CULTIVATING CHANGE AGENTS
MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND HEALTH
IN AFRICA

28-29 MARCH 2017
HOFMEYR LECTURE ROOM (2003), FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2017

8:30–8:45  Registration

8:45–9:00  Welcome and Arrangements
           Juliana Claassens

9:00–10:30 Session 1 (Chair Juliana Claassens)

The Colour of Change: Identity Matters, Christian Faith and Resistance in the HIV and AIDS Pandemic
_The Rev. Dr. Cheryl B. Anderson, Professor of the Old Testament, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois USA_

HIV and faith: Shaping the response from rhetoric into transformative social action
_Prof. Beverley Haddad, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal_

10:30–11:00  Tea

11:00–13:00 Session 2 (Chair Charlene van der Walt)

Deploying indecent literary and socio-historical detail for change: Genesis 2:18-25 as a resource for sexual choice
_Prof. Gerald West, UKZN, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal_

“Rupturing the Skin of Silence”: Disrupting Patriarchy at a South African University
_Dr. Samantha van Schalkwyk, Senior Researcher – Historical Trauma and Transformation, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University_
Re-imagining sin: Engaging intersectional oppressions? Embodied Experiences from a South African church youth group
Dr. Selina Palm, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University

13:00–14:15 Lunch

14:15–15:30 Session 3 (Chair Funlola Olojede)

The importance of Moral Leadership with regard to gender, race, poverty and sexual orientation
Dr. Chris Jones, Centre of Moral Leadership, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Pushing boundaries toward transformation through the political theology of Denise Ackermann and Dorothee Sölle
Dr. Tanya van Wyk, Senior Lecturer: Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria

15:30-15:45 Tea

15:45-17:00 Session 4 (Chair Sarojini Nadar)

On Becoming A Change Agent: Reflections from our Students
Conversation leader Prof. Sarojini Nadar

19:00 LAUNCH GENDER UNIT
Chapel, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University
Guest Speaker, Prof. Sarojini Nadar

Prof Sarojini Nadar (PhD) holds the Desmond Tutu Research Chair in the Faculty of Arts at the University of the Western Cape. The chair focuses on developing and supporting advanced research in the area of religion and social transformation in Africa. She was a co-founder of the Gender and Religion program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2002, and she headed up this programme until 2016. Since its inception, the programme has graduated over 50 Masters and PhD students, mostly African women. Her numerous publications span diverse topics of research at the intersections of gender studies and religion, including gender based violence, HIV, masculinity studies and most recently gender in higher education. She sits on five international journal editorial boards including the Harvard based Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion, and she is also the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa. Nadar has won numerous awards for teaching and research, including the DST Distinguished Young Woman in Science award in 2012. She has held leadership positions in the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and also serves on a number of committees including the Faith and Feminism working group of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. As an activist-academic she is committed to authentic and intersectional socially engaged scholarship.
08:45–09:00  Welcome and Arrangements  
  Juliana Claassens

9:00–10:30  Session 5 (Chair Nadine Bowers-Du Toit)

Historical Trauma and Memory: Recognition and/as Reparation  
  Prof. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Professor and Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University

Cultivating change agents in local faith communities in times of conflict: the case of Rethy in Ituri Province in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo  
  Dr. Elisabet le Roux, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University

10:30–11:00  Tea

11:00–13:00  Session 6 (Chair Gerald West)

The Case of the Trafficked Princesses (Jer 41-44): Trauma Hermeneutics as Pedagogical Tool for Teaching on Gender-Based Violence  
  Prof. L. Juliana Claassens, Professor of Old Testament/Director of Gender Unit, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Having difficult conversations: Engaging film as a reflective surface to encourage dynamic intersectional encounters  
  Dr. Charlene van der Walt, Gender Unit: Research and Program Coordinator, Stellenbosch University

Cultivating Change Agents: Storytelling as an Indigenous Approach to Teaching Gender, Health and Theology in Africa  
  Dr. Funlola Olojede, Postdoctoral Fellow, Gender Unit, Stellenbosch University

13:00–13:45  Brown bag lunch  
  Jürgen Moltmann in conversation with Selina Palm: Remembering Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel

13:45–14:30  Tea

14:30–16:30  Session 7 (Chair Nina Muller van Velden)

The role of Church of Sweden, Constructive Policymaking on Gender and SRHR and the Necessity of a Theological Contribution  
  Rev. Dr. Gunilla Hallonsten, Director of Policy at Church of Sweden, and Senior Advisor on Gender at ACT Alliance
To be human means to resist dehumanization. In the darkest periods of human history, men and women have risen up and in many different voices said this one thing: “Do not treat me like this. Treat me like the human being that I am.” Claiming Her Dignity explores a number of stories from the Old Testament in which women in a variety of creative ways resist the violence of war, rape, heterarchy, and poverty. Amid the life-denying circumstances that seek to attack, violate, and destroy the bodies and psyches of women, men, and children, the women featured in this book absolutely refuse to succumb to the explicit, and at times subtle but no less harmful, manifestations of violence that they face.
PARTICIPANTS

The Rev. Dr. Cheryl B. Anderson, Professor of the Old Testament, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois USA

Prof. Beverley Haddad, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Prof. Gerald West, Senior Professor, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dr. Samantha van Schalkwyk, Senior Researcher – Historical Trauma and Transformation, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Selina Palm, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Chris Jones, Center of Moral Leadership, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Tanya van Wyk, Senior Lecturer: Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria
Prof. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Professor and Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Elisabet le Roux, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Prof. L. Juliana Claassens, Professor of Old Testament/Director of Gender Unit, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Charlene van der Walt, Gender Unit: Research and Program Coordinator, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Dr. Funlola Olojede, Postdoctoral Fellow, Gender Unit, Stellenbosch University

Rev. Dr. Gunilla Hallonsten, Director of Policy at Church of Sweden, and Senior Advisor on Gender at ACT Alliance

Prof. Sarojini Nadar, Desmond Tutu Chair for Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation, University of the Western Cape
ABSTRACTS

The Colour of Change: Identity Matters, Christian Faith and Resistance in the HIV and AIDS Pandemic

The Rev. Dr. Cheryl B. Anderson, Professor of the Old Testament, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois USA

To cultivate faith leaders who seek change is to challenge the status quo. We tend to forget, however, that matters of identity such as race, gender and class shape our relationship to the status quo and, therefore, our willingness to change it. In addition, those identity matters are directly impacted by one’s faith tradition. In her lecture, Prof. Anderson will describe how these matters of identity intersect and diverge in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Incorporating her experiences as a researcher in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States, she will illustrate specific divergences in identity that are prevalent and propose ways to address them.

HIV and faith: Shaping the response from rhetoric into transformative social action

Prof. Beverley Haddad, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal

The HIV epidemic was a silent killer during the 1990s. Without a real understanding of the epidemic and no antiretroviral treatment available, hundreds of thousands of people died. Stigma against those diagnosed HIV positive played no small part in these deaths. The faith communities were understood to be major role players fuelling this stigma and it was not until about 2003 that the global AIDS activist community began to actively seek to work with faith actors to mitigate the epidemic. The School of Religion and Theology (now School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has been at the forefront of changing theological attitudes and beliefs that stigmatise those living with HIV. This has meant shifting attitudes and beliefs away from a moralistic individualist approach to an understanding of the unjust systemic nature of the HIV epidemic. This paper seeks to outline the strategies implemented within the School to bring about a shift from moralistic rhetoric to transformative social action within the faith community. These strategies include the theological curriculum, the establishment of a collaborative on religion and HIV, and a major international research project that has offered resources to the wider AIDS activist community. Further, some of the key questions that the HIV epidemic asks of faith communities are identified as well as the challenges that remain for a future transformative agenda.

Deploying indecent literary and socio-historical detail for change: Genesis 2:18-25 as a resource for sexual choice

Prof. Gerald West, Senior Professor, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Working within the indecent landscape of queer theory as charted by Marcella Althaus-Reid, this paper probes the literary and socio-historical detail of a biblical text in the quest for indecent detail that might deconstruct hetero-patriarchal textual traditions of Genesis 2:18-25. The paper is both a study in method, recognising the capacity of both literary and socio-historical resources to identify and deploy indecent detail, although differently, and a study in how the deployment of indecent ‘biblical’ detail might offer resources through Contextual Bible Study for communities of faith who are struggling with sexual identity questions. The paper locates itself within the indecent intersection between liberation hermeneutics and queer hermeneutics.
“Rupturing the Skin of Silence”: Disrupting Patriarchy at a South African University
Dr. Samantha van Schalkwyk, Senior Researcher – Historical Trauma and Transformation, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University

Patriarchal scripts of masculinity and femininity have a negative impact on the way men and women construct their sense of selfhood. There is general consensus among scholars in the field of gender studies that these patriarchal scripts of female and male identity are intrinsically linked to issues of power and subordination, and to the problem of violence against women. Finding strategies that can open up space for the establishment of alternative gender scripts is crucial in order to disrupt the destructive consequences of patriarchy in educational and social contexts. The foundation of this research consists of a series of gender workshops that were conceptualised according to the central tenets of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission—public acknowledgement of traumatic experience; social healing that invokes a common humanity; cultural and attitudinal change, with the goal of political change. The University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa in collaboration with the non-profit organisation, Gender Reconciliation International, conducted a year-long series of workshops with male and female students. In this paper I examine this process whereby male and female students engaged in a disruption of patriarchal gendered conditioning through the telling of their stories of gendered trauma. Drawing on a collective biography methodology outlined by feminist poststructuralists Davies & Gannon (2006), I explore the impact of these workshops on gender relationships. I analyse the significant moments of connection between the men and women participants—both in the positions of witnessing and telling. Findings showed that these spaces facilitated the deconstruction of gendered conditioning among the students as they began to challenge cultural assumptions about “appropriate” masculinity and femininity. This paper contributes a novel methodology that enhances women’s studies research and provides fresh perspectives on gender healing and transformation in post-conflict societies.

Re-imagining sin: Engaging intersectional oppressions? Embodied Experiences from a South African church youth group
Dr. Selina Palm (Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University)

This paper will reflect on my lived experiences at Rondebosch United Church (RUC), Cape Town where I have been a youth leader for ten years pioneering new theological pedagogies. It draws on in-depth interviews with 5 youth members to offer their voices as to how RUC’s holistic approach to social inclusion as a theological imperative has helped shape their faith identity with particular regard to gender issues and sexual orientation. It will emphasise examples of how it has better equipped them to stand up for change within their existing peer communities. The paper will share a theoretical model piloted at RUC which draws together Jurgen Moltmann’s conceptualisation of sin as intersecting vicious circles of death and Iris Marion Young’s five faces of oppression as part of an identity formation model to equip young people of faith as change agents in the world. It concludes that the linking of theological concepts such as sin to an intersectional understanding of oppression and liberation can assist youth to reconnect to the other, the earth and to God as source of all life.

The importance of Moral Leadership with regard to gender, race, poverty and sexual orientation.
Dr. Chris Jones, Senior Project Coordinator, Center of Moral Leadership, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Leadership that does not come from sound core values is not worthy the name of leadership. True moral leadership is radical and costly. It brings wholeness and gives people a chance to live according to their full potential. It brings deep and lifelong transformative change not only to individuals but also to communities. The presence or absence of true moral leadership is inextricably linked with the spiritual and emotional maturity and discernment of people. Moral leadership arises in essence from a
person's spiritual qualities; from one’s deepest sources of humanity. It is in these depths (of our mind), where core values originate, where they laboriously grow, are shaped and refined. The core values informing moral leadership that will be addressed and in this paper are prosperity, peace (trust), knowledge and justice, with particular attention to what it means for gender, race, poverty and sexual orientation. Leaders with integrity attend to all four these values simultaneously. This task is complex and difficult, but one for which our highly evolved brain is uniquely equipped.

**Pushing boundaries toward transformation through the political theology of Denise Ackermann and Dorothee Sölle**

Dr Tanya van Wyk, Senior Lecturer: Dogmatics and Christian Ethics, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria

This paper will reflect on the nature of ‘boundaries’, ‘transformation’ and ‘reconciling diversity’ with regard to the availability and the creation of opportunities for the whole of humanity to flourish. It will make special reference to the academic environment and the allocation of space and a fluctuating or provisional inclusivity with regard to the status of women in the academy and church by utilizing feminist scholarship on the notions of identity, difference and faith. This will be done by exploring aspects of the political theology of both Denise Ackermann and Dorothee Sölle. It will be argued that the border that separates provisional inclusivity from radical inclusivity is the availability and creation of opportunities for the whole of humankind to flourish.

**Historical Trauma and Memory: Recognition and/as Reparation**

Prof. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, Professor and Research Chair in Historical Trauma and Transformation in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Stellenbosch University

This paper explores the relationship between historical trauma and memory. It considers the ways in which survivors deal with the memory of past traumatic events, and argues that the enduring traumatic legacies make it impossible for victims to “forget the past and move on.” Strategies perpetrators and bystanders employ to face or avoid their violent past are explored. The discussion focuses on remorse as a response that seeks to “repair” and to mourn the past. The contribution of “the witness” in this process of “repair” and mourning is examined, and the broader implications of these processes considered.

**Cultivating change agents in local faith communities in times of conflict: the case of Rethy in Ituri Province in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo**

Dr. Elisabet le Roux, Unit for Religion and Development Research, Stellenbosch University

In 2015 Tearfund and HEAL Africa started a 3-year intervention – ‘Engaging with Faith Groups to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict-affected Communities’ – within 15 target communities near Rethy, in Ituri Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The intervention comprises a range of activities designed to mobilise faith leaders and faith communities to act as catalysts within their communities. The intervention is now entering its third year of implementation. In that time a baseline household survey and three panel visits were conducted, a set of interviews and focus groups with survivors were completed, and interviews with community members were done. By drawing on the research we reflect on the realities of cultivating change agents for addressing VAWG within local faith communities affected by conflict. The setting is unique and uniquely challenging. With much of Africa being affected by conflict, lessons learnt from cultivating change agents for addressing VAWG in such settings, is critically important.
The Case of the Trafficked Princesses (Jer 41-44): Trauma Hermeneutics as Pedagogical Tool for Teaching on Gender-Based Violence

Prof. L. Juliana Claassens, Professor of Old Testament/Director of Gender Unit, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Recent hermeneutical approaches to Jeremiah 40-44 such as feminist critical and postcolonial biblical interpretation have highlighted the presence of some Judean princesses that in the past have not received much attention. This quite minor story of the daughters of King Zedekiah who had been taken hostage by the renegade leader Ishmael and then passed like pawns from one group of leaders to the next draws our attention to the myriad of ways in which women in particular are vulnerable in the aftermath of war and forced migration. This paper proposes that stories like the one of the “trafficked princesses” in Jeremiah (to use Wilda Gaffney’s creative designation) hold great promise in helping raise awareness in the reality of sexual violence in many communities around the world, and especially in the context of migration and the recent refugee crisis. I propose that stories, both ancient and modern, that reflect the trauma of sexual violence are vital in the broader task of teaching students about the reality of sexual violence, and particularly the systemic nature thereof, as well as the creative possibilities of female agency within dignity denying circumstances.

Having difficult conversations: Engaging film as a reflective surface to encourage dynamic intersectional encounters.

Dr. Charlene van der Walt, Gender Unit: Research and Program Coordinator, Department of Old and New Testament, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

Masculinity studies has been a theme of theoretical reflection in the MTh Gender and Health Core Module at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University since 2014. The complex and contextually informed construction of Masculinities often functions as a dynamic thematic space to explore the intersection of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and health. Like so many themes within this complex intersection it does however often hit very close to home and therefore complicates the conversation even more. The paper explores the possibilities, pitfalls and lessons learned from engaging Oliver Hermanus’s 2011 film Skoonheid as a dynamic reflective surface. By talking about the characters in the film and reflecting on the complex masculinity construction portrayed on screen, students are challenged to bridge the gap and to risk the possibility of engaging their own embodied and often vulnerable experiences regarding masculinity construction. Beyond facilitating the often traumatic experience of viewing the film, the point of the exercise is to encourage and empower students to continue to process of complex conversations within the intersection gender, health and theology in their local contexts and in so doing to function as dynamic change agents.

Cultivating Change Agents: Storytelling as an Indigenous Approach to Teaching Gender, Health and Theology in Africa

Dr. Funlola Olojede, Postdoctoral Fellow, Gender Unit, Stellenbosch University

The centrality of stories to biblical traditions is undisputed, and scholars have established the importance of using storytelling not only as a viable interpretative tool in biblical hermeneutics but as a homiletical device in preaching. It is argued in this paper however that storytelling could also be used in the context of teaching the Bible in Africa. In particular, storytelling could be employed as one of the ways to deconstruct traditional stereotypes and mind-sets and to make the teaching of gender and health in theology more relevant in the African context where strong undercurrents of patriarchy and cultural resistance to gender issues persist. Further, the study uses some real life stories to illustrate the need to degenderize even the physical spaces in which gender, health and theology are being taught in some African institutions.
The role of Church of Sweden, Constructive Policymaking on Gender and SRHR and the Necessity of a Theological Contribution

Rev. Dr. Gunilla Hallonsten, Director of Policy at Church of Sweden, and Senior Advisor on Gender at ACT Alliance

The partnership with churches, FBO’s and institutions for higher learning and research in South Africa, and in Africa in general, is of great importance to Church of Sweden. There have for many years been collaborations where the great benefits of contributing and taking part in theological education of relevance to community has been a challenge and an opportunity. Church of Sweden is emphasizing the importance of elaborating theological implications in policymaking, in a systematic way in trying to establish awareness and to strengthen the necessity of a theological contribution to policymaking with a special focus on gender, SOGI and SRHR. For Church of Sweden, a special emphasis is on encouraging and empowering young theologians to be change agents.

The theological perception of gender and SRHR is in general implicit in the discourse within faith communities, as taken-for-granted. The chance to achieve real change and social transformation through policy-making on SRHR and gender equality – locally and globally – will therefore increase by applying theological perspectives. The privilege or power of definition on SRHR often lies with faith community leaders. Therefore, they hold the power to create change on SRHR, especially on local level. The presentation will explore methodological approaches in an attempt to visualize the phenomena. The methodological approach discusses an intersectionality strategy from a standpoint on positioned knowledge production, and explores hermeneutical methodological criteria for theological contributions to policy-making on SRHR and gender equality.