the methodology difficulties that women go through in their struggles in life. The class began discussing the issue, focusing on the problem faced in that story of the Gospel. With this in mind, the reader will now realise why that Monday morning, was clouded with darkness and sadness, which led us anger. The class resettled in getting answers in this murder case of Pule.

I then introduced Gerkin's methodology of pastoral care and asked them to approach the issue with that method in mind.

Gerkin's method of pastoral care

The element of 'shepherding' was needed to help students pastorally care for troubled souls. Shepherding in Africa is common and a known method of caring for the flock. The common entry is shepherding, which will help pastors and pastoral caregivers connect with women who are violated in their lives. The main task was to help students to pastorally care for the broken souls in a violent world. Gerkin raises four concepts of pastoral care, discussed in the sections that follow, which will help students enter the space of those violated by misuse of power in their lives.

Priestly function

The priestly function relates to leading in worship as a process of healing. As Oduyoye rightly reminds us: 'The purpose of our worship is to make us healing agents in the world' (Oduyoye, 2018:72). In other words, when a priest stands in front of the congregation and shares the call to worship, healing has begun – pastoral care has started. Use your words carefully at this time because you are standing on holy grounds.

Prophetic pastoral care

Here the shepherd becomes the voice of the voiceless, and pastorally brings them back into the centre of life of the community that has isolated and rejected them. The circle of women theologians remind us of the stigmatisation that happens to barren women in marriage. They challenged us to be prophetic and speak on their behalf. We are therefore called to be prophetic in our approach to caring for such marriages. As Oduyoye declares:

> Barrenness is a central negative factor in African women's lives that sends many into the hands of 'deliverers'. It is

> important that a caregiver, who is male [note] that women are exploited, marginalised, and humiliated for being childless even though counselling and alternative fertility process is now available. (Mananzan et al., 2004:69)

In my counselling session, I realised how barren women still face threats to life of reproduction, ruled by patriarchal African culture. I have always heard men blaming their wives for being barren. Sending them to medical doctors because they are having a problem and not them. The result will point at the problematic husband. In other words, they have found a man to be the problem in the area of reproduction. We are, therefore, called to be prophetic in our pastoral care approach. I have also included the referral of a couple to medical doctors during pre-marital counselling. Therapy in this case should serve the purpose of giving hope and impetus to women so that they may re-imagine new possibilities in their new life.

Wisdom of wise men and women

Shepherds use the wisdom of their experience in journeying with troubled souls. An African idiom finely captures this. It says: '*La hloho ntsho le rutwa maano ke la hloho Tshweu*'. This simply means that a black hair learns and borrows experience from a white hair. This process allows us to enter into the educational process of mentorship.

Shepherding the flock

Shepherding the flock is a way of journeying with the flock, caring for and protecting them. This process allows for trust and helping each other along the way.

A shepherd is someone who cares for the flock leading them to graze in a good place, and providing security. A good shepherd is willing to die for the flock (Gerkin, 1997:117).

On that day, this pastoral model of Gerkin was applied to the study of Tshegofatso. The students began working and exploring ways of dealing with this method. Women chose prophetic pastoral care as their entry point into caring. They

focused on how they could pastorally become the voice of the voiceless. They were seeking a way of restoring their voice within the community. The men, on the other hand, chose shepherding the flock, caring for the troubled souls. These two methods brought new light to the story of Tshegofatso. Women questioned the journeying pastorally with abused women by men. Some men continue to be traumatised by these unresolved traumas of the past. The main question to ask is, was this process going to be helpful or hinder healing between women and men?

Having explored all avenues of shepherding I then introduced another method that would further develop ways of caring, namely, Pollard's model of positive deconstruction.

An introduction to Pollard's positive deconstruction model

Nick Pollard describes positive deconstruction as follows: 'The process of positive deconstruction is done in a positive way in order to replace parts that are old with something better' (Pollard, 1997:42).

He continues:

> When I was an undergraduate, I bought my first car. It had a good chassis and most of the body works was Ok. However, that was about all that could be said in its favour. The engine was worn out, the gearbox crunched pathetically and the suspension was broken. It just about got me around, but it was not good. Sometime later, I heard about another car of the same make and model. It contained many new parts, which were in good condition, but unfortunately, it had been written off in an accident. I immediately bought it and set about taking both cars completely apart. I looked carefully at each part to see whether it was any good. If it was, I kept it. If it wasn't, I threw it away. Eventually, I put all the pieces together, started it up and found out that I now had a very good car. There wasn't actually much left of

> my original car. Some parts were good enough to keep most of them were now replaced. (Pollard, 1997:44–45)

His methodology shares insights that will help students as well as caregivers enter the space of those violated with grace and dignity. It raises a positive way of working with those who are wounded. The women took over and shared some way of pastorally caring for Pule's family and those affected by violence.

The central question

The process of discussion brings out Bonolo's question, which started the discussion. We can now ask: 'What causes men to destroy the womb that brought life to them?' It also raises the question of how we nurture and raise African children in our village, especially the boy child. In some other ethnic groups, boys are raised to take over the life of the girl child. They see them as their property, in particular after marrying them through the process of 'lobola'. This process supports the theory of owning them. Girls, on the other hand, are governed by self-control, submission and yielding to be controlled by boys (men later on). The creation of this concept leads them to live their lives for men. In other words, they die emotionally in living their lives for themselves. A good example is when the husband of a wife dies, the patriarchal widow inheritance demands that she is passed on to the husband's brother to continue her wifely duties in the dead husband's family, and for 'her own good' to be taken care of by the deceased husband's brother who becomes her new husband. This process is observed as polygamy. If she refuses, she is asked to go back to her family of origin, with nothing, except the clothes she has. Oduyoye articulates this process and avers that patriarchy in African culture is a given, and any word against it is viewed as deviant. She maintains that hierarchies are taken for granted as 'natural' and often justified with the saying, 'all fingers are not equal (Oduyoye, 2019:43). This idiom shares the concept of not expecting everything to be equal in life.

Feedback on the discussions held

The questions raised by the women in class not only challenged men (student's clergy) and the way they were struggling to answer them. They also struggled with how to grapple with the issue of violence and abuse. This is how the challenge led me to try to develop a way practical theology and mission can develop teaching tools for those involved in this issue. I realised that students (especially men) were struggling to address the issues. I also realised that pastoral caregivers need to be taught how to enter the space of victim abuse. There are several people who are traumatised daily, and some of them do not even report these violations, such as rape, physical and emotional abuse, to name a few of the issues. The question that leads us to discuss this issue is: 'Why do men kill the womb that has brought life to them?' We are forced to look at African cultural and custom practices that also perpetuate this violence. This scenario or narrative challenged me in such a way that I was forced to ask the question, 'How do I prepare students to deal with this pandemic?'

Concluding remarks

My concluding remarks made me listen carefully (in class) to what was said so that both my students and I may be able to reflect and analyse the process of caring for victims amid violence and abuse. I was also reminded of Fanon when he was analysing the systems of colonialism that oppressed human beings. He was sharing problems of misuse of power, in the world of slavery. He relates: 'It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other (Fanon, 1963:39). This quotation articulates my experience of living in apartheid South Africa. There was a time when I questioned whether God loved African people. I contemplated whether this affected men in such a way that they were misplacing their anger upon women and children. Looking back, I realise that I was losing my own identity as a black person, hating my own skin, which finally made me angry towards other

human beings. I also realised that I doubted whether God loves black folks.

No wonder men are now destroying the womb that has brought life to them. In short, we have internalised the hatred that was directed at us by colonialists. It is sad to read what Fanon says about people who have lost their dignity and identity. He says:

> The native is declared insensible to ethics; he [sic] represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of value. He [she] is, let us dare to admit, the enemy this sense he [sic] values, and in this sense he (she) is the absolute evil. (Fanon, 1963:41)[7]

This is true because we have become a corrosive element in our country destroying all that comes close to our lives. This corrosiveness has led us to destroy all that is good because we have internalised the irretrievable instrument of blind forces of apartheid. He concludes the above idea of bad internalisation by sharing that the process has dehumanised us in such a way that 'It turned him (us) into an animal' (bestiary as settlers call us) (Fanon, 1963:42).[8]

We (South Africans) face the violence and abuse of women in our country in this unfortunate situation. It is therefore not surprising that African men are misdirecting their anger to African women. The reader will now understand why this book is important. We (theologians) need to analyse our theology, and how it is misleading us to subjugate women into abuse of patriarchy. This analysis, when handled well, will offer us a way of addressing past traumatic memories resurfacing and affecting future generations that have become

7 Here, Fanon is dealing with the issue of the relationship between the French and Algerians.

8 Fanon is dealing here with conceptualisation and articulations of how in the world of oppression, people analysed others as objects, which is a typical way of abusing and violating the other. Then, the use of force and power becomes the order of the day.

violent. Our understanding of addressing theology of violence will help us in dealing meaningfully with the bad split that occurred among the oppressed during the apartheid years. Analysis of our theology will help caregivers to re-direct trauma into healing methods of caring. Vickroy highlights the role of trauma narrative to show how it affects that x violated: 'The effects of trauma on cognition and sense of self that goes to the heart of knowledge and existence is compromised when associated with wounding' (Vickroy, 2015:36). It is my wish and hope that this book will address the issue of violence and abuse, and thus honour the traumatic memories of those women who died at the hands of violent men.

This class is now working in solidarity with impacted communities that are struggling with violence against women and children. It is an essential part of pastoral care, seeking justice for isolated, rejected and marginalised women and children. These relationships inform and direct our steps as we work to change the systems that marginalise and oppress the most vulnerable among us. President Ramaphosa has shared an insight that is worth mentioning in the conclusion. He calls GBV a second pandemic that is affecting us just as Covid did. He also highlights that we live in a country that has been named the 'rape capital of the world' and is regarded as the 'most dangerous country for women'. We deserve leaders and caregivers who will uphold the rights of women and girls and address the violations that are happening around us.

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