Pastoral Care and Counseling for Victims of violence against Women in African Societies

Santa Ludia Mark Lado¹ and Dr Zebedee Muga²

¹(Evangelist in Christian Brotherhood Church; Research paper for Master)
²(Supervisor, Senior lecturer, Biblical Study, Theology and philosophy Department, Limuru, Kenya)

Abstract: As the Gospel of St. Matthew is directing towards reconciling those who disagree so that all Christians can live in harmony, this paper narrates the principles of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation among the African societies. Forgiveness is the principle decision to give up your legitimate right to revenge; it requires that the forgiver recognises that the offender is also human like him/her. It should, therefore, be evident that any religion or theology which takes the human condition seriously needs to contribute to the issue of forgiveness. The primary concern here is the meaning of forgiveness and biblical reconciliation in different Christian traditions through pastoral care and counselling process and questioning about the implication of the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation for our societies. Although this paper focuses on the pastoral care and counselling role for victims of violence against women in African communities, the author argues that forgiveness and reconciliation will lead to peace of mind, freedom from the effect of war, conflict and psychological problems. Besides these peace is defined as concept of harmonious well-being and freedom from hostile aggression, as reconciliation is defined as the change of destructive attitudes and behaviour, into constructive relationship towards sustainable peace, by building trust between the conflicting parties, even as it is mention in Genesis that Isaac was quick to respond, turning a peace treaty occasion into a celebration. We too should be as receptive as Isaac in the Bible the son of Abraham, to those who want to make peace with us when God’s influence in our lives attracts people even enemies. Women and Widows around the World are facing challenges (e.g. rape, domestic violence, intimidation, abuse), as peacemakers, they still forgive the offenders, and said we as women must take the opportunity to reach out to the offenders with God love.

Keywords: Pastoral care, Counseling role, Women, Victims, Forgiveness, Peace, Reconciliation, Story of Tamar & Joseph.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the role of counselling in Forgiveness, Peace and Reconciliation where the majority of victims are usually women but who are willing to forgive, reconcile and have peace with the offenders. For example in Rwanda during the genocide, women stood firm, in equal gender rights, responsibility and opportunities for both women and men. Also, the women play a role of building trust among themselves because they are peace-makers. Furthermore in ancient Judaism women like Deborah who was a judge solved problems in their community, even though they were household workers and who were considered as slaves. The role of pastoral counselling here is therefore, helping the victims who live with stress, anxiety, depression and broken relationship with family, friends and neighbours. By using the integrative method and model of approach by building a genuine relationship with clients, and listening to clients living problems.

Although this paper focuses on the pastoral care and counsellor role for the victims and violence against women, the author argues that forgiveness and reconciliation will lead to peace of mind, freedom from the effect of war. The main references texts of this paper are the Old Testament, the story of Tamar (Gen, 38) and the story of Joseph (Gen, 37; 42-50) more to the point the New Testament (Matt, 6: 14-15) Pastoral care according to Lambert (2018) is defined as consisting of helping acts done by representative persons, directed, toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing of persons who are in trouble. Also, McDonald D (2015) defined pastoral care is under God, to lead God’s people by his word of grace in eternity, and pastoral ministry is of shepherding God’s people, (Ps: 23) (Eze 34; 7-11) (Jn, 10:14-16)

In African societies, the advice people get from the church is, if you have the problem with your spouses, return home and solve your problem in the family, because women are the cause of the trouble, that they need to respect their husbands and do what is expected of them as women instead of counselling, helping and listen to what is a living problem of the client (Kapuma, 2015: 264) update by ( Chisale, 2018: 1) Forgiveness according to Cantacuzino Maria (2015), is the principle decision to give up justifiable right for revenge, or (it helps to relieve the pain of broken relationship, with others as well as yourself). It requires the forgiver to recognise that the offender is also human like him or her.

Also, forgiveness is something no-one finds easy, and yet it is something that none of us can live without forgiveness. It should, therefore, be evident that any religion or theology which takes the human
condition seriously needs to have something to say about the issue of forgiveness. Forgiveness is healing to the soul of the forgiver as well as the forgiven; those who live a life of forgiveness have better mental and physical health outcome. The concept of forgiveness is the centre of the story of the Old Testament and also of human beings, as we see from the beginning about Adam, Eve and God (Gen 3:21).

Peace is the freedom from disturbance, war, conflict and psychological problems. Peace is a state of security within a community provided for by law and harmony in personal relations. McCullough (2001) describes peace as the concept of harmonious well-being and freedom from hostile aggression. In the social sense, peace commonly means lack of conflict (war) and freedom from fear of violence between individuals (family, relatives or foreign group). In Christianity, the Messianic Prophecy defines peace as Christ Jesus; the Prince of Peace ( Isa 9:6).

Reconciliation: According to Michael L.W. (2015), reconciliation is the process of restoring the relationship of friendship and compatible with each other. God values the reconciliation of relationship more than religious practices, for this reason, reconciliation should be the highest priority and done in private with the attitude of humility and love. The person who has sinned should confess their sin and ask for forgiveness from the other person. Once pardon is granted, and reconciliation is complete, sin is no longer allowed to be brought up. Our motivation to reconcile with someone should be because of our love for Christ who reconciled us with God, (2Cor 5:18-19) Christ’s sacrifice was the ultimate fulfillment of the sacrifice representing God’s forgiveness for sin in the Old Testament. As Karen Broenus has written “a societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behaviour into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace,” the path toward reconciliation is a lifelong journey going in two directions: inward, towards discovering and forgiving one's self, and outwards, toward recognizing and, hopefully, forgiving others. it is both an intrapersonal and an interpersonal exercise, each advancing the more deeply a person discovers the reconciliation possible both within and without by building a trust between you and the offender (Gen 26:17-22,26-31) telling us, three times Isaac and his men dug new wells. The first two disputes arose, Isaac moved away from the place. He compromised with philistines for the sake of peace. But when the philistines saw that the Lord was with Isaac, they came to make peace treaty with Isaac, and Isaac was quick to respond, turning the occasion into celebration, we should be just as receptive to those who want to make peace with us as Isaac did with his enemies.

**Peace and Reconciliation**

Women and widows are facing challenges around the world; an example is the community of Dalit in India. The logical Indian group of media and eye art collective reported two cases in September 2015, a woman of forty-five years was stripped naked and forced to drink urine by her neighbour, the offender were from Yadar community in Madhya Pradesh. And a girl of seventeen years old was set on fire by her colleagues from Yadar community for pursuing her education well. Again, in India they practice Temple prostitution: International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) reported (2015) mentions a story of a young girl of 12 years old, who was offered by parents to yellamma (patron goddess) in South India. As she grows, a stream of men would visit her at night in the temple for sexual advances. Since it was their culture, she could not refuse. She ended up giving birth to five children with different fathers. Later on, she ran out of the temple fleeing from the temple violence. Abuse, and worked in the open-pit mine for survival. Many of these cases are common in India even today according to (2019) UK Newsfeed. Fortunately, the caste women with their sons are fighting to stop this discrimination and temple prostitution.¹

**In Africa society’s discrimination of women is in different ways,**

- Since civil war started in South Sudan 2013 – 2019 women were facing sexual violence, abuse from some of Armies/soldiers of different parties. Committing sexual violence against women and girls during the civil war, while they were fleeing from attacks or when they went to buy or search for basic needs such as food and firewood around UN sites. Perpetrators of sexual violence crimes were rarely held accountable. Even before the war, they still face the challenges of domestic violence in the families in various ways, like a woman who was chased with her children by her in-laws, in one of the area in South Sudan because the husband died.

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¹IDSN. International Dalit Solidarity Network, Feb. 24, 2015
https://idsn.org-issues/forced-prostitution
Database: IDSN has created an extensive database on caste-based discrimination
Creative common license, eyezine by eye collective.step 2015

Home>Dissent> Dalit woman stripped naked and forced to drink urine by upper-caste couple overland dispute
In Madhya Pradesh 2016
Besides, in Kenya a woman gave birth to five children and the elders of that community argues that three from these children must be killed because of tradition belief that they are witch, and the elders are Christian who knows that children are the gift from God².

In addition the story of Janet Akinyi in Kenya in 2006, she was heading for divorce and custody of her children after the husband attempted to kill her with a knife. She had endured violent beatings throughout 10 years of her marriage (Mary, 2007 update by Africa renewal journal)³.

Furthermore in Rwanda, during the genocide, Jeanne Izabizia (1994), argues that women stood firm for equality in gender rights, responsibility and opportunities for both women and men, girls and boys, and by emphasising the fact that justice does not mean women being equal with men. To imply those right interests, needs and priorities of both women and men must being given equal consideration. Thousands of women victims who were affected with mental health and physical well-being created mistrust in the families of those who survived the genocide as it was mention at the beginning that women are willing to forgive and reconcile with those who offended them. The women of Rwanda, therefore, start gradually to build trust among them because they were peace-makers.

The Status of Women in Ancient Israel Family Institutions

The position of women in the Ancient Israel family, according to Roland, de Vaux (1997), explains that all the hard work at home indeed fell to women; and they were considered as domestic slaves. They did all the chores (work) in the house. These included looking after flocks, working in the field and taking part in public affairs like Deborah who serviced the community as a judge (Jdg 4-5). Unfortunately, they were refrained or refused from reciting the daily creed of Judaism which originated on Sinai with Moses. In the synagogue, they were required to sit at the back because women were considered unclean.

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The Status of the Widows in Ancient Israel Family

Roland de Vaux (1997) explains that a woman, whose husband died, was to remain unmarried; because the vow she made during wedding continued to bind her, (Nu 30:10) If she was a childless widow according to levirate law, she could remain as part of her husband’s family property. Tamar is one of the example in (Gen 38:11-28), “Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law go back to your parents’ home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you” (but Judah did not really intend to do this because he was afraid about his last son would also die like the two brothers). So, Tamar went back to live in her father’s home.

The story of Tamar, however, shows us that the abuse of women started earlier. And also in (Ru 3:5-12), the human being integrity is being played with, that means for a widow to remarriage with one from the family of the late, and the man will take all properties of the widow’s family (for example, the little properties Naomi had and her daughter-in-law, was taken so that the daughter-in-law to be marriage again). Women of Ancient Israel families were treated the same as slaves in the house and were not allowed to recite the creed because they were considered unclean. In South Sudan, a widow was chased without dress with her children because her husband died. In the book of Hosea 3:14-16; 2:7, 13-16, Israel was described as a prostituted

² Rachael Okumu CEC health look at the five kids that were delivered by Everlyne Namukhula from Navakholo at kakamoga referral hospital on 13/3/2019 [photo courtesy]
³ Taking on violence against women in Africa: International norms, local activism start to alter laws, attitudes: Mary Kimani from Africa Renewal: July 2007
woman who was running after Canaanite idols. The Scripture portrays Israelites as women who abandon their husbands through disobedience and unfaithfulness.4

For more explanation about Tamar story: it shows what happen when the protections of marriage was not proper handle, as we saw in Ruth’s story, God had made provision for keeping the blood lives of Israel pure and clear by handing down of inheritances that requiring a widow to be married again within the family of her husband (Deut. 25: 5-10), the Bible tells us that Judah did not do as he promised Tamar. Tamar was left without getting marriage to Shelah, so she sought to get her right, by dressing in harlot to try sealing her future. Therefore, the story of Tamar is teaching women today that what you wear describes you, Tamar’s choices were intentional, and so each woman must avoid what she was seeking to look like. The story also teaches women what they wear will describe their integrity before/ among people. Furthermore, the story is narrating how God brought about his plan despite the evil of others, sometime things happen to us even when we do not want to do, (Angela, 2019)

**Women in South Sudan**

According to Monica Pinna (2018), sexual violence is occurring on a massive scale in South Sudan and is being used to exert/ability/force revenge on the entire communities. The humanitarian response works to renew or restore victims into their families and society. Further, Siobhan Grady (2018) points out a sad story of a woman narrated to the UN researchers. It is recorded that while the woman was still bleeding after childbirth, she was attacked by some soldiers who raped her. She was helpless and vulnerable, and she feared being killed. Some women who resisted the armed or soldiers were murdered in front of her. As a reason of such incidences, several groups have emerged to advocate for peace, reconciliation and justice. Among them are the Girl Guides of South Sudan and some of the Bishops who in, 2017 have tried to seek Justice for the victims.

**Women and Children in Bidibidi Camp in Uganda**

Bidibidi Camp in Uganda is one of the centres with many women and children who have experienced rape and lost families’ members. In the camp, 36 women receive counselling which enables them to recall and narrate what happened. Grace is one of the 36 victims of sexual violence is receiving such cognitive behavioural therapy from Transcultural Psychosocial organisation teams; she described what she went through. Bidibidi camp projects and programs have contributed significantly to the empowerment of women who have now stepped in to take up roles that had traditionally been performed by men. Women today have become the backbone of their communities, taking care of their homes and families, the sick and the vulnerable victims of recurrent wars, as well as managing agricultural production. Also, many women play vital roles even in the armed forces.

Honourable Hannah Lona Bona a Member of Parliament from Amadi in the Western Equatoria region has encouraged women to speak out against the perpetrators of violence as a critical element of their participation in the peace and reconciliation process. Further, she said, “Men and boys in the conflicting parties are our husbands and sons, we as mothers, wives and sisters have a role in telling them enough is enough.” She further said the consultations catalysed civil society activists, parliamentarians, students, businesswomen and housewives must take action towards realising their potential in shaping the future for a peaceful South Sudan. “Women are expressing their joy as well as bitterness because they would like the agreement to be realised. They are responsible for transforming this peace into reality concept,” explained Theresa Cirisiohiro, an activist for peacebuilding. Moses P, and Leni K, (2018).

**The Role of Counselling**

For Peace and reconciliation to occur, the intervention of the counsellors is beneficial. In this case, counsellors will use the theory of biblical, clinical method and model of caring approach. First, Ikenye (2014) argues that the pastoral counsellors are required, to build a good rapport, and genuine relationship through creating an environment of a good listening attentively. This shows the client that you are caring and concerned about her/him. An honest relationship is essential with the expression of (sympathy empathy and interpathy) during the counselling process. Also, it is necessary to share a client’s emotions by entering into her/his world of the existing problem. This must be done with sensitivity or clear boundary to ethnicity, culture and traditions in respect to the client. Also, a counsellor builds trust and confidence in the client because some people are afraid of being exposed by pastors.

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4by Susan Ackerma, Women in Ancient Israel and the Hebrew Bible

Subject: Biblical Studies, Christianity, Judaism and Jewish Studies online Publication date Apr 2016 DOI10.1093/.013.45
Second, Davis and Dreyer (2014) argue that the guidance extended by Pastoral Counselor to the victims of domestic abuse focuses on helping the victims to function at an acceptable cognitive and moral level in their thinking, attitudes, emotion and behaviour. Reconciling seeks to promote harmonious relationships by restoring the broken relationship between a person and another person as well as between a person and God.

Third, Clinebell (1984) mentions that, nurturing is the function of the Pastoral care and is seeking to promote the growth of people, society and community, through caring and also by using Confrontation, educating the community well will result in a healthy society. The topic is emphasising on pastoral counselling for women who are victims with clear boundary and how the pastors can extend care-giving to the victims of domestic marital violence who have been silenced. The pastors need to do counselling gradually until it reaches the point of reconciliation. Naturally, no one would instantly forgive a person for killing their parents, sibling, and friends or even neighbour as such victims need a gradual healing process. In addition to making it, clear pastoral counsellors are not only men, but women are also counsellors.

According to Cantacuzino (2015), Forgiveness is more than just accepting or letting go because it requires a degree of empathy. That is compassion; the ability to place yourself in someone else’s life. To act according to this empathy is the connection and feeling towards your fellow human being (compassion). Cantacuzino (2015) also states that reconciliation is different from forgiveness. Reconciliation requires some peace process and coming together in unity. The path to reconciliation is often a long journey of inward and onwards self-discovering and reconciling with suffering, and toward recognising and forgiving others.

**Forgiveness in New and Old Testament**

Biblically forgiveness is essential because it is an act of God and it is also the act of humans to forgive, (Matt 18:33-35) the king said “should you not have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you? Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. “That is what my heavenly father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brother and sisters from your heart.” The Word of God reminds us that forgiveness must come from one’s heart, for people to see the sincerity forgiveness in both attitude and behavior.

The injustice of the damaging social conditions must be confessed as David confessed his sins to God; (Ps 51). Jones (1995), points out that the repentance and confession must be practised, in specific and concrete ways as part of the larger ability of forgiveness. The Word of God commands us to forgive, as God forgives us; therefore, one forgives in obedience to God. And forgiveness must be done from the sincere heart, (Matt 6: 14-15; 18: 21-35). God showed his great love for us by sending Jesus Christ to die for us while we were still sinners (Ro 5:8; 12:18). Forgiveness will help us to live in peace with each other, and heal our souls from bitterness.

**Moving from forgiveness to reconciliation**

According to Steve C. (2012), the process to reconciliation depends on when an offended party wants to work towards reconciliation. The most crucial step is the confirmation of genuine repentance on the part of the offender, and people may know the attitude of a person who had really repented from what he was doing before. Proverbs 28:13, says that “people who conceal their sins will not prosper,” but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. The primary message for an abused woman is that the Lord is the protector of the weak, he is our refuge (our Boaz) the gentle, kind and robust Redeemer. He who spreads his wings of protection over us as stated in Ruth 2:12. Naomi urges Ruth to return with her sister-in-law (Ru 2:22). This is possible by surrounding victims with advocate, counsellors and resources to help them make the difficult choice that lies ahead of them.

**Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Old Testament Story of Joseph**

The story of Joseph, (Gen 37-50), is an example of forgiveness and reconciliation in the Old Testament. Joseph greatly suffered after his brothers sold him to slavery. Later on, when he met with them, he forgave them, and they reconciled. How did reconciliation happen? According to various authors of life application Bible (1978), explained in (Gen 42:15), the first time the brothers came to Egypt; Joseph did not reveal himself to them. Instead, he tested them, to bring their youngest brother, in this way Joseph wanted to confirm whether they have changed. In (Gen 42:22) then the brothers realised their mistake, when Reuben, the brother of Joseph explains to his brothers that “Did not I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you would not listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood” this means the brothers regretted selling their brother Joseph.

When Judah was younger he showed no regard for his brother Joseph or his father Jacob (Gen 44:16-34) first he convinced his brothers to sell Joseph as a slave. (Gen 37:27) Then he joined his brothers in lying to his father about Joseph’s fate (Gen 37:32) but what a change had taken place in Judah life! A man who sold his little brother into slavery now offered to become a slave himself to save his brother Benjamin. He was so concerned about his father and his younger brother that he was willing to die for them. Holy Bible, New Living

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5 Clinebell describes pastoral Care and counselling as the empowerment and growth to take place in people life and their relationship 1984.
transitional (Gen 44:33-34) he said “so please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I could not bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!” that shows Judah had changed from his previous life.

One must not give up hope whether on oneself, or others remembering how God can bring about complete changes even in the most selfish personalities likes Judah, the brother of Joseph. In (Gen 45:2-20), Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and he told them that they intended to harm him, but God intended it for good. Joseph was rejected, kidnapped, enslaved and imprisoned. Although his brothers had been unfaithful to him, he graciously forgave them and shared his prosperity with them. Joseph demonstrates how God forgives us and showers us with goodness even though we are sinners before Him. (I Jn 1:9) “But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness” New living translation (2004). God commands us to confess our sins; then He will forgive us.

Joseph as a man who fears God did not forgive and reconcile immediately with his brothers. The attitude of forgiveness comes after confession and repentance, which lead to reconciliation, restoration of the broken relationship and healing of the wounds. He took his brothers through the sessions of counselling by confronting and entry theory into their existing problem by showing (empathy and interplay), also as a servant of God, he used authority and theory of change with love until he declared to his brothers that he was Joseph. After proving/seeing that the offenders (brothers) had changed in their attitude and behaviour, by regretting why they did so to their brother, they asked Joseph to forgive them, (Gen 50:15-21) Joseph forgave them and offered to care for them and their families. Here Joseph’s forgiveness was complete. He demonstrated how God graciously accepts us even though we do not deserve it, thus on the invitation to graciously forgive others as God forgives.

When Moses, for example, was leading the Israelites to the Promised Land and they sinned against God, and God punished them. In a way that Moses prayed and asked forgiveness from God and God forgave them. Often these two terms forgiveness and reconciliation are misunderstood; April quotation narrated that forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation are distinct from each other and relate to each other in very specific ways. For example, married couples, may fight and the relatives would presumably reconcile the couples immediately, but after a short time they may fight again. These recurrent fights are what lead to domestic violence-related deaths without true repentance like the brothers of Joseph. April Kelsey (2014) argues that the counsellor is expected to be careful in handling such cases. Making sure as Joseph did, that there is a true repentance, only then can true forgiveness and reconciliation happen which leads to lasting peace in the family.6 April Kelsey further (2014) argues that reconciliation cannot occur without forgiveness and repentance. Forgiveness, is cancelling of the debts caused by sin, e.g. someone killed your child, and his sincere apology can bring a great measure of peace and healing process. But the murderer cannot bring your child back to life which is an excellent bitterness. Forgiveness acts as the expectation binding the abuser and survivor to seek healing from the sources like:

Psychological forgiveness which include:
- Healing from depression,
- Healing from anxiety,
- Healing from bitterness and
- Healing from Mental challenges.

A counsellor therefore, ought to support and help the victim to arrive at a wise decision but will not decide for them, only provides them with all of the God-honoring choices, that later weight the consequence of the decision made/taken by the victim. In the Old Testament, the hardheartedness of Pharaoh in refusing to repent and forgive earned him and his army punishment from God.

Forgiveness and reconciliation can break and end the vicious conduct cycle of violence and act to promote community building which allows cohesive unity and peaceful co-existence among conflicting groups. For example, Cantacino (2015) narrates a story of a woman whose son was killed: after 12 years the woman met the person who killed the son and she forgave, after forgiveness, all the bitterness, hatred and anger that she had towards the person left and was filled with peace. Therefore forgiveness and reconciliation bring health to the body, soul and peace of mind. According to Omi Mark (1998), a community that does not celebrate God’s forgiveness in its life cannot be a community of reconciliation. Reconciliation overcomes radical breaks which

6 Genesis 44: 33, Joseph wanted to see if his brothers’ attitudes had changed for the better, so he tested the way they treated each other. Judah the brother who had stepped forward with plan to sell Joseph (genesis 37:27) now stepped forward to take Benjamin’s punishment that acted convinced Joseph that his brothers had changed.

7 April Kelsey, forgiveness and reconciliation: December 30, 2014,
Learn more from the word of Jesus in Luke 23: 34,
Reconciliation in South Africa, by Mark Hay Omi and foreword by Robert J. Schreiter 1998
have occurred through sin. Its nature aims at the repair of damaged relations. This, we cannot do it by ourselves but with the help of God.

Therefore, Pastoral counsellors and ministers of the church should make a preferential (giving and indicating) option for the poor, as pastors, servants of God who can initiate peace among people, they need to be more local, (local means ministers who know the culture of Africa) who understand the pain of people and can make proper reconciliation to its cultural and social context to take the particular initiative to reconcile people, where repentance and justice are its pre-condition. Reconciliation restored dignity as human being self-identity solidarity respect for self and other respect for human rights and suitable for all people, Omi M (1998). God’s forgiveness means that He will not remember the sin again as demonstrated by Joseph in (Gen 45:17-20), (although Joseph brothers had been unfaithful to him, he graciously forgave them and shared his prosperity).

(1Chron 21:8), When David realised his sin, he took full responsibility, admitted he was wrong and asked God to forgive him. Many people want to reach God and obtain the benefits of Christianity without acknowledging their sin and guilt. But confession and repentance must come before receiving forgiveness. Like David, we must take full responsibility for our actions and confess them to God before we can expect him to forgive us and continue his work in us. In New Testament, (Matt 6:12) “God does not forgive people who do not forgive others”, the teaching of Jesus about prayer, (Matt 6:14-15) that if you forgive others when they sin against you, then God will forgive you.

Agatha and Peterson in (2009) explain that women enlightening role in the different educational setting can resolve conflicts. They are regarded as, and this crucial role is attach (score) on the fact that women are considered counsellors educators, who nurtured and cultivated peace-loving notions among children. To prevent future conflict, it calls for parents to bring up children as peace lovers, mothers as primary caregivers.

CONCLUSION

As the paper has focused on forgiveness, peace and reconciliation in the Old Testament context, pastoral care and counselling role for the victims of violence against women, the study concludes that, to live a peaceful life one should forgive, as God commanded us to forgive so that he can forgive us. Without forgiveness and reconciliation, human relationship and fellowship with God will cut off or is frustrated. Pastoral counsellors are doing their best in helping the victims to recover from stress, shame and depression. Also, to take responsibility for caring, and showing love, by telling them God knows their pain and he cares for them. God loved the world and sent his only son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. This is the evidence of God care and love, and Jesus Christ is the greatest shepherd who cares for his people/flock also Jesus is the centre of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation because he is the prince of peace who shares our pain and troubles.

Recommendation

Recommendation for further research: pastoral counsellors need to be a wear of people who in need, not only women who are always facing challenges, but also 40% of men are facing domestic violence especially in Africa. In African cultures men suppose not to cry or grief for death of their beloved one and this, psychological it affects personal well-being; therefore, there is limitation of pastoral care and services in many places, especially among women and girls. The increase of violence in Africa societies needs churches to create opportunities for the training of more counsellors because of the wide gap for pastoral counsellors /care.

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