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“Do You Hear Their Cries?”  
A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their  
Religious Congregations

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an ethnography that uses semi-structured interviews, field notes, and participant observation to explore how two religious congregations respond to survivors of domestic violence. I interviewed twenty-two parishioners including domestic violence survivors, clergy and bystanders. I transcribed these interviews verbatim using Agar's method of transcript handling. I used participant observation to explore how congregational practices of preaching, teaching, and pastoral care use myth, symbol, and archetypes to construct contextual theologies. These practices can help or hinder survivors of domestic violence. Using a voice relational approach to the analysis of interviews, I brought the data into dialogue with a feminist relational psychology, theological resources, Jungian theory, and Judith Herman's trauma theory. I explore theological resources from *the via positiva*, *via negativa*, and *via transformativa*. I theorize that religious congregations construct contextual theologies and a persona from practices such as preaching, teaching, and pastoral care that can liberate survivors. Religious congregations can also repress traumatic stories of survivors and use these same practices to silence and oppress survivors. Affect laden, repressed, shameful, violent or sexual elements can later erupt in the form of congregational complexes. This eruption of unconscious material into a congregational complex provides an opportunity to rework the contextual theology to include survivors' experiences. The congregation can integrate the unconscious elements into the contextual theology and help survivors heal. The eruptions of this material can also trigger congregational anxiety and cause the community to repress the traumatic material again. By minimizing or denying survivor experiences congregations alienate survivors, and often fail to act to protect survivors, and their children. I argue for a concept of self that is a "relational, embodied, centered, self in process and in connection to a just and caring community." This "centered self" can assist survivors encounter the Ground of Being within, through contemplation and meditation providing a transformational experience.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all survivors and to their congregations with the hope that it may help in your journeys of recovery. I want to dedicate this dissertation to God, the Ground of Being, who sustained me through all of this. I give my heartfelt thanks for your sustaining, loving and compassionate presence in my life over the period of writing this dissertation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### **Do You Hear Their Cries? A Feminist Relational and Jungian Approach**

Unfold Your Own Myth  
*a poem by Rumi (Excerpt)*

*Who gets up early to discover the moment light begins?*

.....  
*Who lets a bucket down and brings  
up a flowing prophet? Or like Moses goes for fire  
and finds what burns inside the sunrise?*

*Jesus slips into a house to escape enemies,  
and opens a door to the other world.  
Solomon cuts open a fish, and there's a gold ring.  
Omar storms in to kill the prophet  
and leaves with blessings.*

.....  
*But don't be satisfied with stories, how things  
have gone with others. Unfold  
your own myth, without complicated explanation,  
so everyone will understand the passage,  
We have opened you.*

*Start walking toward Shams. Your legs will get heavy  
and tired. Then comes the moment  
Of feeling the wings you've grown,  
lifting*

*{Housden, 2003 #273}*

I start my dissertation with a poem by Rumi, a thirteenth-century Persian Sufi mystic. Although he knows and loves the myths and stories told him by others he implores us each to “unfold your own myth.” Each of us has a unique story that is like no other. Other people’s

stories can inspire us and make us think, but Rumi encourages us not to be satisfied until we have unfolded our own myth. In one line he says, “Start walking toward Shams.” Shams was Rumi’s teacher and beloved friend. Shams opened the world to Rumi through their relationship. Shams also means the sun, so it means both walk toward the beloved and walk toward the light. As we unfold our own stories, we can start walking in the direction that helps unfold it. In this dissertation there are stories of survivors, stories of clergy, and stories of bystanders. There are also stories from the Christian tradition as preached, taught, and heard by my research participants in two particular congregations. Some of these stories are of violence and sexual assault. Some of the stories are similar to our own, and some of the stories touch us even though they are different from our own. Let us listen to these stories and use them as we each unfold our own myth.

### Introduction:

One in four women and one in nine men will experience violence in their family at some point in their lives (Gelles, 1988, 20-38). In a congregation of one hundred members, there will be twenty-five women and eleven men who are survivors of domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> In a congregation of one thousand, that would be two hundred fifty women and one hundred ten men who have experienced domestic violence at some time in their lives sitting next to you in the pews. The clergy, survivors, abusers, and other parishioners are all sharing the same sermon and the same worship. Whether the family violence was physical, sexual, emotional, or economic

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<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence: In this dissertation when I use the term domestic violence I mean violence between intimate partners that includes physical violence, sexual violence, financial exploitation, emotional abuse, or coercion of one partner by another. I include the violence against the children in the home, and include elder abuse by a caregiver. My main focus in this dissertation, however, is the violence between intimate partners.

exploitation, every aspect of a survivor's life is affected. There will be a ripple affect spreading to the survivor's marital relationships, parenting relationships, work relationships and congregational relationships as well.

Consider for a moment the most common response researchers have heard to the question, "How does your congregation deal with domestic violence?" Clergy and laity alike will often tell you, "It doesn't happen here." When I asked for survivors from these same congregations to talk to me, many come forward to tell me their stories of abuse. Some of these stories happened while the survivors were going to church, either as children or as adults. Sunday after Sunday they sat in the pews of a church and kept silent. The children may have been praised for being so "good" in church. That often means the children are well behaved, not disruptive, quiet, and respectful of authority. No one asked what type of coercion gets them to this outward display of perfection. Some survivors talked to their pastors. These same pastors told me they did not have domestic violence in their churches. Some survivors even sent anonymous letters to pastors saying they were being abused. The pastors, not knowing what to do, did nothing. Survivor's went to Christian counselors in the church's counseling center and tried to get help for their suffering. Therapist's told them to forgive and keep trying. Pastors told couples to come for marital counseling. Sometimes they found help outside the congregation from therapists, the legal system, battered women's shelters, or friends and neighbors.

How does it happen that the leaders of the church and their parishioners do not see the abuse that friends, neighbors, police, hospitals, shelters, and lawyers say they see on a daily basis? This dissertation seeks to answer that question. The argument in this dissertation

developed out of interviews with survivors, clergy, and parishioner bystanders. They told me their versions of their congregational story. Their version of the Christian story may not have helped survivors. The way some people told the Christian story was harmful to survivors and their families. Congregations could have helped survivors to hear Rumi's encouragement to "unfold their own myth" (Housden, 2003, 51-52). The research respondents gave me a window into the inner workings of their congregations. The multiperspectival interviewing gave me a kind of three-dimensional or holographic look at the congregation and its response to domestic violence. If I had interviewed just pastors, just survivors or just parishioners, those interviews would have given a picture that is more like the artist's two-dimensional canvas. The interviews would have given us a surface view that suggests depth, but is missing the backside and hidden parts of the picture.

No abusers came forward for interviewing, although I heard about them second hand from the others. They were there, no doubt, charming and not very different in appearance from any other church member. Research tells us they were abused themselves as children, often lacking in self-esteem, and extremely ineffective in negotiating with others to get their needs met (Koss, 1994, 19-38). They learned that coercion and the abuse of power with less powerful members of the family could get their spouse or intimate partner or child to do what they wanted, at least for a while. Surface compliance seemed enough for them, or at least it was all they could get. They maintained their illusion of control and powerfulness. For most of the abusers, the use of power to coerce often backfires in broken relationships, frightened loveless relationships, or relationships where drama substitutes for love. In most of these cases the illusion of a loving

relationship is so strong that it survives all the evidence that points to a contrary reality for both the abuser and the survivor.

I have met some abusers in my role as a therapist. I have worked in in-patient facilities or in various counseling programs for those who are suffering from mental illness and from various aspects of being human in a broken world. In addition to being a therapist, I am an ordained PCUSA (Presbyterian Church USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament, and I have encountered some abusers in that role as well. While abusers are often bullies at home, they can be quite obsequious with the authorities in their life and often will not challenge those who have power over them. The ones I know have an uncanny ability to switch between a victim and an abuser persona. I have personally responded to them by feeling sorrow and compassion for them one moment, and a strong aversion towards their controlling and cruel treatment of their intimate partner the next moment. While abusers vary in personality and in the severity of violence, they inflict, they all used their personal and physical power to get what they want from their family, wives, or intimate partners (Poling, 1991, 12). Some abusers can range from sociopaths with little or no remorse manic depressive, psychotic, and mentally ill, narcissistic, borderline personalities, those with thought disorders and schizophrenic processes, to those who have concomitant substance abuse disorders along with their personality disorder or mental illness. Some have no mental illness, but have learned to be bullies to get their way. Abusers are human and did not start out as abusers. Some trauma or abuse has affected them. Nevertheless, abusers' ability to construct a positive persona, to use Jung's terms, can fool their partners, therapists, and clergy. They deny and minimize the consequences of their behavior to

themselves and to others. They have suppressed their angry, violent side that then erupts in places where they can express it without being accountable. Some of the domestic violence research has explored whether abusers are in control of themselves or not. Many researchers have concluded that they are in control of themselves, and point out that abuse does not often occur in public (Koss, 1994, 41-95). Abuse occurs in privately in the home. Abusers can control and misuse power without being accountable. Our culture has maxims that we use to speak of this privatization. For example, we say, “Who knows what goes on behind closed doors?” We say this with a shrug of the shoulders and the implication that what goes on behind closed doors is none of anyone’s business. We say, “Dirty laundry should not be aired.” In private space the shadow side of the abuser comes out. Survivors sometimes call their experience of an abuser as one of a “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.”. Clergy and parishioners only see Dr. Jekyll, who, to all appearances, is a fine upstanding and charming pillar of the church. Mr. Hyde hides, and appears only to the survivor and to children in the family.<sup>2</sup>

The abuser covers his actions with a veil of illusion and denial. Abuse causes the survivor to speak carefully, “walking on eggshells.” She denies and minimizes her own abuse. The minimization allows her to live in the relationship with her abuser and think, “this is love.” The survivor believes she will not be heard. She speaks in muted tones, so her cries are not heard. She has learned that speaking up and disagreeing may bring argument, and physical or other consequences. The abuser minimizes the abuse too, and does not even recognize his behavior as abusive. Breaking through this wall of denial is often the first step men’s groups for abusers use.

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<sup>2</sup> Since research shows that 95% of abusers are men and 5% are women I will use he for abusers, even though I know that a small percentage of abusers are women (Gelles, 1997)

Men who know the dynamics of abuse challenge other men in the group as no one else can (Gelles, 1997, 163-165). These groups are most often filled with court mandated male abusers, who would not originally have self-identified as abusers, nor come for help, had the court not ordered them to do so. Our culture sees asking for help as weakness, especially in the construction of male identity. Men are sometimes isolated from their feelings and actions. Women ask for help more often because our culture encourages them to do so. We encourage women to be relational and emotional. It is no secret that more women than men seek psychiatric help. More women than men are also in religious congregations.

In this dissertation, I adapted some of Jung's theories to congregations. I try to explain the phenomena of congregations saying, "Abuse does not happen here." I draw on stories from the congregations I researched. The development of a positive, uplifting, contextual theology draws people into worship and a life of faith, but it often suppresses the voices of survivors and the reality of domestic violence. Is it any wonder it is difficult for clergy and parishioners to hear the cries of survivors?

### **THE ARGUMENT FOR THIS DISSERTATION**

#### Point Number One:

*Religious congregations construct a positive picture of themselves that builds a community of believers. I call this positive picture a "congregational persona."*

My argument begins with the assertion that religious congregations construct a positive picture of themselves that builds a community of believers. I call this positive picture a

“congregational *persona*.” In Jung’s terms the *persona* masks the way people present themselves to the world. A congregational *persona* is a positive construction of identity that attracts new members and inspires current members to connect with the divine and the religious community. The congregational *persona* serves an important and not entirely negative function. Christian congregations construct a *persona* that allows them to deal with the cultural reality around them, while passing on their view and experience of the Christian story of salvation. The Christian community often recognizes itself as a flawed, but vitally necessary, vehicle that brings the message of salvation to people. The congregation embodies an imperfect, but real faith, in their community. A congregation constructs a contextual theology from sermons, rituals, sacraments, symbols, interpretation of sacred scriptures, song, and architecture. The congregation creates a *persona* by its practices such as preaching, teaching, liturgy, and pastoral care. The people in leadership have a major role in constructing this *persona*. This is why the pastor’s appearance, liturgical dress, tone of voice, and leadership style is so important to a congregation. The congregation performs this *persona* as it carries out its work and vision. The laity also constructs the *persona* in the way they dress, their theologies, cultural backgrounds, employments, and social status in surrounding culture. The *persona* of the congregation operates in relationships with surrounding culture, and with denominational, national, and international relationships of the congregation. The *persona* preserves those most valued elements of their Christian tradition. The *persona* constructs a particular congregational identity for worship and mission. It preserves certain continuity and allows for change over time.

Congregations use elements from the Christian myth,<sup>3</sup> including Christian symbols and stories from their tradition, while simultaneously repressing certain other elements. This process I call constructing a contextual theology.<sup>4</sup> A contextual theology is important for shaping congregational persona. Contextual theologies use scriptures in a particular way, where the interpretative method is often implicit and taken for granted. The canon they accept, the translation they use, the resources they draw upon for sermons and educational programs, all shape the persona of a congregation.

For example, a congregational sermon might proclaim, “We preach the whole Bible.” Nevertheless the preacher may have his or her favorite passages that he or she uses most often. While publicly rejecting the idea of a canon within a canon, the sermons implicitly build a select subset of favorite texts and their interpretations. For example, the congregation might preach the Ten Commandments (Metzger, 1977, 92-93) and the “love command” of Jesus which sums up the Ten Commandments by the injunction to “love God and love your neighbor as yourself” (Metzger, 1977, 1200). The preacher may love the story of the Prodigal Son and refer often to this passage (Metzger, 1977, 1268-1269). This same pastor will rarely, if ever, preach the imprecatory psalms, which refer to dashing babies’ brains against rocks, or the story of Tamar, who was raped by her brother (White, 1995). While this too, is part of preaching the “whole Bible,” these stories never seem to make it into the sermon, even if they make it into the

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<sup>3</sup> Myth: In using the term “myth” I simply mean a religious or meaning-making narrative that comes from the tradition. I do not mean that the narrative does not convey truth.

<sup>4</sup> Contextual theology: Contextual theology, as I use it in this dissertation, means an interrelated system of meaning using Christian categories such as God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Trinity, church, sin, salvation, forgiveness, repentance, justice, and love. The theology is embedded in the practices of ministry such as preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and education. It is also contextual because the theology is embedded in the local and surrounding culture.

lectionary. Phyllis Tribble, Ph.D., talked about certain Old Testament texts as “Texts of Terror” because they dealt with physical or sexual violence (Tribble, 1989). She pointed out that the writers of scripture forgot or neglected the names of women in these stories, and their names do not appear. Only men were educated and could write the scriptures. These men forgot, or left out, the voices and names of women or victims. Pastors do not mention these stories of abuse. Parishioners want to hear sermons that are uplifting and encouraging, so these parts of scripture overlooked. It is important for survivors that the Bible has records of these events. It is important that tradition did include stories of survival.

Contextual theologies are very important for survivors of domestic violence because they can make it easier or harder for a survivor to speak and congregations to listen. I will argue that a contextual theology can draw on materials from the *via positive*, such as images, stories, symbols and myths. Additional resources from the *via negativa* of mystical writings and experiences of contemplative or centering prayer can aid survivors. Finally, resources from the *via transformativa* can help transform the survivor and the society in which they live. I will explain more about this in the chapter on theological resources for domestic violence survivors.

#### Point Number Two:

*The creation of a positive congregational persona simultaneously represses certain negative or shameful aspects of the human existence of parishioners and clergy. The suppression of violent*

*or sexual material can be an unconscious process and forms a shadow side of the congregation in the collective unconscious. Congregations repress stories of domestic violence in this way.*

I argue that suppression of violent or sexual material can be an unconscious process, which forms a shadow side of the congregation and becomes part of the collective unconscious, to use Jung's terms (Jung, 1933). The shadow side is often where the stories of survivors reside along with actions of abusers. Congregations cannot deal with large portions of people's real experiences. They repress these experiences, alienating them from the congregation, God, and themselves. Many people complain about this disconnect between their actual experiences and their congregation's contextual theology. For example, they might complain that the sermon is not relevant. Alternatively, they might comment that they do not feel connected to the congregation. This happens when large portions of a person's life are not acknowledged as part of human experience.

Point Number Three:

*Repressed unconscious elements of the congregation's shadow side may erupt in the form of "cultural complex." I call this the "congregational complex."*

It is my contention that repressed unconscious elements may erupt in the form of a "cultural complex" in congregations from time to time (Singer, 2004, 1). Debates over

homosexuality are an example of emotionally laden complexes. You can tell it is a complex because of fixed, repetitive nature of the arguments from the left and the right, and the resulting polarization from these emotionally charged conflicts. Congregational resolve conflicts by discussion, compromise, or various accommodations. Complexes cannot be easily resolved. They are affect laden and repetitive. They are rooted in conflicts that are not easily resolved. Complexes reflect issues rooted in oppressions found in the wider culture. These oppressions may be hidden to those arguing the case. Sexism, racism, homophobia, and classism are elements of a cultural complex that can erupt in congregations.

I argue that in the same way an individual's complex benefits from becoming conscious and integrated into the psyche of a person through a therapeutic alliance, so a congregation can benefit by a complex becoming conscious. Congregations can integrate complexes into the contextual theology. They can do this by naming the repressed material. They can develop responses to them that bring healing. Congregational consultants can help with this process if a congregation is willing to allow such work.

The response of a congregation should include one of advocacy for a survivor. Congregations also need to work with abusers to keep them accountable, help them to change and make reparations to survivors. The legal system often should be involved to insure accountability of abusers and restorative justice. Without that ongoing collective process, forgiveness is just so much cheap grace, as Bonhoeffer pointed out:

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, and grace without Jesus

Christ; living and incarnate . . . Costly grace is the gospel, which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. Costly grace is the incarnation of God (Bonhoeffer, 1976, 47-48).

As Bonhoeffer says above, the church needs to be the incarnation of God in this particular place and time. However, pastors and parishioners sometimes urge victims to forgive quickly and reconcile with an abuser. Congregations put little pressure on abusers to repent or stop their behavior. Quick forgiveness effectively suppresses the incident in a socially acceptable way in the congregation, while not really dealing with the depth of the problem. This is how eruptions of complexes in congregations are quickly repressed. This underscores why a contextual theology and the congregational *persona* are so important. Some contextual theologies help the process of naming evil, in this case domestic violence.<sup>5</sup> A contextual theology can provide a framework of forgiveness, costly grace, repentance, and restorative justice that does not come too easily. Pastors and laity can shape a congregational persona to include more of human experience. There are congregations that are sanctuaries, where survivors tell their stories and healing takes place.

#### Point Number Four:

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<sup>5</sup> Another term for domestic violence is intimate partner violence. These terms can be used interchangeably.

*When an eruption of unconscious material from the shadow side of the congregation occurs, it is an opportunity to integrate this material into the contextual theology. Congregations can reshape the congregational persona to be a liberating, healing, and just. congregation.*

When an eruption of the collective unconscious of a congregation occurs and the congregation integrates it in an effective manner, there is a possibility for spiritual growth and development for all involved. Congregations can minister to the survivor and hold the abuser accountable. A contextual theology can assist a survivors contact with the divine by helping them to turn inward, and experience a union of self and God. A contextual theology can then move a congregation outward in solidarity with those who are suffering. A contextual theology can be liberating for survivors, despite terrible oppression, suffering, and isolation.

It is my belief that the turn inward toward the divine, for a survivor, can occur and even if the congregation cannot or will not help. God is not limited by the successes or failures of a particular congregation at a particular time. Nevertheless, I will argue that the *via positiva* of a constructive theology has resources for survivors, abusers, laity and clergy. These include images, stories, and symbols from the Christian tradition that can help survivors, abusers, and their congregations. The *via negativa* from the mystical tradition also has resources for the survivor and abusers such as contemplative prayer. Finally I will argue that the *via*

*transformativa* also has resources for the survivor and abuser to heal and change such as solidarity with survivors and resistance to abuse by the congregation.<sup>6</sup>

I will address the feminist ethical arguments of Carol Gilligan and other relational psychologists. They unmask how moral decision making in girls is relational, while decision-making in boys used abstract ideas such as justice and fairness {Gilligan, 1982 #132}. Her revisions of the “self in relation” unmask differences in the way women and men make moral decisions and show how women’s relational decision making is not valued in theories constructed by men such as Kohlberg.

In recent years, Feminist and deconstructionists have critiqued the idea of a rational, choosing, unitary self, coming from the Enlightenment.. Feminists such as Marilyn Friedman and Dianne Tietjens Meyers have argued that this Enlightenment self is gendered male, because it focuses on logic and will. The unitary, choosing self of the Enlightenment is, in some sense, disembodied. The body and the earth have often been gendered female in Western religious and philosophical tradition. Eco-feminists have stressed the interrelatedness and mutuality of all that is (Ruether, 1998). Feminists such as Meyers and Friedman have proposed a multiplicity of self, or a more fluid self (Diana Tietjens Meyers, 1997, Friedman, 1997). I think that fluidity of self is not just a female phenomenon, but a human experience. People constantly reconstruct the self as they grow and change over time. This more fluid understanding of the self can help a survivor

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<sup>6</sup> I will use the term *via positiva* for resources from the Christian tradition that are also call cataphatic, or kataphatic. These include words such as images for God, images for the congregation, images for what it means to be human. It also includes theologies, myths, and interpretations of scriptures. The *via negativa* I will use for the apophatic tradition which describes what God is not, and includes the mystical union with God. By the *via transformativa* I mean those practices that help change for the better people and congregations.

disengage from self-images of being a victim, to other more positive constructions of her self.

No limited construction is actually a person's whole self. While there is continuity from moment to moment of a person, there is also a possibility for change that allows us not to get stuck in damaging and hurtful notions of what it means to be "me." While embodied on this earth, our concept of "me" is always changing and transforming.

Nevertheless, I will argue that a "multiple self" is not the best construction of the self for a survivor, who already experiences fragmentation and dissociation. I will propose another construction of the self as one of the ways a congregation can help survivors transform. The construction of the self as "centered, embodied, in process, and in relation to a just and caring community." This idea of the self answers the questions, "What kind of Self?" in relation to "What kind of community?" Both the "centered, embodied, self in process" and the relationship to "a just and caring community" are vital elements of my argument.

Point Number Five:

*The kind of community or congregation that a survivor needs is both caring and just. A caring community listens for the voice and stories of survivors, names domestic violence, , provides a place of safety, and joins in solidarity and advocacy with those who are suffering from trauma. These qualities outline the kind of community that survivors need. A just community holds abusers accountable and promotes restorative justice.*

Human beings are born into a human community for better or worse, with its cultural history, resources and limitations, strengths and oppressions. I will argue that a community that is caring listens for the voice of survivors, provides a place of safety, names the truth of domestic violence, and joins in solidarity and advocacy with those suffering from trauma. A just community holds abusers accountable and promotes restorative justice.

Just as there is a kind of community that helps a survivor heal, there is also an understanding of the self that helps a survivor heal. Point number five addresses the concept of a self with the elements of that concept that help a survivor heal.

Point Number Five:

*The “centered, embodied, self in process, and relation to a just and caring community” is a helpful concept of the self for a survivor. I call this self the “Centered self.”*

I argue that there is too much fragmentation and dissociation in a survivor’s experience for a “multiple self” to be a helpful concept for a survivor. I recognize that process in the construct of the concept of the self is necessary to allow survivors to change their understanding of the self over time. I agree with Meyers and Friedman that the Enlightenment idea of the self as rational, unitary and choosing is not much help to a survivor. I argue that a self in process is a vital element of the concept of the self for a survivor. Rather than multiple, I prefer the terms “centered” and “embodied.” Centering brings a survivor into herself and allows union with the

Ground of Being. In using the term “centered,” I bring the mystical resources of the *via negativa*. I will use the term “embodiment” because grounding in the body is also important. For a survivor the experience of the body is where she felt the abuse. The body is sometimes a source of knowledge of the abuse. A survivor can heal her trauma, in part by recovering her body. Activities such as expressive dance, yoga, Tai Chi and similar physical activities help heal survivors. For those survivors who are mentally ill, and psychotic, grounding in the body is very important. Body grounding techniques are therapeutic resources that assist a survivor in gaining control over dissociative experiences. The embodied part of the concept of the self is very important. Next, I will talk about the kind of community the “centered, embodied self in process” needs to be in relationship with.

Rather than a “self in relation,” I argue for a “self in relation to a just and caring community.” It is important for my argument to indicate the kind of relationships and the kind of community that are liberating. Simply being in relationship is not enough. There are particular qualities of the relationship and the community that are needed to be caring and just. The congregation can make all of these ideas part of the contextual theology. This understanding of the self can be part of the preaching, pastoral care, educational, liturgical, and worship practices.

Such a community can be in solidarity with survivors and work for restorative justice. Restorative justice involves the whole community and the abuser in making amends.<sup>7</sup> A

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<sup>7</sup> Restorative justice is a concept that is popular in legal and criminal justice system recently. It involves the idea that an offender needs to make amends to victims and to society. Restorative justice programs provide ways for an offender to make amends. Victims and their families direct what they would like. They may not want to see the

centered self from the contemplative Christian tradition helps a survivor heal and connect to herself and to the Ground of Being.<sup>8</sup>

I will argue that the “centered, embodied, self in relation, and process” develops best without a caring and equitable community that leads to a restorative justice. Restorative justice holds abusers accountable, while facilitating the healing of survivors. Abusers provide time and resources to repair damages done to victims and their families. Restorative justice work includes congregations and the requirement for abusers to be accountable and repentant. Repentance is a concept many congregations preach and teach. Congregants wrestle with how to practice repentance in particular situations of offense. Congregations create sermons and practices that are concrete and detailed. For example, accountability in repentance could involve pastors or lay people making sure the abuse has stopped. Congregations could collect money for counseling for victims. Congregations could recommend the abuser to go to his own counseling or men’s group. Obviously only the legal system can use coercion to mandate attendance at these groups. For the wider interfaith and secular community, keeping abusers accountable includes the legal system. Justice and caring requires a system of agencies that includes the police departments, schools, healthcare organizations, battered women’s shelters, and mental health systems. These groups work together to advocate for the end to domestic abuse. Congregations join this united effort.

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offender again. The offender can still help by providing funds for counseling, buying replacement property, providing service to the community that is appropriate but may not involve giving directly to the victim. At times giving to the victim may be appropriate. That is for the victim to decide.

<sup>8</sup>This “Ground of Being” is Tillich’s term for the divine or the numinous. I use it for lack of a better word.

These five points make up the basic elements of my argument. They emerged from the data in dialogue with my theoretical frames. A brief summary of the points of the argument are:

1. Congregations develop a *persona* to attract members and pass on the truths of their tradition.
2. As a congregation develops a *persona*, some elements are repressed. These elements are shameful, sexual or violent elements of human experience. The repressed elements form a shadow side to the congregation.
3. At times, these unconscious elements erupt into symptoms.
4. Congregations that acknowledge these symptoms integrate them into the *persona* and contextual theology. However, the symptoms can be repressed and traumatize a survivor again.
5. When the congregation represses symptoms repeatedly, they form a complex. This can be a complex in an individual, as Jung argued. Alternatively, as I argue, repressed symptoms in a congregation can become a “congregational complex.”
6. A “congregational complex” is characterized by its fixed, affect laden and repetitive nature. It will be more difficult to challenge or change a congregational complex. Even if a congregational complex has formed, the eruption of symptoms can lead to integration and healing.
- 7.
8. There are certain things the congregation must do to be a just and healing community for a survivor. They are as follows:
  - a. First, it must listen to and believe survivors.
  - b. Secondly it must provide safety.
  - c. Thirdly it must name the abuse.
  - d. Fourthly it must be in solidarity with the survivor.
  - e. It must hold the abuser accountable.
  - f. It must work for restorative justice.
  - g. It must rework its contextual theology and pastoral practices to be liberating and transformative for both the survivor and the abuser.
9. The self of a survivor that is in relationship with just and caring congregation needs certain elements:

- a. These include a centered, embodied, relational self in process with a just and caring community.
- b. For shorthand I will refer to this whole concept of the self as the “Centered Self.”

These elements make up the basis of my argument. The argument arose out of the data and the conversation of the data with the theoretical frameworks I chose as dialogue partners. In Chapter 2, I will talk about the method of ethnography. I will discuss the voice relational approach I used to collect data and analyze the data. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the findings of the first congregation from a Jungian framework. I have called the first congregation “Stone Church.” In Chapter 4, I will discuss the findings of the second congregation from a Jungian framework. I have called this congregation “La Iglesia Nueva Vida.” In Chapter 5, I will bring feminist relational psychology, feminist theologies, Jungian theory, and the trauma theory of Judith Herman into the conversation with the data from the two congregations. I construct the elements of a Self-theory and theological anthropology that would be liberating for survivors. I also touch on the kind of the congregation that is required to be in healing relation to a survivor. I propose that the main elements of a congregational community that survivors need is one that is just and caring. These points are brought out in dialogue with my theoretical frames as well as a general framework of the *via positiva*, *via negativa* and *via transformativa*. In this section I discuss how the theological resources bring transformation to the journey of a survivor. In Chapter 6, I will discuss my conclusions, practical implications, and recommendations for further research. Next, I will examine the research methods in Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODS OF RESEARCH

I chose *qualitative and ethnographic* methods for investigating my topic of domestic abuse because I am interested in the way people in congregations construct a congregational persona and a contextual theology that either helps or hinders those involved in domestic abuse. M. E. Graue, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, puts the definition of ethnographic qualitative research this way,

For some, the term ethnography is loosely applied to any qualitative research project whose purpose is rich description. A more precise definition, rooted in ethnography's disciplinary home of anthropology, is a qualitative research process and product whose aim is cultural interpretation. The ethnographer goes beyond reporting events and details of experience and works to explain how these represent the webs of meaning in which we live (Graue, in press on 8/2/04).

My aim is to go beyond thick description, and to look at the webs of meaning that two particular congregations weave, and how that weaving either includes or excludes the voices of survivors (Geertz, 1973). The qualitative researcher interprets the data. I am interested in examining how contextual theologies facilitate restorative justice for victims and hold abusers accountable. I study how specific congregational communities construct contextual theologies and how these contextual theologies hinder or help justice and healing. I hope congregations will use the results of this dissertation to help congregations move closer and help survivors find safety, name domestic violence,

receive support, and ultimately obtain justice. For abusers, I hope the congregation can help them become accountable to the larger community and to the people they injure. Abusers need to make tangible efforts to assist in repairing the damage done to those injured. At the same time, communities need to help abusers heal from their own wounds and learn to live in the world without abusing others.

I know a congregation cannot do this entirely by itself. A congregation will need to work with of the legal system, social services, schools, and local neighborhoods to provide an integrated approach. Religious congregations are one of the important places where naming abuse, supporting survivors, and holding abusers accountable can take place. I think an interpretive approach is necessary to explain the reasons why this work has been so difficult. Qualitative research provides that interpretive approach.

Qualitative research is systematic inquiry into a particular cultural group that uses naturalistic and interpretive methods of inquiry, such as observation and conversation. The researcher grounds the theory in the actual experience of the people studied. While the researcher may begin with a set of research questions, she will allow interaction with the community to raise new questions and shape the final study. Meaning-making in an ethnographic study is a shared effort, where both researcher and those interviewed have a part in explaining what goes on within a particular cultural group.

For example, in this study a minister tells me that no domestic violence occurs in his congregation. Within minutes after this statement he relates how an anonymous letter he received says that someone in the congregation is experiencing domestic abuse. The

person writing the anonymous letter asks the pastor to speak about it in a sermon, and yet the minister says he does not know how to respond since the person sent the letter anonymously. To me it seems clear that speaking about it in a sermon or a prayer might be an appropriate response, but this never occurs to the pastor. Why doesn't the pastor think of these things? I had many questions as a researcher about this story and its contradictions. Other questions arose as different people told me their stories. My theory building offers an interpretation of possible reasons congregational pastors and parishioners might respond as they did to my questions.

In my estimation, qualitative research methods best fit my interpretive intent as a researcher. While the answers to my questions are neither statistically significant nor generalizable, the answers are transferable from these specific congregations to other settings. . The current data and its interpretation can suggest avenues of action to bring safety, healing, and restorative justice to readers to apply to their own context.

### **Ethnographic Methods Used in This Dissertation**

I used structured interviews for the clergy members, bystanders, and survivors of domestic violence. In addition, I used participant observation and kept a field notes details and impressions of my visits. I looked at artifacts such as symbols in church windows, vestments, and objects used in worship. I examined Sunday school material, worship bulletins and newsletters. I took notes on sermons and read printed sermons. I examined church policies and denominational materials.

I tried to reduce observer bias by using multiple methods in ethnography, or triangulating the data (Mike Palmquist, 2004). Quantitative researchers often charge qualitative researchers with excessive subjectivity. While today researchers are more aware that bias exists in any research effort, qualitative researchers do need to take special care not to draw premature or erroneous conclusions. The triangulation of multiple angles of view through a variety of methods is part of the systematic inquiry that ethnography provides.

In this study, the first method I used is *participant observation* (Mike Palmquist, 2004). While the stance of the participant observer is nonjudgmental, it is not value neutral. Feminist discourses and analytical theories related to class and race guided observations that I recorded in my journal. They also guided my original and revised research questions. I learned about the community by taking part in its activities, such as attending worship services, reading past sermons available to parishioners, attending Sunday school, going to Wednesday prayer meetings, visiting open meetings of the governing board and meeting with leaders of counseling ministries. I kept a journal of these activities and field notes of my thoughts and feelings about them, often commenting on the way congregational culture is gendered, racially constructed, and class consciousness. I observed educational levels, dress, and types of jobs parishioners had. I kept a record of the way the questions I started with changed as the study progressed.

The second method of ethnography I used is *structured interviews* that allowed three categories of people in the congregation to tell me their stories from their point of view (Mike Palmquist, 2004). While narrative in style, the structured interview allows the focus to stay on the topic of the researchers study. If the person interviewed has something they wanted to tell

me that was not in the structured interview I would listen. Then, I would come back to the questions. I taped recorded these interviews and then transcribed them into verbatim transcripts for analysis. I used Agar's method of transcription, which uses marks or particular symbols to indicate pauses, emphasis and inflections (Agar, 1987). I will destroy the tapes after the dissertation is finished. The transcriptions will not use the person's real name.

My focus is *congregational*, because I have not seen this focus in previous literature involved with domestic abuse. Much of the literature is narrative and focuses on individual survivors' stories. In previous research, authors wrote about theology its relationship to survivors, but they did not use a congregational context. Building on the prior research, I want to use narratives of survivors. In addition, I wanted to include clergy and bystanders stories. I wanted to look at how *congregational culture* shapes the lives of those who attend, privileging some kinds of speech and actions, while suppressing others.

## **Process of the Research**

### ***Selection of Participants***

I selected the first congregation the clergy and members because I knew some of them already. I had written, telephoned, and emailed a number of congregations, many of whom were unable to participate. Domestic abuse is a difficult topic for congregations, and to allow s to be scrutiny by an outsider makes them vulnerable in a way that many would rather avoid. I think the congregations that allowed me to study them already had some openness about domestic violence. I am deeply grateful to them for allowing me to study them. They had each done some work on these issues in their own congregations, or I suspect they would not have allowed me to

study them. In some ways, these are the progressive congregations. Many congregations are too threatened to allow a researcher to study domestic violence. The first congregation is located in a suburb of Chicago. It is mostly Caucasian, but has some members that are African American, African, Latino, and various Asian backgrounds (see demographic data in the Appendix). One of the first congregation's clergy suggested a second congregation to me that was in a predominantly Latino neighborhood in Chicago. This pastor of the second congregation is bilingual and bicultural as is most of his congregation. The second congregation had been active in responding to this issue in their community with their parishioners. They were eager to participate.

After contacting the congregations by speaking with the pastors, I then arranged a meeting of the governing groups and presented my research proposal to them. The governing groups then decided whether to allow the research in their congregations. There was vigorous discussion but both groups decided to allow the research. I assured them that I would provide resource materials showing hotlines, shelters, support groups, and social services to any survivors or abusers that I encountered. I developed a resource sheet and gave these resources to any participant that said they wanted it. The governing body signed a congregational informed consent form, which laid out the benefits and possible risks of participating in the study. (See Appendix: Congregational Consent Form.) The next step was to put up posters in congregations, asking clergy, bystanders, or survivors to contact me for an hour's interview. All the clergy, some survivors and bystanders, did contact me for an interview in each location. No abusers contacted me, so none is included in this study. Some survivors and pastors told me

about abusers, but none talked to me directly. I started in one congregation and went there for six months following the above process. I utilized different consent forms for clergy, survivors, and bystanders. While setting up individual interviews, I also attended the worship services of the congregation and collected data in my journal, commenting on the building, vestments, symbols, bulletins, music, and many other things. Then went to the second congregation, attended for six months and repeated the process there. While most in the second congregation spoke Spanish and sang songs in Spanish, the sermons were often in English. They had a few African Americans and Caucasians that did not speak Spanish and some Latinos who did not speak English. This resulted in a sermon where the pastor would speak awhile in one language and then switch to the other language, thus keeping both language groups understanding the sermons. While I speak conversational Spanish, I view my fluency as a limitation. I did not always understand the Spanish, but it was repeated in English, and that helped me. All of the interviews I conducted in English, with participants who are bilingual and bicultural, or English speaking. Still, my results have to be somewhat tentative because I do not come from the predominant cultural group of this congregation.

### **Semi-structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews for each type of participants described below. For example, I would try to start with an open-ended question and then move to more specifics. For survivors I asked:

(General descriptive demographic data: age, race, education, marital status, gender, denomination)

1. Could you tell me how your experience of sexual or domestic violence or abuse affected your life?
2. Have you been able to make sense or meaning out of the experience of domestic violence or abuse? In what way?
3. What emotional resources have helped you in coping with this experience?  
What spiritual resources have helped you in coping with these experiences?
4. In what ways have your religious practices helped or hindered you in recovery?
5. Are you affiliated with a religious congregation?
6. If yes, please describe the congregation.
7. If yes, in what ways has this congregation hindered you in your recovery?
8. If yes, in what ways has this congregation helped you in recovery?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about the experience of domestic violence?
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your recovery?
11. What is your understanding of forgiveness?
12. What is your understanding of repentance?
13. What is your understanding of justice?
14. Anything else you would like to add?

If a survivor wanted to talk about other things, I would let him or her talk. Then later I would draw us back to the questions on the sheet. If a person did not want to talk about something, we would skip over that part. At the end of the interview, I handed each participant a list of area resources for domestic abuse. I thanked them for participating. If anyone wanted to see the transcript, to amend any of their statements, or what I wrote down, they could. Several participants did ask for this option, usually as a way of safeguarding themselves. I went back to them to read the transcript, and they could take out any part they did not want in the study. No one actually took out any part of the interview. This was true of clergy, bystanders, and survivors.

For clergy I asked:

1. Have you ever worked as a clergy person with anyone in your

congregation who was involved in domestic violence or abuse?

2. As you think back to that experience is there anything you would do differently?
3. What is your understanding of justice generally?
4. How does your understanding of justice apply to domestic violence?
5. How do you think the congregation as a whole is affected by people who have experienced domestic abuse?
6. How does your understanding of repentance apply to an abuser?
7. Are there any ministries in the church that address the experience of domestic violence? What are they and how do they address the experience of domestic abuse?
8. Are there spiritual approaches that hinder survivors here? Abusers?
9. Are there spiritual approaches that could help survivors here? Abusers?
10. Are there any denominational policies related to domestic violence and abuse?
11. Did you receive any training on how to deal with domestic violence in seminary?
12. Do you think your gender affects how people respond to you?
13. What is your image of God? Is there anything in your image of God that could be a problem in addressing the issue of domestic violence?
14. Do you find any kind of scriptural helps in dealing with domestic violence? Any ways that scripture can be used as a roadblock?
15. Have you given any thought to how worship might be healing to persons dealing with domestic violence?
16. Does your congregation have educational events about domestic violence?

17. Anything else to add about congregational care?
18. In a nutshell, what do you think the Christian story is?
19. Anything else you want to add?

The questions I asked bystanders in the congregation are:

1. Are you a member of this congregation, or do you not attend a congregation at this time? If you are a member how long have you been a member?
2. Could you briefly describe your religious/spiritual background?
3. What is your understanding of social justice generally? Especially with respect to family violence?
4. What is your understanding of forgiveness generally? Especially with respect to family violence?
5. Have you ever been involved in responding to a person or family who was experiencing domestic abuse?
6. What spiritual resources did you or would you draw upon if you learned of a person experiencing domestic violence?
7. Are there any roadblocks that you are aware of from your religious context in this congregation?
8. What would you do if someone told you they were speaking to an abuser?
9. What would you do if you were speaking to an abuser?
10. What is your understanding of repentance? How does this apply to an abuser?
11. What congregational resources would you like to see come to bear on a situation of domestic abuse if it happened in the congregation?
12. Do you have any additional comments or concerns about the issue of the congregation's response to domestic violence?
13. Anything else you would like to add?

I recorded and transcribed these transcripts verbatim and these transcripts formed the core of the data.

### **Voice-Centered, Relational Method of Data Analysis**

Voice-centered relational methods of data analysis grew out of qualitative research methods, particularly grounded theory (Strauss, 1990). Grounded theory arose at the University of Chicago. The theory came out of the Chicago School of Sociology and was largely symbolic interactionist in theory. Theory is intended to arise from the data of the interview. The researcher should not superimpose predetermined categories. Thus, the categories arise from the data (Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is an inductive way of knowing rather than deductive from *a priori* principles. Theory generation is the aim of grounded theory. Theory does not start with a statistically significant and tested hypothesis. Nor are the results meant to be prescriptive. In a qualitative research Qualitative Research Consultants Association website that asks the question, “What is qualitative research?” the author answers:

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with attention to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of sub-sets of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than prescriptive. (Q.R.C.A., 2003).

The results are thought provoking and produce theory. The data are transferable to other situations that the reader encounters rather than generalizable. Grounded theory is helpful in allowing research respondents put their own interpretations into the process without first going through the researcher's interpretive frame. Respondents question and challenge the researcher's points of view.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The study proposal went through the Northwestern Memorial Hospital Internal Review Board (IRB). They examined the consent forms to make sure the researcher meets important ethical considerations. The proposal and consent forms passed on 9/13/2000. The IRB addressed issues such as informed consent, harm and risk, honesty and trust, confidentiality, intervention, and advocacy. I developed four consent forms, and read them verbatim to each respondent or governing group. I stopped to explain and answer questions for the governing bodies, clergy, survivors, or bystanders. The first informed consent sheet went to the governing body of the congregation. In addition, I developed consent forms for each type of individual I talked to, using the structured interview questions shown. I spoke to the clergy (ordained and called ministers), survivors (persons who have experienced domestic abuse at some time in their lives but are sufficiently recovered to answer questions), and bystanders (or lay persons who have not experienced domestic abuse, but attend the congregation).

The informed consent sheets address the issue of possible harm to the congregation and participants. In the category of “risks,” the informed consent forms state that:

Discussing domestic violence may be uncomfortable and may raise issues that cause emotional pain. Talking about domestic violence may challenge the belief that, ‘This does not happen in our congregation.’ In the event that you experience considerable significant emotional distress, the recorder will be turned off, and you will be allowed to withdraw from the study (See consent forms in the Appendix.)

While no participant experienced such significant emotional distress, I did make it clear that a respondent or congregation could withdraw at any time. If things came up even after the

interview, I gave them my phone number. In addition, I gave all participants a resource sheet for area domestic violence and abuse including shelters, hotlines, therapists and hospitals where they could receive assistance if needed. I made it clear to congregations that if a case of child or elder abuse came to my attention, I would report it to the authorities. I told congregations that I would encourage adults to seek help and report violations to the police themselves. I warned the congregations that reporting or talking with survivors could create difficulty in the congregation. None of these scenarios occurred during the course of the study, but I alerted the congregational governing bodies to the possibility. I also made it clear that the interviews were not therapy or counseling sessions, even though I am a licensed therapist in the State of Illinois. I have a BS from Emory University, an MSN degree from University of Connecticut, and an Advanced Practice RN license from the State of IL. In addition I have an M. Div. from the University of Chicago and I am an ordained Presbyterian Church United States of America Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The informed consent sheets also made it clear that there would be no direct benefit to the congregations or to the participants. It also made clear that all participants could choose not to participate in the study if they did not want to. In addition, I made clear that the study was not sponsored, nor supervised, by the congregations, which one of the governing bodies had pointed out, was important to them. The informed consent form also stated that I would not identify participants by name or the use the names of their congregations, in order to protect the identity of vulnerable persons. I also made sure that no participant was under that age of eighteen. In the case of survivors, I made sure that they felt sufficiently healed from the experience that they

could talk about it without further harm. While I used my own professional judgment, I also wrote a letter to the survivor's therapist (if they had one) and asked them to state that it was safe for the survivor to participate in the study. Finally, I made sure that the congregation and participants would not incur any financial cost through participating.

### **Analysis of Data**

While I remain interested in grounded theory (Strauss, 1967) an article by Andrea Doucet and Natasha Mauthner brought out issues that had concerned me and suggested a new way of analyzing the data (Mauthner, 1995-1996). The issues relate to voice and hearing. Often, people do not hear the survivor's voice. The authors include men's voices as well as women's voices showing how their sense of self is reflected in their choice of reflexive pronouns such as "I," "We," or "You" as they narrate their own experiences. In reading interview transcripts, they note critical shifts between these pronouns and state they hear conflicts the speaker struggles with more clearly. The researchers do this to catch implicit or unspoken assumptions of the speaker. Researchers can easily miss assumptions of the speaker (Strauss, 1990). This is troubling to Doucet and Mauthner, who think that choices the researcher makes about which of the respondent's issues to bring to the foreground speaks more about the researcher's theoretical, personal and political views than issues the respondent cares about (Mauthner, 1998). Researchers recognize bias in the research process, and the importance of identifying our own social location and assumptions that shape our research (Harding, 1987). Therefore the fact that I am a white, middle aged, and middle class, divorced woman, who lives in the Midwest of the United States; and who is a liberal, Protestant, feminist, concerned with the oppression of race,

class, disability, age, gender and homosexuals. These commitments and biases shape how I hear my respondent. I need to take special care to hear what the respondent is saying. I recognize that the research product, while joint in some respects, is ultimately the researcher's to decide what to include and exclude. The less overlapping our horizons of experience and understanding, as Gadamer say, the more tentative I must make my interpretation and conclusions (Gadamer, 1993).

I list the process that Doucet and Mauthner outline below:

*Reading #1: Reading for the plot and for our responses to the narrative:*

The first reading is comprised of two elements. First, the researcher reads the text for overall plot and story. They ask themselves, "What are the main events, the protagonists, and the subplots?" The researcher listens to recurrent images, words, metaphors and contradictions in the narrative. This element is common to other methods of qualitative analysis (Riessman, 1993) and (Strauss, 1990). In the "reader response" element of this reading, the researcher places herself, with her own particular background history and experience; in relation to the person she interviewed (Taylor et al, 1995). The researcher essentially reads the narrative on her own terms. She notes how she is responding emotionally and intellectually to the respondent (Mauthner, 1998).

One of the researchers gives this example from her work. She studied how a married couple decides who does what work in the home. The researcher became aware that she listened more to the wife, and was more sympathetic to her, than to the husband. She realized that her commitments as a feminist, and her view that wives are disadvantaged, might have caused her to

discount the husband's anger and frustration over negotiating role definitions (Mauthner, 1998).

The authors hope that this type of awareness will help distinguish between the respondent's narrative and the researcher's interpretation of it (Mauthner, 1998).

The second step in the process is:

*Reading #2: Reading for the voice of the "I":*

The second reading Doucet and Mauthner conducted focused on how the respondent experiences, feels, and speaks, about herself. They said,

We used the method of using a colored pencil to physically trace and underline certain of the respondent's statements in the interview transcript, namely, where the respondent uses personal pronouns such as "I," "we," or "you," in talking about themselves. This process centers our attention on the active "I" which is telling the story; amplifies the terms in which the respondent sees and presents herself; highlights where the respondent might be emotionally or intellectually struggling to say something; and identifies those places where the respondent shifts between "I" and "we" and "you" signaling how the respondent perceives and experiences herself. Spending this time carefully listening to the respondent creates a space between her way of speaking and seeing and our own, so we can discover "I"...how she speaks of herself before we speak of her (Brown and Gilligan, 1992:22-27; Mauthner, 1998).

This quote of Mauthner and Doucet shows the second reading to be looking for the active "I," the voice of the respondent. Shifts to "we," or "you," and "I" might add silences and long pauses where the respondent appears to be struggling to find a space to articulate her truth. The authors give an example of this from their research on postpartum depression. Mauthner says,

The new mother's struggles with her internalized voice of what motherhood should be like and what she is actually experiencing. She wonders if she should have gone back to work earlier, which might have made her feel better, and her own expectation that she should sacrifice all to her newborn daughter Suzie (Mauthner, 1998).

The researchers noted with the shift of voice that the respondents found it difficult to accept their feelings and that they tried to change themselves to live up to their idea of what a

good mother should be (Mauthner, 1998). Another example from their research involved a stay-at-home dad, and shows how he struggles with giving up his career. At times, he says he never was career-minded, and at other times he says he wished he had a career (Mauthner, 1998).

These contradictions of statements back-to-back indicate layered voices and perspectives sometimes internalized with the respondents thought processes (Mauthner, 1998). Grounded theory is more interested in the interaction than in the person's internal decision-making. I am interested in both the person's interactions, but also their internal decision-making and how they deal with the experience of domestic violence in their lives.

The third step is the process whereby a group of researchers closely reads the transcripts and comments on what the researcher may have missed or minimized. I did not work in a group and mostly worked alone. I did receive feedback from my advisor and the dissertation committee, so in some respects they functioned as a group. They questioned choices related to the aspects of the respondents' narratives I had highlighted (Mauthner, 1998).

The fourth step is to write up a case study for each of the respondents, very detailed for narratives deemed more important, and more of summary, for others (Mauthner, 1998). I will include summaries of most of these in the Appendix.

The fifth step is to break up each transcript into a number of overlapping themes and sub-themes emerging from the intensive case studies and summaries much the way grounded theory does. The main difference is the intensive listening to voices transcribed in the original transcripts that occur before the data reduction phase (Mauthner, 1998). While acknowledging that the feminist ideal of listening to voices of women and the oppressed on their own terms is

somewhat impossible in its purest form, they are committed to trying “to hear the multiple and varied voices and stories of each person we interview” (Mauthner, 1998). The authors see an interplay of the respondents internalized and spoken multiple voices, the researcher’s personal experiences and social location, and the researcher’s theoretical standpoint, and theories she brings to the dialogue. Ultimately, the researcher will shape the final product, so in many respects remains in a privileged position. Nevertheless, by not trying to fit the voices of respondents into preconceived categories, the researcher hopes that the respondents have significantly shaped the knowledge production. Careful listening in the early stages before the data reduction stage is very important to this stance and commitment (Mauthner, 1998). I will provide a summary of these themes mentioned in the Appendix (see Appendix).

The final step is to dialogue with the theories and standpoints that the researcher brings to the study with new reflections and theory based on this dialogic process (Hartsock, 1997). The dialogue with critical theory raises questions and posits ideas that may not have come up in the earlier stages of analysis (Mauthner, 1998). I also reflected on the interviews and data through the lens of feminist, liberationist and other theologies and through critical theories of various feminisms (Harding, 1987). I reflected through the lens of Jung, and Gilligan.(Gilligan, 1988; Jordan, 1991; Jordan, 1997).

### CHAPTER 3: THE SURVIVOR AS “EMBODIED, CENTERED, SELF, IN PROCESS AND RELATION TO A JUST AND CARING COMMUNITY”

A certain day became a presence to me;  
there it was confronting me—sky, air, light:  
a being. And before it started to descend  
from the height of noon, it leaned over  
and struck my shoulder as if with  
the flat of a sword granting me  
honor and a task. The day’s blow  
rang out metallic—or it was I, a bell awakened,  
and what I heard was my whole self  
saying and singing what it heard: *I can*.

“Variation on a Theme by Rilke: The Book of Hours: Book 1, Poem 1, Stanza 1” by Denise Levertov (Sewell, 1991, 23-24).

A survivor did not write this poem, but it illustrates an important point I want to make in this dissertation. A survivor can find the power to overcome a history of violence or abuse. Each day has possibility, if a person can first turn inward and listen to “my whole self saying and singing what it heard: *I can*,” (Sewell, 1991, 24). In this poem the present day refers to a knighting experience, where a sword strikes the shoulder of a person, bestowing honor and purpose. Alternately, the poem suggests a bell calling a person to prayer or meditation. Either way, the present moment signals a person to really listen to their whole self and realize, “*I can*.”

This study starts with the experience of survivors of domestic violence and abuse. The survivors’ experience is a source of knowledge and transformation. Because the experience of the survivor is a starting place of knowledge, it is helpful for the survivor and the community that is trying to connect to have a working and none damaging idea of the self. The “whole self”

includes mind, thoughts, emotions, desiring, choosing, body, and relationships to family, congregation, and community. These culturally embedded relationships change continually. I call this self *the centered relational self in process and continuity*. *The second part of this definition is the self in relation to a just and caring community.*

A survivor is first a person and a human being. At the core of the person is the relational self in process. Turning inward the survivor can find the place where our being and the “Ground of Being,” touch, to use Tillich’s words (Tillich, 1951, 1957, 1963). The core self is where the present moment and the eternal fuse. It is the place where distinctions melt away. If the survivor can find this place of silence and emptiness within, he or she can find a reservoir of healing and empowerment. Even at a survivor’s most isolated moment, he or she has a relationship to the core self and to the ground of being which connects us to all that is.

This human being is born into a human community for better or worse, with its cultural history, resources and limitations, strengths and oppressions. I will argue that a community that can name the truth of domestic violence, provides a place of safety, listens for the voice of survivors, and joins in solidarity with those suffering from trauma, are the kinds of communities that survivors need. These communities are just and caring communities that hold abusers accountable and promote restorative justice.

From the moment of our birth, our selves and communities are constantly changing. Elements of growth and creativity intertwine with elements of deterioration and decay. While there is continuity from birth until death, the tenuous thread that weaves together growth, relatedness, aging, sickness, and death is not always apparent. In our cultures, along with

resources for growth and creativity, are invisible hegemonies that oppress some and elevate others based on relative values and power relations. The congregational research will show how this has worked in the lives of survivors of domestic violence and their congregations, both past and present. The relational world of a person is shattered with the experience of abuse. A survivor needs to overcome the loss of relatedness, and subsequent isolation. I will place the experiences of survivors I interviewed in the theoretical framework of Judith Herman, MD, a feminist, a psychiatrist and an advocate for survivors (Herman, 1998).

Herman's groundbreaking book, Trauma and Recovery: the Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror addresses the effects of trauma and the healing process for an survivor of trauma (Herman, 1998). Herman addresses individual treatment issues using a psychiatry and advocacy model that includes political and gender analysis (Herman, 1998). Her work discusses a broad base of research and clinical data on the subject of traumatic disorders and the recovery process. Herman writes as a feminist, a relational psychiatrist, and an advocate for survivors. Herman defines trauma as "the threat to the life of an individual that temporarily overwhelms that person's ability to cope" (Herman, 1997, 33). She traces the repression of traumatic material such as rape, combat, child abuse, or violence in both personal and historical context, starting with the earliest psychiatrists, Charcot and Janet. Both of these psychiatrists worked with women who had hysterical symptoms and independently theorized that these reactions were due to trauma. Breuer is the psychiatrist who developed the "talking cure" as well as hypnosis while working with women who had hysterical symptoms. Freud originally believed women's reports of abuse, but later changed his theory to say abuse reports were oedipal

fantasies or erotic wish fulfillments (Herman, 1997, 1-35). Herman points out that in the history of dealing with domestic violence there is dialectic between discovery and subsequent denial and repression. This is true historically in societies and personally for individual survivors, abusers, or even bystanders and therapists. I will argue that a similar process takes place in religious congregations.

For the victims, reaction to traumatic material takes a predictable course from dissociation, hyperarousal, and intrusive thoughts, to constriction of emotions or psychic numbing (Herman, 1997, 35-95). A fundamental shattering of trust occurs with trauma leading to disruption of connection to others. Trust in God and faith questions often result from such trauma. According to Herman, persons with an internal locus of control do better than those who see themselves acting more passively. Also the longer the duration and the more severe the trauma, the less well the person does. Those with a supportive community around them do better than those who are isolated. This has obvious implications for women whose main community is often a religious congregation. If the victim is a captive, such as a prisoner or a dependent child in a family, the more difficult recovery will be (Herman, 1997, 89).

Herman's review of literature and work with psychological patients reveal that perpetrators often appear normal, but pursue a number of well-known tactics to gain psychological domination. These tactics include fear, threats, reprieve from death, and guilt (Herman, 1997, 76-78). Strategies victims use to mitigate terror are hunger strikes, clinging to transitional objects, and making alliances with other trauma survivors. If trauma is severe and long enough, a person can become totally broken. Dissociative states, living for the moment, an

ongoing sense of shame, a sense of contamination, witnessing atrocities passively, are all manifestations of such brokenness. Among abused children, dysphoria, self-injury, compulsive sexuality, vomiting and unreasonable risk taking are common behaviors. Repeated victimization is also common (Herman, 1997). The role of community is very important in either making the abuse worse or helping (Herman, 1997, 70-71). I argue that congregations can be a community of a repeated traumatization, if the congregation is unsupportive, or of healing, if supportive.

In order to avoid the blame-the-victim phenomenon, Herman proposes a new diagnosis. She calls this syndrome “Complex post-traumatic stress disorder” (Herman, 1997, 115-129). Herman names other psychological disorders that have trauma as a factor, such as borderline personality (symptoms include frequent unstable relationships, a feeling of emptiness, self-harm or self-injury), and somaticization (symptoms include excessive preoccupation with the body and perceived illnesses that do not have basis in reality). She mentions multiple personality disorder, more often called dissociative identity disorder. In dissociative identity disorder fugue states occur. In this state, fragments of the personality are not available consciously to other parts of the personality. Much more rarely, a survivor creates distinct personalities.

Herman describes the following stages of recovery: safety, remembrance and mourning, reconnection, and commonality (Herman, 1997, 133-174). Therapy can provide a healing relationship that fosters empowerment, the recovery of memory, and the expression of a whole range of feelings that trauma and its recovery uncover. Congregations can walk with survivors as they go through the stages of healing. A survivor can do some of the work outside a therapist’s office. There is a place for friendship and clergy support in each stage of the journey.

Traumatized persons will often be hypersensitive and have difficulty with boundaries.

Therapists and pastoral counselors often have bystander guilt, and suffer intense emotions themselves. It is likely that parishioners and clergy who support the survivor in recovery may also experience bystander guilt. Survivors need good support systems and their support systems need support (Herman, 1997, 151-154). Some patients become suicidal in recovering from trauma. If suicidal ideations develop into an active plan of self-harm; hospitalization in an in-patient psychiatric unit may be required. A person can help a survivor develop a safety plan to prevent suicide or minimize the risk. Some survivors from the interviews in this study became suicidal at some point in their recovery process. Some survivors promote healing by becoming politically active on behalf of other survivors. We will see this too. Congregations could join the survivors in these efforts. Subsequent losses or traumas may reactivate past memories and require further work at different stages of life. Congregations could be there after therapy is long over. When later losses occur and more reworking of the trauma occurs they can support the survivor or make sure the survivor goes back to therapy.

Types of trauma that Herman addresses include physical and sexual assault, wife battering, combat trauma, political torture, child abuse, and the like. She links these types of abuse to structural patterns of patriarchy and oppression, which privilege and empower white males and devalue women, children, and minorities. These structural oppressions also affect congregations and they need to become aware of these patterns and resist such oppression within their group. Survivors must deal with structural oppressions in the surrounding culture and in their congregations. I will discuss that more in the congregational chapters.

From Herman's theorizing and research, the trauma has the following symptoms in a survivor:

- hypervigilance (a survivor is always on the alert for danger that has physical and emotionally negative consequences such as always being anxious, hypertension, and psychosomatic problems)
- intrusive memories of the trauma or flashbacks
- constriction of emotions (psychic numbing and dissociation)
- lack of trust

Knowing these symptoms is important for those dealing with survivors in congregations. Knowing the stages of the healing process is also helpful. The steps in the healing process follow this general pattern, although not necessarily the same order:

- 1) Safety (obtaining safety is the most critical first step)
- 2) Silence (a retreat into silence and loss of voice is a common response to trauma, and while this is not exactly a healing part of the journey, it is a common response to trauma. It can be a protective move for a survivor).
- 3) Remembering (remembering can be painful and in this phase suicidal or
- 4) self-destructive impulses can arise, memories can be intrusive and flooding, but
- 5) memories are necessary for healing)
- 6) Mourning (naming the trauma, learning to defend oneself, connecting the physical and bodily memories to words and interpreting meaning, expression of anger and rage, dealing with temptation to suicide, and depression or mourning expressions of feelings of loss, alterations in the sense of self)
- 7) Reconnection (the final stage is the imagining and reestablishing a new vision of the self in relationship). This stage involves the risk of trusting again and the work of making a new life for oneself following the trauma, which incorporates the trauma into the sense of self but also moves on. In this stage, the solidarity with others who have experienced trauma and the work for social justice is important. A survivor may seek legal action against perpetrator or confront perpetrator thus breaking "family secrets" (Herman, 1997, 153-213).

Congregations can be there for the support of a survivor in all these stages. They can provide safety until a person goes to a domestic violence shelter. They could listen for the

survivor's silence and hear into voice the story of the survivor. Congregations can provide money for therapy and shelter. Churches can provide a safe place to shed tears and mourning. They can provide a community where the survivor could reconnect and learn to trust again. Congregations could do all of this, and yet for some reason it seems extremely difficult for congregations.

In this dissertation, I have looked at the two congregations. I investigated how these congregations construct a persona and a shadow side. I discussed how they repressed some aspects of their experience. I talk about how this repressed material erupts. I examine how congregational responses to these eruptions are healing or repeat the trauma. I will discuss how congregations could be in solidarity with survivors and how they could work for structural change in gender, race, and class. I will now discuss the concepts I have borrowed from Jung's ideas about individuals and applied to them to the congregational context. I will use these ideas as modified and changed by relational feminist psychologists, psychiatrists, pastoral counselors, and theorists (Mary P. Koss, 1994; Meyers, 2004; Neuger, 1996; Poling, 1991) and (Jordan, 1991, 72; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, 1997; Marie Fortune, 1991; Meyers, 2004; Wehr, 198).

### A Brief Review of Jung's Concepts and Applications to Congregations and Survivors

At first glance, Jung seems an unlikely interlocutor for a dissertation on religious congregations and their responses to domestic violence. Jung is not known for his religious devotion to Protestant Christianity or to Christianity at all. Nevertheless, many academics find

his framework very useful in the study of religion and psychology. Jung's father was a Reformed Protestant minister in Switzerland before World War II, Jung was heavily influenced by this form of Christianity. One of Jung's important early dreams involved an image of a bird defecating on a church. He understood this to prefigure his own break with the religion of childhood. He explored Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions, and incorporated these insights into his psychology. His use of symbols, his ideas about the individual and collective unconscious, his understanding of alchemy (a metaphor for transformation based on the alchemist from the Middle Ages), and other contributions to the field of psychology such are well known. In addition, his work with archetypes, the shadow part of the personality, and complexes are well known. Others later developed his early work with personality types into the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

### The Self

First among Jungian ideas of importance is Jung's idea of the Self. For Jung, Self is also an archetype composed of conscious and unconscious parts. In the conscious part is the ego. The self is the center around which the ego "circumambulates" (Singer, 1994). The Self, according to Jung, is the center of everything, and thus the word is capitalized (Sedgwick, 2001). The Self includes the conscious and unconscious aspects. The ego rests on the Self, and is not synonymous with the Self (Sedgwick, 2001). Jung symbolizes the Self as a circle, quaternity, a mandala, or a child (Sedgwick, 2001, 398). The Self develops in a spiral process. The Self uses energy liberated from the conflict of the ego with the unconscious for integration and wholeness. Various aspects of the unconscious, such as the mask of the persona, and archetypes (such as the

shadow, animus, anima, divine child, wise old man, wise old woman, the trickster, or a host of other archetypes) lead to further individuation. Paradoxically, more wholeness and connectedness occurs the more individuation a person develops. The psyche or the soul has a "purposive energy which feels as if one is being drawn inward toward a center of great luminosity" (Singer, 1994). The Self is not the same as the ego, or the "I" of which I am consciously aware. Commenting on Jung's idea of the Self, Singer says:

The 'Self,' as Jung uses it, has a special meaning: It is the center of being around which the ego circumambulates. At the same time the Self is the superordinate factor in a system in which the ego is subordinate" (Singer, 1994).

One way to know the Self is in analysis. Another way to know the Self, and to know God, is through prayerful contemplation (Singer, 1994). In the search to know oneself, and to know the divine, is the language of "metaphor." Metaphor makes the unknowable known (Singer, 1994).<sup>9</sup>

For Jung, the undifferentiated Self arises in primordial chaos and becomes aware of itself in a tension of opposites; wholeness and separateness, the one and the many, totality and otherness (Singer, 1994). The language of "symbol" expresses the Self {Singer, 1994 #220}. For Jung, "the primary all encompassing archetype is the archetype of the Self" (Singer, 1994). Jung identifies Christ as one of the archetypes of the Self as used by Christianity. Theologians understand this. They use Christ's humanity to be a type of what it means to be human.

Jung's concept of the Self is much different from that concept of the self that comes from the Enlightenment. The self of the Enlightenment is unitary, disembodied and choosing.

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<sup>9</sup> Metaphor brings together two different things in a way that shows both similarities and differences in a fresh and often surprising way. Metaphor is more poetic than listing similarities and differences between things.

Feminists have charged that this rational choosing self is actually a hegemonic norm that uses white, male, middle class, and first world ideas of the self (Friedman, 1997). This concept of self as unitary comes, from Enlightenment philosophers, such as Descartes, Locke and others (Friedman, 1997). In the Enlightenment self, the female is dissolved and disappears into the male self. Relational theorists have posited an embodied person who chooses ethically, based on preserving and caring for relationships using an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, 1991; Jordan, 1991). I will use the relational model of the self, but find it somewhat problematic for survivors. The multiplicity of selves rather than the unitary self has sometimes been confused with multiple personality disorder and pathology. I would like to draw on a self concept that is relational and embodied, but that can recreate itself over time. The self is in process.<sup>10</sup> There is both continuity and an ability to change over time. This creative reconstruction of the self is one of the inner resources a survivor draws upon to survive and can draw upon to transcend the trauma. It is important for survivors to remember their trauma and not forget. Preserving continuity through change is an important survival tool for the survivor.

### Archetypes

For Jung, archetypes are the archaic remnants or mental forms of the collective unconscious that manifest mythical motifs (Jung, 1964). They come from the unconscious of an individual and are part of the evolutionary history and collective unconscious of humankind (Jung, 1989). Archetypes are instinctual and directional, for Jung. Archetypes move forward

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<sup>10</sup> While Jung capitalized his idea of Self, I choose to use self as a concept that is not emphasized in the same way and so is not capitalized. The embodied, centered, self in process and in relation to a just and caring community,” is my concept of the self.

toward some collective and teleological unknown end that connects us to each other, to the earth, and to the universe as a whole. Archetypes have emotional power, and a transcendental numinosity (Jung, 1964). To find the archetypes in a person's inner life, Jung looks for religious ideas that correspond to emotional feeling states of the patient in symbols, myths, fantasies, fairy tales or religious writings (Jung, 1989). Places where Jung would find archetypes in individual patients are in dreams, active imagination, guided imagery, mystical experiences, or even the paranormal. When the archetypes arose, the therapist would try to interpret them. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have taken only a few of these concepts and adapted them to the congregation and its responses to domestic violence. I have used persona, shadow and the collective unconscious as well as the Self. This framework has helped me make sense of survivor's experiences in congregations as they spoke to me in interviews.

According to Jung, the *persona* is the mask or socially acceptable part of the self that helps the self negotiate the social and cultural world around a person. This is not the whole Self. Jung wrote, "The *persona* . . . is the individual's system of dealing with the world"(Jung, 1989). He noted that every profession has its own characteristic way of dealing with the world and its own persona. The word *persona* comes from the idea of the mask worn by an actor. The mask presents a particular face to the world chosen by the actor, and hides his real face. I have drawn extensively on this Jungian concept to explain the face a congregation presents to the world by bringing positive aspects to the foreground and repressing negative elements in the shadow side. I will look at the particular aspects of the *persona* of the first and second congregations in which

I did my research. The shadow is another idea of Jung he used for repressed and unconscious parts of the Self, which I have adapted for the congregation's shadow.

The shadow of the congregation contains all repressed and unconscious aspects of the congregation's collective history. The shadow represents all the repressed information residing in the unconscious of an individual, or in the congregation. The ego, which is the conscious part of the self, has the job of reducing all the sensations to a meaningful whole to cope with the surrounding world. A working contextual theology acts as the congregation's ego. The purpose of this contextual theology is to make a meaningful representation of Christianity that helps the parishioners cope with the surrounding world in all of its complexity.

As the congregation develops its contextual theology, it puts forward a congregational persona, and represses the unacceptable parts of our unconscious into a shadow side of the congregation. Congregations can integrate the unconscious material that erupt in symptoms, or repress these eruptions again into the shadow side. Before I move on to the idea of complexes, it will be helpful to talk about how Jung did psychotherapy in the analytic school and discuss how that can relate to congregations as well as individuals.

### Psychotherapy of the Person in the Analytic School and the Interpretive Process in the Congregation

The interpretive process in therapy involves patient and analyst and is thus relational. Gone are the distancing techniques of the Freudian school, such as the couch and sitting behind the patient, and a therapist who discloses no personal information. The therapist may use limited

self-disclosure. The process is interpretive. The therapist and patient do not consider interpretations correct until there is a felt sense in the patient that confirms the interpretation. Therapy is thus alchemic, another Jungian concept. Jung draws on the alchemic studies of the Middle Ages. The alchemist mixes base elements with the intent to produce gold. This is a metaphor for transformation. Transformation is the goal of psychotherapy for Jung. When the consciousness of the ego and the contents of the unconscious come together in therapy, integration, transformation, and individuation occur.

Jung stated, "The intelligent psychotherapist has known for years that any complicated treatment is a dialectical process in which the doctor as a person participates just as much as the patient" (Sedgwick, 2001). For Jung, the therapeutic relationship takes precedence over insight or psychodynamic theory (Sedgwick, 2001, 3). Jung knew we feel better when we are listened to and understood, but that there are limits to understanding (Sedgwick, 2001, 7). We need a Zen no-mind to approach the therapeutic relationship, which means we must not assume we know things the patient is telling us. We must wait for the patient to explain his or her inner world to us. Just as an individual tells us about his or her inner world, we must listen to stories of survivors to explain their inner worlds. Next, I will place this study in the context of schools of Jungian therapy.

There are at least four branches of Jungian schools of thought. First, is classical analytical therapy and thought—as Jung first taught it. Secondly there is a developmental school that focuses on the development of the child and adult and incorporates object relations theory. The third branch is an archetypal approach based on the insights of James Hillman, a Jungian

analyst (Sedgwick, 2001, 10-11). There is a fourth school that uses Jungian language, in addition to intersubjectivity and relationality and has led to works on "the soul," "care," "the psychology of women," and "the restoration of the feminine" (Sedgwick, 2001, 11). This last school is literary and academically based, while having an overlap with Jungian psychotherapy. The literary and academic school is more the terrain of intellectually creative and spiritually oriented individuals. They find the Jungian language of myth, symbol, and archetypes to be helpful in their studies in psychology of religion, psychology of women, and comparative religion (Sedgwick, 2001, 11). These areas are of particular interest to me as a scholar, while the clinical approaches are important to me as a therapist. For either approach, the developmental process of individuation is an important concept. I find it important for survivors and for congregations alike.

### Individuation

Individuation is a crucial process of human development as used in Jung. I also find it important in congregational development. First, to understand the concept from an individual standpoint is important. Jung states, "I use the term individuation to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual' that is, a separate, indivisible 'whole'" (Jung, 1989, 395). It implies becoming one's own self (Jung, 1989, 395). Jung sees this as an ongoing and spiral process. A person may encounter archetypes and make them conscious in the process of individuation.

Jung's idea of individuation misses the interconnection and relatedness of feminist constructions of the Self (Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, 1991; Jordan, 1997). The goal of growth and development for a survivor is not to become separate, but to remain in connection. Jung borrowed from Buddhism, but missed the Buddhist sense of the interconnectedness of all things. Feminists have retrieved the idea of the union of mind, body and self. Jung's methods of analysis tend to neglect the body and deal with the basic unity of the self by keeping polar opposites in paradoxical tension. For example, on the gender issue, Jung says people have both the anima and animus archetypes. This neglects an analysis of power imbalances between cultural gender, race, and class constructions that act as interlocking oppressions on minority groups of people. Jung's psychoanalysis was unreflectively patriarchal. His writings, at times, present a sexualized objectification of women. He allowed a collapse of boundaries between some of his patients and ended up having affairs with some of them (Bair, 2003, 200). He had a mistress, who was a psychiatrist, and who had been his patient. Her name was Toni Wolff (Bair, 2003, 200).<sup>11</sup> I do not want to bring forward Jung's boundary problems and affairs. I want to stress the importance of boundaries in therapeutic relationships, and I warn against having intimate relationships with patients.

### Complexes

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<sup>11</sup> Jung first met Toni Wolff as a patient. Later she became an analyst, and was in Jung's inner circle of analysts. They had a long-term affair. His wife, Emma Jung, was most upset about this, as were Jung's children. At the time, marriages did not break up because of affairs in Jung's day. Eventually Emma came to terms with Toni's presence in their lives, and the three of them even spent time together. Jung had an affair with another patient, earlier than Toni Wolff did, and her name was Sabina Spielrun. Jung's relationship with Toni Wolff, his former patient and assistant, lasted over forty years. Toni helped him with much of his writing and theorizing.

Another concept of Jung is that I adapted to the congregation, is the idea of the “complex.” According to Jung, complexes are clustered feeling states (Sedgwick, 2001). In Jung’s structure of the personality, the ego is surrounded by partly conscious and unconscious feeling states that he refers to as “complexes” (Sedgwick, 2001). Jung thought that complexes are psychic fragments that have split off owing to traumatic influences or certain incompatible tendencies (Jung, 1989). Complexes are wounded parts of the personality that circle around the conscious or ego part of the personality (Sedgwick, 2001). Jung’s therapy brought the unconscious parts of the complexes to consciousness, thus bringing healing. The individual complexes can be noted in blocked thoughts or feelings or hesitation in the free association of ideas or in emotionally charged areas that are repressed or difficult to speak about. This is important for the healing of persons who have experienced domestic violence in that trauma leaves in its wake repressed portions of the trauma as a complex in the person who has experienced it.

People, who experienced trauma by their fathers, could have a father complex. For example, such trauma by the father can make it difficult to relate to men they see as father figures. People can transfer repressed intense feelings toward authority figures. Transference refers to this unconscious process. Dealing with transference is an important part of therapy. Problems arising from abuse caused by a mother could become a mother complex. Bringing the complexes to consciousness can improve relationships in which transference occurs. It could improve a person’s images of the divine. It can free psychic energy towards further growth and

development. Some work has been done on bringing the concept of a complex from an individual level to a cultural level by Thomas Singer (Singer, 2004).

Thomas Singer has developed the idea of a “cultural complex” (Singer, 2004). In his work he argues that a trauma causes the group to set up defenses and a false persona to ward off imminent danger to the group. For example, some of the religious centuries-old conflicts may have developed into cultural complexes. The wounds are deep and repetitive. An example might be the conflicts between Israel (which carries the wounds of centuries of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust) with an Islamic Arabic communities (which carry a sense of abandonment and forced exile going all the way back to the story of slave woman Hagar and her son Ishmael). The continuing wars and conflicts Singer calls a “cultural complex.”

The idea of a cultural complex is useful in explaining what happens to survivors in some congregations. I argue that a “cultural complex,” related to gender and to sexuality is playing out on a congregational level. I call this a “congregational complex.” Congregations do not want to acknowledge that aggression, often along gender lines, occur in the intimate relationships of couples in their own congregations. Since Christians are supposed to be loving and non-violent, the strong desires for control expressed in aggression and jealousy is something we should acknowledge in congregations. Christians can acknowledge to the difficulty of forgiving those who hurt us. Christians find it harder to acknowledge how willing we are to hurt others. That these stances are gendered and reflective of complexes in the larger culture is part of my argument. Debates on homosexuality and continued racism are examples of these cultural complexes. These conflicts are played out in the congregation and surrounding culture. I will

explain this in the description of the congregations I interviewed. My underlying argument in this project follows the following outline.

*1. Religious congregations construct a positive picture of themselves that builds a community of believers. I call this positive picture a “congregational persona.”*

Individual “selves” and congregational “identities” have parallel processes in their development over time. They include the formation of a *persona*, a repressed shadow side, and the formation of individual and congregational complexes. The unconscious eruption of symptoms of trauma in both individuals and congregations brings the possibility of integration and growth. It brings the possibility of repressing the unconscious material repeating the survivor’s trauma. Alternately a congregation could change its contextual theology and pastoral practices of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and worship in ways that lead to liberation and reparative justice. These developmental processes influence responses to domestic violence for both individuals and congregations and can help or hinder growth of either.

*Individual responses to personal growth and domestic violence:*

Individuals construct a *persona* they present to the world, which allows them to relate to the world while keeping their individual uniqueness. This process also suppresses parts of the self, which remain in the shadow side. Other aspects of the unconscious, or complexes, erupt into symptoms. When these symptoms erupt from the unconscious reservoir, the person has an

opportunity to bring the shadow to consciousness and integrate those parts into a new and more complete understanding. This can include incorporating archetypes from the collective unconscious and mythological aspects of the collective past to guide the person towards wholeness, meaning-making, and individuation. The mythological also connects a person with the numinous. This process is spiral and progressive for the most part, but can become stuck and repetitive at points of pain and suffering. By spiral, I mean that growth occurs continually, and yet circles around to work earlier issues again in new contexts. Mythological and archetypal elements retrieved from the unconscious can help the alchemical or transformational processes. A relational constructive approach to domestic violence helps describe a context in which mutuality and meaning-making occurs in the intersubjective space between survivor and congregation. A person willing to enter the struggle, with sufficient empathy, life experience, and strength to share in the process can help. A person's congregation can help or hinder in the transformational process. With mythological elements from the survivor's religious tradition and with the symbols, stories and community of the congregation, additional resources for healing are available. As an individual acknowledges a personal complex, such as a father or mother complex, they can use this knowledge to bring past traumatic experiences to consciousness. This makes the affect attached to the trauma less intense. Mythological figures retrieved from religious or literary sources can facilitate this process. Freud understood this when he retrieved the Oedipal myth. Myths from Christianity such as the Creation myths from the early chapters of Genesis, the suffering servant from Isaiah, Jesus as Savior is a type of hero myth, Mary as a mother archetype, are available from the Christian.

For those who have experience abuse in childhood or adulthood, becoming aware of parts of themselves that are unconscious and repressed and integrating these into their conscious awareness, can bring healing. Whether the means is therapy, religious retrieval of symbols, myths, archetypes, sympathetic friends, pastors, kind bosses, prayer, mystical experiences or the simple inward turn to self, all can bring healing in the face of tremendous obstacles.

For the survivor, the symptoms of abuse such as dissociation, flashbacks, and hypervigilance when brought to consciousness in a safe place can lead to integration and growth of the self. The trauma survivor can also be afflicted by an endless repetition of trauma, if their depth experience is not brought into the conscious awareness and connected to the numinous through a personal appropriation of the Christian story, symbol, myth or religious ritual. A religious congregation can help survivors by naming the abuse, and by providing safe places to talk about trauma. Congregations can acknowledge that perpetrators can be pillars of the church, charming but nonetheless accountable for the damage they do. Congregations can help by providing safe places to stay such as a shelter. Congregations can support the legal process by walking with survivors through court procedures such as getting a restraining order or getting a divorce. Most of all, congregations can affirm the dignity of the abused person. If a religious community suppresses awareness and is unable to provide safe places for talking and sanctuary, if it does not hold an abuser accountable, and is unable to incorporate human experiences of abuse into theology, if it endorses a theology and practice of cheap forgiveness, and cheap grace; then it limits the healing of survivors. If a contextual theology cannot deal with real human experiences and respond to trauma with denial and minimization, then a false *persona* grows.

When someone denies a human experience, justice-making is hindered, love is hindered, and less of the truth is available for growth and transformation.

Christian congregations construct a persona, or a public representation of themselves. The persona allows them to deal with the cultural reality around them while passing on their view and experience of salvation through connection with God. The *persona* preserves elements most valued from the tradition and constructs a particular identity and contextual theology in the local church. Congregations use elements from Christian myth, including Christian symbols, and stories from the Christian tradition, while simultaneously repressing certain other elements.

2. *Repressed unconscious elements of the congregation's shadow side may erupt in the form of a cultural complex that provides occasions for transformation.*

The creation of a congregational *persona* is an unconscious process and the result is the formation of a shadow reality in the congregation. Great writers such as Dostoevsky explore this dark side of the human psyche in works such as Crime and Punishment, a novel, which explores the guilt related to a murder (Dostoevsky, 1990). In The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky writes about the Church's experience of the Inquisition (Dostoevsky, 1990). A mute Christ returns to earth and listens to the self-justifications of the Grand Inquisitor as he tells Jesus why the Church has to control people and tell them what existence means (Dostoevsky, 1990). The Inquisitor tells Christ that the people beg him to tell them what to do. Christ listens and never says a word, but leaves after giving the Grand Inquisitor a kiss. In another part of this novel,

Dostoevsky explores the unexplainable suffering of children (Dostoevsky, 1990). He cites soldiers skewing babies on bayonets, for example. This is an unblinking view of the terrible parts of reality through a Christian lens. Christian congregations cannot bear this scrutiny, and too often closes their eyes to suffering. Better to deny it than have to incorporate it into their faith. For many that is too hard.

Material from the shadow also taps into a collective unconscious. Jung has talked about the collective unconscious. He thought that myths, symbols and archetypes are portals into the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious, for Jung, is not entirely negative. Connecting with these unconscious elements also connects people with each other and with the divine. Clearly congregations can take these elements for transformation and transcendence. Some aspects of the unconscious are parts of the shadow side of a congregation and represent wounded or shameful aspect of the collective congregational experience. Repressed unconscious elements erupt in the congregations from time to time as symptoms. Symptoms can include repetitive conflicts where there is no resolution, outbreaks of sexual or moral lapses, and other elements that threaten to unmask the persona and reveal fault lines previously hidden in the congregation. The eruption of congregational symptoms represents an opportunity for incorporating more of human experience into the congregation's contextual theology. Alternately the symptoms can lead to repressed of unwanted realities, again with the danger of traumatizing survivors again. Modern congregations often promote silence by causing those having a variety of unacceptable human experiences. The more experiences are denied, the more people are marginalized. This adds to people's experience of alienation while in a group of people, who

claim to be a loving, graced, and saved community. Some survivors experience less acceptance from their fellow church members than from their local self-help group or Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Parishioners tend to forgive abusers quickly, and people cannot fathom the depths of evil and its terrible ordinariness of evil in human hearts. Clergy preach and teach a contextual theology that requires a façade. If pastors admit to small human sins, they are loved by their congregations. They must keep silent the deeper secrets of their human experience. Pastors are not encouraged to set limits on needy parishioners. This can lead to exhaustion. Exhaustion leads to the breaking down of appropriate boundaries, neglecting their own needs, and the needs of their families. This exhaustion and lack of boundaries opens the door for the sexual abuse of parishioners. Congregations spend their energy keeping up a false front. Energy also goes into repressing the trauma, or eruptive symptoms, rather than to helping survivors heal. People drop out of the congregation because the activities and worship seem inauthentic. The church is hurt, and the pastor does not know why people are leaving. Even if the congregational messages about healing and accountability are relevant in some ways, it is often too diffuse to help survivors. Parishioners lack transformation. Alcoholism continues. Abuse continues. All manner of addictions and human frailties prevail, despite parishioners declaring they are “saved” and “sanctified.” This leads to an endless repetition of trauma and pain in the congregation. It also leads to a disconnection between the contextual theology and human experiences among members of the congregation. If traumatic material is repressed, less of human experience is available for healing, resistance to oppression, personal and collective liberation, or reparative justice in the local congregation and surrounding communities.

The power of healing and transformation is not outside the reach of God, who is still accessible to survivors in prayer, mystical experiences, serendipitous events, and healing experiences of all types. Therapy, kind neighbors, bystanders, police, and other external sources can provide help for some. However, if these resources fail the Holy Spirit is not limited. Survivors report mystical experiences where they are lead from life-threatening situations in a way that is beyond their own resources.

Repetitive conflicts around similar issues point to areas of intense emotional complexes the roots of which are not always clear. Consultants trained in conflict resolution, who deal with emotional complexes and repressed trauma should be available for congregations. A consultant can act in the role of a “therapist to the congregation,” helping to uncover is suppressed elements. These elements include differences in power relationships, gender, class, and race factors, which mirror oppressions in the surrounding culture. While congregants would like to believe they are ahead of social movements related to liberation, congregations are often followers of cultural change. Retrievals of myth, archetypes, and liberating elements of the tradition can promote healing.

So far, in the dissertation, we have discussed the following points of the argument

1. The congregation constructs a *persona*.
2. The congregation represses shameful, sexual or violent material from the public *persona* to form a “shadow side” in the collective unconscious of the congregation.

3. The repressed unconscious material in the congregational shadow can erupt in the form of symptoms in the congregation. If repressed these symptoms can become a “congregational complex” and can erupt repeatedly in emotional repetitive conflicts.

I will now move on to add the following points of the argument:

4. These symptoms can come to consciousness for integration into the congregational persona and contextual theology. This process can lead to the “just and caring community” that survivors need.
5. Survivors need a construct of the self in relation to a just and caring community. That construct of the self is a “centered, embodied, self in process” to a just and caring community.

Before I argue these last two points, I want to show how the first three points arose from my research in the two congregations. Chapter 4 will show how this framework applies in my first congregation, which I call “Stone Church.” Chapter 6 will show how this framework applies in the second congregation, which I call, “La Iglesia Nueva Vida,” meaning the New Life Church in English. First, I apply the framework and argument to the Stone Church.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONGREGATION ONE, THE STONE CHURCH

### 1. The Stone Church constructs a *persona*:

Everything about the Stone Church speaks of good taste. The church and parishioners all reflect the conservative aesthetics of the upper middle class. The members of this congregation see themselves as cultured, educated, forgiven and graced by God. The face the church presents is of people publicly confessing that they are sinners forgiven by a gracious and merciful God. The majority are attractive, successful people. They work together to present a version of the gospel to those around them in a culturally appealing way. The congregants consider themselves a “family” church, meaning a married man and a woman with their children. The preachers encourage families to include those without families. This may involve speaking to them in a small group Bible Study or inviting them to a holiday meal. The rest of the time some of those who are divorced, single parents, or never married are marginalized. Most members are not aware or concerned that this definition of family excludes single people, divorced people, non-traditional families, intimate pairs, and anyone who does not fit into this model. There is a singles ministry and an outreach to students at the local prestigious private university, but these ministries have struggled to survive.

This congregation is part of a mainline denomination. It has a connectional affiliation, but presents a distinctive moderate and evangelical view of this faith that is not characteristic of the local judicatory. The congregation has more in common with more rural and conservative

congregations within their tradition. This congregation is neither fundamentalist, nor liberal, theologically. Its members have a variety of political points of view; however, the dominant view is moderately conservative theologically and politically. The congregation considers itself as a moral and just church. Worship includes classical organ, praise songs, timpani, and electronic keyboard. It has a hundred member choir. Worship blends traditional and more modern styles. The *persona* with respect to race is predominantly white with some blacks, Asians, and other races. The church sees itself as multicultural. The congregation is predominantly upper middle and middle class, with some other classes mixed in. The prosperity of the congregants is evident in the clothes, cars, educational backgrounds and professional positions held by congregants. While people from less affluent backgrounds are welcomed verbally, they do not find leadership and programs that meet their needs. In many ways, this congregation replicates the fractures and fault lines of the surrounding semi-urban, semi-suburban society.

How does this *persona* help or hinder survivors of domestic violence? If the survivor is white, middle class, and married they would be likely to feel welcome and they could find a place to serve, have a small group connection in Bible study, attend worship, and take their children for religious education and strong youth group ministries. If they wished to talk about their experiences of childhood abuse, they could go to the church's counseling center, connect with a Stephen minister (lay counseling ministry), or talk to the pastors. Parishioners would not be likely to hear about domestic violence in a prayer or a sermon. They would not hear about the texts of violence from the Bible, or ponder about them in a present context. Chances are they

would never mention their experience of abuse. They would work hard to look as good as the other successful people in the congregation do.

Consider what one actual member of this congregation says about herself. “Teresa” (name changed) grew up in a very violent household. She was raised Catholic. In her words:

My mother and father fought a lot. . . .My father had low self-esteem, lower than basement level . . . and my mother would keep harping on him and then he would haul off and hit her. The police were at my house a lot. They would take my father away and he’d be back in a couple of hours . . . and my mom wouldn’t leave him. She would say, “I didn’t get married to be alone.” In some sick kind of way she felt it was better to have an argument and get beaten up than to be ignored . . .and I learned not to speak up and I couldn’t feel anything . . . I just turned off my feelings . . .even now . . .I’ve been going to counselors for years and years . . . and after I finish talking to you I am going to a group for inner healing and so far I haven’t found any answers yet . . . I can talk about the abuse, dad taking out a gun and threatening us, but I don’t have any feeling attached to it. I told my mother, “You divorce him or I’m leaving.” My testimony is that I accepted Jesus Christ and became suicidal. And, as the senior pastor put it, the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let me lie to myself anymore. And when I felt like killing myself I would call the pastor and he would be there for me, just a caring presence . . . and finally the crisis part passed, and I said I wouldn’t hurt myself, and I put a small memorial stone under my mattress to remember passing over to the promised land. But, you know, God’s presence isn’t enough . . . and some pastors talk like God should be your everything, but it isn’t enough and I just feel disappointed and still seek healing. I don’t have a lot of friends, but I think a friend might help. That’s where the violence affected me, because I am functional in a lot of ways, but not socially or relationally. I wish someone here just wanted to be my friend. I don’t think there is anybody here who cares enough. I just need a friend who would really care about me . . . someone who would make a personal commitment to try and get to know me . . . I wouldn’t have to spend every waking hour with them . . .I don’t really enjoy anything . . . and I have a hard time feeling God’s love . . . I’m fine working on the social justice committee or educational committee, but not having friends. (When I asked her what were roadblocks in faith are for her) she says, “I can’t feel God’s caring, although I know it in my head . . . and then, I kind of think, if I don’t live a certain way God will be wrathful.

Teresa wants a friend. She needs a window to her feelings, such as music. She longs for a vision of a God who is not wrathful. The pastor’s caring presence made a difference in her life, as did

healing prayer groups, counselors, and other resources. At her core, however, nothing really helped her connect to her feelings or to heal deeply. This is the story of woman whose church is not there for her, with her post-traumatic experiences. She is isolated from those around her. The church became a positive resource in her adult life. The pastor talks with her, but no one else befriends her, even though she is quite active in the ministries of the congregation. The music in the church is very important to her because it connects with her emotional life. Most of her emotions are cut off from her awareness. Her social activism has been helpful to her as well, but in her core Self, the results of abuse remain. Nothing has really transformed her, nor substantially healed her. She did experience enough healing so that she did not want to commit suicide. However, she has not healed enough to enjoy life, or to connect to her feelings, or to others in a significant way.

Consider the words of another survivor, “Vicky” (name changed), a thirty-five year old divorced and remarried survivor. She says:

In my first marriage my husband and I were going to school...He started at (a local conservative seminary) and I was at (name of a conservative urban church, with a seminary attached). I wanted to make an appropriate pastor's wife so I went for a degree in music . . . I finished school, but he didn't. He never was a pastor . . . I got pregnant while I was in school . . . we just ran out of money . . . and I got pregnant a second time . . . we didn't have health insurance . . . the way I dealt with it was that I just put it out of my mind . . . I didn't think about it . . . He never really hit me. He pushed me and gripped me so hard he left bruises on me but never really struck me . . . He would pin me to the wall . . . push me hard against the wall maybe eight or ten different times . . . and a lot of it was emotional abuse. We both worked hard in the church. We were pillars of the church . . . nobody had a clue . . . I played piano in Sunday school, and he taught in Sunday school. We were pillars of the church, and we fit right in. Sometimes that makes the pastors not very sympathetic or even aware of what is going on right in front of them . . . My husband was a carpenter . . . It was something he could do to make money, so he did that, . . . and he got really depressed. .

. . one thing that made it worse was his mother . . . she lived on the second floor, and was always there . . . in her eyes he could do no wrong. . . . He was the baby Jesus, .and whatever she was planning for a daughter-in-law, I wasn't it . . .The whole family was Christian, while all this was going on and it was very confusing . . . How were you to make sense out this? . . . When I told the pastor I wanted a divorce, . . . He said, "What took you so long?" But, he had never said anything before I told him. I lost a lot of weight, and the men in the church starting hitting on me. I had never experienced that before, and I didn't know what to make of it, all these supposedly "good Christian men," . . . and they were married . . .and all the time people are saying, "God works everything together for good," and it was just Christianity "lite" ....L-I-T-E...I did not need that right now . . . and I started drinking heavily . . . my alcoholism became really active . . . and that's how I met my second husband, . . .at a bar. . . . My family (of origin) wasn't physically abusive, but my three sisters and two brothers all settled for abusive relationships. I think my father was abusive emotionally. . . . It was covert, not overt. . . . He was an alcoholic, . . . and my second husband is an alcoholic. . . . What helped me was Alcoholics Anonymous, . . . although I didn't get in to that until I first went to AlAnon., . . . because my husband was the alcoholic you know (she laughs) . . . not me. . . .I was going to a Mom's Bible study group, and I started talking about my life . . .and some people find it very intimidating . . .so I am not exactly welcome to Bible studies. . . . My second husband comes from a prestigious family in the (a mainline denomination) church, . . .and his dad was very upset that I was pregnant before we got married, so things didn't start off on a good foot with the second marriage either. . . . (one thing that helps in worship is music) music makes a big difference and helps me a lot in worship . . . praise songs . . .classical whatever, . . . AA, the pastor, reading the Bible through in a year. . . all helped me in recovery.

From her story you can see the minimization of abuse, the role of alcohol, both in Vicky's family of origin and in life with her second husband. Many persons who are in abusive relationships use alcohol and drugs to numb the pain. Because the *persona* of this congregation stresses "looking good," and we can see how hard it is for her Bible study group to listen to the real stories of Vicky's life. Vicky tries to share herself, but the response of others was discouraging, so she does not share anymore. The *persona* of the congregation acts to silence her, and prevents her from getting help. While the pastor appeared to be aware of her marital struggles, he did not intervene until she tells him she wants to divorce. He is supportive with his,

“What took you so long?” but was hardly active in helping address the couple’s problems.

Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon seem to have been very helpful resources, more helpful than resources offered in her church at the time (the church she talked about during this period is not the Stone Church). Vicky’s faith is important to her. Reading the Bible through in a year helped her, but from this narrative we are not sure just what about the Bible reading helped her. The “looking good” *persona* of this congregation seems to force survivors to get help outside the congregation. In public arena of the congregation, the abuse is “not happening here,” (to quote one of the pastors from his interview). This comment indicates the repression of traumatic material and a denial from the pastor.

The next section of this chapter deals with how the contextual theology implicit in the *Persona* represses shameful, sexual or violent material into a shadow side of the congregation:

Here is the next point in the argument as it applies to congregation one.

*2. As a congregation constructs a persona, a shadow side of repressed, shameful, or violent material, forms in the congregation’s collective unconscious.*

A contextual theology comes to the parishioner in a variety of ways. The Sunday worship service is one of the main vehicles for this, but publications of the congregation, educational activities, music program, mission work, and social justice activities shape the contextual theology of the congregation. For example, in Stone Church, the names of the divine most used in sermons and liturgy are God the Father, Lord, Master, Creator, Abba, Holy Spirit,

and Good Shepherd. God is most often unreflectively referred to as “He.” The “Father” here worshipped is often defined as “like the father of the Prodigal Son story from Luke,” not a father that is tyrannical. Alternatively “Father” is defined as “Daddy, from the Aramaic word ‘Abba,’” a more personal and intimate view of God, the Father. The Father archetype is a primary archetype here. Jesus as the Son is also a primary archetype. It a hero archetype and an archetype for what it means to be human. These two archetypes, the Father and the Son underscore a somewhat triumphalist contextual theology. Satan is a personal spirit, and is alive and well in the contextual theology. The pastor recommends exorcism of demons as a way of dealing with violence, although it is a metaphorical appropriation of exorcism. I am not sure exactly what he means by this, or what an exorcism would look like in his pastoral practices.

Some of the retrievals of Mary as the Mother archetype are missing here, although they can be found in many Catholic churches. Less frequently, and by women mostly, God can be referred to as “She” in the worship service. This causes slight discomfort to some congregants. It is passed over like a blip on the radar screen, where the background is the traditional evangelical theology. People introducing terms such as “Sophia” (from the Greek meaning “wisdom” and feminine in form), changing the Lord’s Prayer to be inclusive (the rather mild “our Father and Mother”) are not welcomed, and people who try to do this are marginalized and are not asked to participate as worship leaders. The reason given is that “Jesus used these words,” (meaning Jesus said, “Our Father” in the Lord’s Prayer).<sup>12</sup> One of the pastors of the

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<sup>12</sup> Jesus actually spoke in Aramaic, not Greek, and certainly not English. Many of the Aramaic words use feminine or gender-neutral words. Many of these were masculinized in the Greek and even more so in the English translations over time.

Stone Church gave me this explanation as to why he didn't use the words of feminist reformers who want to use terms such as "mother," "Sophia," "She," etc. This attitude ties current practice to first century norms and does not allow many new or liberating changes to take place. It also does not take into account that Jesus spoke Aramaic and not English or Greek. The second reason the pastor cited that he would not use female language for God is that it would "upset some of the members," thus making anyone who wants to make the language inclusive into someone who is insensitive and insistent on their own way. Upsetting the reformers is not a concern, despite a dedication to the slogan "reformed and always reforming," which is an honored phrase retrieved from the beginning of this denomination whose roots are in the Reformation. The next section will look at how the appropriation of symbols shapes the contextual theology and congregational *persona*.

#### Symbol as Part of the Contextual Theology and *Persona*:

A main symbol of the faith retrieved from the tradition in the Stone Church is the cross of Christ. This symbol is central here. This is reiterated from the pulpit, in stained glass windows, sung about in songs, is on pulpit and lectern, and in the Cross made out of lilies that is used on Easter morning. The cross in Protestant Christianity is just the abstract cross, and does not include the pierced and agonized body of Christ as it would in some Catholic or Anglican churches. People ignore the actual body of Christ, or anyone else's body. For example, in worship the body of Christ is spiritualized by the congregation in the wafer or loaf of bread taken at Communion. A concern for the environment does not rank highly among concerns in the

contextual theology. The contextual theology does emphasize martyrdom and suffering for God's sake and for the sake of salvation.

My conclusions about this is that in dualities of opposites (the male as opposed to female, light as opposed to darkness, spiritual as opposed to bodily or earthly, and so forth) , the first of the pair is made preeminent in the Stone Church's contextual theology. Along with this are accompanying power differentials. The higher power or value goes to the first in the pair of opposites. This is a fair indication of firm, even entrenched, patriarchy. Patriarchy keeps in place a series of relationships based on gender, and extends outward into interlocking oppressions of race and class.

The suffering and atoning sacrifice by Christ and the identification of each believer with this central symbol is the primary way atonement is understood and taught in sermons, Sunday school materials and liturgy. It is interesting that the Cross of Christ is referred to, but not the cross of Jesus (since Christ is often referred to as the resurrected Christ and Jesus the human earthly manifestation). Christ is the anointed Messiah and emphasis is on the divine, not the human. The theology of the church will touch on the immanence of Jesus during Advent, reflecting on the birth of Christ, God with us, or Immanuel. The suffering of Christ is reinforced by reflecting on the martyrdom of Bonhoeffer, quotations from C.S. Lewis, and references to Karl Barth holding a Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other as way to be relevant. The parishioners understand the atonement as the perfect sacrifice of Christ substituted for the believer's sinfulness. In this congregation there is no other way of salvation, although pastors and teachers teach a respect for other religions. The substitutionary atonement is the main view

of salvation by faith alone, through grace alone, and not of works. It is Protestant and Reformation oriented, in that a favorite reference of Martin Luther's to the Apostle Paul's, "By grace we are saved through faith and that not ourselves, it is the gift of God lest any man should boast" {Metzger, 1977 #248 1418}. Retrievals of prophecy from the Old Testament of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah emphasize this view of salvation. Suffering is supported by Christ's example of discipleship and dying on the cross unjustly. Enduring unjust suffering in this contextual theology is a virtue. Endurance of suffering rather than resistance to oppression could encourage survivors of abuse to bravely endure suffering rather than resist abuse. Victims might hear the injunction to suffer and stay in their abusive relationships.

Anthropology as Part of the Contextual Theology and *Persona*:

The anthropology in the Stone Church is one of the human person as an incredibly valuable child of God, and paradoxically, as a great sinner in need of redemption. The body is not recognized, for the most part in this theology, except as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" that "we are to take care of." A person is born in the image of God, but is also a sinner needing God's redeeming grace. A lower anthropology requires a more active God, based on the idea that while we were sinners, God loved us and redeemed us.

This "lower" anthropology might provide an acceptance of the shadow side and an incorporation of the shadow into the self-concept of the congregation and individual. Instead this lower anthropology leads to a shame-based suppression of the sinful aspects of the self. The view of salvation gives us and a before-conversion and after-conversion view of the redeemed sinner. Sinful aspects become elements in the past and the new creation in Christ assumes

transformational aspects, whether they have occurred or not. The emphasis on suffering and the sacrificial aspects of the atonement could result in a domestic violence survivor seeing herself as a martyr, sacrificing herself in love and care for the abuser as the appropriate thing to do. Jesus allowed himself to be abused so we should too, might be a victim's reasoning. Standing up for her rights, deserving better, or not allowing abuse to occur, do not seem to fit with the glorification of suffering in triumphalist theology. The sacrificing yourself for another would be better incorporated by the abuser behavior that only benefits himself. This is not likely to happen, because the abuser blames his spouse or partner for what is wrong in the relationship. He uses his power to get control of his partner so his needs are met (Poling, 1991, 23-34).

Take for example a Korean woman from Stone Church named "Hae Won" (not her real name). She is 35, a divorced mother of two, with a BS, and who is a survivor of domestic abuse. She states:

I don't want to face that I was abused . . . I was one fine person doing well, a good student, I was never degraded. (Her family is Korean Christians. Her husband was not a Christian. About him) she says, "We had two different spirits . . . the trouble in the marriage started right away. . . Whenever I tried to voice my opinion or confront him. . . whenever I tried to be myself. . . he would slap me . . . It didn't hurt much, but it scared me to death. . . it changed the way I viewed myself. . . I became afraid to speak up somehow. . . I didn't know what to think about this. . . It was an intensive issue for me. . . It had to do with my faith in God. . . " (When Hae Won approached her parents about this she was told) to "obey your husband, it's your job to make your marriage work." She describes this as "being caught between reality and so called Christian doctrine" (as) "hell." (Here we see a rigid *persona* of her Korean congregation not incorporating her experience of reality and creating a personal hell for a survivor by their contextual theology. Again she struggles with the concept of forgiveness) Hae Won says, "There is an instance of his I cannot forgive, he was abusive in front of my two children." (Christian congregations seem to place the burden of forgiveness on the one hurt. No call is for the abuser to stop abusing or repent. At this point Hae Won saw a therapist who named the abuse and told her to call

the police the next time it happened, which she did. When the police took him away, and he was held accountable, he did not hit her again. When the police asked him why he did this, he said he had seen his father and mother do this in Korea and didn't know there was a law against it in the United States. Nevertheless Hae Won drops charges and accepts him back) Hae Won says, "As a good Christian woman should do, forgive and try again." She tells herself, "If I fail family then I fail everything, . . . but my feelings for my husband were destroyed . . . My family (of origin) did not support me and it ruined my relationship with them too. . . . I had no one to turn to except God. . . . God sent me outside the church and answered my prayer. . . . I never talked at church, . . . but God sent me a kind boss . . . through my darkest time . . . trying to keep my family together . . . God only knows how hard." (Her husband abandons her and he returns to Korea. During the time of separation she hears a Korean woman inspirational speaker) Hae Won says, "The speaker told how she had been imprisoned for her beliefs and had to work with a criminal who didn't even know how to handle his own human waste. God told the speaker to love her enemies and (she) loved this criminal by washing him." (Hae Won was moved by this story and thought God was telling her to love her husband who was) "my only real enemy," she says. (Then the husband calls her asks her to help him because his parents are dying from cancer and he needs her help. She understands this to be a call from God to return, so she leaves her children with her parents and goes to him. Trying to be a good Christian woman she takes care of them although she notes that in Korea this is the son's obligation usually. She prayed for a miracle.) Hae Won says, "If they would be saved then all of my suffering would be worth it." (Their dying takes three years, during which time she is separated from her children and she is abused again by her then ex-husband.) She relates the dying of her father in law, "A little before my father in law died, he gave one of the Hospice workers a note that said, "Love, Joy, Peace, Hope and, I think, Faith...with shaky hands from the Bible and I knew he was saved."

As I look at Hae Won's story, I am very ambivalent. I see that she has much courage and inner strength to face such an abusive marriage with the lack of support from her church and family. I recognize that Hae Won is trying to make meaning from a very difficult experience. At the same time, I do not think her abuse was justified by the salvation of her in-laws. This a difference in view points between researcher and respondent. I struggled with what I should say about this narrative, realizing that I am not part of her culture. Perhaps I am reading in my cultural biases. On the other hand I want to declare that she should not have had to face this type

of abuse, not matter what her culture. What if “faith” was not part of the message from her father-in-law? Would that have cancelled out any meaning making of the experience she had? According to Hae Won, her mother in law had changed too, and had started going to a Catholic church. Hae Won doesn’t like that “Catholics bow down to ancestors like Koreans do” and she was convinced that was not right. Still she could see her mother-in-law was “saved” before she died. This made it worth all the sacrifice she had gone through for her. I do not think she should have sacrificed herself like this. Hae Won eventually left Korea, and came back to the United States and got a divorce. The salvation of these two people made all of Hae Won’s suffering meaningful. I found this conclusion disconcerting, and wish she did not put herself back in the abusive situation for any reason. At least in the end she did get free.

In contrast to pastor’s declaration that no one in the congregation is experiencing domestic violence, I talked to many survivors that are recovering c violence or are experiencing domestic violence. Hae Won says she felt silenced in church. How many others would say the same thing?

Many parts of Hae Won’s story are relevant to this research. First, the church was a place of silence and lack of support for her. Despite this, God remains a refuge to her. Her family of Christians told her to obey an abusive husband and put the responsibility for keeping the family together rather than holding the abuser accountable. She learned that obedience of her husband comes from Scripture and, if not dealt with, operates as an oppressive injunction. Help came to her from outside church and family-her therapist, the police, God, and most important, herself. Her Christian theology encouraged her to present her body and self as a “sacrifice.”

Nevertheless, she retrieves a meaning because of her witness, two people are “saved.” I do not believe God would want her to leave her children for three years to be beaten and abused by her husband and his family. Then there is her statement, “Love, Joy, Peace and, I think, Faith.” Perhaps she inserted “Faith” in a story to make some meaning of all her suffering. I hesitate to question her meaning-making. Nevertheless, I would tell a woman who is being abused to get out of the situation if possible, that she does not deserve abuse, even in the name of Christ.

What then are we to do with Jesus’ real martyrdom? How do we know when suffering is warranted, and when is it not. Glorification of suffering is not warranted, but a personal choice to endure suffering for a greater cause might be at times. For example, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Bishop Tutu are examples of people who suffered for a greater cause. However, if a person has no choice in their abuse, is it not just oppression? Shouldn’t oppression be resisted? What about the price her children paid for her martyrdom? No one asked nor considered the impact of her sacrifice on them. Hae Won’s immigrant status and isolation play a part in her suffering. She needs culturally sensitive resources. For example, gender roles are probably performed differently in Korea. Is a son supposed to take care of his ailing parents in that culture, especially an eldest son or his wife? Does Korea have laws protecting women from abuse? I was glad to hear a therapist tell Hae Won she did not deserve to be hit, and advised her to call the police. The police came and enforced the law. That does not always happen. I am happy she had a kind boss who affirmed her many strengths. I was moved by her definition of “hell” as being “caught between reality and church doctrine.” That could apply to many human

experiences that do not fit the contextual theology. Local congregations need to take care that critical parts of human experience are not excluded from the contextual theology.

#### Scripture Interpretation as Part of the Persona:

In the Stone Church, scripture is not interpreted literally. Interpretations include metaphor and form (such as letter, poetry, law). At the same time, Billy Graham's saying, "The Bible says it, that settles it," promotes a more literalistic view. For Stone Church, the Bible is authoritative, with a meaning debated within a range of meanings. However, they do not use a deconstructive, liberating, or even a higher critical view. The Bible serves as an icon and symbol in its own right. At times, the pastor lifts the Bible above the heads of worshippers as the authoritative and absolute Word of God. This lends much authority to those who speak from this pulpit. Pastors and lay leaders say that "all parts of the Bible" must be taken together." This is a corrective for proof-texting. Nevertheless, favorite parts are stressed, while explicitly, "all the Bible together" is the working rule. While pastors may be sophisticated about the history of the canon, interpretation, and Greek and Hebrew translation, the parishioners, particularly a vocal minority, are less sophisticated about the Bible. These parishioners are leaning unconsciously towards the more fundamentalist approaches to the Bible, including forms of literalism. These vocal parishioners tend to influence decisions, and sit on all the important governing bodies such as the elders, deacons, and denominational committees. They have surprising power in the congregation. This power is allowed, and even encouraged, by one of the pastors who spent two out of three of his years in seminary at a very conservative school near by. He also attended the

local denominational seminary, which is much more liberal. He also attended a well-known academic divinity school for his D.Min. Nevertheless, his personal theology has drawn many conservatives, even fundamentalists, to the church over the more than twenty-year period he has pastored there.

### Myths as Part of the *Persona*:

Certainly the most important myths are the creation myth of the early chapters of Genesis, and the myth of the new creation in Jesus Christ. There is no strong reflection on the Exodus and its liberation story. Sunday school teachers teach the Exodus story in Sunday school, but this story is not mentioned often in the service. The Ten Commandments are favorites. Jesus' command to love God and neighbor is another favorite injunction. The denomination uses summary of the early church's creed in the Nicene Creed, which the congregation recites in worship along with other ancient creeds. God creates a world that is perfect, and then humans fall into temptation and sin, lured by the serpent. The church regularly reviews a long history of God reaching out to fallible human beings. The preachers and teachers review the early history, the formation of Israel and Judah, Babylonian exile, and times of judges, kingdoms, and prophets. They explain how God tries in many ways to reach fallen humans beings. Finally, God sends his only Son, Jesus Christ, who saves humankind through his death and resurrection. The faith story preachers tell is that God makes us all into a new creation. The preacher invites us all to the sacrificial altar, where we can participate in the cosmic drama of salvation. Here we identify by faith with Christ's atoning sacrifice, and are saved. Justice, peace, and love, will reign forever. In this congregation, there is no other way to be saved, and

some will be lost. Evangelizing the lost is critical, because people will go to hell if they do not believe. This is the great motivating myth of God's great love for sinners and plan of salvation through the ages. Salvation is a free gift, with grave consequences when not accepted.

Gender, race, class also shape the contextual theology and *persona*:

When I observed the congregation, I saw more women than men present. I saw more Caucasians than any other ethnic group. I saw a few Asians, Latinos, African-Americans, or Africans. I estimate that there are about one-percent of minorities in the church. The church talks about itself as open to all, regardless of race, class, or gender. Nevertheless, what I actually see is a mostly white congregation. I based this conclusion on my ethnographic notes of attendees at several worship services, and by counting the numbers of ethnic minorities and whites in the pictorial directory. While these methods are subject to a margin of error, they do represent a roughly accurate estimate.

My impression as a participant-observer is that the church pretty much reflects the biases, opinions, and prejudices, of the surrounding culture. It does not stand in prophetic opposition to them in actual practice in the congregation, although they acknowledge the moral wrongness of racism, and sexism. On exception to this is that the congregation does seem to include the handicapped. They have a handbell choir for developmentally delayed children and a Sunday school class for special education students. No mention is made of the homophobia. Stone Church does not agree with the analysis that homophobia is a problem. In Stone Church, homosexuality is a sin. The pastor and congregation understand homosexual practice as a transgression against God's command. An explicit rejection of homosexuality is preached and

taught. Preachers do not mention ageism, either. Although many seniors are loyal attendees, they may be passed over in favor of younger members for important places of service. Preachers may mention “the poor” but do not use the word classism. The Use of the phrase “the poor” implies poor people are unfortunate, and deserve charity. A soup kitchen and a clothes closet is an appropriate response to “the poor.” The church serves poor people in the church’s soup kitchen and clothes’ closet. Church members do not often invite the attendees at the soup kitchen to attend worship. If the soup kitchen’s guests did come to worship, they might feel uncomfortable sitting quietly for the worship hour. Sometimes the pastor jokes about his traditions quiet style, and he calls their worship style tradition that of the “frozen chosen.” “Classism” is a different term for the problem from the term “the poor.” “Classism” implies the need for structural change in a culture that privileges some at the expense of others. Classism implies that there are unjust power differentials. Classism implies that there is an inequitable distribution of wealth. One respondent at the Stone Church, whose income is below the poverty line, mentions that the pastor prayed that, “the poor have faith.” She said, “but I don’t need faith . . . I have lots of faith . . . what I need are resources!”

#### Cultural Context of the Congregation as Shaping the *Persona*:

The dominant culture at Stone Church is North American, United States, Midwestern, and a mixture of urban and suburban, largely middle class. Gays and lesbians are welcomed into the congregation, but they later discover they will never be elected to deacon or elder. They will never be ordained in this congregation if they are open about their sexual practice. The denomination set limits on homosexual leadership, after much conversation and dialogue within

the larger area governing body, and the national denomination. This is the state of things at the time of this research in the year 2000-2001. The church hired a gay man to be a professional singer in the choir. He left the church after he discovered he could not be ordained to the office of deacon. The leaders say he left voluntarily. Nevertheless, the oppression he experienced as a gay man in the church was a factor that led to his departure.

At one time, the Stone Church had an Asian minister and a female minister. At the time of this writing, there was one female minister and many of those who were dealing with abuse came to her.<sup>13</sup> As those women and Asian ministers moved on, there are now only white male ministers. As the country became more conservative politically, so has this church become more conservative. This fact reinforces my point that patriarchy and a patriarchal interpretation of scripture is at the root of the contextual theology here. This patriarchal interpretation is non-reflective and hegemonically suppressive of minorities, women, gays and lesbians, singles, the divorced, and alternative families. While all are invited to hear the gospel, anyone who is not part of the two-parent family with children, or minority, is likely to be marginalized. None of this is overt. Women are leaders of elders, or on committees. Persons of color are elected to leadership positions, but represent only a tiny fraction of the leadership (less than 1%). Some people are perplexed as to why women and minorities are not selected as leaders. More white woman do serve as leaders of committees and governing boards, but only one female minister at

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<sup>13</sup> I did not use a lot of this female pastor's interview material. She specifically asked me to be very careful not to reveal her identity. As the only female pastor in this congregation it would have been clear what she had said, from those who knew that this dissertation was about their church (for example those who were interviewed). She said many interesting things I could not use in the dissertation. From her interview, it became clear that female survivors of sexual and physical abuse felt more comfortable talking to her than to male pastors. This may be why male pastors did not hear as much about abuse in the Stone Church.

a time has served. In the total one hundred year history, that is two women associate pastors. White people do not understand why minorities do not want to serve on committees, even though minorities are asked to serve. Minorities have not articulated their reasons for not wanting to serve. This outlines how a contextual theology allows biases from the surrounding culture to remain unchallenged, and weakens the prophetic voice of the community.

What does a congregational culture, that hegemonically continues to support a patriarchal view of the faith, have to do with domestic violence? For one thing, domestic violence tends to become hidden, especially for those who are powerful and privileged. The more money one has the more possible it is to hide or avoid legal charges, for example. For example, in my interview with the senior pastor, I asked him if he had worked with a person or a family experiencing domestic violence. He first said that “The answer is really, no.” He goes on to remember an incident where he got involved with another church where he was once a youth minister. In that incident, the church secretary’s husband broke her arm. The pastor said:

I really had to put a cap on my anger (towards the husband) . . . didn’t want him to think there was anything funny (sexual) going on between his wife and me. He was very penitent . . . he was also a person of color and I was his wife’s boss (outlining the power and race issues) . . . so I was gentle with him but at the same time I told him I would work to keep him out of the house. In addition, the church gave her some money for counseling. (The senior pastor goes on to say,) The other outrageous piece that I didn’t understand and didn’t know how to address, was the police response. And what kind of legal protection she had. . . We had a problem getting the police to respond or to get a restraining order (this was in 1978).

Here the pastor is aware how important it is to have trained and responsive police and legal system working with the church in its ministry to victims. When behavior is criminal, such

as assault, the authority to enforce the laws is required. The pastor then brings in two cases where the woman was a perpetrator in abuse. In the research there is evidence that 95-99% of the time the male is the perpetrator. Often audiences I speak to will try to make it look like it is equal numbers. I believe that the pastor bringing in two cases of women perpetrators is an attempt to balance the books and deny the workings of patriarchal power imbalances. In other words he is arguing, “women do it too.” When I ask him to tell me about those cases he backs down and says:

I really wasn't privy to those cases but heard about them, . . . but my understanding of domestic violence is primarily the male against the female, where there is more power on the male side. . . . so it is the abuse of power . . . in the same way as the appropriation of the idea of justice.

The pastor has an intellectual understanding of the abuse of power in domestic violence and in other areas of injustice. Nevertheless, he rationalizes that “women do it too.” Another paradox that he is discussed several cases of domestic violence he has dealt with, even after saying that he has not really dealt with domestic violence. Here is what the senior pastor says about an abuser:

I think one thing is that the person doesn't see what he is doing, and doesn't understand the outrage of what he is doing . . . he acts out of such a deep anger that is uncontrollable . . . I don't think repentance is the right metaphor, maybe exorcism is a more appropriate metaphor.

He is excusing the behavior of the abuser since that the person doesn't know what he is doing. Usually abusers know what they are doing, and use power to get what they want from a spouse or partner. They may sometimes feel guilty and occasionally repent. It is intriguing and interesting though that the pastor contrasts exorcism and repentance in this case. He seems to

recognize the limitations of repentance in these cases. In many cases, a perpetrator will say they are sorry many times and ask forgiveness, but go right back to the behavior of assault. The pastor understands that keeping people safe is the first priority. He says, “The community first of all intervenes and separates . . . radical intervention is important for people to be safe.” He also adds that the Stephen ministry and professional counseling can be adjunctive. However he does not show awareness that couples’ counseling is not a good idea since the perpetrator can control what goes on in counseling by threats and coercive moves outside of counseling. The abuse can use subtle reminders inside counseling, like the raising of an eyebrow, to enforce control, saying nonverbally, “remember I told you I would teach you a lesson if you say anything about violence in a counseling session.” Pastor reiterates, “We have not yet had a case where domestic violence was going on inside a home.” I have delineated survivor stories where this was going on, yet the pastor claims not to know, despite his own words to the contrary.

This pastor is aware of patriarchy and has gone to three Promise Keepers events (a men’s movement in the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches). He says:

I think the heartland of American is a very chauvinistic culture and a lot of the men come to Promise Keepers, I think they are born and raised . . . in that patriarchal assumption where there are certain roles . . . and I think Promise Keepers really take that on effectively . . . with those who have grown up in the heartland with a male headship in practice and teaching.

I thought this was an odd comment, as Promise Keepers do nothing to dismantle the “headship” notion. They do try to reframe it as, “servant headship,” which would require men to be loving and attentive to their wives, while still maintaining authority and control in the relationship. Still Promise Keepers do not question the power imbalance and rightness of

“headship.” Nor are alternative understandings of headship offered. For example, I have heard Greek word studies suggest that “head” in Greek is like “source”, as in the head or of a river means the river’s source. The pastor is not advocating a radical attempt to make equal and mutual the power relationships in marriage, church, and society. When I asked him if he preached on or prayed about domestic violence in worship services, he said no. He agreed that this would raise awareness, but did not say he would preach or pray about domestic violence in the future. I don’t know if he ever did preach or pray about this issue to raise awareness. I never heard him do so, but one of the other pastors in Stone Church did mention it in a sermon. When I asked him about the obstacles to domestic violence that might hinder survivors he says:

Well, a lot of it has to do with the culture of the church . . . if the church has a culture where everybody looks neat and tidy . . . yeah . . . I think that the church to begin with kind of encourages that . . . I have heard this comment from people who are going through divorces . . . they say, ‘I’ll look around me and I see people who have it all together.

He is pointing out a key barrier to the support of survivors. When the church as a whole is not honest about their shadow side, but lead with their strengths, the *persona* of the church makes it hard to bring up a difficult personal problem such as domestic violence. Experiences of violence remain suppressed, erupting only rarely. He cites two cases that erupted in the denomination. He knows about them because he serves on the judicial courts of his denomination. One involves a minister who was sexually abusing his step–daughter. This minister was “deadmitted from ministry.”<sup>14</sup> While this didn’t happen in Stone Church, it did occur in the denomination. Another was a minister was sexually involved with a parishioner.

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<sup>14</sup> Deadmission to ministry in this denomination means that denomination revoked the minister's ordination, and he could no longer practice as a minister.

Stone Church's pastor says that in the twenty years he has served on the denomination's courts he has heard of only seven cases of abuse involving clergy. This pastor thinks that there are many more cases. He says:

The odd thing is how few really do come to light. It's an embarrassment, really, but it's just a reality. We pray for families every week and one letter by a teenager to a youth minister said, 'I really don't know why he (her father) hits me.' It was not handled well, I don't think, it was sort of . . . there was confidentiality here . . . that a youth minister showed me a letter not intended for me . . . uh, do I intervene at that point? . . . Would her life have been better if I had knocked down the door and, uh, confronted this man? I'll never know.

What is missing is the pastor's awareness that he had the option to report this to Division of Child and Family Services anonymously. Maybe he should have taken the risk to intervene for the teen's safety. Confidentiality is invoked as an ethical value higher than the personal safety of a teen in this case. He would not have to confront this man directly and could have remained anonymous. Therapists train student therapists that personal safety is a greater concern than confidentiality. Apparently, the denomination did not adequately train this pastor.

*4. When an eruption of unconscious material from the shadow side of the congregation occurs it is an opportunity to integrate this material into the contextual theology and reshape the congregational persona to be liberating, healing and just.*

As eruptions are symptoms that point to cultural or congregational complexes. Stone Church has a ministry to teens. One of the teens accused the lay minister of approaching teen boys inappropriately. This story serves as an example of the way this congregation handles

shameful or abusive sexual behavior. The teen boys talked to their parents about the inappropriate actions of the lay youth leader. They talked to their youth pastor. The lay minister denied it, and the pastors did not believe the teen boys. The assistant minister, “Doug” (not his real name), said:

I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic abuse or abuse of any kind at this church . . . well, I did get a letter from a person who said, ‘I can’t tell you who I am but there are people in this congregation who are being abused.’ . . . that was pretty frustrating and we couldn’t find out who it was . . . (I ask him what he did about this, such as making a public prayer for the person or preach on it) I didn’t do anything . . . no one ever came to me and said they were abusing anyone either . . . oh well, once a person did say he had sexually abused his two daughters . . . and he wanted to confess it to the men’s group. We talked it over and he did confess it and he got a warm reception.

I thought an abuser who told his men’s group about his abuse was a really positive development, until I found out from the other pastor that the confessor never really said he had sexually abused his two daughters. The associate pastor said about this man:

He asked if it was ok (to tell the details of the sexual abuse of his daughters to the men’s group) or should he sanitize it? . . . so we told him to sanitize it and he said something like, “I hurt my girls,” rather than naming it as sexual abuse. The men were very supportive, but I don’t know what would have happened if he had named it sexual abuse. . . . I believe he is forgiven by God, and that in the atonement some kind of cosmic exchange took place, and the definitive thing is that God and good will win, and evil will lose. . . . that’s the good news.

I bring this story because the pastor has created a congregational *persona* where sexual abuse, even confessed, is not named publicly. The men’s group could not really support this abuser nor keep him accountable, because what he did had not been named. The irony is that the abuser was ready to name the sexual abuse, and the pastors of this congregation stopped him. This created a context where teenage boys had never heard sexual abuse named as even a possibility

by authority figures. This represents an enormous barrier. Here again both pastors persist in saying abuse doesn't happen in the Stone Church. This persistence is despite receiving letters saying it does, hearing an abuser confess to them, and counseling survivors on a regular basis. This is a striking example of repeated denial and lack of ability to name sexual abuse. In addition, the pastor is more concerned that this abuser forgiveness, than about damage to the man's daughters and wife. He said nothing said about keeping the abuser accountable. He says nothing about restorative justice, cheap grace, or what real forgiveness might be. The whole approach is justified by the term "cosmic exchange." In the pastor's mind, God has forgiven the man and that seems to be all there is to it. The abuser has exchanged his abusive behavior for Jesus' sinlessness. Jesus covers this sin with his righteousness. The abuser does not have to account for his abuse. He receives grace. What do the victims receive? Does anyone even ask this question? The contextual theology is mostly concerned with helping men get forgiveness for abuses of their power. There is not a preaching on repentance for racism, sexism, and classism. The important question is how does this pastoral practice help the daughters of the abuser or the teenage boys who approached inappropriately?

On the other hand, this congregation tried to protect their children and youth by constructing a "Protection Policy." One of the pastors said:

We do have a protection policy here and that has helped. . . . We do background checks on all of our staff and volunteers working with children, and there has to be two go to the bathroom with a child . . . Also we have hall monitors to keep an eye on what is going on during worship and Sunday School (when the children are not with parents). . . . We don't educate staff on this, but the policy is there, and most staff knows about this, as we have talked about this in staff meetings. . . . We do have sexual misconduct of clergy policy in

our denomination, and we have had seven cases in the past twenty years that I know about and probably more have been tried in the church courts.

A Protection Policy is an important step, but if Stone Church does not routinely educate personnel about it, it could be very ineffective. One helpful thing they do is they do background checks on people working with children and youth. I think that may go a long way in protecting their children and youth.

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3. *Repressed unconscious elements of the congregation's shadow side may erupt in the form of a "cultural complex" in the congregation.*

When the lay youth minister was accused by teenage boys of inappropriate behavior, the parents talked to the ministers about it. The lay minister denied it. Both pastors believed that the lay minister used, "bad judgment." This sounds like a euphemism to me. His behavior was not simply "bad judgment," but an overture to real sexual abuse. This use of euphemisms and language distortion avoids naming a sexual overture to abuse and an immoral act. They dismissed the teen's concerns. A year later this lay minister moved to another state where he did sexually assault two teenage boys. The courts of that state convicted and imprisoned him for the crime of rape. He had met the boys in his high school classroom where he was a teacher. The teenage boys in the church's youth group were accurate in their concerns. The ministers did not believe the boys because they knew and liked the lay minister. They could not believe that this valued member of their youth ministry team could do something like this. Of course, "We don't have domestic abuse," and, "We don't have sexual abuse of children here," and "There are only

seven cases of ministers are having sex with parishioners in twenty years in our denomination.”

Years later these teens cite this as a big obstacle to their faith, and an example of why they think Christians are hypocrites, and Christianity is not the truth. They do not attend church. This is clearly a giant obstacle to their faith. While “looking good” to the public, abuse is going on behind the scenes. This and other scandals, such as Catholic Church priests’ sexual abuse of children scandal, is driving people away from churches. It is like a cancer eating away at the vitality of the church and its witness. Symptoms erupted several times with the teens. It happened twice while the lay leader was in the congregation, and another time when the courts of another state convict the lay leader of sexual assault in another state. When the congregation’s teens and parents heard about it, the congregation had a chance to address it and incorporate it into their contextual theology and *persona*.

*3. The creation of a positive congregational persona represses other negative aspects of the congregation. The suppression of violent or sexual material can be an unconscious process and forms a shadow side of the congregation or a collective unconscious.*

.....This eruption of symptom reveals the shadow side of the congregation.

Acknowledgement of this eruption creates the possibility of making conscious the formerly unconscious and repressed parts of congregational identity, thus healing the congregational and cultural complex related to sexuality and power differentials. The eruption provides an opportunity to integrate and expand contextual theology to include more of the truth of human

experience. It also can be repressed and thus allow the abuse to continue to traumatize people again. In this instance, it was repressed and allowing abuse to continue unchecked. When parents of the teens heard about the incarceration of the former lay youth minister, they demanded a meeting. The pastors came and parents and teens expressed their anger, frustration, and fear. The pastors listened.

*4. When the unconscious material from the shadow side of the congregation erupts it is an opportunity to integrate this material into the congregational theology and reshape the congregational persona to be liberating, healing and just.*

This was an opportunity for growth, but in my mind, it was another exercise in minimization. In the end, the incident of sexual abuse of a leader was repressed, leaving the congregation vulnerable for these symptoms to erupt again. The congregation did not put any policies or programs to prevent future occurrences. There were many people at these meetings, other than clergy or survivors and their families. I call the other parishioners in this example “bystanders.” What could they have done to remedy this situation? Let us look at the role of bystander in the congregation. The bystander has a choice when listening to the voice of a survivor as a friend, a prayer partner, or a Bible study participant, to respond in solidarity or to ignore and minimize the story of a survivor.

Take for example the voice of Denise (not her real name), a 51-60 year old, married, college educated, Euro-American, bystander respondent in this study:

I have been at [Stone Church] for ten years . . . I was raised fundamentalist Baptist . . . I had to suppress angry thoughts as a child and confess to my mother every night any wrong thing I did or I would not be taken up in the rapture [taken from a scripture in the Bible where Christ returns and some are taken up to heaven to be with Christ and others left behind] . . . My husband was the opposite of what my parents wanted for me. . . . He was divorced, smoked and drank and had children and wasn't a Christian, . . . but we married and he started his spiritual pilgrimage . . . studied Gandhi and Martin Luther King and even went to seminary for a time . . . and I became interested in interfaith ministry . . . Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism . . . and I also developed an interest in interfaith ministry . . . I'm interested in ecology and saving the earth . . . I haven't seen domestic violence in the church, but I have known people who have been raped . . . my niece and also a single mom I knew, who left her children in the care of others when she was on a business trip, and the uncle of these kids got them drunk and raped them and they had a terrible time . . . you know as Christians, especially Christian women, we are taught not to think highly of ourselves . . . but I am a child of God, with the same rights as anybody else, and I am as good as anybody else . . . but I know a lot of people in this church who have been raped or abused, and if I know them, then that's just the tip of the iceberg. My sister in law was raped and she went through two long court cases . . . the first a mistrial, . . . and the second, because of an incident that concluded, "She asked for it." She didn't get any justice here.

Denise has heard of a lot of abuse, mostly rape, and she sees the injustice of the courts for her niece. Here is a woman who came from a very strict fundamentalist background and was moving toward a more inclusive theology. She reached out to family members and others around her who had experienced rape or domestic violence. She even has a fine contextual theology that could help the ministers change their views, if they listened to her. Denise says:

For me the Christian story is about being led out of bondage . . . God makes the blind to see and the sick whole. . . the prodigal son in the New Testament and the Exodus in the Old Testament . . . God is setting us free from bondage to be whole human beings . . .

This is a wonderful retrieval of the Exodus story in a liberating way that could be very helpful to those who have been raped, or have experienced domestic violence.

Another bystander, that I will call Melanie (not her real name), works in the church Sunday school and children's ministries. She is in the 51-60 age group, Caucasian and married, and has a Master's Degree. Melanie has this to say:

I belonged to [Stone Church] for twenty-seven years. I was raised in a beautiful mainline church in the East. . . I was baptized confirmed and married there . . . both my parents are buried there . . . an experience in a European Protestant ministry helped me renew my faith. . . We reach out to African American churches in the summer camp ministry . . . it's a shared ministry, . . . and I help support a support group for children who have experienced a loss through death or divorce. . . I think these programs have helped many, and also reached across some racial divisions, . . . and it is very good for our children to experience diversity. . . . When I think about what social justice is, I think of Micah 6:8 "to do justice, to love mercy and forgiveness...and to walk humbly with our God." God is a God of grace, and that can't be earned, . . . and there is a place for appropriate rage, . . . but we need to follow God's example, and not be an unforgiving servant, . . . If I run across true domestic violence, I refer them to the counseling center, but they aren't always strong on children. . . . A lot of families are dealing with alcohol and drugs. . . . I do believe that if an abuser has repented and was forgiven, he could come back and work with children. . . . I believe in God's grace.

Most of what Melanie says is great, like the parts about racial diversity and her work with children who have suffered loss through death or divorce, and families who are dealing with alcohol and abuse. I do have some concern about Melanie's narrative above. For one thing, she would refer families dealing with domestic violence to the counseling center, even though they are not "great on children." It is my understanding from the literature that family counseling is not a good idea at first. Safety is the first concern. Counseling may increase abuse if a survivor brings up the domestic violence in couples counseling, or if a child mentions it. They could be beaten up when they return home, for "breaking the secret." In addition, a survivor may be threatened to be quiet before the session. The abuser can reinforce this nonverbally in a session. The second problem I have with Melanie's "cheap grace and forgiveness" personal theology. She

believes in forgiveness, and I have no problem with that in principle, but forgiveness should happen as the end of a long process. As Marie Fortune has emphasized there is first safety, then silence, then speaking and naming the abuse, then anger, then depression, then healing integration of repressed material, and finally advocacy if she chooses to do so (Fortune, 1991). The survivor can choose forgiveness to free her from the past. This is not so the survivor forgets the abuse, but helps the survivor to detach and let go of the abuse. This is as much for the survivor as for the abuser. Melanie ends her thoughts on forgiveness with the conclusion that she would allow known perpetrators to work again with children. This minimizes the process of repentance and the intractableness of the urge to sexually or physically abuse children. Keeping our children safe is our primary concern. Melanie's approach can place children in harm's way, and this is the last thing a church should want to do.

Overall, Melanie's ministries to children have been creative and helpful. The support group for children who have experienced the loss of a parent through death or divorce is invaluable. Her cross-cultural summer camp ministry has fostered interracial understanding over the twenty or more years of her ministry. She implements the policies of having two people with a child in a bathroom, and has a roving person in the hallways to make sure nothing inappropriate is going on in the hallways during Sunday school. Her volunteers that work with children all go through a background check. There are many positive things that Melanie is doing to prevent child abuse in the church.

Here is a commentary about domestic violence by one of the therapist's in the counseling center. These comments show what a person experiencing domestic violence might encounter in therapy at the Stone Church. Jay, (not his real name) is a therapist, D. Min., Euro-American, and remarried after a divorce. He says:

People come in here and say they are abused, and it doesn't seem like that is what it is happening . . . I have seen some instances of abuse . . .but it's not chronic . . . just a one time thing with young couples. . . .I would ask, 'What is the emotional context?' and "Where is this happening?" . . . "What does it mean to the people?" . . . I would be careful not to label an abuser as an "abuser." . . . I do see violence in movies, football, and if anybody raped me, I would want to beat the abuser up . . . but, I am just not seeing it in my practice. . . . I think justice is about power, . . . where the power is, and male and females use power differently, . . . women have verbal power, and men are intimidated by that, . . . Men get violent in relationships because they lack skills, . . . or, if they are dealing with oppression, like racism . . . like a slave revolt, . . .they rise up to be on an equal plane with oppression, like racism. . . . You do have an obligation to keep people from damaging you. . . . Therapy is a kind of reporting, confessing, . . .and reconciliation is part of the work, . . . and, I don't see forgiveness as pulling you out from a 'less than position,' . . . if you understand who the abuser is, then it upgrades you, and the abuser too. . . . I know some people are sociopaths, . . .but I don't usually see them here. . . .I would ask the woman, how did you end up with someone who abuses you? . . . I train the Stephen Ministers, but we don't go into domestic abuse, because we don't see much of that. . . .I believe God is present, even in those situations, God allowed Judas and Christ to die a hideous death . . . God's purpose and presence are available to you, . . .whether this has happened to you, or not. . . . I think we should have prayers based on lamentations, and also a drama about a guy who hit his wife and was sorry about it and changed.

This narrative is a mixed message. There is denial and minimization of abuse. The therapist says, "It is only once, in a young couple." He rationalizes male abuse by saying women have equal power, verbal power. He recognizes the power differentials. His questioning the woman how she ended up with someone who abused her is a form of blaming the victim. He doesn't ask the abuser, how did you end up being someone who hits women? He seems to

minimize domestic violence by saying it is a “lack of skills.” Most experts in the field think domestic violence is about power, control, and revenge. This therapist seems to have no appreciation that couple’s counseling when domestic violence is going on, is not a good idea for the reasons cited earlier in this chapter. Finally he suggests a drama about the abuser having hit his wife, repented, and changed. He does not say we should have a drama about a woman who leaves a situation of domestic violence and is liberated. He seems to espouse a quick forgiveness and repentance and a kind a cheap grace theology. While I am sure he would not say repentance and reconciliation is easy, the emphasis is on letting those in power to be excused or easily change. The emphasis is not on safety, liberation of a survivor, accountability of an abuser, repentance of an abuser, and restorative justice by the abuser for a survivor.

This chapter has looked at Jungian concepts of persona, shadow, myth, symbol, congregational complexes, eruption of unconscious materials, and how the Stone Church’s contextual theology and pastoral practices either help or hinder the healing of survivors. I have also examined how the Stone Church could have incorporated unconscious material into its contextual theology. The congregation could change its pastoral practices, thus widening its circle of truth and understanding by facing the human experience of domestic violence. The Stone Church never got to the place where they could practice restorative justice. They had opportunities, but the denial and minimization got in their way. I don’t think this church is very different from many other churches. In fact, in many ways, they are fairly progressive. They have a fine protection policy, do background checks on volunteer working with children, and have counseling ministries in place. While much needs to be done, they are trying. If the

bystanders in the congregation pushed for it, I am sure more could be done. Or if the clergy were more able to name abuse and to respond to it, that would help. Next I will move on to look at these same concepts applied in a very different context, a Latino congregation I will call, La Iglesia Vida Nueva.

**CONGREGATION TWO: LA IGLESIA NUEVA VIDA**  
**(The New Life Church)**

*1. Religious congregations construct a positive picture of themselves that builds a community of believers. I call this positive picture a “congregational persona.”*

The persona of congregation is modest, Puerto Rican, urban and Protestant. The building is a storefront with glass windows and a brick facade. It is not markedly different from other stores on this street. The overall impression is modest but serviceable. with the symbols of a large wooden cross, a pulpit, some chairs and that is all. La Iglesia Nueva Vida resides in a Latino community in the city of Chicago. Despite the proximity to one of the world’s most affluent economic centers, the neighborhood surrounding La Nueva Vida is economically deprived. While the surrounding neighborhoods have gentrified, this is a neighborhood of working middle class, working poor families, and unemployed, mostly Puerto Rican and Mexican families. There are a fair number of people who are on welfare. (see demographic data in Appendix). On most Sundays, forty families and individuals gather for worship. There are guitars, morocco’s, and a lot of enthusiastic singing in Spanish. Sermons are in Spanish with a little English translation for the non-Spanish speaking members of the congregation. There are two non-Spanish speaking members. The members of this church mostly come from the same

village on an island in Puerto Rico. Many had families of origin from there, but were born in the United States and have lived here their whole lives here. They are mostly bilingual and bicultural. Some speak only Spanish. They are all United States citizens. This is a fact, even though members of the dominant white culture lump all Hispanics together. These people know they are United States citizens, and Puerto Ricans. They migrate. They do not immigrate. They have United States passports and do not need green cards to work or reside here. In this neighborhood, there are deep divisions between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. One respondent spoke of his friendships with some Mexicans all the way through high school. He spoke of how gangs and cultural pressure split them apart in high school. They were still friends, but their peer group would not let them be friends. They had to choose which group they belonged to, and the cultural ties are stronger than friendships forged across ethnic groups. People who tried mix risked being beaten up. Gangs play a part in the violence that keeps each in their ethnic group. It is not likely that Mexicans will come to worship at the La Vida Nueva, no matter how inclusive the message. It is not likely that people from El Salvador, Cuba or other Central American or South American countries will be coming to worship in La Iglesia Nueva Vida either. Not even Puerto Ricans from other towns or villages would come here. Most likely the church will remain small. This is based on the history of identity built in towns and villages from Puerto Rico. Migrants in the early part of this century banded together for social and economic support. Some members of other races have come to La Iglesia Nueva Vida, despite cultural differences. One African-American and English speaking woman comes here to worship. Another white woman came to the church to be involved in a children's ministry in the summers and stayed. She has

since married a Puerto Rican young man from the congregation and they have a beautiful young daughter. Despite pressures from the surrounding culture to stay predominantly Puerto Rican, the church has a multicultural element.

The pastor, though Puerto Rican, was born in New York City and has lived in the United States his whole life. While his family is originally from Puerto Rico, he has never lived there. He has visited family there from time to time. He is bicultural and speaks both Spanish and English fluently. He holds a position on the local school board and is active in the community. He organizes change, such as affordable housing. He and members of his congregation are working to eliminate drugs and gangs. Pastor Jorge has a B.A., an M. Div., and is working on a D.Min. He is one of the most educated men in his church. The community respects Pastor Jorge. This church describes their church as one that:

Prays, worships, educates believers, trains believers in Godly character, builds wholeness in the Body of Believers, leads others to salvation in Jesus Christ and ministers to the needs of the poor with dignity and compassion. (This mission statement was taken from the worship bulletin June 3, 2001).

Everyone dresses up for Sunday worship. This display of their best does not hide that this church not affluent. Freestanding chairs are used for worship. There is faded paint on the walls. The carpet is worn. All of this points to a lack of funds. The pastor tells his congregation during a Sunday sermon, “Church, the heating bill is going up and we have a large bill. There is no one else to pay this bill. We have to pay it. Try to put some money in the offering so we can keep our doors open when it is cold.” It has been cold this winter in Chicago. The building is not well insulated, so heating costs are high.

There is one computer in the pastor's office. At first I tried to reach the congregation by email and never received a response. Entry into this system is not by electronic means. Unknown to me, they had already decided to participate in the research from a letter I had sent explaining the research. They expected me talk to them in person. This is what I eventually did. I could have missed the opportunity if I had relied on email. This is a church where the important things take place face to face between people in relationship. This is partly due to the smallness of the congregation, and partly due to the culture of the people. A lot of what the pastor does in preaching and pastoral care is to build the self-esteem of the parishioners. Pastor Jorge encourages parishioners to transform their neighborhood for the better. He does this work by organizing neighborhood people to improve housing, finding jobs, improving schools, and encouraging voting.

For example, the pastor talks about a Hispanic prayer breakfast that he helped organize. It was held at the White House, in Washington D.C. He was invited along with other Latino leaders to talk to President Bush. He urges the church members to pray for the President, "whether we agree with the president or not." It is clear that on some issues they diverge, but he is not anti-Bush either. The pastor is a former Vietnam veteran. He goes on to say in his Sunday Sermon:

We are a small church, not important, the church is you and me, and we need to celebrate. . . Your gender is not important, your education is not important, ok, . . . so you live in (this Latino neighborhood) . . . it doesn't matter where you live, you are God's chosen and that is what is important.

This is the theme of today's sermon, 'You are God's chosen, and you are here because God brought you here.' It is a very uplifting message. "You are a child of God and we need to celebrate . . . together we are a community." Clearly a group community identity is part of the persona of this church. He calls for the community to be different from the surrounding community, "Holy, blameless," and he talks about "sharing our wealth with the third world." He urges them to share, despite the fact that the people gather here are of limited means. Pastor Jorge expects sharing of money and time for the third world, as well as neighborhood. He continues his message saying,

You may think you can't make a difference in facing dope dealers and gang bangers, . . .but we can make a difference . . .and we can make a difference in the schools, . . . you may be a single parent, but you can make a difference to your child, . . .boys you can respect women, . . . your sister, and your grandmother, and your mother, . . . all women. . . . We are chosen to make a difference. . . . I am somebody to God, . . . no matter how wealthy or educated you are, you may be out of balance. . . . How can you say you love God and not love the neighborhood? (Sunday Sermon 5-26-01)

Consider the theme of another Sunday Sermon, which deals with liberation from captivity.

Pastor Jorge selects a text about the return of the Israel from Babylon:

God's hand was on Nebuchadnezzar, that Babylon would come down, . . . when Jerusalem was conquered it was a humiliating experience, . . .being taken into captivity was humiliating, . . .and God said, 'in seventy years Cyrus said, "You are free to return to Israel to build the house of God." (Sunday Sermon June 10, 2001)

I can see by their facial expressions that the parishioners understand oppression and humiliation. They can relate to this Bible story of displacement and exile. He goes on to say,

It would be like someone saying, "I'm going to change your name from Sophia to Margaret." . . . or telling us all we have to speak English. . . . Nebuchadnezzar was ruthless, and disrupted the culture of the people. . . . Make no mistake, it still matters what

you do. . . . What you do today influences what you do tomorrow. . . . Stay in school, do your homework. . . . Be the best person you can be. . . . You may have to wait seventy years, and seventy years is a long time, . . . but things can change. . . . Some of us are older, and we've seen a lot of change, . . . but God called the people who were settled in captivity, and told them to leave Babylon. . . . God's call can come at peculiar moments, . . . and maybe you are wrestling with God's call, . . . You're settled, you're just not ready. . . . We can't know God's time, but we need to be ready to be called out of captivity whenever the call comes. . . . Scripture tells us some had to stay, and some had to go, . . . but they never lost the vision. . . . They didn't have much, . . . but God provided what they needed. . . . God is a faithful God, even if you are poor. . . . You might think, "I can't go to college," but God doesn't rely on your resources. . . . Don't let anybody discriminate against you because you don't have money. . . . These schools have money, and it's God's money. . . . Some had to stay, and some had to go. . . . Some of us don't like to start over, . . . again, . . . but some had to stay, and some had to go. . . . "So how come you are not working?" "Well, I am waiting for a friend of a friend who knows a friend." (he is smiling and the congregation is chuckling with him) Some are not ready to live by faith, maybe God has not stirred the hearts of every member of your family, but you are not alone. . . . God is with you, and some of the community is with you, some had to stay and some had to go.

He goes on to bring the people in to his cadence move by move. You can tell the people in the congregation are with him in this sermon, for the most part. This sermon is not written down, it is oral. It has cadence, it borrows a little from the African call and response. People will not find this sermon written out and posted on the website of the church. They will remember the message spoken in powerful metaphor and lilting language and powerful refrain. It will empower them, and give them hope. This is Congregation Two, La Vida Nueva, at its best. This is a congregation changed by God, despite the very overwhelming circumstances of poverty, racism and oppression. The story is one of liberation from oppression. It takes its myth from the Exodus story, where a whole people may be brought out of bondage together. This sermon points out the struggle of some members of the congregation moving into the middle class, while others remain in poverty. The message is "be ready to be lead out of captivity, even

if some have to stay captive for now.” The wait may be long, but the call is sure. This idea of partial liberation in the midst of struggle resonates with congregation. It fits with their struggle for self-esteem, jobs and maintaining cultural identity. It helps in the fight against drugs, gangs and poverty. It is a fight against very real pressures from the dominant white culture to “speak English” and to “change your name.” The pressure is to Anglicize, and stop being Puerto Rican. Don’t be Juan, but John, don’t be Pedro but Peter. Disruption of their culture and pressure to assimilate is real. This is part of the weight of oppression, in addition to economic pressures. . In his sermon, pastor uses the example of the people returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. He likens this to the task of the local people to rebuild the local school. He says:

I became president of the local school board and we had to paint the fence. It would cost \$45,000 if we used union painters, and we didn’t have that. What about the parents? Couldn’t we get together on Saturday to chip and paint? This is good stewardship . . . The Israelites left their city for the city of God. We cannot abandon our charge. . . . The devil doesn’t have control over any of us unless we relinquish control. . . . I didn’t get A’s all through school, but I graduated. . . . We can take charge. . . . I’m going to re-establish the temple in Jerusalem . . . (he goes on to talk about President Clinton and his scandals) God is a God of second chances, God doesn’t give up on us, but God won’t tolerate us in our foolishness if we continue. . . (he urges the congregation), We must become a congregation How much do you love this church? It’s an ER, a way station, for some it’s home . . .for them the temple was destroyed. . . it’s time to rebuild. You’re here to stay, and folks around here will feel threatened. They were controlling you, but God is in control. We see them (the Israelites) leave for the city of God. We see them take risks. One person had a vision of a church in a storefront and our church was born. How will we pay for this? Tithe.

The metaphors he uses for the church in this sermon are striking. The church is an “emergency room” where the wounded and sick are treated and healed. The church is a “way station.” This is a place where you may be traveling through a wilderness terrain and supplies to sustain your life are there to restock and rebuild for the rest of the journey. The church is for

some “a home.” This is a place of belonging, a place of rootedness, a place of family even IF there is no rootedness, no belonging and no family elsewhere. The words for the divine in this sermon are mostly “God.” It is not Jesus, Father, Lord, or even “He.” I don’t think the parishioners notice this, but it makes a difference. This is not a gendered God. This is a God of second chances, and a powerful and liberating God. It is the community as a whole that is saved. This is not an individual and personal faith. There is an interesting side stepping of labor unions in this talk. It is not a rejection of labor unions per se, but a recognition that the labor unions charge more than the school system can pay. He calls upon the parents at the school to volunteer their labor at the school.

Pastor Jorge says,

Faith is not a closet experience. Go public. Come out into your public. Faith is a choice to believe. Say it with me . . . Faith, . . . either you believe them, or God. . . . Faith is a choice to believe. . . . If you don’t believe in yourself, then you’ve chosen not to believe in yourself. . . . God will never reject a genuine gesture of faith, . . . and each of us has a faith challenge. . . . Look at the people selling chilotes,<sup>15</sup> for \$1.25, some sell milotes, helado, watermelon and you can buy it from carts and it’s so convenient. I see more carts, they are in demand. But the restaurant owner got jealous and they want: “No Carts! No license!” Nobody told the cart owners they needed a license.

So here pastor is on the side of the cart owners and against the greedy restaurateurs. It is a faith challenge to him. This is his illustrated definition of a public faith. This is a local struggle where a Christian can be on the side of the poor or powerless against the more powerful. Interestingly enough the Chicago city government’s requirement of a license to protect the public health is here a barrier to the poor to make a living. In many Latin American countries the carts

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<sup>15</sup> These are Puerto Rican food items.

are an easy way for the poor to make a living, and the public health requirements are not so stringent. Here is a clash of values between those seeking to survive and make a living by vending from carts, and those working in restaurants, which are governed by standards and laws of public health. Both values are important. In a conflict of values Pastor Jorge is on the side of the poor. In this respect, Pastor Jorge is a liberationist (Gutierrez, 1971).<sup>16</sup> Liberation theology and the Exodus motif is the myth this congregation uses. The conflict between street vendors and restaurant owners shows how two groups who are both struggling to make a living can be pitted against each other in a struggle for survival. The restaurant owners have to pay extra to meet public health standards of cleanliness, and to get a license from city officials. They see cart owners as a threat, because cart owners can undersell products to the public since they haven't had to meet requirements for a license. In the best of all possible scenarios, both groups would have their need met to stay in business and make a profit. Maybe religious congregations could help the city develop a way to ensure public health without charging the street vendors too much. Restaurant owners are using the laws of the city to drive the vendors out of business and deprive cart vendors of their livelihood.

In summary, the *persona* of this congregation is poor, faithful, and liberated. They are led by a non-gendered God. They are a community being saved together. This community is mostly Puerto Rican from the same small town.. This is a community that has multiple opportunities to express faith as they rebuilding their church and community. It is a church where some are being called into the middle class, and some are called to live out their faith in poverty. All are called

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<sup>16</sup> Liberation theology uses the Exodus paradigm for liberation, and states that God is on the side of the poor. God has a "preferential option for the poor."

to share their resources with the third world, their local church, and neighborhood. The church is an “Emergency Room, a way station, and a home.” This is a small, but mighty *persona*.

*2. The creation of a positive congregational persona represses other negative aspects of the congregation. The suppression of violent or sexual material can be an unconscious process and forms a shadow side of the congregation or a collective unconscious.*

Where is the shadow of this congregation? I would point to the Pastor Jorge’s sense of importance. While I really like and respect this dedicated pastor, he very powerful in this church. He is educated, and he is charismatic. As long as he is leading in the right direction, he will be a force for good. When pastor’s ordinary human flaws surface, where will the corrective be? It will have to come from the church community. Most of the parishioners were recruited by Pastor Jorge, and groomed by him for their positions in the church. Will these young men and women be able to correct him? I wonder if they will be up to the challenge. For example, one woman in the congregation talks about how hard the Pastor Jorge is on his own son. There is an implication that he might even be abusive with his son. The pastor tells a story about this in his own interview below. Would the congregation be able to intervene with Pastor Jorge? Also, how does this congregation relate to the issue of domestic violence in general? Hear the words of Pastor Jorge:

**Pastor Jorge (not his real name) La Iglesia Nueva Vida, age 51, married, three children, has M.Div. degree, ordained, finishing his D.Min. in his denominational seminary**

### Changing Water into Wine

When I asked Pastor Jorge if he had ever worked with a person experiencing domestic violence as a pastoral caregiver, he answers an unequivocal “Yes.” He says:

At first I was very ignorant, not of domestic violence, but that it can be happening around you . . . and you are not aware of it. . . . I try to listen to people’s stories, and the situation educated me . . . not just to the victims, but to the victimizers . . . people who abuse, have also been abused . . . there’s not one experience that this is not the case . . . it’s always there..

What I like about this story, is that Pastor Jorge admits how hard it is to see domestic violence. It can be happening right in your group, and you can miss it. He is open enough to be educated by the “situation,” rather than repressing it. He brings these experiences into his contextual theology and into his pastoral practices. More importantly, he does not deny that domestic violence occurs in his congregation. Pastor Jorge says:

(Once) a young woman came to me with marks on her from her father, and I took the opportunity to confront him alone, . . . and I basically threatened him. . . . (he laughs) . . . I was a young minister then, and I told him if he ever hit her again, . . . I would hit him. . . . The guy . . . he was a tough guy. . . . He was a brute. . . . The approach was very successful . . . (Probably because) someone outside of the family knew, and was powerful enough to intervene. . . . That stopped him. This man started coming to church, . . . but I had a lot of ignorance in the early days.

Here he keeps an abuser accountable, which is good. However, by using threats of force he reinforces the “macho” way of dealing with problems, coercive force. He recognizes using force is an immaturity, but at least he is active on behalf of victims. I wonder whether his experiences as a Vietnam veteran play into his willingness to use violence to stop violence. As a former combatant, he trained to fight, and even kill. About the victims, Pastor Jorge says:

(The victims I know sometimes are difficult to deal with because) they protect the abuser and the abuse, . . . they play it down, . . . and I know women who abuse young children, and I confront that directly with them. . . . We have done some educating in this church about the issue, invited expert speakers in. . . . We also showed the film “The Burning Bed.” We used this film as a way of creating “awareness” of the issue. I name it and call it what it is, domestic violence—just like when I deal with racism. . . . I just kind of put it out there . . . and sometimes people don’t like that.

Pastor Jorge recognizes how victims minimize their abuse. He also has seen women abuse children, and he doesn’t hesitate to confront them about this. He has reported them to Division of Child and Family Services. He names domestic violence and racism, even if some of his parishioners don’t like him doing that. He says concerning children:

It wrecks me. . . . It wrecks me emotionally, that they had to hold me back, because I’ve seen dead babies, I’ve carried dead babies in my arms. (Pastor Jorge recalls a time when), “. . . damn . . . there was a time when this thing was reigning . . . it was reigning, because it created some very anxious moments, because you know, . . . I had a very hard life when I was a child, being very poor . . . but I was blessed, . . . you know because between being very poor, and being abused, . . . I don’t know, . . . give me poverty, . . . dang, . . . you know, . . . maybe counselors are better equipped (on what to do to help), . . . the sexual piece, . . . I cannot deal with it, . . . (once) a man told me he had sexually abused his daughter, and I referred him to a sexual abuse counselor, but I also reported it to the authorities.

He lets me know that the sexual abuse is difficult for him to deal with, and a limitation for him. He referred a person to a counselor for that. He has to restrain himself from using physical violence against abusers who have killed babies. He reports abuse to authorities. He is doing a lot to keep victims safe and abusers accountable. Another experience he has had that disturbed him is:

I’ve come across some clergy, . . . who abuse, not just their spouse, . . . but children, . . . physically, sexually and emotionally. . . . I find that the most difficult to deal with.

Pastor Jorge names clergy abuse. He admits that clergy can be abusive, although he finds that it difficult to deal with. He tells me he has worked with the denominational authorities and committees set up to deal with clergy abuse. He is concerned because confidentiality for those accused was not kept. In those cases the clergy (before they were even found guilty) were, “stigmatized as a wife beater, child abuser etc.” While he does not condone abuse, he thinks confidentiality of pastors during a trial is important. Pastor Jorge likes the way some denominations have a hot line telephone for reporting. He tells another story about intervening in a violent situation. He says:

(Pastor Jorge intervened in a situation where a gun was used by a victim to prevent further abuse by her husband). Part of me thought, OK, go ahead and blow the man away, he deserved it, but I had to talk her into giving me the gun (which he was successful in doing. Pastor Jorge referred the husband to a psychologist, and the psychologist and Pastor Jorge together kept the couple accountable. The couple did better over time).

He did not mention a separation though, which I thought would have been advisable for safety reasons. Pastor Jorge said,

You know, I did some things because I felt compelled to, . . . but I’m not a therapist . . . not a person who can deal with this.

He is admitting his own limitations in dealing with this kind of violence, but he still gets involved. He went on to tell me that he had been born and raised in New York City, and that he had never lived in Puerto Rico. In New York City he “organized” various things through the church and neighborhood to improve the community—housing, economic development, and he worked on local voting campaigns. He helped start the National Association of Hispanic Evangelicals (he explains elsewhere that ‘evangelico’ in Spanish means ‘good news,’ not

necessarily anything political or theological, nor does it carry the connotation of fundamentalist), He started the National Hispanic Association of Religious Partnership for community health in Brooklyn, N.Y.. Pastor Jorge says about himself, “I was never able to dichotomize between the material and the spiritual and the social.” This speaks of his theology of the Self. It is interrelated. He said he has family in Puerto Rico. When they would visit in New York City, they would all gather to play music,

Quatros, guitars, moroccos, bongos, and spoons....and everybody had a great voice....I never had a record in my house or a radio...they bring over their instruments...yeah these guys...these panchos, we were kind noisy (he laughs).<sup>17</sup>

When I asked him how he became a minister he says:

Well, basically I was in Vietnam . . . I received what I perceived to be a call of God . . . I think what I saw in Vietnam, . . . I sort of made a conscious decision that whatever I would do in life, would have to be connected to the church. . . . I never perceived a notion of pastoring, I felt a call to ministry in the church. . . . I think that’s when I went to Bible college after I was discharged. . . . so I found a group of people that just don’t connect with the traditional church . . . and you sort of take on the role of a pastor, chaplain, whatever leader?. . . . But for me, the priesthood of all believers is what it is all about. . . . For me a pastor is just as significant as being called to drive a truck, . . . that is just my niche.

Pastor Jorge was injured in Vietnam. Because of his injury, and because his grandfather was sick, he eventually was dishonorable discharged from the military. He says “by the grace of God, I didn’t have to go back.” He says:

I thought that things I saw there were the worst that people could do to one another, and so I felt I could handle whatever else life brought him. I was one lucky dude! (I asked him about repentance) We all have a chance to repent. One of my sons did something that made me angry and I smashed a chair. My son said, “Papi, why are you like the Hulk?” By this he meant sometimes I’m nice and other times I’m like the giant green angry “Hulk” character on TV. This made me aware that I was scaring my child, and I sat down with my child, and I said I was sorry, and I didn’t do it again.

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<sup>17</sup> These are various musical instruments his family used, some of which are unique to Puerto Rico or the Caribbean.

In this section of the interview, we see the pastor confronting his shadow side, apologizing to his son, and keeping himself accountable. While he is successful, according to his own account, others in the congregation point out he might still have a problem being abusive with his son. I did not get to interview his son about this. Pastor Jorge has flaws. He may be abusive, at times, with his own son. However, he is open about this, and confronts this in himself. I am concerned that there is no one in this congregation to hold him accountable. While the denomination could do this, I get the impression that they are very distant from the day-to-day life of the congregation. I do not think they would know about any problems in pastor's family, unless he told them about it.

When talking about roadblocks in dealing with domestic violence, Pastor Jorge talks about gender issues. He cites the usual submission texts from the Bible in Ephesians 4:5, (Metzger, 1977). He adds that the, "Bible as whole isn't too favorable to women." This is an acknowledgement that a Christian's primary resource is patriarchal and unfavorable to women. His awareness is an important step. This is a major roadblock. Scriptures are liberating to women at times, and oppressive at times, as they are rooted in the patriarchal cultures from which they came. He talks about the texts where violence against women takes place as roadblocks. He says he tries to preach about domestic violence, and tries to "lift women up" in his sermons. He also remembers a large men's conference (Promise Keepers) he went to in an athletic dome. In this meeting, people wrote down on index cards if they had been abused. They were asked to come forward in an altar call. There were thousands of men who came forward. They were asked, "to

give it to God.” He talked about how surprised he was that so many men came forward despite stigma. Promise Keepers has done a lot for men, but as I said before, it advocates “headship,” meaning the man is in charge in the home. This reinforces patriarchy, but redefines it to be a more “gentle patriarchy” of “servant leadership.” This is not a group that advocates mutuality in marriage and between genders. I see it as oppressive. Even so, this organization recognizes that men have been victims of abuse, and offers a place for them to heal. I have to say that “coming forward and giving it to God” may not be a very effective way to deal with abuse. First, it exposes shame in a large meeting. That one time of acknowledgement is supposed to heal you. I think it is safer for abused people to tell someone, like a therapist, in a safe setting. This therapist can then support them through a journey of healing. However, I do recognize that men in our culture, and men from Latino machismo cultures, are not socialized to come to therapy. Some of these poorer men do not have the money for therapy. The church can help these men, if it is willing to offer a variety of helps such as pastoral counseling, men’s groups, and retreats for men. Jorge talked some about Hispanic men and “machismo.” He said:

Some men I know were taken care of in foster homes and were raped. They just do not talk about it, because it is not macho. It just eats you up inside.

This comment underscores the need for reform in the Department of Child and Family Services and foster care system in the state and the nation. Much sexual and physical abuse occurs there. Churches could do much to reform this system, including writing to senators and congress representatives and to government officials on the state level. Churches could encourage families that would not be abusive, to take in foster children.

Pastor Jorge addresses gender issues related to domestic violence within his community. He tries to “lift women up,” and tells members to “respect women.” He does not yet have a full-scale analysis of patriarchy, and how that relates to interlocking oppressions. He has keen understanding of racism. He does not hesitate to name racism as he names domestic violence. These are the strengths of the *persona* of this congregation and in the *persona* of the pastor. He understands the experience of oppression. He is good in pointing out how the machismo culture makes it difficult for boys raped in foster homes to get help. These young men are silenced as not being “macho,” and the experience of rape “eats them up inside.” This underscores that many men are victims and survivors. It points out our need to reform the foster care system. He has stated earlier that men who abuse are always abused themselves and “the experience (of dealing with abused people) educated me about this.”

I do like how vulnerable the pastor is. He admits mistakes and is open about his growth. As a person, I think he is making more progress than most in dealing with his shadow side. His response of wanting to beat up those who have abused others is a typical male response that is not helpful. It deals with abuse in a way that uses a kind individual coercive power against abuse. This is a common way men in our society are taught to deal with problems. This reinforces power differentials and could form a kind of vigilantism. A turn towards a just authority would be best, but the Puerto Rican experience of the police and justice is one fraught with difficulty. Take for example the following account taken from a narrative by Mervin Mendez Rodriquez, a Chicago professional historian. He states that the Chicago Police were and are the most vicious and oppressive of institutions in Chicago. Two Puerto Rican men could not

even converse on the sidewalk without the police stopping and interrogating them {Rodriquez, 2002}. The language barriers are particularly difficult. Mendez- Rodriguez said:

We would use our mother's maiden name when we say our name. So you know, if somebody asked me what my name is, I would say Mervin Mendez Rodriquez. Well, to an Irish cop, that was like, oh, this guy is messing with my mind, he's not being straight with me, he's giving me two last names. What is that jerk doing to me? And so that was an excuse to batter the person, that was an excuse to arrest the person, you know, accuse the person of resisting arrest or not cooperating with the police (Rodriquez, 2002).

Hispanic language problems are part of the early accounts of abusive Chicago police used. Mendez-Rodriquez says that some police colluded with gangs, such as the Gaylord's, as early as the 1930's and 1940's. Mendez-Rodriquez says these gangs were sometimes doing the police's bidding when they "committed acts of aggression" against migrant and immigrant groups (Rodriquez, 2002). Looking to the police for justice and authority does not seem to be a viable alternative in this community. In this context, what are people supposed to do to help survivors in their midst? The larger dominant culture could demand equal treatment and non-abusive treatment for people of color. Residents of the City of Chicago could bring to justice people who used torture against people of color. Courts could hold police who used these methods accountable by law.

In my interviews with survivors, I asked about their idea of justice. Invariably the response that I got was, "There is no justice." I found this shocking, but maybe I should have been more aware of how little justice there is in our society for the poor and for people of color.

One of the ways Pastor Jorge finds out about former abuse is when he does pre-marital counseling. They have a policy in the church if you are married there, you have to come to pre-

marital counseling for ten sessions. There is a questionnaire to answer, and the question of abuse is one of the questions. He thinks that it is good they talked about it, because it would have surfaced as soon as they were married. He goes on to say,

You know, in my hearts of hearts, I am proud of what we have done . . . I mean we rather changed the water into wine. . . . Because I have seen the power of God in transforming the lives of men and women, . . . who have gone through abuse and domestic violence.

He goes on to say the church taught children about “good touch, and bad touch.” He tells adults and youth about the importance of setting boundaries. This little congregation with few resources has done a lot to prevent abuse and work with domestic violence survivors.

Let us move now to the stories of survivors and their experiences in this congregation.

### **Ana (Name Changed) La Iglesia Nueva , Survivor**

51 year old, Puerto Rican, divorced and remarried mother of two grown sons, non-clergy, third year in graduate school for a master’s degree-will graduate 2002.

#### **“No Saving Grace, No Justice”**

I grew up in a home in Puerto Rico . . . My mother and father constantly fought, and the fighting was physically and emotionally abusive at times . . . My mother moved to the United States to escape the abuse. I grew up thinking this (abusive relationship) was normal . . . My parents divorced and, . . . thought the abuse would be over, . . . but my mother remarried, and the new couple also began to have fights. . . . During the time of abuse, we had to move every few months, and my education was often interrupted, making it very difficult to learn. . . . We also moved back and forth to Puerto Rico . . . As a result, I was an unhappy child, and as the oldest of four children, I had much responsibility at home. . . . My parents believed in arranged marriages, and I was married to a man my parents selected at the age of fifteen. My sister was sixteen when she married, my brother was seventeen, and my youngest sister resisted, so she wasn’t married until she was twenty. . . . We moved so often we didn’t have many friends, and the lack of education really hurt us. (She explains gender roles for women), For Hispanic women the key to success is, if you are a good cook, a good housekeeper, and a good seamstress.

We met in her house for the interview, and it is immaculate. She is cooking dinner for her family and it smelled and looked delicious. She also mentions how the instability of moving back and forth to the mainland hurt her education. Some of this moving is related to the domestic violence in her family. She said:

I had beautiful children. . . . My oldest boy was four, and the youngest was one-and-a-half, but we were in turmoil. My husband and I moved back to Puerto Rico because his father was ill. . . . We lived on an isolated farmland. Then the turmoil began. My mother-in-law was abused all her life. Her oldest son was now back in her home. There was no saving grace. His father chased me. I had to get his shoes. He was always drunk. He grabbed me and my little child. I ran away out of the house. He chased after me with, what do you call it? . . . a long knife, . . . (She demonstrates the size about three feet long) a knife they use to cut the cane, . . . like a machete, . . . I ran off into the fields. My husband came and stopped me from leaving. My life was in jeopardy. My husband's father and my husband too, were dangerous... . . . I ran away to my sister's, but months later my husband comes and takes me back. . . . The abuse started again. He beat me. I ran away in a night gown. I ran to a neighbor and the woman of the house took me in. The police came and took him. They released him a few hours later. . . . He came back and beat me, and raped me. . . . (her eyes filled with tears) . . . I was praying, let him sleep and let me get out of here! . . . I put a few of our things in a dry potato bag, and with nothing more than that,—I left.

This is truly a desperate, life-threatening, situation of abuse. Somewhere within herself, she summoned the courage to leave. She ran to her sister's, and then took a plane to Chicago.

She said:

I took a cab to my mother's house. At first, my step-father did not recognize me because I was so badly beaten. I had just had a hysterectomy, and my belly was swollen. I needed special medication. Right after that, I tried to get a job, but couldn't get one because I was failing the physicals. Finally, a woman who knew I had a temperature and had failed the physical, hired me anyway as a machine operator at a tool and dye cutting company. Then my husband came into town and tried to get me back, but I refused. "Come back," he said, "We have a house, no one will put up with you." I did not come back with him. He began threatening me saying, "If I find you I will kill you."

This situation illustrates what advocates say, that the most dangerous time for a victim/survivor is when a person leaves an abuser. Yet she has the courage not to go back with her husband and to certain abuse. It also underscores how the abuse and surgery had made her unemployable. This made her all the more vulnerable to abuse, and dependent on someone else to take care of her. At this point in her story, the church has been no help at all. A kind woman hires her despite her not meeting the physical requirements of the job. Her family helps her, but we are hearing nothing about any church helping. Ana said,

I had to move out of my parent's house, since he knew where we lived. I went to a minister, and he said he usually did not do this, but he helped me get a divorce.

Finally, we hear about a minister actually helping. He helps her get a divorce, even though he is usually against divorce. We don't hear of much more help from the church, just help getting a divorce, but that is very important help.

I lost all the money that I had invested in the house and the things in the house. I and my two children slept on a mattress on the floor, all three in one bed. I often had to choose between spending money on the bus to get to work and eating. I continued to work and take care of my children. I bought a refrigerator and a stove for three-hundred dollars, and paid them off ten to fifteen dollars at a time.

In that part of her story, we see Anna's economic struggle for survival. I don't hear of any church giving her money. I don't hear of any social service agency giving her some money, either. Most of this survival has been on her own, with a little help from her family, and a little help with the divorce from a church. In fact, the church has in some ways been an obstacle for her. She says:

My mother was a Pentecostal Christian, so she was already a Christian. . . . I attended my mother's church. My mother accepted the Lord. Her man died in January. I died in June (she means this death metaphorically). I had turmoil in my life. I stayed with it. . . . I attended her church (Pentecostal). . . . I was a single woman. . . . The other women in the church were threatened by me (she is petite and attractive). I was too pretty, and they were too ugly, so it seemed to them I was a threat, although I had no intentions on their husbands. I didn't want to be in a relationship. I needed a church, and I didn't care if women had long or short hair (long haired women are more traditional, and shorter haired women are more modern-hers is short she explains to me). I left that church and found this church (La Iglesia Nueva Vida).

Rather than being a help, the church women are jealous and threatened by an attractive, divorced, single, woman in their midst. She still wants a church, but she doesn't say why.

Fortunately, she changes churches and comes to the store front I am researching. She has a better time at La Iglesia Vida Nueva. She said:

I went back to school to be a dental assistant. After two years in community college, I got a job and my boss liked me. He offered to pay for my classes. He said, 'Work for me for five years and I will pay for your classes. I became an office assistant manager. I finished my Bachelor's of Arts degree at a local college.

Here a kind boss who makes a real difference in Anna's life. She obtains the means to get her Bachelor's degree. The church is not a part of this. God may be a part of this, in the broad sense of sustaining her and providing opportunities, but she does not highlight that. She talked about her new relationship with her second husband:

I met my current husband, and we dated three years. It was very hard for me to trust him. The first time we were to meet, I left the dental assisting late, and got mugged on the way. My wallet was gone, and I had no money. He helped me, and gave me money. When he first asked me for a date, I was worried about being raped, and made sure to bring money in case I needed to run away. . . . We went to the Zoo, because I thought that would be pretty safe. . . . We had a nice time. I gave a friend the name of the place I was going, just in case I did not come back. I dated him three years. We came to a place where we were

going to marry or break up. . . .My mother called and said, “You’ve accomplished a lot, give this young man a chance.” I did.

The struggle she has, as a survivor, with trust is illustrated by this part of her story. She might not have married him, if her mother had not urged her to do so. Her mother’s family is her biggest support system. She did not tell me, as researcher, how her second relationship is going, so I don’t know how it is working out. I asked her what emotional and spiritual aids helped in recovery and she said:

I came to the Lord . . .I had a genuine experience with God. . . I prayed through the good and the bad. . . . There were not a lot of people in the church, it was mostly women in the church, and they saw me as a threat. . . . They didn’t ask me to come to their house for dinner. . . . I was isolated. . . . The Lord was there. . . . I prayed every day, “earth open up and swallow me.” . . . I didn’t have winter clothes. . . .I had to make by, and make do. ”Why do you allow me to live, Lord?” I thought, “If I end my life, I will go to hell, but my kids will live.” I prayed. . . .I was lonely. . . . I was single, and the people in my church were all married. I didn’t fit in. . . . I was constantly trusting Him (God) for my welfare.”

In this section of her story, she underscores God’s taking care of her, while saying the church women did not help her. No matter how isolated she was, she had a firm belief that God was there and looking out for her welfare. She connected to God, inside herself. This was in spite of feelings of suicidal despair, which many survivors feel. Anna said:

(I asked her what her understanding of justice is) There is no justice. There was no justice at that time. The police let him go (referring to incident when the police arrested her husband, and then let him go, and he raped and almost killed her). No one in the church cared. It was OK with them if I was there and OK with them if I was not there. . . .I got out, I was saved. . . .I had guilt. . . . Was I in the Lord’s will or not? Am I still in God’s will, if I am divorced?

Some of Anna's struggles are theological. She asks herself, "Can I be in God's will and be divorced." A few marriage sermons that outline when it is right, and even advisable to get a divorce, would have helped Anna. For example, a pastor could have mentioned it is all right to get a divorce if you or your children are being abused, your partner is an alcoholic or drug addicted and making no efforts to recover, your partner is an unrecovered gambler, your partner is unfaithful, or if your partner abandons you. These teachings on marriage and divorce might have made this struggle easier, but she was not in a church that had such sermons at the time.

Anna said:

I'm still God's child, pray, and search God out. I found a church that accepts me. I was a single mom. When my son saw his father, he blamed me for the divorce. I was poor. If I had money for lunch, then I didn't have money for the bus. . . I didn't want a relationship with anyone. . . I was very afraid to let someone into my life. . . I was afraid. . . . Why was he like that? You grow up with it. My first husband was thirty, and I was fifteen, a naïve kid,. . . I didn't know about sex. . . .My husband let me finish high school, but he wouldn't let me go on with my plans to be a professional person. . . .On the weekend, he drank alcohol. . . . I didn't want to get even; I just wanted a better life than violence, women, and drinking. . . . I told God, "One day I will have a house . . .you owe me a house!" Now look! (we are meeting in a kitchen of a very nice house in the suburbs that she and her second husband have fixed up). "It's a beautiful house." (Her husband and his son come in for dinner and the interview ends).

Anna articulates some of her liberating theology. She is still "God's child," and she has found a church that accepts her. Some sex education, as a teenager, might have helped Anna., even sex education from the public school. Ana did get some of her prayers answered, in that she has a nice house now, a new husband, and her children. She also has her education. I admire her greatly and find her very courageous.

Next, is another story from a survivor in La Iglesia Nueva Vida. Marita (name changed) minimizes the abuse. She is in the category of a bystander, by self-identification, but I can hear she is also a survivor.

### **Marita (Name Changed) La Iglesia Nueva Vida, Bystander**

51 year old, recently widowed woman, Puerto Rican, born on the mainland United States, lived in Chicago most of her life, bilingual-bicultural, married (second marriage), mother of two grown daughters. Lives with her granddaughter and owns her own house.

I was raised as a Roman Catholic, and I went to Parish schools all my life. My mother is still Roman Catholic. When I was twenty-one, I saw how my father-in-law passed away, and how he had peace, serenity and a total lack of fear. At the funeral there was a lot of joy. I became a Pentecostal at that point, the religion of my father-in-law.

In the Catholic Church of Marita's childhood, they did not talk about domestic violence. After seeing her father-in-law die, she had a conversion experience and went to a Pentecostal church. When I asked her about justice, she said:

There isn't any (justice). . . . I work with attorneys, and I don't trust the system. Money paves the way for the criminals. The innocent pay for a crime they didn't commit. Judges condemned people on the basis of their looks, or because they didn't like the attorney pleading the case. As for the rare Hispanic judge, they didn't do much for Hispanics. I used to see them scoop up drug addicts and street people to vote for their candidate. I see racism and discrimination all around, but I don't cry out.

This part of her story underscores the lack of justice for the poor again, especially if they are people of color. She does not even "cry out" for justice, and the oppression she and her people experience has resulted in silence from her on the issue of justice. Marita said:

I lived some of my early days in (a public housing project). . . . Race, class, being a woman, it never kept me down. (I asked her if she had ever experienced domestic

violence and she said she has not, but her sister has). My sister wanted more money and a place in the suburbs, but the man she got involved in was twelve years older than she was, and he abused her with beatings. He was as drug dealer and a drinker. She left this man and remarried, but this man abused her emotionally. One of my sister's children was murdered. She was prostituting for her drugs. The police never investigated. She never made a home with the right man. She repeated the pattern. She had her kids out of wedlock. God was not a part of that life. She used to call me 'holier than thou.' My sister has a son who is accused of murder and is in jail. She is upset about this, and asks the family for money for an attorney. The family doesn't want to lend it. They have their own problems. My husband is not abusive, except to himself. He drank a lot and used drugs a lot, and eventually this killed his liver. He was on the transplant list for a new liver. You have to be sober for six months, and my husband lied and said that he had been sober for that long. Someone died, and he did receive a liver. He was on television in the state. The whole family was on television too. . . . I was afraid he wouldn't respect that someone died, so that he could live. I was afraid that he would still drink. (She didn't say whether he did or not. He died a few months before the interview, and she did not elaborate on this. We went on to talk about forgiveness.)

She has her own definition of forgiveness and said:

Forgiveness is having peace with yourself, and no hatred for the other person. I was sexually abused by two family members. I can say, "God bless you," and mean it. I have no ill feelings towards them. Why did it happen? I don't seek an answer. Whenever guilt and discontent wants to come and attack me, I say, "God doesn't hold it in his book." It's not denial. I have forgiveness. I couldn't tell about it in the church. In my youth, God was far away. I had no personal contact with God. The nuns and the Roman Catholic priests were far away, and they scared me. The nun's room was a holy place to me. I didn't know how you could confess this to God. Except in the confessional box, it was hidden. You couldn't see the face of the priest. I never sought help. God knew my heart. At my first Holy Communion, I made up my sins.

For this woman the church, and theology as she understands it, is again an obstacle to getting help. She blames herself for the abuse of family members and feels the need to confess.

At least the Catholic Church provides first communion as a place to feel you are starting over with a clean slate, and confession, even though I can see that she is not to blame for her abuse. It is very sad that she felt she had to lie about the abuse because she blamed herself. Marita said:

The closer you were to God, the more penance you did. (As researcher I said, “but you never did anything wrong. It was the two family members who were wrong.”) She replied to this,

Hmm, yes, maybe . . . I guess that’s right. I never shared it with my mother. (She never had told anyone, except me). I worked in a factory when I was thirteen, and I was never able to be a child. When I was in public housing, I had to protect the other children from other people who would do them harm, but I was just a child myself. My husband was unfaithful. I thought I didn’t deserve better. I had no self worth and wanted to commit suicide. . . . Even my love for my children was not enough to want to live at the time. . . . I tried to commit suicide but did not succeed.

Many survivors feel suicidal, or attempt suicide. This stems from feelings of worthlessness. Domestic abuse takes many lives through suicide, or murder. It also robs survivors of quality of life. Marita picks a man who is unfaithful, because she “doesn’t think I deserve better.” This is how abuse can affect the quality of a person’s life, even if she does survive. Marita said:

The only thing that helped me was Sunday school. . . . Sunday school is the backbone of the church. . . . There you could bring your faith into your life. . . . Sunday school touched that nerve, it would come out. We were learning about the Word. Like David and abuse—he was abused by Saul, both mentally, physically and emotionally. David abused his wife, and also Bathsheba was raped. His daughter was raped by her brother. So that started the discussion, and we would talk about all kinds of things. . . . Your own leaders are abusers sometimes. It’s not out in the open. How can you expect help from abusers? They have to be there for their own congregations, and they neglect the needs of their own family. Pastor is harsh on his own son. He has high expectations. There is constant pressure, or you are going to destroy my ministry.

This woman does find help in the church. In Sunday school, they grapple with the texts of violence and share their personal stories. It is a safe place to do so. Here again is a way La Iglesia Nueva Vida reaches out to the real experiences of parishioners. But Marita said Pastor

Jorge is abusive to his own son. Pastor Jorge had talked about that earlier in his narrative, but here the judgment is much harsher. Marita thinks, "If your leaders are abusive, you won't get much help when you are being abused." It is not clear from her story if the abuse is mostly emotional and related to "high expectations," or physical abuse. It does point out that a pastor caring for a church often neglects his or her own family. Denominations need to provide support to their pastors and to their pastor's families. Support groups for pastor's spouses could be helpful and activities for their children could help. Pastors could be encouraged to spend time with their own families. Denominations could provide money to pay for counseling for pastors and their spouses, or their families. Marita goes on to speak about other family members who have been abused. They are also parishioners in La Iglesia Vida Nueva. Marita said:

My niece was abused by her husband, and I asked pastor to go with her to help, but he told her to call the police. . . I went anyway and my niece's husband was naked and drunk and drugged. He was holding the baby by the foot and swinging it around. I told the man to give me the baby, and he did . . . He had a demon, but the demon saw I belonged to God, and stepped aside . . . My image of God is Jesus with his arms stretched out to go around you, like a mother holding you in her lap.

This is a much different picture of Pastor Jorge, than the story, he tells about himself where he was going to people's houses to confront abusers. In this case, he did not. I do think there are times we should call the police, and this was one such case. However, with all that I heard about the police in Chicago, I am not surprised that Marita did not call them. Would they have come quickly? Would justice be done? I wondered if anyone reported this abuse? If this man was drinking, taking drugs and mistreating a baby, he should be reported. Marita attributes this man's behavior to his having a demon. In a way, a person on drugs and alcohol is

“possessed” by spirits (alcohol and drugs), but somehow the possession language seems to take away the accountability of the abuser. For this reason, I would like avoid language of possession.

*3. Symptoms erupt from the shadow side of the congregation and this is an opportunity to integrate the material into the contextual theology and congregational persona.*

It seems that the eruption, of the shadow side of Pastor Jorge ends in abuse of his son. In a very small church, the personality and flaws of the pastor have a great impact. As I said before, there may be no checks and balances on the pastor’s flaws. To his credit, Pastor Jorge tried to put checks and balances in place. He does not hug parishioners, to minimize the possibility of clergy sexual abuse. In addition, he names abuse and educates the church about it. He works for respect of women and calls abusers to be accountable, at least some of the time. If a pastor shares power with the governing body, perhaps some of the worst lapses could be avoided in a small church. Perhaps we need to look at our polity and see what safeguards we can put in place to prevent small churches from being vulnerable to a charismatic pastor who uses his power and influence to abuse parishioners. For the most part, Pastor Jorge has done a good job with these issues, except as far as his son is concerned. Someone should encourage Pastor Jorge to get some help for himself, and his family. Remember, Pastor Jorge has a full time job at the school board in addition to his pastoring. The need for a second job is another factor in which lack of resources play a part. If the church were not so poor, Pastor Jorge would not have to

work in a full time job outside the church. This other job plus his church responsibilities drains Pastor Jorge of energy and may make keeping boundaries difficult. On the other hand, his job provides money and an opportunity to make a difference in the community. Perhaps minister's in the denomination could have a spiritual director or a pastor's support group. I would like to move on to one more story.

I want to bring forward the story of a survivor, whom I shall call Juan (not his real name). This story illustrates that many boys and men are survivors of physical and sexual abuse. Juan is a survivor of abuse, married, male, Puerto Rican; age 20-31, with one daughter.

Here is Juan's story of domestic abuse. Juan said:

I am a youth leader in the church, and do music and games for the kids. . . . It's a lot of work, but very gratifying. . . . We reached a lot of kids. We had forty kids here, out of a pick up truck, or a horse trailer. . . . We had puppets and microphones, a stage, everything, . . . Kids brought other children to the church, or brought them from the streets. . . . Kids who didn't go to church, and they would go home excited, and bring their parents. . . . We trained as we went . . . Skits could be changed as we wanted. Our older kids would relate to the younger kids . . . We did it for three years, and some of the kids went on to college. . . . At one point we lost the money for the program, and so we lost the whole program. . . . The director changed hands, . . . and we lost the trailer, but the people contributed.

Juan is very excited about his contributions to the church. He is a vital and important member of the children's ministry. He gets much of his self-esteem and sense of meaning from La Vida Nueva. He is also a member of the governing board of the church. He is part of Pastor Jorge's inner circle of leaders. He is also attending a local college and getting a degree in early childhood development. I asked this young man if he could tell me about his life before his experience of domestic violence and he could not remember such a time. Juan said:

I was thinking about the question when I read it, (The question asked him to tell me about his life before the abuse) . . . and I was thinking about it, but I can't remember. . . . (I asked him, 'It goes way back for you?') Yeah, . . . and I've never thought about it . . . I don't think that questions ever been asked, . . . and I think about my father, . . . he was very strict . . . my real father, to the point where, if I had anything, that made noise, he threw it out. . . He tolerated it, one time, maybe. I remember my mom saying that when I was a baby, I was crying, and I wouldn't stop crying, when we were in church, and he became really angry, and he got up, and went out of the church, and spanked me, as a baby, and one of the sisters in the church ran out and stopped him, what he was doing,, and they said, "he is a baby he doesn't understand what is going on."

Juan has been abused since he was a baby. The church sisters (I assume they were Catholic sisters, although other denominations sometimes call their women 'sister') intervened to stop the abuse that day. I do not know if they reported this abuse or intervened in any other way. It is clear from this story, that although his mother cared for him, she did nothing to stop the abuse. He goes on to say:

I remember being very afraid of, of my father, and I remember if we were playing and he walked into the room, everybody stopped what they were doing, because he would immediately take off his belt and sit down, put the belt across his lap, and turn on the TV, and that meant everybody else needed to be quiet. It's been more of a verbal thing than anything else. Because he's always been very demeaning, because he has very high expectations. He wanted me to be like him, and a lot of times I wasn't. And he expected a lot of me, since I was the oldest and male, the only male. (I asked him if he would be able to talk to me and tell me how the sexual and domestic violence and verbal abuse and affected his life.) There was sexual and verbal (abuse). My self-esteem and the way I looked at things life, and the way I perceived myself in life, and where I'd thought I'd be, which was nowhere, umm, I didn't think that I would be do anything positive with my life, until a few years back, and I thought that I was here to die.

Here is a common theme with survivors, a feeling of absolute worthlessness, and a desire to die based on self-hatred. He said:

And I didn't think I'd ever be good for anybody else, and I think emotionally I still gotta deal with this, and I think it's very apparent to a lot of people that know me well, that I've

been asked the question before, I've been confronted with the question, uh, you know, "Were you an abused child?" and people have guessed that I have been sexually abused, and physically abused, in my life, but I think that I try too hard. . . . Yeah, I'm always trying to do better than the next guy. That is the type of person that I am. . . . I don't want the competition to be better. . . . I am never satisfied, when I get there,, (accomplish something) I feel like I have done nothing. I felt a sense of hatred towards myself.

Here he clearly states the self-hatred that is the result of growing up with sexual and domestic violence. Juan goes on to relate more of his growing up experiences:

My mother's been married three times. I think that's added to a lot of my frustration. I was very angry at my mother when she left my father, and I remember word for word what he said to me when he walked out the door. I was maybe seven years old, and I remember him turning to me, and I said, "Papi, where are you going?" (His father replies) 'Your mother threw me out, I need to leave.' And I remember being angry with my mother for years after that, I mean years! I remember the pastor's son in church, he was either a grown man or in his late teens. I remember him making me perform sexual acts on him, and I was that same age, when my father left, and I can remember my father, he wants me to go see him, my father telling me how, how I wasn't meeting up to expectations.

Juan recounts his anger with his mother for throwing his dad out, and for remarrying other abusive men. Juan adds a story about a pastor's son making him perform sexual acts on him, around the same time his father left. I remember wondering if it was at this church or another church, he doesn't say. I did not clarify this point, but should have. If it is La Iglesia Nueva Vida, then it lends credence to the charge that pastor is abusive to his son. On the other hand, perhaps someone abused the pastor's son sexually elsewhere. Anyway, a pastor's son was sexually abusive to Juan. Juan told a story about his stepfathers:

I remember my step dad. He became a drug addict, when he was married with my mom. I remember spilling his cocaine, and I remember him being very angry at me. He was very clearly abusive, and he was a very tall man, a very strong man, and when he became angry and he was high, I felt it. (I ask him if he means that at those times his stepfather was physically abusive?) Yeah. He was (also) sexually abusive with my sisters. We later found out he was cheating on my mother, not only with women, but he was bi (sexual) yeah. (My

mother) found out, and when she found out, the rest of us found out, and I remember going with her, we followed him one night, and she took me with her. There was a lot of arguing and a lot of fighting, all the time, and then she left him.

Juan's step-father was worse than his biological father. Juan's step-father abused the whole family, physically, and sexually, in addition to cheating on his wife with men and women. This must have been terribly confusing and painful to Juan, and left him with many scars. He is a survivor, in spite of a very troubled background. His mother's third husband appeared to be a decent man, and Juan's relationship with this man went a long way in healing him. About this man Juan said:

Then I remember her (his mother) getting friendly with a man, which was the last husband she had. I fell in love with him, and he was great. But they had problems, and they couldn't work them out. I remember being very angry with my mom. I thought like it was her fault, and I think it was just that I wanted him to stay so badly. He did things for me that my father didn't do, and (name of his mother's second husband) didn't do. He took me out to games. He took me out to eat . . . He went camping with us. He took us to youth activities. He was one of the adults that was always participating in youth activities. He was very musical. He got me playing the gongas.<sup>18</sup> He was the one who instilled in me the passion for Carlos Santanyo. Because of him, that is my favorite musician. We went to listen to his music together all the time. I'd play the gongas and guitaros and he taught me the gongas. He was a musician. We jammed. We were our own band. (he laughs) He left when I was sixteen. Those were very important years, especially because at that time, I had gone off and into gang banging, and I was taking drugs myself. Pastor (Jorge) helped me (get off drugs). This pastor, he doesn't know how much he helped, he has no idea, because he did certain things that got me thinking, and he took me in. He decided that I was going to be one of his boys, and what he decided was to be, I didn't have a choice in it. (He laughs) Yeah, I was younger; actually, pastor had been working on me. He knew that I was dealing with some emotions, even though I didn't know that he knew. He was one of the first people to confront me and ask me if I had been sexually abused. I said, "yes" to the physical, but I didn't say, "yes" to the sexual, because I felt so dirty, I was worried about whether I was homosexual or not.

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<sup>18</sup> Gongas are a musical instrument used in Puerto Rico.

Here there is the positive impact of two men in Juan's life, both of them connected to the church. One is Juan's step-father, who spent time nurturing Juan. Juan's second step-father took Juan camping, to church, and taught him music. The second man is Pastor Jorge, who included him in his inner circle and named abuse for him. Even with pastor's help in naming abuse, Juan could not talk about sexual abuse. He says:

I didn't want to get into that conversation (About whether he is homosexual or not). It was much later, that I approached Pastor Jorge and told him the truth. He (Pastor Jorge) said that he knew it, and he has been very helpful in communicating to me and talking with me when I needed to talk. (Juan is crying). I am somebody, and that I am here with a great purpose. These things weren't my fault.

Juan is saying what a tremendous help his church and Pastor Jorge has been to him. The message that he is somebody, and that he is here for a purpose, has been very helpful to him.

Juan's awareness that these things are not his fault also helped him. Juan said:

They were things out of my control . . . but the pain part doesn't go away. I think I learned how to deal with it, in a much better way, but it doesn't go away, and the memories don't go away, and the dreams don't go away, and sometimes I feel like I have been in Viet Nam. I have these terrible nightmares, and they'll probably always be there with me. They have gotten better, less frequent, I've had (flashbacks) happen to me twice, almost every day I have some type of memory.

Even though the church has helped Juan, the pain and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder are an everyday reality for him. He often has nightmares, flashbacks and painful memories. Juan directs his energies toward helping children in his job, and at church. However, his involvement at church, which had previously been helpful, but now is over involvement. Juan thinks he needs invest more time at home, and less time at church now that he is married and has a child. Juan said:

They used to say I lived in the church, because I was there seven days a week. I was there all day, and I was there to answer phones, and any time I could be in the church, I was in the church. At that time I didn't understand why my devotion was so great, and I know that I had my love for God, but it wasn't until I got married, and I had other responsibilities, that it came to me that I was trying to keep myself busy because I had gone from one extreme to the other. I wasn't gambling. I wasn't taking drugs. I wasn't going around beating people up. Now I was with church totally.

Juan shares his insight that he was so busy in the church as a way of dealing with his feelings about the abuse. If he is busy, he doesn't have to face them. Being involved in church makes him feel better about himself. Juan's excessive church involvement is a kind of reaction formation. It also keeps him busy so he doesn't have to deal with his feelings about abuse. That is understandable. He goes on to say how his church has been supportive. He says:

My church is a very supportive church. (I shared my story of abuse) in prayer meetings and stuff, and what ended up happening was that there were several men in the church that started taking the initiative, and started getting together with me, and in certain things, activities and stuff, and so I didn't ask for these men to do this. They stepped up to the plate. We kind of do the same thing now with other members of the church. We are very supportive of our youth, and we step up to the plate, when they need it, and even when they don't need it. When I confront it, I deal with it better. And especially in the church because these men and you, with the youth, you can model for a father that you and these kids never really had, having those male figures in your life is really important.

Juan says how very important his relationships with the men in the church are. He has received a little bit of the fathering he never had. In addition, it has helped him to father and mentor the youth in his church. Nevertheless, his relationship with men is troubled. Juan says:

When my step-father left, my relationship with men was never the same, so they tried and I responded in a positive way, but I still have not let myself get really close. I have this sense of hatred towards men, and I am trying to deal with that, but I really don't like men,

you know, and yet I am a man, and that tells me something about myself, because if I don't like men in general, then what does that say about what I think of myself?

Juan is articulating a core issue related to his own self-esteem. Juan's hatred of men who were his abusers, leads to his hatred of men generally. The hatred of men generally leads to his hatred of himself. Despite the positive relationships with men he has had, from his second stepfather, Pastor Jorge, the men in the church, and boys he works with, Juan still struggles with this issue. I asked him to talk about his recovery process. Juan said:

My wife, she's a big part, a major role in my life, she supports me, she uplifts me, she prays for me. She's there when I need to talk, and I'm the most comfortable around her...

Juan talks about his wife and the important force for healing she has been for him. I asked him what his understanding of forgiveness is, and whether that has helped or hindered him. He said:

My understanding is that to forgive somebody for something they have done to me, I can free myself of some pain, and I think I've verbally said, "I forgive." I have done that, but I think when the anger sinks into my heart, I haven't, and it's been real difficult for me to do so, but that is my understanding of forgiveness, for my sake, for my wellbeing, not for theirs.

Juan's understanding of forgiveness is that it is easy to forgive verbally, but hard to really do from the heart. This is especially true when the offense is as big as sexual and physical abuse. The expectation that Christianity and some churches put on the Christians to forgive is quite a burden for survivors. That main point is that forgiveness ultimately benefits the survivor. Stressing the benefits to the forgiver, may help a person to forgive. If a person has been grievously injured, however, I would not ever expect or require someone to forgive. They must

do what they feel in their heart, and not rush forgiveness because the church or others want to see forgiveness occur. The church has put too much of the responsibility for forgiveness on the, victim, and not enough on the abuser to be accountable and to repent. Repentance should include the practice of restorative justice. About repentance, Juan said:

It (forgiveness) means to be sincere in how you think about something. I'm sincere in being sorry. About what I've done, and what I've caused. And that's my understanding of repentance. I would think hopefully, and I say hopefully because I don't know if I would be strong enough to forgive them, but I don't know if my memory would allow me to, I would want to, as much as I know God wants me to, and I know that keeps me in some type of prison, but letting go is very difficult.

Letting go of the pain, while still having the memories, is very difficult. The decision to forgive should be up to the one injured, and should not be an expectation of the church. How is forgiveness achieved or facilitated? How can a person let go of the emotion attached to the memories if you still have the memory? That is a question for pastoral counselors and pastors who are helping people with this type of thing on a daily basis. Listening to the story, believing the person, letting them know it is not their fault, letting them express their rage and anger, supporting them in sadness, getting help for depression and suicidal feelings, and then if they choose to, supporting them in forgiveness. As Marie Fortune has said, forgiveness is the last step in a long process (Fortune, 1991).

A final step in the process of dealing with an abuser should be the step of restorative justice. This requires an abuser to hear the testimony (either in person or by letter, video or audio tape) of the damage his actions have caused in the other person and their relationships. The abuser then makes concrete actions to repair the damage. The abuser can provide money, if that

helps a survivor, or the abuser can admit what they have done and repent. Repentance may mean going to the police and admitting to the crime. The victim should have control over what they want from the abuser. Many survivors do not want to see the abuser again. This is understandable, and we would not want to traumatize a survivor again just to meet our idea of restorative justice. Still, if concrete reparative actions would help a survivor, the abuser should do them. While our main goal is that this may help a survivor, it may help the abuser as well. This is a concept that has come out of the criminal justice system as a way of dealing with violent crime. The focus is on the victims of crime. A secondary focus is on the offender, and his or her rehabilitation. Churches could support this justice work for victims, and the rehabilitation, and repentance, of abusers. On the subject of justice, Juan's comment is, "I'm not even sure I have an answer for that." This is a young man, who is just beginning to deal with the results of abuse in his life, just does not know what to think or expect about justice.

I have dealt with the clergy and some survivors from this congregation. I have tried to describe the persona (a poor, caring, and just community, Hispanic, Puerto Rican, and Christian Protestant church), the myths (Exodus and liberation theology) and symbols (the cross and the Bible) the congregation used. I talked about the shadow side of this congregation in discussing the shadow side of Pastor Jorge and the possible abuse of his son. I discussed the eruption of symptoms in the congregation by talking about the abuse of Pastor Jorge's son, and the possible abuse of Juan by pastor's son (although I have to be very tentative here as I am not sure the "pastor's son" who abused Juan is Pastor Jorge's son, or another Pastor's son). I talked about what helps survivors (male mentors, relationships with Juan's wife, liberation theology, Bible

studies, pastoral counseling etc.) and what hinders them (Having forgiveness forced on them too early, not including them if they are single, keeping survivor's too busy, not naming domestic violence). I have not yet talked about bystanders. In this church, only one bystander talked to me, and that is the wife of the survivor, Juan. I will call her Sandra (name changed). She is a 21-31 year old, married, mother of one. She is Caucasian and going to school to get her degree as an early childhood teacher. She works at the same daycare as Juan, and they bring their child there. She said:

I came to this Chicago as a semester internship for my college. I worked with kids in a Christian school. In addition, they had a number of ministries like a shelter for the homeless, and a rehabilitation part, and a student mission. I liked it here, and this is where I met Juan, since we were both working with kids. . . . I thought this was God's leading, to be here, working with kids in the city, and I married Juan here, and we have a daughter. Juan's father was so terrible to him, I mean I could forgive him, but I couldn't expect Juan to (forgive his father). Forgiveness is an individual thing. Sometimes Juan will just freeze, and I can't get him back. He will just space out, and at other times he will be dreaming, and he will be screaming and yelling, and I can't wake him up. I mean, he told me about the abuse before our marriage, but I just didn't understand how deeply it affected him. It has been really hard on us both. I tried to get him to see a priest who offered to do counseling for us, but he hasn't gone yet.

Sandra is a bystander, and yet the abuse her husband sustained deeply affects her. She has volunteered to help kids at a local shelter. Sandra started a ministry in the church to help survivors. The hurt and pain her husband feels has deeply affected her. She is trying in everyway she can to help. I think her reaction is a good model for what it means to be in solidarity, but she also suffers and needs support. This is how bystanders and people who try to help trauma survivors get a vicarious form of post-traumatic stress syndrome themselves. She has a lot of strength. She comes from a family of pacifists, who were good to her. But, her

childhood did not teach her how to deal with domestic violence. Like many bystanders, she does not know what to do. Unlike many bystanders, she has tried to do something in her ministry work. Having listened to the stories of survivors, clergy and bystanders I will move on to examine how eruptions of unconscious material happen in this context.

Point Number Three:

*Repressed unconscious elements of the congregation's shadow side may erupt in the form of a "cultural complex," in the congregation.*

I have spoken already about the eruption symptoms related to the pastor and his son. I have spoken about the eruption of symptoms in the pastor's son allegedly abusing Juan. There is another dynamic about the eruption of symptoms, however, which relates to the general oppression of the dominant culture on a predominantly minority congregation. Indeed, this church might be overwhelmed with a variety of issues in addition to racism including poverty, gangs, addictions, crowding, poor housing as well as domestic violence. In this case, domestic violence is just one more issue to address with little resources. Eruption of symptoms may emerge not just in the congregation, but also in the community. In the 1960's, an event of police violence started a chain of events that led to a riot in this community. Below is Mendez-Rodriguez's account of the Division Street Riots in Chicago. These riots are an eruption of symptoms due to oppression that occurred in this community.

Prior to these riots in 1966, the white community's view of Puerto Ricans was one of hard working people, the "model immigrant." Rodriguez-Mendez says:

It's interesting if we look at the headlines in the newspapers of the 1950's. The perception of the Puerto Rican community is that of hard working people that have come to this land of milk and honey, to work hard and prosper, but there's something that really changes the relationship between Chicago and the Puerto Rican community, and that was a riot that occurred in 1960, between June 12<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup> of 1966 on Division Street. We call it the Division Street riots. It occurred before the Madison street riots, and it was just as devastating, and you know the Madison Street riots occurred in 1967 and the Democratic Convention riots occurred in 1968 {Rodriguez, 2002 #245}.

The first race riots in the Civil Rights Era happened in Chicago in the Puerto Rican Community, according to Rodriguez-Mendez. The riots began as an altercation with the largely white Chicago police force. The charge was police brutality. Mendez-Rodriguez notes that white historians are blind to the Puerto Rican community, and have often not mentioned police brutality (Rodriguez, 2002). He also mentions that the Puerto Rican community refused to have Martin Luther King be a mediator between the Puerto Rican community and the city of Chicago. He attributes this to a history of racism in Puerto Rico against the African-Americans who were imported here as slaves. Their own racism blinded them to the commonalities of their struggle and that of the African-Americans according to Mendez-Rodriguez. Hispanics were slow to see the connections of interlocking oppressions, although many of them have come to this understanding today. Here is Mendez-Rodriguez account of the 1966 Division Street Riot:

The root cause of the riot was white racism. The initial cause was police brutality. Then the police became the metaphor for everything thing that was wrong with white society, and we lashed out for three consecutive days against the police. After these riots, the perception of the Puerto Rican community (in the white community) is very negative. But at the same time the power of the community, of the Puerto Rican community has, had increased tenfold. The clout of the Puerto Rican community had increased quite a bit. For example, we were able to change the regulations, the height and weight requirements for police

officers and subsequently we eventually were able to get more police officers of Puerto Rican descent and Latino descent in the police department. We were able to get the city to advertise its programs to the Latin American community, to really be bilingual, Spanish and English for the first time. But the price was the price for fighting back was this perception of being evil, bad people, of being that negative element. We became the “fearful other.” Instead of being the “welcome other,” we became the “fearful other” {Rodriguez, 2002 #245}.

Some background history may be helpful in understanding of the eruption in riots of the Puerto Rican community at this time. The times of the 1960's and 1970's were a turbulent time for the United States as a whole. It was towards the end of the strongest part of the Civil Rights Movement and at the height of the anti-Vietnam war protest. In Chicago, the first Mayor Richard Daley had come out of the Irish community, and lived in the Bridgeport area. Mendez-Rodriguez says the Irish were part of the first race riot in Chicago in 1919. The Irish had had its own gangs, called the Hamburgs, according to Mendez-Rodriguez, which were entirely “white” ethnically, and included some Jews (Rodriguez, 2002).

Mendez-Rodriguez suggests that Chicago has always been run by gangs of one ethnicity or another, although he calls these gangs “turf gangs” that protected their family and turf. He says the gangs did not become business enterprises until the 1970's, when the gangs took over the drug trade and other criminal activities. I am not so sure of this, because they were in the gambling business prior to the drug trade, involved in stealing items and other criminal activities. He goes on to say the Young Lords gang of Puerto Rican youths aged 18-21 became political activists after the 1966 Division Street riots. They began to work with youth and tried to change their community by organizing anti-poverty programs. From the riots, many Puerto Ricans

discovered they were not a small minority, but a large and powerful block of people. They began to organize for the benefit of their people. Hispanics formed neighborhood groups to represent Puerto Ricans in Chicago. One example is the Spanish Action Committee, and another example is the Latin American Defense Organization. Hispanics formed these organizations to represent Latin Americans in Chicago. In the country as a whole, the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-War movement had spawned a counter attack on the part of the government.

Investigations by the CIA and FBI were wire tapping private citizen's homes and abusing some citizen's rights. The first Mayor Daley refused to work with the CIA to infiltrate possible communist or insurrectionist groups, but hired former CIA and FBI operatives to infiltrate these groups. According to Mendez-Rodriguez, this was particularly true in the Spanish Action Committee, since they were advocating Puerto Rican independence. Some Puerto Ricans advocated the use of violent methods to promote Puerto Rican independence. Daley wanted to control the activities that went on in Chicago. He did infiltrate these organizations and succeeded in having them fight against each other, thus severely hampering their effectiveness to make change in Chicago. Some of this infighting might have happened anyway, even without the infiltration of government people. Because of these activities, and oppressions, the Puerto Rican independence movement was born. According to Mendez-Rodriguez children and teens, who had never been to Puerto Rico, who were born and raised in Chicago, were ready to die for Puerto Rico {Rodriguez, 2002 #245}. The oppression, the politicalization, the conscientization of Puerto Ricans as a group led to a Puerto Rican consciousness at this time and this fueled the Puerto Rican Independence movement in this country.

An interesting story came out of Mendez-Rodriguez interview. He says that part of the conscientization of young people was about the ways various institutions affected the neighborhood. For example, there was a Neighborhood Preservation Society in the neighborhood. It did not have any of the poor Hispanic people of the neighborhood in it. Hispanics began to confront these organizations and institutions. One of these institutions was McCormick Theological Seminary. This PCUSA (Presbyterian Church in the USA) Seminary that was then located in what is now the DePaul University campus. Local organizers from the Hispanic community confronted the Catholics at DePaul, and the Protestants at McCormick, as well as the administration of Children's Memorial Hospital. In 1969, they took over the library of the McCormick Theological Seminary at gunpoint, threatening to burn the library if they did not give in to a number of concessions (Ramos-Zayas, 1998). They did give in to the concessions. (The narrative does not say what the demands were, only that they occupied the library for a week).

I mention this history because a whole neighborhood experienced oppression, so an eruption of symptoms may occur in a neighborhood, not just in part of the church as in a dominant culture church. In the case of La Vida Nueva, the church as a whole is part of an oppressed community. The eruption of symptoms can be related to a whole range of oppressions including racism, sexism, poverty, and cultural biases. The authorities, in this case the Chicago police, are part of the problem and people in this neighborhood do not necessarily look to the police for help.

4. *When an eruption of unconscious material from the shadow side of the collective unconscious of the congregation occurs, it is an opportunity to integrate this material into the contextual theology and reshape the congregational persona to be liberating, healing and just.*

.....I think this congregation does take most opportunities to incorporate the repressed material into the contextual theology. The way the pastor speaks to his congregation about the process of liberation from oppression in his theme from his sermon, "Some had to stay and some had to go," makes it acceptable for some of the congregation to succeed, even if not all of them can do so all at once. He teaches values that encourage parishioners to work, to get educated, to help one another in need, and at the same time models a person who is from their cultural background who is educated, and is working to improve the neighborhood, the school system, and to address neighborhood problems. He shows that a pastor can see his own shadow, and work on that, although he is not perfect. I do think the lay members of the church could hold him more accountable with his son. I am not sure he did this. In addition, pastor could help his family by decreasing time in church and work, and spending more time with his family. I think the denomination could do more for pastors and their families and for this church as well. Overall, this small church has done a remarkable job in meeting the needs of its parishioners, while transforming their neighborhood. I may have missed some of the eruptions in this congregation for a number of reasons. I was there only a short time. I am not of the majority ethnic group. My Spanish is limited. Still, from what I did see, the church has done a lot in addressing domestic violence. In Jung's terms, this is alchemical or transformational. In the words of Pastor Jorge, "We have turned water into wine."

## CHAPTER SIX: THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

### *Theological Resources for Domestic Violence Survivors and their Congregations*

Dorothee Soëlle, a German theologian, has defined mysticism the following way, “the knowledge of God that comes from one’s own life” (Soëlle, 2001, 45). Mysticism can sidestep systems of authority, and reach out to women, the poor, and those oppressed by racism. It can reach into the fissures and cracks of society to reach marginalized or forgotten people. Everyone has his or her own experience. A survivor’s experience is an approach to knowledge of God that is not dependent upon hierarchy, institution, gender, race, class or political affiliation. Soëlle gently reminds us that mystics have rarely separated themselves from historical religions and their institutions. They find in mysticism resources to confront their traditions and to transform them. Mysticism must still make use of language, but admits to its inadequacy in the language of paradox and ineffability. Mysticism uses such terms as “the cloud of unknowing” (Unknown, 1981). Soëlle cites Baron von Hügel as one who draws on the resources of Russian orthodoxy, when he stated that three elements of Christianity are needed: institutionality, intellectuality, and mysticism (Soëlle, 2001, 49). Soëlle goes on to say that there are three elements of mysticism that can be used as an outline for the mystical journey today. These include, “being amazed, letting go, and resistance” (Soëlle, 2001, 88-93). She includes the *via positiva* in the first step of “being amazed.” Also included in “being amazed,” are childhood experiences of amazement in learning numbers, seeing the sunset, and other experiences of bliss.

In the “letting go” of mysticism, she includes the *via negativa*.<sup>19</sup> These include being apart, letting go, God’s absence, suffering, and the dark night of the soul. In resistance she includes the *via transformativa*, or the transformative journey. The journey of transformation includes changing the world, compassion, justice, living in union with God, and the metaphor of the rainbow. The rainbow includes all the spectrum of light, visible and invisible to the human eye. I would like to take this outline of the mystical journey through the eyes of a survivor of domestic violence.

### *Via Positiva and Domestic Violence Survivors*

God is a spirit, a mystery beyond human understanding, and therefore we can only approach that mystery through metaphor. Our metaphors come, of course, from human and cultural understandings of the good, the loving, and the just. The problem is that the formulations of the religious metaphors we live by, women’s experience has once again been largely discounted: God has been king, prince, lord, father, conqueror, judge...the image of God is (sometimes) evoked in surprising and rewarding forms: a mother cat, a blossom pressed in a book, a gardener, a veiled woman, a new-born lamb. Such images allow a divinity of softness and vulnerability, of tenderness and nurturance. We are led to less fear and more to comfort and hope than traditional images alone have provided (Sewell, 1991, 238).

Domestic violence survivors have been able to take some of the resources of traditional theology from local congregations and used it to help them in their journey of recovery. Many of these resources can also be obstacles to them on their way. The way pastors use “God,” and “human,” can either help or hinder survivors. These terms can help keep abusers accountable, or

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<sup>19</sup> The term *via negativa* also includes the apophatic tradition, or mystical traditions. I will use only the term *via negativa* in this dissertation to avoid confusion.

fail to keep them accountable. In this chapter of my dissertation, I will discuss how the resources from *via positiva* help or hinder survivors.

In the *via positiva* “God” is described through concepts, images, symbols, and metaphors. These constructs can help survivors, but can be a hindrance (Miller, 1995-1996). For example, God, “the Father,” is the ultimate patriarchal symbol. The “Father” symbol can be punitive and oppressive to some abused by their own fathers. Teresa in Stone Church is an example of this problem of God language for survivors. God, as “Mother,” can liberate for those who had good relationships with their mothers, but oppress those who experienced abuse by their mother. Metaphors can work positively or negatively. Another example is Juan from La Iglesia Nueva Vida. He had abusive fathers and a mother who also disappointed him. For Juan, parent metaphors carry a lot of baggage. Other metaphors for God include Light, Rock, Spirit, or Comforter and using these might facilitate a survivor’s worship and in prayer. It is important for pastors to use a variety of metaphors, so the same person is not continually confronted with a metaphor that is oppressive for them. Creativity in language for God keeps liturgy and sermons fresh, and a little surprising, for parishioners.

The resources of systematic theology of the *via positiva* are rich, but these theologians are often answering questions that survivors do not have. For example, Tillich’s Systematic Theology correlates questions from existential psychology with answers from Christian resources (Tillich, 1951, 1957, 1963). This work answers many of the questions that academics of the twentieth have struggled, but do not address many questions survivors have. For example, “Where was God when the abuse was taking place, and why did God allow it?” Alternatively,

take Karl Barth's explorations of the concepts of God, human, salvation and other theological concepts in his works in the Church Dogmatics (Barth, 1936). Barth explores many theological and human concerns with a neo-orthodox approach (Barth, 1961). Neither of these works touches particularly on the experience of survivors of domestic violence, except on a more abstract level (Barth, 1963). With the sociological research showing one in six women, and one in nine men in the United States as survivors of abuse, there are great numbers of survivors whose questions deserve a contextual or systematic theology that can help them.

Contextual theologies have often drawn on images of God, metaphors for religious understanding, and correlations of Christian concepts with the news and current events. With the Bible in one hand, and the newspaper in the other, many preachers have followed Karl Barth's suggestion to preach a relevant gospel (Barth, 1963). With Biblical images, metaphors, parables, systematic theologies, centuries of Christian writings, churches resource their contextual theologies. Congregations constructed contextual theologies that reflected the biases of the surrounding cultures. Academic work does reach these congregations through the training and education of their pastors. However, the weight of tradition and the local practice operate as resistances to the liberating elements of academic approaches. In addition, the academic approaches are often neither easily understandable, nor relevant to local congregations. Finally, academic approaches are at times oppressive and can reflect the various dominant powers of society. Just because resources are academic, they are not necessarily liberating.

For example, Stone Church's contextual theology maintains a moderate evangelical position. While women pastors have been ordained in Stone Church, the congregation has not

done work to make the congregation fully inclusive. The congregation favors “Father” language. A pastor in Stone Church justifies this since, “Jesus used the words ‘Our Father’ in the Lord’s Prayer.” He concludes that, “Therefore we should use “Father” language.” Interpretations of scripture used in Stone Church are traditional, and challenging these interpretations leaves lay people marginalized as “not true believers,” or “liberals.” The lack of interpretive sophistication of scriptures and centuries of tradition remain a weight upon the church. Traditional interpretations keep some women in marriages thinking they should be submissive. It causes some to stay in marriage, and not divorce, even in abusive situations. Some things are changing, but the pace of change in a more conservative congregation is slow.

The *via positiva* in Christian tradition uses story, myth, metaphors, symbols and concepts to explain their faith. Anselm says the academic study of Christianity is, “faith seeking understanding” (Anselm, 1962). Examples of words for God in the Judeo-Christian tradition include, Yahweh, Creator, Jehovah, Lord, Master, Suffering Servant, Messiah, King, Spirit, Holy Spirit, Word and Trinitarian formulas.

Some of the images or metaphors for the divine in scripture are the Spirit of God hovering over the water in the early chapters of Genesis, and Creator in Genesis (Metzger, 1977, 1-5). In Exodus, God is imaged by a pillar of light by night, and a pillar of cloud by day, leading the people out of captivity and across the desert (Metzger, 1977, 120). Other images from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament include rock, light, tower, wind, breath, an ever present help, Comforter, a Shepherd, Savior, and Redeemer (McFague, 1982). Sallie McFague, a feminist and metaphorical theologian, has suggested using the terms Mother, Lover, and Friend

as metaphors that are not sexist nor oppressive (McFague, 1987). I think even these terms could be difficult for survivors, depending upon the relationships a person has had in life. Tillich refers to the divine as, “The Ground of Being” in his systematic theology (Tillich, 1951, 1957, 1963). This can work for some, and seems somewhat consistent with more Buddhist and Eastern understandings. It is little academic for some in devotional practices. The words a person uses for the divine are quite personal, and somewhat problematic. This is why all words have their limitations. Sometimes words do not serve a survivor. I will address silence, contemplative prayer, and meditation as resources for survivors later in this section. First, I would like to explore the use of a creation myth for survivors.

In addition to words, images, and metaphors, the *via positiva* in the Judeo-Christian traditions use myth to explain the people’s understanding of the divine.<sup>20</sup> While there are many variations of the creation story in Judaism and Christianity, I will present one here. All “selves” begin at the birth of the world where God speaks creation into being. This speaking of God’s word is the creative power of the divine at work. The writer of Genesis emphasized God’s voice in the Hebrew creation myth (Metzger, 1977, 1-5). In this myth, creation requires separation and division. At first, there is formlessness and void. The Spirit of God hovers over the watery chaos. First light is created, and darkness, and God calls one day and the other night. This is the first separation or distinction. God calls the light good, but says nothing about the darkness. God declares the darkness as neither good, nor evil. The writer of Genesis refers to this period of time as a “day.” The author mentions the separation of heaven from earth. God creates sea creatures

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<sup>20</sup> *Via positiva* also includes the terms cataphatic, kataphatic, systematic and academic theologies, and writings from the church including creeds, autobiographies, and liturgies.

separate from the sea, and trees or animals separate from the earth. God creates the human “our image” (Metzger, 1977, 1). God divides the human into male and female (Metzger, 1977, 4). God pronounces all of these distinctions and separations “good,” (Metzger, 1977, 1-48). The Spirit creates good and evil simultaneously. In this creation of goodness, evil already exists. The myth symbolizes evil as a serpent.

The *via positiva* draws upon various symbols to present understandings of divine and human relationships. Paul Ricoeur said, “The symbol gives rise to thought” (Ricoeur, 1967, 347-357).<sup>21</sup> The serpent symbolizes evil, which is already present in the garden before Adam and Eve are introduced (Metzger, 1977, 4-5). The serpent brings the thought of disobedience to Eve and Adam. The serpent is present in the Garden of Eden from the beginning. Despite the Garden being good, the potential for evil also exists. God sets the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden and forbids Adam and Eve to eat of it. The potential for evil exists within the goodness of creation. The myth does not editorialize upon this, although various theologies do speculate on this.

In this myth, the human male and human female somehow shows forth “the image of God,” in this account (Metzger, 1977, 2). The presence of the divine is within the first humans. People reflect the image of God. There is an intimate connection between God and the human.

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Ricoeur’s definition of myth is, “not a false explanation by means of images and fables, but a traditional narration which relates to events that happened at the beginning of time and which has the purpose of providing grounds for the ritual actions of men today and in a general manner, establishing all the forms of action and thought by which man understands himself in his world” (Ricoeur, 1967, 172-305). He goes on to say there are four mythical types that have helped people understand the problem of evil, which are: (1) The drama of creation and the ‘ritual’ vision of the world (178-179), (2). The ‘Adamic’ myth and the eschatological vision’ of history, (233-235) (3). The wicked god and the ‘tragic’ vision of existence (173, 214, 216), The “myth of the exiled soul and salvation through knowledge” (287).

This myth does not say the same thing about the rest of creation, but one could argue that every aspect of creation shows forth the divine. In other places in scripture, this is mentioned, such as in Psalm 8: 1-9 (Metzger, 1977, 660). In this passage, the psalmist describes the heavens displaying the glory and handiwork of God. Survivors in both Stone Church and La Iglesia Nueva Vida mentioned they know God is there in creation. Despite the pain and difficulty of their lives, there are aspects of creation that are beautiful, and they have sustained them through times of trouble. This is part of what Soëlle calls, “being amazed” (Soëlle, 2001). Many of the survivors drew strength from the births, and existence, of their own children, such as Ana describes in her interview. Her love for her children became a motivator for her to leave, and to struggle to survive, despite much suffering. In addition to myth, or included in the myth of creation, are many symbols.

The author of Genesis brings the symbol of the serpent, the symbol of the tree of life, and the symbol of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Metzger, 1977, 1-5). Could we also say these symbols show forth the nature of God? While not said explicitly in the ancient texts, neither do they say that these symbols do not show forth God’s nature. From God came good and evil. Could we say that God is beyond good and evil? Speculating on these texts, we can say that God, in the act of creation, brings forth good and evil, the creative and the destructive, from the beginning. We could say that the creative and the destructive images of God are co-arising. As they arise, they are also dissipating. The creative and destructive forces are appearing and disappearing simultaneously. The creative and destructive forces are building and dismantling from the beginning. God sows the seeds for life and seeds of dying together.

What are we to say about such a God? Such a God is ambiguous and terrifying from the human perspective. This God is creative and destructive from the human perspective. This God is both awesome and amazing. This is even further complicated because this “God” arises from a void. All comes from an emptiness and darkness. The watery chaos and the Spirit exist together before the creation and the creation or universe arises from them. This presents the classical theodicy problem and the various solutions proposed by the *via positiva*. We do see survivors wrestling with these problems. Ana asks, “Where was God when this was happening?” She says, “There was no saving grace,” when her husband was let go by the police and returned to beat and rape her. Juan has struggled with forgiveness. He can say the words, but in reality, the pain is too deep to forgive.

#### The Theodicy Problem in the *Via Positiva*

In the *via positiva*, God is often seen as all good, all-powerful, all wise, all knowing, and all light. Theologians call these God’s attributes. This presents us with the traditional theodicy problem. If a person accepts most of the above ideas, then the theodicy problem that arises is, “If God is all good, and all powerful, and how can God allow evil, sin and death to exist?” With these premises, the conclusion must be that God must be either not all good, or not all-powerful. Surely, survivors have asked themselves, “Why God allowed this evil to happen to me? Is God really good? Is God unable to help me and just powerless? Does God just not care? Is God absent from the world in which I exist?” We have seen some of these questions in the stories of Teresa from Stone Church and from stories in La Iglesia as well. Believers and doubters have posed these questions in various forms over the centuries.

In traditional Judea-Christian theology, sin and death enter the world through a human transgression of God's command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Metzger, 1977, 1-5). In this version of the story, human disobedience is the cause of sin and death its consequence. God has no responsibility in this, except for creating the possibility for disobedience by giving humans the freedom of choice between good and evil. God has set the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden and commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of it (Metzger, 1977, 4). God has created the garden and all of the creatures within. The serpent is part of creation. Many contextual theologies of local congregations do not attempt to explain the presence of the serpent in the garden, and lay the blame for sin clearly on the Adam and Eve. Often people emphasize Eve's responsibility over Adam's responsibility. This is a sexist rendering. Some congregations and religious authorities use this to say that men should rule over women in the family, the congregation, and in society. Religious authorities have used this interpretation to deny women admission to the priesthood or ordination. In addition, the responsibility for forgiving others is related to God's having forgiven us our transgressions. This forgiveness is provided as a way to reconnect to God through Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. People tell survivors to forgive their abusers, while people do not tell them to leave the abusive relationship. People tell couples where abuse occur that they should get counseling and to try to save the relationship. Therapists often do not explore power imbalances in counseling. The counselor in the Stone Church tried to help couples, while minimizing abuse. Congregations teach survivors to love enemies, even intimate enemies. Abusers are encouraged to repent, but no safeguards are put in place to protect those who are being abused.

Congregations teach parishioners to forgive “seventy times seven,” as Jesus asks his listeners to do in Matthew 18:21-22 (Metzger, 1977, 1195). While this is good advice for Peter, to whom Jesus is speaking, would Jesus have said the same thing to a survivor? Would Jesus have said this if it meant the survivor returned to a relationship where she was later beaten to death? Pastor Jorge, in La Iglesia Vida Nueva, had seen dead babies, and one of his parishioners had seen a crack crazed father swinging a baby by the foot. She felt compelled to intervene to stop this abuse. Should the mother in this situation leave to protect her child? I think so. However, if a congregation teaches a person to forgive “seventy times seven,” perhaps they will stay in an abusive relationship, and the end will be a dead baby. Are there limits to forgiveness?

Many contextual theologies contain many of the elements of the foregoing theological understandings. Humans are responsible for evil, sin, and death. Survivors get confused about this, and think of themselves as sinners. They blame themselves for their own abuse. We saw this in the story of the one woman who could not confess her “sin” before her first communion. Marita blamed herself for her abuse, and considered it her sin. Only a heroic savior, the archetype of the human, a perfect sacrifice, represented by Passover and Jesus Christ in the Christian tradition, can save them from their sin. However, what if their problem is that they are a survivor? How does this change the theology? A person who is sinned against needs healing and liberation, not repentance and forgiveness. Compassion and restoration are called for. Restoration and justice are called for. An oppressed person needs help to resistance oppression. Survivors sometimes get confused about this, and their congregations could help them. Congregations sometimes teach survivors faith in an all good and powerful God can save us, and

set the creation right. However, this is hard to sell to someone who has experienced abuse. God let this happen, so how can God be all good or all-powerful? People promise survivors that the coming Realm of God is assured. While this is comforting, and allows hope in desperate situations, it is a little bit of “pie in the sky bye and bye.” Survivors need real respite and real sanctuary in the present.

In Judaism, hope is in the Messiah, who will bring the whole people, finally and forever out of bondage, like Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. This liberating message was one Pastor Jorge used for La Iglesia Nueva Vida. The metaphor of liberation is a powerful one. Liberation can be empowering for survivors.. A contextual liberation theology with a feminist gender power analysis could be very helpful to survivors.

Recent advances in theology, such as process theology, attempt to address the theodicy dilemma by preserving God’s goodness, but conceding God’s powerfulness. God shares God’s power with humans. God is a co-creator with humans. Humans have not carried their side of this co-creation, thus the world is in jeopardy. One way to resolve this difficulty is a view of Christ’s coming and salvation by faith in him that can tip the balance in favor of the realm of God. That is the hope of process theology. In process theology, the jury is still out as to which way the cosmic battle between good and evil will end. This is an oversimplification of process theology, but it does lay out some basic pieces of this theological approach. While solving some of the classical theodicy problems, it opens up new problems, such as the possibility that salvation or redemption of creation may fail depending on how humans respond.

How do these resources from a constructive or systematic theology help or hinder a survivor? For a survivor the process approach leaves redemption in the hands of humans. Of course of these humans are abusers, who are capable of great cruelty. It can also be problematic if redemption is left in the hands of the oppressed, who are often powerless when resisting the evil of the world. God lend's God's power to the struggle, and that is supposed to help. However, the problem for survivors is that God's power often does not help. Even this theological approach remains problematic. It is a step in the right direction for a survivor, however, even if it does not solve all the problems of theodicy. It values the co-creation and goodness of the human and that can be quite healing for a survivor. Part of the healing for a survivor involves justice.

Many of the poorer survivors I interviewed say, "There is no justice." They do not limit this statement to earthly justice, distributive justice or restorative justice. They just say that in their experience, there is no justice. Process theology seems descriptively to fit their experience; but it does not provide a sure way to liberation. This would be true if oppression is one of class, gender, or race or any of the other interlocking experiences of oppression.

In traditional theology, we have human beings, male and female, created good and in the image of God. These humans are prone to sin and are born into a fallen world. The evil in this world enters each human through personal sin, whether breaking a commandment of God, or through failing to love fully. Most recently in feminist theology, Valerie Saiving has added this last type of sin as "women's sin," or the failure to act for justice and love (Saiving, 1979). In traditional theology the fallen human is redeemed by an all powerful and all good God who will

send a human Messiah (in Judaism) or who has sent a God/Human Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ to lead the people out of bondage and death into new life and a new creation. Jesus Christ offers atonement, whatever theory of atonement, for those who believe. In identifying with his living, dying and resurrection, God brings survivors to salvation. They are transformed into God's image, through faith by grace, or by participating in the sacraments in some traditions. The Realm of God is established forever. There are many versions of this basic story. Christian anthropologies represent various high and low anthropologies, where in the higher anthropologies people are considered more "good," and thus able to be co-creators with God in effecting salvation. In the lower anthropologies, people are considered more "sinful and evil" and therefore more powerless to effect their own salvation and in need of more of God's radical grace.

*How does this type of theological resource help or hinder survivors of domestic violence?*

It is conceivable that an all powerful and all good God could be a helpful resource for survivors. Faith a good and powerful God could lead to hope that there is a way out of their situation of violence and abuse. God's power counters one's own powerlessness, and overcomes obstacles. A story such as David and Goliath could be a resource for a survivor where a young and powerless person triumphs over a giant with God's help (Metzger, 1977, 353-356). The story of Joseph's brothers' jealousy and throwing him down a well and into the hands of Potaphar, his imprisonment and unjust treatment, and ultimate vindication could be a resource to a survivor

(Metzger, 1977, 46-48). Other passages remain problematic. For example, God's ultimate use of Joseph's success that leads eventually to the saving of his entire family from famine remains problematic. Should a survivor's suffering for the sake of saving her family be something a congregation encourages? For example the story of Hae Won, from Stone Church, stresses her belief that suffering led to the salvation of her abusive husband's family, and gave meaning to her suffering. Traditional theology could ultimately lead to a survivor's death, or to the death of the couple's children. I think we need to be very careful in this type of appropriation and application of theology's approach to suffering.

Problems with this traditional theology can arise when the experience of the survivor is not one of God's Spirit powerfully leading her out of a situation of abuse. God seems inactive and powerless. God does not even seem particularly good. God seems distant, absent, or non-existent. Teresa in Stone Church saw God as punitive, violent, and demanding. Why is God allowing the abuse? It all seems up to the survivor to rescue herself, and yet it is she who is imprisoned by theology, dependency, and hope in the Christian God of love transforming her abuser. She is isolated. Even the community of God is not much use until later after she has figured out her own way of escape. Police, therapists, friends, or family can help. They may not have anything to do with the local church, or her faith at. These resources could be part of the goodness of the creation as a whole. God makes the rain to fall on righteous and unrighteous alike, and so whether you are a Christian or not, help may come to you from various sources many of which are not Christian. We would like to think that the Christian church would help

lead people out of situations of abuse, but this is often not the case, as we have seen in the preceding stories from Stone Church and La Iglesia Nueva Vida.

Process theology offers more than this. It provides an explanation of evil, and puts some of the responsibility on the person to leave their situation. It provides a framework that can be empowering. People are co-creators. They need to stop abuse. It would be helpful if community agencies, friends, family, the local church, police and therapists would also help as co-creators, but even if they do not, God and the survivor can create a better situation. Since God shares power, it explains why abuse occurs, and offers a hope to the survivor. The limitation here is that the one who shares God's power limits God's power. In some situations, sharing power could be a fatal limitation. Newspapers are full of stories of the murder victims of abuser, or the murder suicide and killing of the couple's children as well. When an abuser is the one sharing God's power the consequences can be deadly. At least in process theology, God's inaction cannot be attributed to a lack of goodness. Still, the survivor cannot help asking, "Where is God?" Process theology has possibilities and limitations for survivors of domestic violence.

Liberation theology offers another approach for the poor or powerless. Gutierrez and other liberation theologians offer a strong retrieval of Exodus story for the poor (Gutierrez, 1971). Feminist revisions of this basic approach further expand this theology to be inclusive of women (Gebara, 1996). It uses the paradigm of Moses leading the people of Israel out of the oppression of slavery by the Egyptians (Metzger, 1977, 67-121). God leads the way after a very long wait of hundreds of years. For Gutierrez and Gebara, God is on the side of the poor and

powerless. For a survivor, this could be good news indeed. Since liberation theology also contains a critical theory to unmask political hegemonies regarding class conflicts, it helps in liberating the poor and women from powerful oppressive political and gender forces. The violence a survivor experiences is in the private sphere of the family, rather than in the political sphere of class struggle. Feminists have analyzed political theologies and political theories arguing that the private is political. For them, family and abuse are not just private spheres, but deserve political dialogue and political action. Feminist theologies address the gender inequities in both society and the family. This is a rich resource for survivors of domestic violence. If the husband is abusive, and the wife is a survivor, this approach can help. It exposes power imbalances imposed by societal gender roles and scripts particularly as it applies to marriage and to intimate relationships. This help is more problematic in gay couples that often have power imbalances based on physical size, income, or the emotional ability to manipulate another through guilt, blame, or belittling. While these behaviors also occur in heterosexual relationships, I am arguing that feminism and gender imbalances alone will not be sufficient as an unmasking of hegemonies as they relate to a same sex couple. Theorists can develop another critical theory for that. If a woman is abusing a husband (research shows that 95% are men abusing women and only 5% are women abusing men), or an elderly parent is being abused by their son or daughter, the power imbalances and dynamics are different than the ones that feminisms address. It is also problematic if a parent is abusing a young child. If that parent is a mother, then a gender imbalance analysis is not sufficient for power analysis. Theologians need

to do more work to construct theologies that protect and liberate children or people in same sex partnerships.

Feminists help survivors as they call for equality in the home, equal pay in the workplace, and develop political agendas that include the family.. Congregations could work for changes in society in solidarity with survivors. Despite reforms, society has only partially restructured society to provide equal rights and opportunities for women. For women survivors, work on images of God such as She, Sophia, Midwife, Mother can be liberating (Johnson, 1993). However, if the abuser was a mother or if the survivor is a boy these images may reinforce the power imbalances of the family of origin. In La Iglesia Nueva Vida, single women are often heads of households, as some are also in Stone Church. They can be severe at times in their discipline of children, both male and female. They may treat children in the same way that they were treated, although this is not necessarily so. Pastor Jorge mentioned reprimanding abuse of children when he sees it. He reports this abuse to authorities as ways of dealing with child abuse.

Another limitation of the first wave of feminism is the neglect of race, class, and culture in power imbalances (Grant, 1989; Oduyoye, 1995; Terrell, 1998). This neglect of race and class in the first wave of feminism has lead to the development of *mujerista*, *womanist* and various types of feminist theologies. *Mujerista* theology has been helpful insofar as these have addressed the unique cultures from which they arose (Arellano, 1994; Anzuldua, 1987; Isasi-Diaz, 1993). These writers have addressed the *mestizo* nature of people who lived after colonization of indigenous people by the conquest of Spain. African heritage in the Americas is also evident, and was often a result of the slave trade. Countries construct race differently

depending upon the historical and cultural context. For the Puerto Ricans interviewed, a Mexican feminism may have missed key elements of the Puerto Rican experience, such as village, the migration rather than immigration, and animosities between the Puerto Rican and Mexican communities in the American context. The indigenous peoples of Puerto Rico are Tajino in background. Puerto Rico's indigenous people had a different culture than the Aztecs and Incas of Central and South America. While they both share the experience of racism that Hispanics experience in the mainland USA, their experience and contextual theologies may vary in significant ways.

Feminist theologies have pointed out the problem of Jesus' maleness, and the general maleness of the Trinity in traditional theologies. Pointing to Jesus's overall humanness, the way he treated women with respect even in a very patriarchal culture, and of his including women in his circle for teaching, are some ways feminists have tried to revise the Jesus story so as be inclusive of women. These teachings could help bolster a survivor's sense of self-esteem in a congregation. Feminist theologians have pointed out that women were the first to witness the resurrection. Survivors can use these revisions to assert their value as women. Feminists have sometimes increased Mary's importance as mother of God in order to find something female of value to place along side Jesus's maleness. Theologians faced bigger problems trying to revise the Trinity. They tried replacing Father with Mother, She, Sophia, or images from nature such as rock, light, tower, and wind among others. Feminist theologians stressed the connection of the female with the earth, and the ecological movement (Ruether, 1998). The feminine gender of "Ruah" (transliteration of Hebrew for Spirit) and "Pnuema" (transliteration of the Greek for

Spirit, feminine gender) are two words that preserve the feminine in the Trinity. These revisions leave the problem of maleness in the other two persons of the Trinity. None of these resolutions is entirely satisfactory.

Theologians have challenged various atonement theories. For example, Rita Nakishima Brock wrote that a God who needs a perfect sacrifice in the form of His own Son to be a “divine child abuser,” (Brock, 1988). This image of God is not helpful to a survivor, as it legitimizes abuse in the very nature of God. She is right to call for a different theory of atonement. Survivors need a theory that does not glorify sacrifice.

At a certain point, a survivor is beyond the power and effects of words. A survivor is in a world of silence. While silence can be the result of voicelessness and powerlessness, it can also be a place of renewal and transformation. I want to make a distinction between a silence that is oppressive and one that is a silence of solitude. A silence of solitude includes communion with God. I would like to turn to another resource for survivors from the mystical tradition of Christianity (Unknown, 1981; Harvey, 1998).

#### Via Negativa-Finding God Within

i found god in myself  
and i loved her/i loved her fiercely

From “for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf”-an excerpt (Sewell, 1991, 252).

The *via negativa* approaches the theological task by describing what God is not. In another part of this tradition, God and humans connect in the experience of emptiness and silence. In the *via negativa* there is a mystical union of the human and the divine. Such persons as St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, and centuries of contemplative and monastic tradition speak to this experience (Harvey, 1998). In this section, I will argue that while the *via positiva* has some resources for the survivors of domestic violence, the resources of the *via negativa* also has a rich resource for empowerment and transformation. While these resources are not widely used for resistance, they offer additional direction for survivors.

The *via negativa*, has a different approach to the divine, as well as to what it means to be human. In this approach, rather than finding words to describe what God is, descriptions outline what God is not. God, the numinous, Spirit, Ground of Being or whatever a person wants to call the divine, is always more than our words and greater than our understanding. God is in some sense ineffable. In the Jewish tradition, Jews did not write out the name of God, Yahweh. They referred to God by letters “YHWH,” (transliterated from the Hebrew whose points for vowels would be omitted). This way they acknowledged the limits of human understanding. While the *via positiva* is “faith seeking understanding,” the *via negativa* is an attempt to realize union with that which is greater than our words or beyond our images. The person uses contemplative prayer, emptying, or meditative ways of finding union with God.

Mysticism is a way of approaching the divine. Christian scriptures have ample resources for this approach. Christ’s kenotic emptying of the self, in the New Testament book of Philippians: 2:1-2, is one such example (Metzger, 1977, 1424-1425).

We have Jewish resources for this approach. In 1190 AD, Maimonides, a Jewish philosopher, wrote in his Guide to the Perplexed:

God's existence is absolute and it includes no composition, and we comprehend only the fact that He exists not his essence . . . it is clear he has no positive attributes . . . the negative attributes are necessary to direct the mind to the truths which we must believe . . . it is first . . . it is not due to any cause I . . . it is not feeble nor ignorant . . . He is One . . . (Maimonides Guide to the Perplexed, 1:58).

Here Maimonides struggles to say what God is not, rather than sketching out the attributes of goodness, omniscience, omnipotence and the like.

Some other examples of the *via negativa* in the understanding of the divine might be:

1. Rather than saying that God exists or has particular attributes we can say that God neither exists, nor does not exist.
2. Rather than saying that God is "one," we can say there is no multiplicity in God, or that God is beyond the one and the many.
3. Rather than saying that God is Creator, we could say that God is uncreated.
4. Rather than saying that God is Eternal, we could say that God is not limited to time and space.

To be honest, I am not sure that this part of the approach of the *via negativa* is particularly helpful to a survivor, but other aspects might be more helpful as I shall explain below.

Another advantage of this approach to the divine in theology is that it recognizes the emptiness within us as a way to connect with the divine. Centering prayer as taught by Thomas

Keating starts with such an emptying, and then centering on a sacred word as a way of disciplining the mind to let go of thoughts, emotions, and images (Keating, 1997). Dorothee Soëlle was speaking about this as “letting go” at the beginning of this chapter (Soëlle, 2001, 93). This union with the divine dismantles the false self-systems, according to Thomas Keating (Keating, 1997). Eastern disciplines of breathing meditation, tai chi and other meditative and contemplative practices facilitate going inward to connect to the divine through the experience of emptiness and silence.

Other scriptural references that might be helpful are the Hebrew Bible’s use of the desert experience in the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness. The desert experience of a survivor in an abuse situation and the long wait before deliverance could resonate with the survivor’s experience. Satan tests Jesus, when Jesus is in the New Testament. John the Baptist comes out of the desert to start his ministry. There are mentions of God’s absence and even abandonment in Jesus’s cry from the cross, “My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?” (Metzger, 1977, 1237). For Christians, the ultimate absence of God is the symbol of Christ’s three days in the tomb, and the descent into hell (Metzger, 1977, 1238). The descent into hell can be a description of the experience of abuse. Language as powerful as that may be needed for human experiences of abuse, torture, or war. Survivors need powerful language to describe their experience. The Apostle’s Creed has a section that describes Jesus’ descent into Hell. Many have wanted to delete this section of the Apostle’s Creed, but I think retaining it is helpful to those who have experienced the extremes of life’s negative experiences. The gospel of Mark

ends with the empty tomb (Metzger, 1977, 1238). For some, that is important. It has been said that faith as small as a mustard seed could be enough, and within the mustard seed is emptiness.

While the *via negativa* is primarily Roman Catholic and monastic, much interest in mysticism has occurred recently in many Protestant circles. In the Eastern traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism there are parallels. The focus on emptiness, silence, and meditation as paths to spiritual connection are also practices in those traditions (Daniel Palmer, 1997). Rather than stressing the light and goodness of God, as many contextual theologies do, we could retrieve an understanding of God that contains both light and dark. Rather than concentrating on the divine spark (as in Gnosticism) or inner light (in Society of Friends, although Quakers do), this approach incorporates the dark night of the soul, drawing on the writings of St. John of the Cross (Harvey, 1998). The union with the divine is stressed in the Interior Castles, by Saint Teresa of Avila, St. John's mentor and advocate (Harvey, 1998; McGinnis, 1994, 1996, and 1998). Julian of Norwich used contemplative prayer and monastic living to practice her *via negativa* (Harvey, 1998; McGinn, 1994, 1996, and 1998). Modern day mystics such as Thomas Merton, Thomas Keating's Contemplative Outreach and others are resources for modern day mystics Catholic or otherwise (Keating, 1997; Merton, 1961).

While retrieving these parts of the tradition, I would like to caution against the self-flagellation and self abuse that some of the monastic practices. Survivors are often cutters, anorexic, bulimic, or suicidal. We would do well to listen to the story of Buddha, or Siddhartha, who tried extreme asceticism prior to enlightenment (Trainor, 2004, 36). One day he saw a boat on the river in front of him. There was a musician on it, with a stringed instrument. Buddha

realized it was important to keep the string not too tight, or too loose. He realized that the middle way is the best way. He realized that he should not treat his body to extreme deprivation, nor to excess, and he taught that the middle way to his followers. Such an understanding could help many survivors.

How could a *via negativa* approach to a contextual theology help a survivor of domestic violence? First of all this approach emphasizes the connection a person has with the divines within themselves. It teaches the survivor to listen to, and depend on, their own inner wisdom. Despite horrendous situations of abuse, and the very real isolation abuse survivors endure, a direct experience of the divine can still be theirs. Survivors will say a mystical experience provided them strength to leave an abusive relationship. Friends, therapists, pastors, battered women's shelters and family are all important resources for survivors. The more connected people are to this array of help the better. However, many survivors do not have these resources. Mystical experiences of the divine can be powerful liberating experiences for the survivors. Perhaps a turn inward to experience her own wisdom could re-energize her for resistance. People experience silence in different ways. Losing voice is a common psychological symptom of abuse or oppression, as we saw in Herman's section on trauma (Herman, 1998). Since survivors often experience their interior landscape as a place without words, finding God in the void and silence is often their experience. As God spoke creatively out of the void, perhaps a survivor could find voice in her silence. It seems paradoxical, but this is nevertheless can be a survivor's experience. A person does not expect to find water in the desert, and yet sometimes there are oases. The spiritual experience of *via negativa* could help a survivor find these oases.

Consider this passage from Annie Dillard's, "Teaching a Stone to Talk." While not a survivor of abuse, she captures how the direct experience of nature in silence is a spiritual and mystical experience:

At a certain point you say to the woods, to the sea, to the mountains, the world. Now I am ready. Now I will stop and be wholly attentive. You empty yourself and you wait, listening. After a time you hear it: there is nothing there. There is nothing but those things only, those created objects, discrete, growing or holding, or swaying, being rained on or raining, held flooding or ebbing, standing or spread. You feel the world's word as a tension, a hum a single chorused note everywhere the same. This is it: this hum is the silence . . . The silence is all there is. It is the alpha and the omega. It is God's brooding over the face of the waters; it is the blended note of the ten thousand things, the whine of wings. You take a step in the right direction to pray to this silence, and even to address the prayer to "World." Distinctions blur. Quit your tents. Pray without ceasing (Sewell, 1991, 255).

This experience of silence, and the things in themselves, with distinctions blurring is a mystical union with the divine in the world in you. This meditation is a prayer without ceasing. This connection with nature and silence is one way out of a situation of abuse. Part of nature, that a survivor experiences, is his or her own body. A reconnection with her body in a positive way is also important. Survivors are often out of touch with their bodies, because abuse has been experienced bodily. Memories are located in the body without words. In meditative walking, yoga, relaxation or quiet sitting could bring renewal and reconnection with the parts of the body that are disowned or unconsciously repressed due to traumatic memories. The reconnection with the body must be done very carefully and with emotional support lest a survivor be overwhelmed by memories and be unable to cope with them and become self-destructive. A survivor could connect with her body and competent. She could try meditative walking, tai chi, yoga, or expressive dance, could provide such a reconnection with the body in a positive way. This

combination of resources draws from both theological and Eastern traditions. Islamic mysticism also offers resources from the mystical traditions in the writings of Al Ghazali, and Rumi (Barks, 2001). The experience of letting go, going inward, contemplation, meditation and union with God are important experiences on the mystical journey, but not the end of the journey. If one rests in union with God alone, healing, and the transformation of the world is not advanced. The journey of transformation includes changing the world, living out compassion and justice, living in union with God (Soëlle, 2001, 45). The *via transformativa* is the next step in the journey.

When a survivor reaches the stage of transformation she seeks to use her experience to change the world. She may write poetry, as did Maya Angelou, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. She may host a television talk show that helps survivors of domestic violence or champions other causes, as does Oprah Winfrey, also a survivor of childhood domestic violence. A male survivor of childhood abuse may mentor other children, as did Juan from La Iglesia Vida Nueva. She may volunteer at a local shelter for battered women. She may work with girls to increase their self-esteem by teaching dance, art or expressive therapies. He or she may become a therapist to help others through a variety of interpersonal difficulties including abuse. A man could join a men's movement and work for mutual relationships in marriage, lead a men's group for men who batter, and hold them accountable while supporting them through change. A person could become a politician and work for laws that promote a just society. They could work for laws that ensure equality between men and women, equal justice for members of minorities, and seek an approach of restorative justice. Both men and women could become pastors, priests or clergy and work for gender justice within their traditions and congregations. They could name

domestic violence from the pulpit and pray for survivors of domestic violence. They could provide shelters for the abused when public shelters are full. They could develop liturgies of healing for survivors. They could provide crisis hotlines from the church that could provide resources for survivors of domestic violence. A congregation could buy housing in their areas and refurbish them providing temporary housing. Survivors could gradually work towards ownership of the housing. People in solidarity with survivors could provide counseling centers and monies for survivors' therapy. Most of all, parishioners could provide friendship, community and acceptance for survivors and their children.

They could become theologians and develop theologies of forgiveness, repentance, and transformation. They could write marriage theologies that hold abusers accountable and lift multiple interlocking oppressions from the backs of women and children survivors. They could develop critical theories that unmask hegemonies, and provide ways to create more just societies and religious institutions. They could become artists and photographers. They could make documentaries of survivor's lives and walk in solidarity with them. They could become newspaper journalists that give voice to those who suffer abuse.. The possibilities for transformation are endless and limited only by the creativity, motivation, and frailties of human existence. Master Eckhart has said, "What we have gathered in contemplation, we give out in love" (Soëlle, 2001, 201). Soëlle goes on to say,

The point is neither to practice an introverted mysticism nor to engage in an extroverted critique of the age alone, but to find one's own *vita mixta* in this sense between contemplation and activity. This was made manifest in the Middle Ages, above all in the many attempts of mystical women to involve themselves in the church politics of their day without neglecting the voluntary poverty and asceticism. The combination of

contemplation and Acting is rooted in the mysticism of understanding of the relationship to God as a mutuality of receiving and giving (Soëlle, 2001, 201).

I think these last points emphasize that the journey of mysticism ends in dance of giving and receiving. The end of mysticism is finding a rhythm between union with God and taking that renewal, life and love back into the world. The end of this is transformation of both the mystic and the world in which the mystic resides. For the survivor the journey can begin with either a step of action out of a situation of abuse, or a step inward to experience the divine directly. Either step can take the survivor on a journey that leads to being amazed, letting go and transformation.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research**

In this chapter, I will reflect on the analytic framework and the practical implications of this dissertation. First, I will look at the research method and the analytic frame. I will address how adequate the methods and frames were to the task of understanding domestic violence survivors and their congregations. Next, I will explore the method of ethnography in the following areas: participant observation, field notes, interviews, and the voice relational method of analyzing the interviews. Then, I will examine how well the theoretical frames of Herman, relational psychology, Jungian psychology, feminist theologies, and the mystical tradition served the research task of exploring religious congregations and their responses to domestic violence survivors. Finally, I will comment on how the findings of the dissertation inform the theories I used for analysis.

Secondly, I will look at the practical implications of the research. This will include exploring some models and resources for congregational work on domestic violence. I will also evaluate these models based on the findings of the dissertation. I will suggest possible areas for further research.

### **Reflection on Ethnographic Methods and Theoretical Frames**

**Method:** In this section, I will look at the ethnographic methods of participant observation, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and the voice relational method of analyzing the transcripts. I will reflect on how well they served the research on domestic violence survivors and their congregations.

First, I will look at the strengths and limitations of the ethnographic method of participant observation. With the Stone Church participant observation worked well. Because it is a large congregation, a researcher who looks similar to the rest of the congregants will not be noticed. The researcher's writing of notes did not bother parishioners. Many parishioners take notes during the sermon, or in an adult educational class. However, in the very small and Hispanic congregation of La Vida Nueva, a participant observer was noticeable. I wrote notes during the service and this seemed to make some parishioners a little nervous. Some asked me about it, wondering why I was doing it. However, when the pastor announced my presence and purpose on the morning I first arrived, everyone knew why I was there. I wondered if that might change how parishioners interacted in the service, or even how the pastor might preach. I thought they might give domestic violence more attention than usual, since they knew why I was there. Perhaps the preacher would mention it in a sermon, and that would be different from the usual sermon. Pastor Jorge did preach on domestic violence while I was observing them. Then there was the fact that I am a white middle class woman observing in a mostly Puerto Rican congregation. I was clearly identifiable as differing from them. I wondered if my class and race would affect my participation or the amount and type of information that participants in the study would give me. The pastor assured me it would not, since another white woman already attended the congregation. According to Pastor Jorge, "The dynamic of race is already here." Still I thought my presence as a white researcher might affect the proceedings in a way a white parishioner might not. I eventually sat in the back and took notes, despite feeling a little awkward, and wondering if this activity would change the results of the research. Taking notes

after the service was something I also tried but I realized I lost much data that way, as my memory was not as good as I hoped. I settled on taking notes during the service. Taping the service was not really an option, as there were people there who had not consented to be in the research. Perhaps in future studies, I could hire an indigenous person who was bilingual and bicultural to do the participant observation. However, then I would be dealing with different researchers, bringing different experiences to the research. Still, it might yield some data that was different from the data I collected. Future researches could consider these issues. I did write some field notes from memory, and despite limitations of having forgotten some material they were helpful. The Stone Church printed their sermons every week on their website. However, the sermons from La Iglesia Vida Nueva were not typed, nor placed on a website, nor typed in hardcopy for parishioners. As a result, I had no choice but to take notes during the service, or lose much of the content.

Next, I will examine the strengths and weakness of the ethnographic method of semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview questions I used to gather data were somewhat unsatisfactory in the end. Going in to the data gathering phase, I was interested in justice, forgiveness, repentance and other issues. As the interviews progressed, different questions came into view. I realized I should have been asking different questions. For example, I should have asked the survivors for what image of God they found helpful. I did ask some of them this. One member of La Iglesia Nueva Vida told me that the picture of Jesus embracing her was important as an image of God. Another survivor from the Stone Church told me the image of a mountain was important to her, as God was solid and stable, and reaching between heaven

and earth. In retrospect, I wish I had asked all of them, survivors, clergy and bystanders what images of God were helpful to them. I began the study with a feminist theological standpoint and feminist relational psychology. However, it was not until after I finished collecting the data that I decided upon mystical and Jungian approaches. I wish now, I had asked more about survivor's mystical experiences. While I heard about these from other studies and reports, I had missed the chance to ask most of these survivors. I wish I had explored their use of myth, and symbol. While I was able to look at the contextual theologies, I missed the chance to get more information from the survivors. I also wish I had asked survivors more questions about what helped them take that first step out of an abusive relationship. What really helps if a person is so isolated and yet moves to get help and leave the relationship? I would recommend that future research explore these questions.

Another drawback of using the semi-structured interviews is they limit how the respondent told his or her story. In retrospect, a more open-ended interviewing style might have elicited more interesting and wide-ranging data. Respondents might have spoken about their mystical experiences, images of God, or some other topic of importance to them. Perhaps if I had trained some men interviewers to talk with the men, I could have gotten some men to talk about their controlling behavior and they would not have felt so judged. When a researcher uses the term "abuser" it sounds judgmental, and men did not volunteer for interviews. In retrospect, I could have recruited for "partners of women who have experienced abuse," thereby not implying that the partner had done the abuse. Maybe I would have gotten more respondents that way. Next I will look at the voice relational method of interview transcript analysis.

The voice relational method of data analysis: I had originally tried the voice relational method of data analysis because it had come from those who had developed relational feminist psychology at the Stone Center in Massachusetts (Gilligan, 1982; Robb, 2006). At first, I thought that listening for voice and rereading so as not to miss anything would be an improvement over grounded theory. However, in retrospect, I did not find that this process yielded anything more than an ordinary grounded theory approach would have yielded. It was a lot more work and did not necessarily give me any more insight into the phenomenon of domestic violence survivors and their religious congregations than did the grounded theory approach alone. I did find the Agar method of transcription to be helpful in identifying times of hesitation and places of blocking in the conversation. It highlighted the voice qualities actually better than the voice relational method did. The Agar transcription method is a method I borrowed from the anthropology field and it served me well (Agar, 1987). For future research, I would suggest a grounded theory approach with an Agar method of transcription. The move to the identification of themes and subthemes was tedious, but easy. I ended up with three major categories of psychological, theological, and relational themes (by which I mean interpersonal rather than individually psychological themes). I found the next move of bringing these themes into dialogue with my theoretical frameworks much harder. For one thing, I had only three broad categories but hundreds of sub-themes. Perhaps, I should have moved the many sub-themes into intermediate categories, but they did not seem to fit together, so I left them as they were (see Appendix). I ended up commenting upon the findings in a general way, with the theoretical frames, and developing an argument after I collected the data, as it seemed to emerge from the

data. The sub-themes did not enter into this much. The method did not serve me well in theorizing about the data. I will next try to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical frames I used to interpret this data.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

For this study, I used the following four theoretical frameworks: feminist relational psychology; Judith Herman's trauma theory; Jung's theory about persona, shadow, myth and symbol; and feminist theologies. Using the voice relational method I brought the data into dialogue with these perspectives. My argument arose from this dialogue.

First, I would like to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of feminist relational psychology as I used it in this dissertation. Gilligan, Jordan, Miller and Stiver developed feminist relational psychology (Jordan, 1991, Jordan, 1997). I mentioned earlier that feminist relational psychology of the self emerged from Carol Gilligan's work on ethical developmental theory. She observed young girls making ethical decisions based on preserving the relationships, rather than based on abstract principles, such as justice. Lawrence Kohlberg theorized that justice was the highest developmental level of ethical decision-making. Gilligan challenged Kohlberg. She said Kohlberg's developmental formulation was based on a male experience. Gilligan said Kohlberg neglected the important relational decision making of the girls she studied. In the Stone Center in Wellesley Massachusetts, theorists developed the idea of the relational self. Care taking is extremely important activity in our society and other societies. Ethical choices based on caring for others are important values in an overall ethical stance. However, a survivor's

often make decisions with only the abuser's needs in mind. This is often at the expense of her self-care or at the expense of the care of the children involved.

Another possible limitation of relational psychology is stressing relationships over justice. In my thinking, both relationships and justice are important. It does not need to be an either or. Justice and equality need to be a quality of the relationships. If justice, equality, and mutual respect are not part of the relationship, a survivor has the right to leave the relationship without undue guilt and self-blame. Justice, equality, and mutual respect should be the disposition in the characters of those in the marriage or intimate partner relationship. If that is not so, a survivor can decide to leave. This is where gender analysis and power analysis is so important. If the patriarchal family dynamics are at work, the woman will have less or very little power to wield in the relationship. Larger societal issues such as working for equal access to education, jobs, and housing remain important activities as well. A survivor cannot leave a dependent relationship unless she has a place to go. Communities could work toward the eradication of domestic abuse or intimate partner abuse by aiding activities that brought structural change in these areas. These basic societal structures make it possible for an individual survivor to leave an abusive relationship and gain an independent life. We have seen from the interviews in this dissertation how finding a job and a place to live are so important for survivors leaving abusive relationships. Where this is certainly true in the United States, it is even more urgent in some third world countries where the vast majority of the population live in poverty, where the status of women is low, and where children die early at alarming rates. Some men experience racial oppression, or lack jobs, housing and education. Where war, violence, genocide

and rape are everyday experiences of whole populations, domestic violence may not stand out as the most important issue.

The stories in this dissertation from La Iglesia Nueva Vida show how racism and poverty continue to affect a congregation and their survivors, despite innovative attempts to bring awareness to the community and healing to the survivors. They have faith. They need resources. There is no justice for them. The poor survivor I interviewed in Stone Church said there was no justice. My interviews point that in the United States, despite all of our democratic traditions and institutions, people have just about as much justice as they can buy. This is an important finding of the dissertation and our congregations and our society should address justice issues. I am particularly interested in how congregations could apply restorative justice in their setting.

Having sketched out the limitations of a relational psychology point of view, I want to point out what I think is important in the relational psychology point of view. The first thing I value about this point of view is that these authors recognized the importance of voice. As a trained dramatist, Gilligan appreciated the voice, its tenor, its expression, and its absence. Gilligan pointed out that it is not just voice, but also women's experience, that is the basis for another way of knowing. The academy had neglected this way of knowing. Listening to voices of girls and women were Gilligan's way of hearing and valuing that wisdom. Abusers often silenced survivors. Hearing their stories and making them known through research is a way relational psychology can aid survivors. Hearing and communicating the knowledge of survivors is one important outcome of this research.

Another aspect of relational psychology that I value is the insight that men have been injured in patriarchal society as well as women. Gilligan today can cite decades of research that has shown that all humans are born with the capacity of relationship. She points out that society pressures boys to neglect caregiving and to stress achievement or competition. Boys as early as preschool have been encouraged not to cry, not to be vulnerable, to be tough, to fight, to be aggressive, and not to be dependent on others (Robb, 2006). Patriarchal role definitions of gender hurt both boys and girls.

Miller in her work entitled *Toward a New Psychology of Women* published in 1976 pointed out that what some psychologists viewed as women's weakness; hypersensitivity, merging; dependency can be viewed as strengths such as authenticity, empathy, the drive to connect and stay connected (Robb, 2006). Women's ways of knowing pointed to a huge area of ignorance in psychology that started with Freud. This area of ignorance was about women and their experiences. Since most psychiatrists and psychologists were men prior to the 1980's, they applied men's frames of reference and ways of knowing to women. One area that this is particularly so, is the area of incest and trauma. As I mentioned earlier in the section of Judith Herman MD, Freud originally believed women when they told him about their experiences of abuse. Later he did not believe these experiences actually happened, but reframed them to be the woman's wish fulfillment. Not believing women's stories of sexual abuse has a long history in psychology. Herman, and other advocates for women who have experienced domestic violence and abuse, says it is important to believe the woman, as I cited earlier in this dissertation (Herman, 1998). A feminist relational approach that also includes rights and justice is a

contribution that Herman made. Other feminist who wanted to reject the unitary and rational self from the Enlightenment critiqued her. Her viewpoint has included rights and justice, and this has been invaluable to women seeking to escape from abuse.

Judith Herman's work *Trauma and Recovery* sketches the history of repression and silencing in psychology and psychiatry. Herman points out that, although there may be an incest taboo, that taboo is regularly violated. Herman's grounding in anthropology helped her see that incest occurred in every society, despite what her discipline of psychology and psychiatry denied. She also had years of statistics that 80,000-100,000 of children who are abused in the United States every year (Robb, 2006, 82). About a fourth of these were abused by kin (Robb, 2006, 82). While social workers working with poor and disorganized families report this, Herman theorized this was because they lacked the resources to keep incest private (Robb, 2006, 82). Research has shown that abusers pressure their victims to keep silent about the abuse and use various methods of power to coerce this silence (Robb, 2006, 82). This dynamic parallels the dynamics of repression that Freud went through and the history of psychology has been through since Freud's time. I argue in this dissertation that this often happens in congregations as well. I site the example in the Stone Church of how repressed shameful material erupts in the congregation. Congregations deal with these eruptions superficially repressed them again. The dissertation points out how cyclical eruptions and suppressions happen in individuals, and reports how this happens in a congregation. In congregations and in individuals the cycle is repetitive, if the repressed material is not brought to consciousness and integrated with the rest of the person or congregation's experience.

Herman's analysis points to the importance of gender analysis to the experience of domestic violence. Herman noticed that mother/son incest is rare and occurs in only about 1-4 % of cases. She comments that 97% of incest victims were female, and 92% of perpetrators were male. Herman wanted to know why. She theorized that patriarchal society gave fathers the power to abuse wives and daughters while technically denying the validity of abuse or incest. Herman wants to replace the idea of the patriarchal family with a more democratic ideal. She wants to replace patriarchal familial relationships with that of mutual relationships and with equal rights. She unapologetically drew upon the Enlightenment language of rights to legitimate this argument. Some feminists who are rejecting the unitary choosing self of the Enlightenment have critiqued her for this. However, I agree with her that relationality alone, without rights, or the idea of justice, could end up denying women a mutually interdependent and respectful marriage relationship. This is what relational psychology most wants men and women to have. Herman saw how psychiatrists continue to focus on the powerless child as the originator of the wish or fantasy of abuse. She saw that powerful men in these families claimed the child made me think it, or made me do it. These men, and some of the researchers who studied them, blamed the powerless child, and did no analysis of power imbalances (Robb, 2006, 87-90). Relational theory explains why mothers who care for children are less likely to commit incest than fathers who are not as actively involved in the care of children day to day. Mothers who care and nurture developing children, if she has genuine empathy for them, will understand the harm that parental erotic involvement with children can do. While Kinsey and others argued that incest does no harm, we have seen in the interviews cited in this dissertation the emotional

numbing, the loss of voice, the fragmentation, dissociation, the lack of trust in relationships, and the lifelong damage that domestic violence or incest can do (Robb, 2006, 87-89). The research in this dissertation supports Herman's conclusions, and not those who deny the harm of domestic violence and incest. The gender analysis of abuse is not sufficient alone. Interlocking systems of oppression of race, class and gender interplay to affect survivors and the dynamics of trauma.

The dissertation shows how some victims of abuse are men. Some men interviewed in this dissertation are victims, and they experience various oppressions despite their privilege as men in our culture. As a member of a racial minority, Juan in La Iglesia Nueva Vida shows how interlocking oppressions in the Puerto Rican Community of poverty and race affect men. This has complicated his recovery from his experience of abuse. His understanding of what it means to be a man, in spite of abuse, is a struggle for him. He is not alone in this struggle. The issue of what it means to be a man, and the issue of aggression and war in our society, is also touched on in the narrative of Pastor Jorge.

The dissertation research points to the military's induction of large numbers of the poor into the army. Pastor Jorge's story of combat trauma during the Vietnam War is one way the research draws out this issue. Other men, and now also women, have since returned from the Gulf War and the War in Iraq and Afghanistan. Congregations could do a lot to help returning veterans cope with their trauma experiences in combat. Congregations and psychological service providers could be aware that this experience of violence may be carried into their marriages and family relationships in the form of domestic violence or abuse. Who will be there to help these returning veterans? I hope that congregations and communities could develop services for these

men. Support groups, one on one counseling relationships, peer counseling and pastoral care services could be developed to help them. War remains one of the largest sources of trauma affecting our society and the global community. Research with returning veterans who experience posttraumatic stress and their experience of reintegration could be very helpful. Next, I would like to examine the Jungian theoretical framework.

I used the Jungian theoretical framework for this dissertation especially to frame the argument about the congregational process for building a congregational persona, and the suppression of shameful material in the congregational shadow. I used the Jungian frame for the integration of the eruption of previously repressed material into the contextual theology. I argue that there is a possibility that erupting repressed material can be potentially liberating if integrated into the contextually theology. I also acknowledge that many times this material has been repressed again. This repression can further traumatize a survivor. The Jungian ideas of persona, shadow, and integration to wholeness, helped as a critical theory that unmasked hegemonies related to race, class, and gender. Depth psychology in general can help with unmasking hegemonies, especially those related to shame based elements of an individual or collective unconscious. Object relations theory is another theory that could have done this, and perhaps done it better. I would like to see research with the theoretical frame of object relations. The ideas of empathy and good and bad object attachments could have had greater explanatory power. Another framework that had possibilities for analysis is that of systems theory. The interrelation of members of the family and congregation in a larger system could have been a rich theoretical frame to bring to the table. Ideas related to triangulation, or working indirectly

with one part of the system to change the whole system, could have led to fruitful work. Jungian theory could have been developed further in my study. I could have further developed the concepts of myth, symbol, and archetype. I looked briefly at the symbol of the cross and nature of suffering. I developed the idea of the archetype of the Self in Christ, but could have done more there as well. I would like to see more research done in developing these ideas. These elements of Jung's theory did allow me to join the theological resources of feminist theology and liberation theologies. I will also add reflections on the resources from mysticism as part of this discussion.

### **Theological Approaches and Mystical Resources**

I focused on the construction of theological anthropology in using feminist and other theologies. I argue that "a centered Self in relation with a just and caring community," is a way of looking at the Self. I called this the centered Self for short. This draws on feminist and relational ideas of the self and avoids the unitary, rational and willing Enlightenment self. This formulation of the Self is not a product of an overarching ideological grand narrative. I could have drawn more on embodiment theory and I hope future research will elaborate more on the embodied aspect of the self. I am interested in exploring the difference between concepts of "embodiment" in theology and psychology and the idea of "the body" from the medical model.

Drawing on the *via positiva*, *via negativa*, and *via transformative* as resources for survivors. I argued that contemplative practices such as centering prayer and language such as the dark night of the soul, desert experiences and the experience of the abandonment of God could be helpful resources for survivors in integrating their experiences into consciousness. I

also argued that a congregation could use these resources for survivors of trauma, and for integrating eruptions of unconscious material into consciousness. I argued that this integration could bring more of the truth to bear in the contextual theology. I also brought in liberation theology paradigms of the Exodus, and developed a little how Pastor Jorge used this language to help his congregants be more hopeful and active in their own liberation. I focused on the *via negativa* and other resources from the mystical tradition.

While I think the mystical approach can be helpful for survivors, I think there are limitations to this approach for psychotic survivors. For persons experiencing psychotic processes, I have found that physical grounding techniques can help more in grounding in reality than centering prayer. While a person is psychotic, an approach that uses psychotropic medication is more helpful. Once they are again stable and in touch with reality, the mystical approaches can be helpful. This is one major limitation of the approach I mention here. For the severely depressed person anti-depressant medication, talk therapy, physical exercise, and cognitive therapy are more helpful than the mystical approaches. Congregations can still be helpful in walking with survivors through an episode of depression, as we saw the pastor do with Teresa from the Stone Church. He was there for her, and maybe even helped prevent a suicide. Parishioners could have befriended her as well. The fact that they did not, was an additional element to her suffering. I also drew on images of God, and especially stressed this with clergy. I could have asked more of the survivors this question and incorporated this into the study. This is one weakness of my questions as I have indicated earlier in the dissertation.

### **Practical Implications of the Research**

Next, I want to address the practical implications of this dissertation. What can congregations do to help survivors of domestic violence? What models and resources are available for congregations who would like to respond to survivors of domestic violence?

The first model is a combination workshop and strategic plan. I helped develop the Josselyn Center Domestic Violence Prevention Program in Northbrook, IL from 1999-2001. The Josselyn Center is a community mental health center. This program was named “Family Violence: The Religious Response.” This program was made possible by a grant from the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority and a grant from the Kraft Employees Fund. The Josselyn Center hired me part time to help the Josselyn Center administer the grants for the first two years of their existence. Josselyn Center hired me and others to develop a program for clergy and lay members of local congregations. We sent out over five hundred invitations to churches in our area. Twenty-three churches sent clergy and laity to the program. We had representatives from Jewish, Catholic and Protestant Congregations. We sent invitations to some other faith traditions but they chose not to attend. The program was a series of three educational workshops. The first workshop was on domestic violence. The second workshop was on child abuse. The third workshop was on elder abuse. We had a keynote speaker for each one. We invited Marie Fortune of The Faith Trust Institute in Seattle, WA for the workshop on domestic violence. The Faith Trust Institute is an interfaith organization whose specific purpose is to help religious congregations to address domestic violence. They can be found on the internet and you can buy their videos, books, and resources. Marie Fortune, the Institute’s founder, came and showed the

Institute's video called "Broken Promises." It shares some survivor's stories of abuse told by the actual survivor. Marie Fortune then shares the points she would like to make on this domestic violence. In our workshop Marie spoke with an introduction to domestic violence and answered questions. She shared the resources of the Faith Trust Institute. One particularly vivid illustrative exercise she did was to have each of us who helped put on the program, read a short sentence. Each sentence highlighted things that oppress women and keeps them in abusive relationships. For example, one read, "I was taught to obey my parents in Sunday school." Another read "I was abused as a child and told to keep the secret. I thought it was my fault." Another read, "I was told marriage was for life until death do us part, no matter what." "I was taught that my husband would take care of me and I didn't need to have a career." For each of eight statements we put a sheet over Marie's head. Finally, she was completely covered. Moving under the thick layer of sheets was almost impossible. Then we read statements that represented each layer being removed. "I was told the childhood abuse was not my fault." "Somebody told me that no one should abuse me and that I had a right to be safe." "Someone gave me the number of a battered women's shelter." "Someone gave me a job." "My minister told me that divorce was all right in an abuse situation." As each statement was read a sheet was removed. It showed vividly how layers of oppression keep women in abusive relationships, and how piece by piece we can help remove those layers. We then had small group sessions which we arranged by geographic area. The groups brainstormed on ways congregations could address the situation of domestic violence and put this on newsprint. Each group shared their list with the whole group. Suggestions included:

1. Provide education on family violence, battered women, child abuse and elder abuse.
2. Post on bulletin board or in the stalls of women's bathrooms, (abusive partners cannot go in the bathroom), the phone numbers of shelters for battered women, hotlines, and batterer's programs.
3. Subscribe to a newsletter of an advocacy program against domestic violence (this is for congregations and not survivors because having this newsletter may put them at risk with an abusive partner)
4. Raise the issue through worship, adult educational forums, confirmation curricula and Bible study curriculum.
5. State that abuse will not be tolerated. Develop a resolution on this topic and post it for all to see. Formally adopt it at a congregational meeting.
6. Include anti-abuse discussions in premarital counseling sessions. Include anti-abuse vows in the marriage ceremony.
7. Generously fund abuse prevention programs, battered women's shelters, hotlines and emergency care facilities.
8. Work with a shelter by providing volunteers, furnishings, bedding, toys, financial support, transportation or other help.
9. Provide education on loving family relationships and abuse prevention. Lift up positive models for family life and relationships. Provide mentors for young couples.
10. Read Psalm 22 in a sermon and talk about domestic violence. This Psalm includes the sentence "My God My God, why hast thou forsaken me."

11. Talk about what physical abuse is, what emotional abuse is, what financial exploitation is, and what sexual abuse is. Talk about other related destructive acts such as breaking furniture, kicking or harming pets, threats and intimidation. Talk about subtle and overt ways to abuse a person's power in a relationship in order to gain control of a victim.
12. Explain what to do if someone is experiencing abuse. Examples include: believe the victim, listen, remove fault, suggest resources, be supportive, and give time.

We compiled, typed and mailed these suggestions to each participant after the workshop was over. There were tables around the front of the workshop with area agencies that handed out local and informational resources. We also set up a point person from each congregation to join a support group. Each congregation was to organize a committee that would develop a strategic plan on how their congregation would address abuse. We then met monthly for most of two years except for summers. We encouraged each other to follow through on the strategic plans. We shared the plans with each other. Each congregation selected at least one of the above suggestions to implement. We did the same thing for all of the forms of abuse-domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this type of program? In my experience with this model, the workshops were well attended. We even invited the media to the first session with Marie Fortune, and she was featured in one of our local papers. The congregations that attended were happy to be educated. The part of the model where congregations formed committees that implemented strategic plans was much harder. Interest lagged after the workshops. Some congregations did implement a strategic plan. It was more common that one

person in a congregation was interested and did accomplish a strategic plan. Some groups dropped out. People moved or tried other things. It was hard to sustain effort. Still, awareness was raised. We evaluated this program at each workshop with before and after questionnaire and found that participants learned a statistically significant amount from the workshops. Another limitation of this model is that it requires money and the obtaining of a grant. Not all congregations or local community mental health centers have the time and resources to develop such a program.

Another model that can be helpful is the development of a resource center. The Josselyn Center developed a resource center. We compiled articles, information on local agencies, resources for legal help, information on shelters for battered women, and the Faith Trust Institute videos for education. These resources were used by the participating congregations from time to time. People from the community sometimes used the resource center.

In addition to the workshop and strategic plan model, and the resource center model, we developed a twenty-minute presentation for Sunday school education model. The one session Sunday school lesson model involved giving the basics of domestic violence by power point or handout. This was followed by a short video from the Faith Trust Institute on survivor's stories or the video called "Broken Vows." These videos are very professionally done and were able to get the point across better than our words and handouts alone. The resources are available in English, Spanish, some Asian and Pacific Islander languages. This was followed up by discussion and the handing out of materials and resources. I am not sure what the impact of this

activity was, but at least it raised awareness. It met the need for a one-time informational session in an adult Sunday school setting.

Another model I have worked with is a resource packet developed through our denomination. The packet contained materials that discussed what domestic violence is. It contained a sample sermon, a sample prayer naming domestic violence, a sample adult Sunday school session, articles on domestic violence, theological resources on forgiveness and scriptures that can be used in working with domestic violence survivors. We included our local area resources. We handed out these resources to any congregation that was willing to actually use them. We also had other resources we handed out during the national October domestic violence awareness month. We printed up tear off resource index cards and placed in the women's bathroom. They were printed in Spanish, English and Korean. This model worked well in a connectional type denominational setting.

There are many other things a congregation could do. For example, set up a counseling center and teach Stephen Ministers how to respond to domestic violence survivors. Congregations can provide prayer ministries for domestic survivors and staff twenty-four hour hot lines. Committees could be formed to address domestic violence. Pastors and worship leaders could pray for domestic violence survivors on a Sunday or Saturday morning. Congregations could develop children's programs for children who have been through domestic violence. Adult educational programs could show a film on domestic violence and discuss it. and befriend survivors. The list can go on. The practical implications of what a congregation can do are limited only by the motivation and creativity of the congregants themselves. Never

underestimate what a few committed lay people can accomplish. If the clergy support them, parishioners will do much more. Survivors can help other survivors, and advocate for change.

In this section I have examined the method and theoretical frames. I have also looked at the practical implications of this research. I mentioned several workable models and their strengths and limitations. As hard as it is to change the congregational persona, much can be done to address domestic violence and reach out to survivors. It is my hope that this dissertation will assist in that process.

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## APPENDIX

## SAMPLES FOR CONGREGATION ONE AND TWO DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### **Sample Congregation One:**

Congregation One has approximately 3800 parishioners at the time of the study in 2000 according to pastors.

**Sample size: N=14**

Gender: 7 male, 7 female

Race: 13 White, 1 Asian, 0 Black, 0 Hispanic

Education: 1 Some College, 5 BS/BA, 4 MS/MA, 4 Doctorate

Age: (18-30) 1, (31-40) 1, (41-50) 5, (51-60) 6, (70+) 1

Clergy: 4, Survivors: 6, Bystanders 4

### **Sample: Congregation Two:**

Congregation of about 40-65 (estimated from worship attendance)

**Sample Size N=8**

Gender: 2 male, 6 female

Race: 6 Hispanic, 1 Black, 1 White

Education: 2 completed grade school and some high school, 2 high school, 2 some college, 1 college, 1 master's with some towards a doctorate

Clergy: 1, Survivors: 5, Bystanders: 2

## Demographic Data-2000-US Census Data

### Total Population 2000

### White (percent of population)

### Black

### American Indian

### Asian & Pacific Islander

### Hispanic

### Murder (per 100,000)

### Rapes (per 100,000)

### Robbery (per 100,000)

### Assault (per 100,000)

### Burglary (per 100,000)

### Larceny ( per 100,000)

### Auto Theft (per 100,000)

### City data crime index/Higer more crime

### Density (persons per square mile)

### Median Age

### Education (100 represents the national average)

### Shelter

### Crime Risk (100 represents the national average)

### Murder Risk (100 national average)

### Rape Risk (100 national averag)

### Assault (100 national average)

### Burglary ( 100 national average)

### Larceny (100 national average)

### Automotive Theft (100 national average)

### Medium Household Income

### Those earning over \$200,000 (percentage)

### Those earning over \$100,000

### Employment status (percentage)

### Medium Housing value

### residents with less than ninth grade education

### Congregation One Community

74,239  
(7.7 Sq. mi.)

### Congregation Two Community

65,836  
(3.2 Sq.mi.)

48429 (62%)

1,537 (2.33%)

16704(22.2%)

31,207 (47.40%)

140(<1%)

85(0.13%)

3,535 (6.1%)

87 (0.49%)

4,539) (6.2%)

31,607(48.1%)

< 1/100,000-2.7

9 (12.1)

132 (177.8)

171(230.3)

963 (1297.2)

2954(3979)

186 (250.5)

377 263 (country 163)

12848.81

32.5

29.05

70

70

263

458

281

287

140

215

199

78,886

38,000

7 percent

3%

2 out of 5 families

1 out of 10 families

65%

50%

\$ 290,000

\$175,000

3%

25%

**per capita income**

\$35,000

\$ 10,094

Similar statistics were not always available for the two communities. I cannot site exact references because that would compromise the confidentiality that I promised the two congregations. Data was taken mostly taken from US Census Bureau Data for the year 2000.

## Voices from Congregation One-The Stone Church

### **Voices of those who are Survivors of Domestic Abuse.**

Claire: Research respondent (names of all participants have been changed). In the 41-50 age group, Euro-American, living with domestic partner (Estevan) and their son, completed graduate school, single, divorced, and female

I lived by myself for 15 years after my divorce and I liked that. I grew up with emotional violence, an angry father and strict religious mother, so I didn't much notice the emotional violence when I met my current partner....I didn't much trust anyone, even my own child or even myself...life was full of fear...my self felt so diminished...I was very defensive and negative, a naysayer." About her intimate partner, Estevan, she says, "He is responding out of fear and decreased self esteem." (She describes an episode where he pounded on her door and broke it down one day. She didn't want him to come in because he had been drinking and she was afraid. She didn't call the police and neither did her neighbors. She is still with him. Estevan has had other violent acts but they are), "much less now."

"My religious upbringing was more a barrier to God than a help, and it didn't help in dealing with domestic violence. My mother was strict and religious and had attended Wheaton College. (Claire says), As a result life was full of rules we were told were God's rules, no drinking, no dancing, no movies, and no rock music. My upbringing hindered me for years....I was told, 'don't get angry, put other's first, obey your parents even when they are wrong, and be kind.' (She attends Congregation One/Stone Church and began attending because the children's program had a group for children who had experienced a loss such as the death of a parent or divorce. There her son received much help and got some friends and Claire also made friends in a support group for the parents whose children were in the group. Her path to spirituality and her eventual return to the church did not begin here. It began in an Al-Anon Group. She says), "The group and the 12 steps helped me; especially steps number 11 and 12." (Claire made a best friend there, another woman whose husband is an alcoholic and who attends Stone Church). "She's my angel. We talk a lot." (Claire is educated but,) "My income is low; I live below the poverty level." (She says that the wealth of the Stone Church is difficult for her and its) "upper middle class-ness." (She loves the ministers at Stone church, finds them), "terrific, sermons are inspirational." (But she remembers one service where the minister prayed), "that the poor have faith." She laughs and says, "I have faith, plenty of faith...I need resources!" (She does not receive welfare, but survives because she inherited a house from her grandfather with the mortgage paid off, and runs a cottage industry out of her house so she can be there when her son needs her. When I asked Claire about social justice, what it means to her she said), "There is no justice." (Claire says the things that helped her were), "Al-Anon, the music program at Stone Church, prayer and meditation, my friend, gratitude, honesty, humility, and worship.)" She speaks of something she read once in Teilhard de Chardin, "By virtue of the creation and more by the incarnation there is nothing on earth that is bad for those who know how to see." (Claire

says), “I agree with that, even after having lived through the abuse and violence, alcoholism, poverty and all the rest... God has given me my own spiritual path and eyes to see.”

Voice of Teresa-a survivor: 41-50 year old, Euro-American, married, Caucasian female, college graduate

“I was raised a Catholic in pre-Vatican II and a little post Vatican II.” (She had a theological question that her priest couldn’t answer), ‘If I am forgiven why did Jesus have to die?’ (She asked if her church had Bible studies but they no longer offered them, since they had tried and ‘no one came.’ (Teresa says,) “I was told tradition and scripture weigh equally in the Catholic church and I wanted to explore the Bible so I came to Stone Church where they had Bible studies.” ( In discussing her family of origin she says), “My mother and father fought a lot....my mother was into verbal abuse a lot ...and my father had low self esteem....so she would keep harping on him and he would haul off and hit her...and in order not to get hit, although he did slap me at times. I learned to keep my mouth shut...When I was four or five, I told my mother to get a divorce. ...when I was a teen I told her not to talk to me about all the bad things my father was doing until she got a divorce....My brother and I tried to run away so someone would notice how upset we were but my mother called a family member to come bring us back and no one ever knew why we ran away...I once had a dream where I heard my mother and father arguing in the living room and there was blood all over. I went into the kitchen to get a butcher knife and (she whispers here) sneaked up on him and stabbed him in the back a few times. I remember being afraid he would get up and hurt me. I told my mom about it and she said, ‘Oh, well you shouldn’t feel that way.’ I tried to shut my mother out of my room when she was telling me all of the bad things my father had done, but there weren’t any locks on the doors so I failed at shutting her out....So I was afraid to speak....and I don’t have feelings for the most part....I have the traumatic memories but not the feelings....My testimony is that I accepted Jesus Christ and I became suicidal...I started to heal a little and had some feelings that were overwhelming and I put Tylenol in my hot chocolate...I called the senior pastor of Stone Church and he came and talked to me and that helped...I got past the crisis and I reluctantly told God I wouldn’t try to hurt myself anymore...but I still feel like it at times....You know God’s presence just isn’t enough, sometimes you want a person to be there...I don’t have a lot of friends...I can’t feel God’s love....nothing is enjoyable...I do see a therapist and that helps....some....I have liked working on social justice things in the church....I got the social justice committee to finally stop talking about all the issues and to do something....we got together with an African American Church in town for dialogue about racial issues and 100 people came to this for eight weeks...it was instrumental in helping resolve some issues between us,...also I have the gift of spiritual warfare, getting rid of demons (she describes a Charismatic movement of which this is a part). I laid hands on a man who was demon possessed and they went out of him and it knocked him backwards towards the credenza when I touched him...But my relational problems are still there....all my problems are relational....my husband is an alcoholic and not a Christian....I prayed he stop drinking and become a Christian but he hasn’t and these disappointments are hard

to take...I think he will die drinking...I can't relate to anyone really....I have a big hole in my heart...so I ask, 'Where is God?' I have prayed to be healed, that when I wake up in the morning I will be healed but it hasn't happened and I still have this sense of worthlessness despite being told I am loved and valued by God. ...I have one piece of advice for women with children who are being abused, 'Don't be a doormat.' It isn't fair to the children. I would love to have friends at church but everyone is so busy and it takes time to make friends. I miss the little visible signs that someone cares. The music at church helps, praise songs get to my emotions as does classical. Worship helps and my service to others helps. Therapy helps and whatever attention the pastor gives also helps.

Voice of Hae Won-a survivor: 35 year old divorced, female, college educated accountant, Korean, mother of two, English as a second language

"I don't want to face I was abused...I was doing good on the job....I was a good student...I was never degraded in my family of origin...I was the oldest girl and had a lot of responsibility in my family.....in college I had the experience of being anointed by the Holy Spirit and became spirit filled...I married my husband and the trouble started right away...Whenever I raised my voice he would slap me...It didn't hurt that much but it really scared me...it changed the way I view myself...my voice was silenced...I didn't know what to think about this intensive issue and my faith in God....When I talked to my father he just said, 'Obey your husband...it's your job to make your marriage work...this experience of being caught between reality and Christian doctrine was hell....We had two babies what could I do?...Then he hit me in front of my children and that was the turning point, my love for my children and what it was doing to them...I went to see a therapist and he said, 'If it happens again you have to be strong and not let him do it. Call the police, don't put up with it.' "When it happened again I was crying inside and called the police and they came. They asked my husband, 'Why are you hitting your wife?' He said, 'She's my wife and I can hit her if I want.' There are no laws against this in Korea and it is common there. My husband's father hits his mother and that was ok. After that, he didn't hit me any more because he was afraid of the authorities....but my feelings for him were destroyed....I didn't leave because I thought, 'If I fail at family I fail at everything.' I tried to have my family hear my story and my cry...who I am...what I felt....but no one paid any attention....God sustained me....it is not a private issue but no one would listen...there was no one to turn to except God....I prayed to God to send someone to talk to at church...I got help out of church.....I got a job with a kind boss..." Finally Hae Won's husband left her and went back to Korea. In the meantime she heard an inspirational speaker, a Korean woman who had been imprisoned for her beliefs during the Korean civil war and had to work with a criminal who didn't even know how to handle his own human waste. God told the speaker to 'love your enemies.' She loved this criminal by washing him. (Hae Won was moved by this story and a few weeks later her husband called crying because his parents were dying and begging her to go back

to Korea. She left her children with her parents and went back to Korea praying that her husband's Buddhist parents would be saved. ...She stayed in Korea three years while they died and did everything for them, even though the son is supposed to care for them in Korean culture. A little before he died her father in law gave the Hospice worker a piece of paper that said, "Love, Joy, Peace, Hope and (I think) Faith." With shaky hands from the Bible I knew he was saved....(and he started going to a Catholic church which disturbed Hae Won since she had been taught not to bow down to ancestors and she thought the Catholics did this since they have saints. Her husband, however continued to abuse her. Eventually she left Korea and came back to the US and got a divorce. The meaning she takes away from all of this is that), "I know they are both saved and that is why God let it happen."

Bystanders:

Denise (name changed): Bystander married female not a survivor age 51-60 college educated and Euro-American

"I've been at Stone Church for 10 years. My family was fundamentalist, very rigid, very conscious of sinfulness; I had to suppress angry thoughts. ...I was afraid of Jesus and the second coming...I had to confess my sins to my mother every night so I would be ready if he came because if I had one sin I would be left behind....I was very very fearful....and I was trying hard to be good...I had questions ...and I questioned why it wasn't ok to dance or drink or go to movies....and when I met my husband in college he was the opposite of what my parents wanted...he was divorced, smoked and drank, had children and wasn't a Christian...but we married and then he started his spiritual pilgrimage...studied Gandhi and Martin Luther King and went to seminary but he never graduated nor became a minister....he went to a Friends Meeting...then to Stone Church. ...I went to a desert Roman Catholic retreat center and there I found the presence of God, in that landscape, I experienced God's care and love...and I became interested in interfaith...Buddhism, Hinduism and Taoism...and I also developed an interest in social justice....I didn't see a gulf between the saved and the lost...I was contemplative though, not an activist....I'm interested in ecology and preserving the earth so I have been an activist there...(the researcher asks her about domestic violence in this church)...Well I haven't seen domestic violence but there have been people I know who have been raped...my niece and also a single mom I know left her children in care of family and went on a business trip and the uncle of these kids got them drunk and raped them...The oldest got away but the middle and youngest were raped and they had a terrible time..but domestic violence seems to be about women's issues, as women we were raised to be subservient...it's ingrained from the day we are born...Christianity does us a disservice because we are taught not to think of ourselves highly and so I wasn't able to think of myself as a 'speaker out'..even my body posture is huddled over...but I am a child of God with the same rights as anybody else and I am as good as anybody else...I've worked at a battered women's shelter and also at a soup kitchen...but I know a lot of people in this church who have been raped or abused and if I know them then that's just the tip

of the iceberg. My sister in law was raped, and she went through two long court cases. The first was a mistrial because some of jurors went to the scene of the incident and concluded she 'asked for it.' The second trial took years and wasn't decided satisfactorily either so now she is out of the country and starting over in another place. She didn't get any justice here... For me the Christian story is about being led out of bondage...God makes the blind see and the sick whole...the prodigal son in the New Testament and the Exodus in the Old Testament...God is setting us free from bondage to be whole human beings.

Melanie (name changed) 51-60, married, Euro-American, heads the children's ministry, but is not ordained and is not a survivor, has a Master's Degree in Ecology

I belonged to this church for 27 years. I was raised in a beautiful mainline church in the East...I was baptized, confirmed and married there....both my parents are buried there...an experience in a European protestant ministry helped renew my faith. In the children's ministry here we reached out to four other churches including two African American Churches. We share some ministries such as summer camp and also a support group for children who have experienced a loss through divorce or death of a parent. ...I think these programs have helped many and also reached across some racial divisions. We also helped one other congregation start a pre-school in their own church...it's been very good for our children to experience this diversity....when I think about what social justice is I think of Micah 6:8, "to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God." God is a God of Grace...and that can't be earned, mercy and forgiveness...and there's a place of appropriate rage but we need to follow God's example and not be an unforgiving servant...If I run across true domestic violence I refer them to the counseling center, but they aren't always strong on children...one couple I remember a man found out some time in their marriage he was attracted to men and not women---so that's not abuse...but I went with them to court ....just to be there and help work out the divorce...and help the children...we spent many long talks crying and talking....and a lot of families are dealing with alcohol or drugs....I do believe if an abuser had repented and was forgiven he could come back and work with children....I believe in God's grace.

Jay (a therapist, D. Min. who comes to the congregation and sees patients from the congregation) 41-50, Euro-American, second marriage.

"People come in here and say they are abused and it doesn't seem like that is what is happening...I have seen instances of abuse...but it is not chronic, just a one time thing with young couples...I would ask what is the emotional context and where is this happening...what does it mean to the people? ...I would be careful not to label an abuser as an "abuser."...I do see violence in movies, football, and if anybody raped me I would want to beat that person up...but I am just not seeing it in my practice...I think justice is about power...where the power is and male and females use power differently....women have verbal power and men are intimidated by that....men get violent in relationships because they lack skills...or if they are dealing with

oppression, like racism....like a slave revolt....they rise up to be on an equal plane....you do have an obligation to keep people from damaging you....therapy is a kind of reporting, confessing....and reconciliation is part of the work....I do not see forgiveness as pulling you out from a 'less than positions' ....if you understand who the abuser is then it upgrades you and the abuser...I know some people are sociopaths but I don't usually see that here...I would ask the woman how did you end up with someone who abuses you?....I train the Stephen Ministers here sometimes but we don't usually go into domestic abuse because we don't see much of that....I believe God is present even in those situations, God allowed Judas and Christ to die a hideous death...God's purpose and presence are available to you...whether this has happened to you or not....I think we should have prayers about this based on lamentations and also a drama about a guy who hit his wife and was sorry about it and changed.

Jeffrey (name changed) Bystander 31-40, married, Euro-American, college educated and going to seminary and working in the youth ministry

I've been in the church six years and come from a faith oriented home...we went to church every Sunday and mid-week too...they believed in 'plain truth evangelism' and that is big in (another state) where I grew up. ...and I was involved with Evangelicals for Social Action and met and worked with (famous name) who has worked with the poor for years...I think we are our brother's keepers...we are to uphold the poor and oppressed...God holds the violent accountable for their deeds...We have a protection policy and we go over it as a staff every year so the volunteers and all know about what it says...we had an episode where one of our youth workers was accused of something by our young people and we investigated but it wasn't proved and it was a case of 'He said, they said' so nothing was done. It turns out he was convicted and imprisoned in another state for molesting two children where he was a teacher...it seems like the kids knew more what was going on than we did....and then we took the youth to (another country) to build houses and one of the girls was touched inappropriately by one of the host fathers....that was a problem and we moved them all out of that house and had a leader with them....and another time I had a grown teen and a father who got in a fight and I reported that to DCFS (Department of Child and Family Services-the reporting and casework agency for child abuse). ..and another teen witnessed abuse in a public bathroom in a local mall...so I have had to deal with a variety of things as a youth leader....one of the biggest blocks of dealing with things here is that we put on our Sunday best and look good so it is hard for the truth of this type of thing to come out.

Clergy:

Dennis (name changed) age 51-60, married Euro Caucasian, male, M. Div. and D. Min.,

"I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic abuse at this church...well, I did get a letter once from a person who said. 'I can't tell you who I am, but there are people in this congregation

including me who are being abused.”...that was pretty frustrating and I asked others on the staff did they recognize this handwriting or know who it might be but no one knew.” (when asked if he preached on it made a public prayer about it he said, “No.”) “I just didn’t do anything. No person ever came to me and said they were abusing someone either...oh well someone did once say they had abused their two young daughter and the daughter grew up and complained and he and his wife were separated. He went to a new church, us, and tried to get a new start. He wanted to know if he should confess it to the men’s group. The ministers talked this over and said he could so he did. He got a very warm reception. He is going to court ordered groups, seeing the pastor from the old church, a chaplain from a nursing home and one of us and the men’s group so he’s pretty accountable. I don’t know if he will get to see his girls again as they are pretty angry....but he is hopeful....So that turned out about as well as it could...I helped one woman leave her husband because of alcohol abuse...but that’s different...if someone actively reported child abuse to me I would report it to DCFS (Department of Child and Family Services-investigates reports of abuse).

Clergy: Doug, married, Euro-American, 51-60

I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic violence in this congregation...I did work with a secretary in another church who came to work with her arm broken by her husband and I got involved...we got her a restraining order and I talked to her husband telling him in as nice a way as possible that he was not to come to the house or I would call the police...and I ferried the kids and her to and from things, and I was afraid he would think something funny was going on so I explained it wasn’t, but the power structures were funny because he was a person of color and I was white and his wife’s boss...and so it was a personal response more than a congregational response...I remember being very angry with him, but I didn’t emote that anger...I think justice is about fair treatment for people who don’t have power...and if violence occurs in marriage that destroys the basis of the covenantal relationship...and repentance is awakening to the wrong you have done and seeing it from the other person’s eyes or from God’s eyes hopefully...it is like an exorcism of demons...since Jesus came to do three things and that was preach the gospel, heal the sick and exorcise demons....so that is like getting rid of obsessions and addictions and maybe violence is like that and needs to be exorcised....first though people have to be safe and then have their basic needs taken care of ....then they can go to counseling....I once spoke on Promise Keepers at a local seminary and a woman there challenged me to preach on it because that gives people in the congregation permission to talk about it and that seemed like a good point to me...my daughter is on my case about Promise Keepers too, because of the whole male headship thing...I don’t think that is the core of the teaching...and Promise Keepers has helped a lot of men care for their wives and get more involved in parenting their children....and once I said jokingly in a sermon I was ‘beating up my kids’ and a Native American Woman came up to me after the sermon and said ‘You should never say that...it gives people the idea it’s ok to beat up on your kids’ ....so my consciousness was raised you could say...(the researcher asks about barriers in the church) Yeah here it is part

of the culture of the church, and people encourage it, to look your Sunday best and I have heard people getting divorced to say that the other people look like they have it all together and so it is hard to admit an embarrassing problem here... We do have a child protection policy here and that has helped...we do background checks on all staff and volunteers working with children and there has to be to go to the bathroom with a child...also we have hall monitors to keep an eye on what is going on during worship and Sunday school. We don't educate staff on this but the policy is there and most of the staff knows about as we have talked about it in staff meetings...We do have sexual misconduct of clergy policy in our local denomination and about 7 cases in the past 20 years I know about and probably more I don't know about have been tried in our church courts. We did have one guy in the men's group come to the clergy and ask if he could tell his story about abusing his young daughters and ask for help from the men's group. He typed up what he wanted to say and we read it. He asked if it was ok or should he sanitize it so we told him to sanitize it and he said something like, "I hurt my girls," rather than naming it as sexual abuse. The men were very supportive, but I don't know what would have happened if he had named it sexual abuse....I believe he is forgiven by God and that in the atonement some kind of cosmic exchange took place and the definitive thing is that God and good will win and evil will lose...that's the good news...

## Voices from Congregation Two-La Vida Nueva

Survivor: **Anna** (name changed) Female, 51, Hispanic, divorced and remarried, mother of two grown sons, non-clergy, third year in graduate school for Master's degree

I grew up in Puerto Rico and I had the experience of domestic violence. My parents had fights and the police used to come and break them up. My mother came to the mainland United States to escape abuse. My parents were divorced...we thought the abuse would stop, but my mom met another man and they married. My stepfather and my mother had big fights. I decided to fight back and I promised myself I would never live like that. The abuse affected me because every few months we moved to a new place to live and I had to go to a new school. I was the oldest of four. My younger sister and younger brother are divorced. Our parents believed in arranged marriages. All of us and our neighbors too got married young. I was 15, my sister was 16, my brother was 17, and my youngest sister resisted and she married at 20. She made a different life for herself. I rebelled...as a Hispanic woman the key to success is if you are a good cook, a good housekeeper and a good seamstress. I had beautiful children there was too much turmoil. We lived in an isolated farmland. Then the turmoil began when we moved in with my husband's parent's home. His mother was abused all her life. His father chased me. I had to get his shoes. He was always drunk. He grabbed me and my little child. I ran away out of the house. He chased after me, with a long knife they used to cut the cane...I ran off into the fields. My husband came home and stopped me from leaving. My life was in jeopardy. My husband was dangerous too. I thought to myself I will move. I fled to my sister's house. He followed me there and threatened me and I went back. He beat me. I ran away in a nightgown. I ran to a neighbor and she took me in. The police came and took him. They released him a few hours later and he beat me and raped me....(her eyes fill with tears)....I was praying let him sleep and let me get out of here.....I will run away with my children...I put a few things in a dry potato bag and with nothing more than that I left. I went to my sister's place and from there to Chicago where my mother was. I knocked on the door, my father answered it, and at first, he didn't recognize me because I was beaten so badly. I had just had surgery, a hysterectomy and my belly was swollen and I needed special medication. I had a temperature. I tried to get a job but no one would hire me because I couldn't pass the physicals. One kind woman gave me a job even though I failed the physical. ..My husband threatened me. He said, 'I'll find you and kill you.' I went to Moody Bible Institute and I would see him there. I got a divorce when a kind lawyer helped me. My husband and I had built a house in Puerto Rico and I left it all and got nothing back for all I put into it. I had to leave that behind, all the work I put into it. We lived in one room with only a mattress for furniture. ..I worked and took care of my children, and was able to buy a stove and a refrigerator...My Mom was Pentecostal so I went to her church...I was the only single woman, and the other women were jealous, because I was attractive. They thought I was after their husbands, which was the last thing from the truth...I didn't want to be with anyone...I kind boss gave me a job and then paid for my education while I worked in the

office...I graduated....and met my husband...I really had to be talked into giving him a chance...I was so scared...I didn't believe a man could be nice...I was working as a dental assistant and we had late hours so I got mugged and my husband got me some money and helped me with that...I dated him three years...and it took a long time to trust him again...(when asked about justice) in my mind there is no justice....the police would come and arrest my first husband and let him go. No one in the church cared. Their attitude is, 'You made your bed now lie in it.' I got out but I felt guilty, was I in the Lord's will or not. I blamed myself. I had little self-esteem. I was dead inside. It takes your life...even my kids blamed me for the divorce...he was thirty and I was fifteen just a naïve kid...I didn't know about sex...I wanted to be a professional person but he didn't want that...he drank every weekend...I wanted better...I shouted at God....you owe me a house...and now we have a nice house in the suburbs...it's a beautiful house...

Survivor: **Marita** (name changed) female, married, 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage, Puerto Rican.

I've been in this church five years...I was raised Catholic...I went to parish schools all the way through high school..I became a Pentecostal after my father-in-law passed away...he had such serenity when he died...(I asked her what she thought justice is) 'there isn't any,' I work with attorneys and I don't trust the system...money paves the way for criminals...the innocent pay for crimes they did not commit, judges decide cases based on how a person looks or because they didn't like the attorney pleading the case...for the rare Hispanic judge, they don't do too much for Hispanics, as for the Hispanic politicians, I used to see them scoop up drug addicts and the homeless to take them to the polls to vote for them...the white man has helped me out...and the physically and mentally abused continuously cry out discrimination....I lived in (name of public housing project)...and in the area where (gentrified area in Chicago) is now before it gentrified....and the area around (location), but I never experienced domestic violence...but my sister married an abusive man...he was older than her, the drugs, the beatings, the liquor, she lived it all...she passed the pattern on to her children...her daughter was murdered....she was prostituting for money for drugs...the police never investigated....My Dad was verbally abusive but he worked and provided for us and was responsible...my sister's only sin was that she wanted to have fun and go dancing but what she got was abuse...he wasn't religious...My husband was a drinker, drugs, alcohol, ..his liver was destroyed...he had a transplant...he lied that he had been sober, but he was desperate... but he died anyway...I was sexually abused by two members of my family....I didn't talk about it in my church and I didn't tell my mother because I didn't talk to her about sex...I know God forgives me for being such a sinner (she thinks she is to blame)..my father in law abused me...God gave me the wisdom and insight to deal with it myself

Survivor: Juan (name changed), married father of one son, 22

I am a youth leader in the church and do music and games for the kids...it's a lot of work but very gratifying...we reached a lot of kids, we had forty kids here....out of a pick up truck, or a horse trailer we had puppets and microphones....a stage everything....kids brought children to the church or the streets....kids who didn't go to church....and they would go home excited and bring their parents....and it's a family supported ministry....we trained as we went....skits could be changed as we wanted. Our older kids would relate to the younger kids...we did it for three years and some of the kids went on to college....at one point we lost the money for the program and lost the whole program...the director changed hands...and we lost the trailer, but the people contributed.....my father never liked kids, and my mother did everything with us. He would yell...and he threw away the shoes with heels that my mother had....anything loud he couldn't tolerate....we had to be quiet...my father was Pentecostal...mom turned on music and he would dance...we were innocent and mom took the chance and left....it was not much of a relationship...every other weekend and once a month a day then every few months ....he lived in the city.... we would run into him....we were disrespectful....and he wouldn't come to see us....he was a bad influence to his kids from his new wife....he was so angry that he didn't raise them...this is a smack in the face culturally...he had no say in how we were raised...I never felt love for him....I don't feel like he's a father....he gave me a gift...the gift of abuse....he rejected me and I never understood his father was the same way to him....I loved my grandfather....He only saw my child two times and he wouldn't hold her.

**Donna** (name changed) female, 58, single, divorced, 5 kids, high school, some college, AA  
I was raised in a nice home by my grandmother and grandfather who adopted me. Before that I was with my mother and stepfather. My stepfather beat me. My self-esteem was always down...he would call me a stupid bitch, a whore. There were no hugs whatsoever. If I didn't say I loved him I would be whipped. I went to a Catholic church, she made me go. It was OK. There was no questioning and no talking back. I never talked at all. Hush, hush, hush if we ever told we'd get a whipping. It affected my self-esteem and I learned not to give a damn about anything. The year I ran away, I was doing drugs and drinking and being with many different men. In one relationship he beat the hell out of me. I had black eyes and a bloody nose. I tried to set him on fire. I left him and came back to him. I was tired and had two kids and was pregnant with the third by the time I was 19. My mother had moved to Chicago from the South and lived on the west side. She helped me move there. I don't understand abusers. They want to control others but they can't control themselves...they only know that you beat others to get them to do what you want...the think that's what makes them male...I was on public aid and had three kids....I had no feelings....I hated my mother and my grandmother....there were no shelters then...only the Lord was there for me...I didn't call the police...he broke down the door in a drunken rage...and restraining orders don't really work....if a person wants to get to you he will...the Lord helped me...people were praying for me...I couldn't have made it otherwise...and I didn't know the Lord like I do now...I was without anybody...I hated men and

I couldn't trust men, I still have trouble with that..but once we feel empowered the man will back off....the power is in us...I have to love me first....we were taught to be caretakers of the kids and our husband but we have to take care of ourselves first...a woman in Rogers Park told me about God and the Lord led me here to an Hispanic church...We need to learn love because often the Puerto Rican and Blacks don't get along...the Lord can break down every barrier...I became a deacon....I love it...I pray go to Sunday School...I read Watchman Nee (a Chinese Christian)...Jesus helped me and gave me strength when I was pushed out a second floor window....churches need to have program to empower women and programs for men to help them with their rage...and also women abuse too not just men...and alcohol really adds to all this...it might be better not to drink at all...I knew a woman who kept going back to her man and she was finally killed...I tried to tell her to leave but she didn't really listen...even with all the shelters we have now...people get killed...lawyers like Legal Aid can help...but the Legal system takes the point of view of the man mostly..they might beat their wives...and so there is no justice....jobs can help and empower....bosses can help or be abusive themselves...I would like to say to other women experiencing abuse that you can make it...it is not true that nobody wants you...wait for somebody...don't just take the first one that comes along but get to know them...I worked for the local shelter and that helped....we need to tell the women we are loved with a capitol "L"..Jesus loves us so much.

Survivor: Number 21(name changed), female, age 51-60,

The abuse started when I was 18. I had a good home...I loved my Mom and Dad and brother and sister...when we had a disagreement they never raised their hand...they were strict, we had to go to school...we had no friends..our parents are Puerto Rican...they didn't trust people...my dad was alcoholic, he quietly got drunk and was sick but he never treated us bad...and he paid the bills ...and so was my Mom... a drinker, but they were quiet drunks...when I was 16 he came to Lord and gave up drinking. My Mom was very quiet about fighting...he worked the night shift...and they fought in the day...he pulled her hair....I had two brothers and two sisters....I'm the oldest and was born and raised here....my dad worked night shift as a dishwasher for a company...40 years in shipping and receiving, he was a hard worker and now he is 71 and retired, he volunteers at his church, my Mom is at home and took care of my kids and my sisters kids,...I experienced sexual and domestic abuse...the first guy I dated when I was 18 passed himself off as caring...he was in gangs...he went to Puerto Rico....he persuaded me to go out with him by smooth talking me...he was very charming and all the girls were crazy about him...he was not a Christian...I got rebellious..I didn't fall in love, I had lust...I tried to break it off but he was pursuing and pursuing...he forced himself on me...I never told my parents...he threatened me if I wouldn't do it...he then moved on to my sister...he had already taken advantage of me...he pressured me to leave my parents...and we argued...I moved out and moved in with him...and my parents were old fashioned Catholics and thought, 'You made your bed now lie in it.' I married him and he wanted children...I thought maybe he will change...I blamed myself for the abuse...he had been with other women...he was with other women the

whole marriage...years later after the divorce my family and friends let me know...I wasted those years...what was the point...I had three kids with him and he was always hitting me when I was pregnant...he was drinking...drugs and drinking...he was angry all the time and hit me a lot...he threw me off the couch and dragged me around the floor...he bit me...he was evil...it was pretty sick...he took a belt to me and my daughter...I hit him back...my middle child, he was always spanking him and he was only a year and a half old...he strangled me...he put a gun to my head...I called the battered women's hot line...I filed for divorce with their help and served him papers...I lived with my sister... he took all the money...my Mom and Dad were supportive...Dad was angry he had been hitting me...my sister's didn't know about the abuse because I kept it to myself...things weren't that bad ...we went to counseling for a year...all his family drank...my Mom and stepfather...and they drove drunk...all the men...he helped me leave but my kids went to foster homes...he worked for the police as a dispatcher...so I couldn't call the police because they wouldn't believe me...he choked me with a telephone cord and wouldn't leave...so I called the police but they wouldn't arrest him...he got one other girl pregnant ...and he didn't pay child support...he got fired because of his absences...I studied business in high school and learned short hand and typing...and I supported myself by working part time in an office..then I worked full time in a factory foundry that later went bankrupt...then I worked 15 years in customer service... (Researcher asked how it affected her life) well I though I had to be hard...I had an attitude towards men..I'd been taken advantage of and I was overly sensitive at times...it only makes sense in relation to God's mercy....that's what brought me out of this...I didn't have to live that way...God was there...even though I didn't know it...after I left him one day God showed up in the person of this woman who helped me...and another person....and there was counseling in this church...before our pastor came....for sexually abused women...and pastor's wife helped...I lived alone a lot of years...when I got married again there were sexual problems...and I was crying

Clergy research subject number 23, male, Puerto Rican, M.Div., working on D. Min.

At first I was very ignorant about domestic violence....I mean it could be happening around you and you are not aware of it..I try to listen to people's stories...not just the victims but the abusers...people who abuse often are people who have been abused...there was a young lady whose father was abusing her and she had marks on her body...and I spoke to him and basically threatened him..I told him if he even hit her again I would hit him...the guy was a brute, a real tough guy...but the approach was successful..he knew someone outside the family knew who was powerful enough to intervene and he started coming to church...so a man can confront another man and it's not a macho thing...and the other thing is when a victim, when they tell you what is happening they kind of downplay it...we had a workshop here and the presenter played

the film, 'The Burning Bed' to raise the congregation's awareness and it started some good discussion...and you know I just name it like I name racism...I put it out there with a lot of love...and sometimes it wrecks me emotionally...I once went to the emergency room and they had to hold me back, because the victim was a child...I wanted to kick somebody's ass...and some guys tell me, 'I had sex with my daughter' and I can't take it, I have to refer them to somebody else...and when I hear this stuff I feel I have to report it...and not just lay people are doing this, but clergy too.....but by the grace of God there hasn't been that many cases...but when the clergy do this there is such a stigma, you know 'the wife beater' and so they don't want to come forward and get help. ..this thing about the clergy isn't going to go away...as clergy we have to be more open about our own failings...once I was over at a couple's house and this was going on and the wife got a gun and I was between her and her husband and the gun went off and hit the bathroom door...the thing just escalated...I spent a lot of time at their place...but I had to refer them to a therapist because I couldn't handle it...it was out of my league...you asked me about what justice is...justice is making it work for everybody...the victim and the abuser would both get help and relationships would be restored...and God is an equal opportunity employer, everyone gets a chance to repent...and while things should be clear there are times when things get blurred in my mind, I say, 'Let the guy burn,' and that's not justice...so I have to remind myself that I am not God...I started working for justice when I was 12 in New York City--I was organizing...I worked with a social justice ministry team there...housing...economic development....I worked in local campaigns...we had an adopt a building program...and I started a National Association for Hispanic Evangelicals for Social Action (evangelical doesn't mean what it does to Caucasians he explains)...I got the call to ministry after I got back from Vietnam...I saw so much inhumanity in Nam...I've been through hell, I was med-evaced...and they lost my papers so I got to stay out...(he laughs)...the grace of God and military incompetence saved me...I was born in NYC but my grandfather and some family are still on the island (Puerto Rico)..and I never had a TV or a radio in my house but my family used to come and bring their instruments..quattros, guitars, bongos, and spoons, (he laughs) those panchos were kind of noisy....and everybody had a great voice..my kids got that from them....you know the people in my church are hurting....and they are really loving to each other...and what they've been through is worse than Vietnam in some ways...and the church has done everything from buying a plane ticket to get someone out before they are killed to helping a family get food when the man of the house is denying the family food...and the women have been through this themselves so they are really present to hurting people and just do what's necessary...and that presence prevented some things and it was soothing too, that presence...we had a situation where the children were being abused and they were in our children's program and we fed them and at the same time their father wasn't around a lot of the time..so the women took care of them and their mother...and we have a Christian counseling center here...and I guess God is the ultimate resource...but God is made present through the people...and as you ask what hinders people I guess that whole doctrine of prosperity preaching (a form of triumphalism which emphasizes material success if one follows God)...or some people will say the reason you are being abused is because you are not spiritual enough...and also the attitude that the male is the dominant

one...and many ministers abuse women...they say look just give 'em what they want...a baby....you know...so even the clergy...and in our church people hug a lot...and I have talked about boundaries...because people don't know about that really...and while it's a cultural thing to be warm...we carry it too far...so I have to talk about that...and people can use the excuse of culture to continue a bad habit...and I had to set boundaries at my home too...because when I was younger people came over to my house all the time and there wasn't time for me and my wife as a couple....I didn't see it at first, but she helped me and then I had to say no to the people about coming over all the time...and another thing, a lot of the men have been abused...I went to a men's conference that was held in a superdome and thousands of me came forward to be healed from abuse and it was very heavy...and Hispanic men have this macho thing and that gets in the way...and drugs and alcohol are a big big barrier and then sometimes...and sometimes they (the victims) think, 'It's my fault,' and that gets in the way...but the church has done a lot to help, even though our resources are limited..in my heart of hearts I am pretty proud of what we have done...I mean we kind of changed water into wine...because I have seen the power of God...in transforming the lives of men and women....

# NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

## CONSENT FORM FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE #1

### **TITLE: "Do You Hear Our Cries?" Core Narratives of Two Religious Congregations and the Challenge of Domestic Violence**

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin, MS, MSN, MDiv

FACULTY SPONSOR: Dr. Cristina Traina, Professor of Ethics, Religion Department of Northwestern University

### **INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

You are being asked to participate in a research study that investigates the response of religious congregations to domestic violence. In particular, it explores how congregations keep abusers accountable, provide pastoral care, construct worship services or provide educational classes that help or hinder healing from domestic violence. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you have experienced domestic violence at some time earlier in your life. Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin is conducting the research for the fulfillment of her Doctor of Philosophy requirements of Joint Program of Northwestern University and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

### **PROCEDURES**

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to participate in one interview, which will last about an hour. The interviews will be held at your religious congregation or at Garrett Seminary (2121 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60201), wherever you feel more comfortable. You will be asked questions about domestic violence. You will be asked to relate domestic violence to your faith and faith life of the congregation. These interviews are not counseling or therapy interviews, but interviews for research purposes only.

### **RISKS**

Your participation in this study may involve the following risks:

Discussing domestic violence may be uncomfortable and may raise issues that cause emotional pain. You are free to refrain from answering any questions that you are not comfortable addressing. If the information that you do give in the interview triggers feelings of anxiety or memories that are painful, you will have the opportunity at that point to have the tape recorder off and the interview stopped. In the possibility that you become extremely upset sometime after the interview, you will be referred to a counselor of your choice or to some area therapists or pastoral counselors. The research project necessitates that Dorothy Valin not be that counselor, so that the researcher and counselor roles are kept distinct. Only persons not currently in an abusive relationship are invited to participate in the study. If there is any danger to you at the

present time, any further participation in the research study will be terminated, and you will be referred to the **Chicago Area Domestic Violence Hotline (1-877-863-6338)**, a local shelter and to a therapist of your choice (See the attached resource sheet). Your safety and the safety of any minor children remain the first priority.

### **BENEFITS**

There will be no direct benefit to you by your participation in this research study. You may become aware of the need to address domestic violence in your life, in your congregation, and in your community. You may provide information that adds to the body of knowledge about domestic violence and the way religious faith and religious congregations can help or hinder the recovery process.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in the study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Participation in this study is confidential. Your name will be changed to protect your identity. Participants will not be identified personally in any reports or publications resulting from this study. The name of your religious congregation and any identifying characteristics will also be changed. Tape recordings will be destroyed following the completion of the research study. If a case of child abuse or neglect becomes known to the researcher, she will report it to the **Child Abuse Hot Line 1-800-252-2873** of the Department of Children and Family Services as required by law for professionals working with children (Public Act 91-0244 effective January 1, 2000). The Department of Children and Family Services will investigate any reports and determine the course of action within their policies. Any cases of elder abuse or neglect that become known to the researcher will be reported by the researcher at the **Elder Abuse Hotline 1-800-242-8966**, the Department of Aging Hotline. You will be asked to provide the name of your therapist so that the researcher can check with the therapist as to your readiness to participate in the study, but you are in no way obligated to provide the name of your therapist. The researcher will not pressure you for this information.

**CONGREGATIONAL DISCLAIMER:** This study is not sponsored nor supervised by, nor is it being conducted for the direct benefit of the congregation.

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you or to your congregation. All costs for conducting the study will be the responsibility of the researcher. No payment will be made to you for your participation in the study. No payment will be made to you for any publications that may result from this study.

**SUBJECTS' RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate will in no way affect any rights to which you are entitled. The investigator may discontinue your participation in this study if the investigator thinks the discussion of this material may cause undue emotional distress or place you at risk in any way.

**CONTACT PERSONS**

Any questions you may have about this study may be directed to Dorothy Ann Valin at the telephone number (847) 256-3577, which can be used during the weekday and also on weekends and nights. The Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University can be reached at telephone number (312) 503-9338 and people there can provide further information about your rights as a research subject. The Office of Protection of Research Subjects is where any research-related issues or problems can be reported.

**CONSENT**

I agree to participate in the research study described above. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

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Signature of the Participant

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Date

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Signature of the Investigator

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Date

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(Signature of the Investigator)

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Date

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY****CONSENT FORM FOR CLERGY****TITLE: "Do You Hear Our Cries?" Core Narratives of Two Religious Congregations and the Challenge of Domestic Violence**

**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR:** Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin, M. S., M.S.N., M. Div.

**FACULTY SPONSOR:** Dr. Cristina Traina, Professor of Ethics, Religion Department of Northwestern University

**INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are clergy of a congregation that has been identified as concerned about the experience of domestic violence or abuse. The purpose of this research is to explore ways that congregational practices of worship, education and pastoral care either help or hinder response to and recovery from domestic violence and abuse. It explores ways that the expression of religious faith and practice either blocks or promotes justice and healing for people experiencing domestic violence. In particular, it explores how congregations keep abusers accountable, provide pastoral care, construct worship services and provide educational classes that help or hinder recovery from abuse. Rev. Dorothy Valin is conducting the research for the fulfillment of her Doctor of Philosophy requirements of Joint Program of Northwestern University and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

**PROCEDURES**

As participants in the study, you will be asked to participate in one interview with the investigator, Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin. The interview will last about an hour. The interview will be about your experiences with domestic violence as a pastoral caregiver in the congregation. You will be asked to describe your religious congregation. You will be asked questions about domestic violence and asked to relate domestic violence to your faith and faith life of the congregation. The interviews will be tape recorded, but you are free to turn off the recorder at any time. These interviews are not counseling or therapy interviews, but interviews for research purposes only. The interviews may be held at your congregation, or at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60621, whichever you prefer. You will receive a summary of the research results if you request to have it.

**RISKS**

Your participation may involve some risks as follows. Discussing domestic violence may be uncomfortable and may raise issues that cause emotional pain. Talking about domestic violence

may challenge the belief that "This does not happen in our congregation." In the event that you experience considerable significant emotional distress, the recorder will be turned off, and you will be allowed to withdraw from the study.

### **BENEFITS**

There may be no direct benefit to you or your congregation by your participation in this research study. The possible benefits to you from participation in this study may include the following: You may become more aware of the need to address domestic violence within your congregations and your community. In addition, the study may contribute to the body of literature demonstrating the importance of religious belief and practice in studying the spiritual, psychological, and social aspects of domestic violence and abuse for survivors, for their religious congregations, and their surrounding communities. It may contribute to the pastoral care of persons who have experienced domestic violence.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Participation in this research study is confidential. Your name will be changed and the name and identifying characteristics of your congregation will be changed as well. Tape recordings will be destroyed following the completion of the research study and the researcher will use only the changed names for the final research project and any publications resulting from it in order to protect the identity of participants and the congregation. After the study is completed the tapes will be destroyed. Your identity and the identity of the congregation will be changed to protect your identities. Any cases of child abuse or neglect of a person under the age of 18 will be reported by Dorothy Valin at the Department of Children and Family Services **Child Abuse Hot Line telephone number 1-800-252-2873** (according to Public Act 91-0244 effective January 2000). If you become aware of a case of child abuse you may report it as well, and names of reporters of child abuse will be kept confidential by DCFS. Professional persons who work with children are mandated to report any cases of child abuse.

Any cases of elder abuse or neglect of persons 60 years if age and older, that have occurred within the past 12 months, and are made known to Dorothy Ann Valin will be reported to the **State of Illinois Elder Abuse Hot Lines at telephone number 1-800-8966** (according to Public Act 91-0244 effective January 2000).

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you or to your congregation. All costs for conducting the study will be the responsibility of the researcher. There will be no payment for participating in this study.

**CONTACT PERSONS**

Any questions you may have about this study may be directed to Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin at telephone number (847) 256-3577 to raise any concerns related to the research study. You may use this number on nights or weekends as well as during the day. Questions about research subjects' right may be directed to the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University, at telephone number (312) 503-9338. The Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University can provide further information about your rights as a research subject and is where any research-related injury or problems should be reported.

**SUBJECT'S RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate will in no way affect any rights to which you are entitled. You and your congregation may discontinue participation at any time. The investigator, without your consent, may discontinue your participation in this study if the investigator thinks the discussion of this material may cause undue emotional distress or place you and your congregation at risk.

**CONSENT**

I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

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(Signature of Clergy Subject)

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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(Signature of Researcher)

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**CONSENT FORM FOR LAITY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**  
**IRB PROJECT NUMBER 796-001**  
**RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: "Do You Hear Our Cries?" Core Narratives of Two**  
**Religious Congregations and the Challenge of Domestic Violence**  
**PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin, M.S., M.S.N., M. Div.**  
**FACULTY SPONSOR: Dr. Cristina Traina, Professor of Ethics, Religion Department of**  
**Northwestern University**

### **INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are associated with a congregation that has been identified as concerned about the experience of domestic violence or abuse. This Consent Form gives you information about the research study that you will be able to discuss with the research study investigator, Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin. The information provided is an effort to make you better informed in order for you to make a decision as to whether or not you wish to participate in the study.

You have been informed that the purpose of this research is to explore ways that congregational practices of worship, education and pastoral care either help or hinder response to and recovery from domestic violence and abuse. It explores ways that the congregation's chief or guiding faith story shapes practices that either block or promote justice and healing for people experiencing domestic violence. In particular, it explores how congregations keep abusers accountable, provide pastoral care, construct worship services and provide educational classes that help or hinder healing from domestic violence. Rev. Dorothy Valin is conducting the research for the fulfillment of her Doctor of Philosophy requirements of Joint Program of Northwestern University and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. The duration of the study will be approximately one year.

### **PROCEDURES**

As participants in the study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews with the investigator, Rev. Dorothy Valin. Each interview will last about an hour. The first interview will be about your experiences with domestic violence as a lay or non-clergy person in the congregation. Laity who are interviewed will be asked to come to a follow-up interview. The reason for the follow up interview is so that you can change or take out any information that you do not wish to be part of the final study. The follow up interview will take 30 minutes to an hour. You will be asked to describe the religious congregation. You will be asked questions about domestic violence and asked to relate domestic violence to your faith and faith life of the congregation. The interviews will be tape recorded, but you are free to turn off the recorder at any time. After the study is completed the tapes will be destroyed. Your identity and the identity of the congregation will be changed to protect your identities. You have been informed that these

interviews are not counseling or therapy interviews, but interviews for research purposes only. No people under the age of 18 will be recruited for this study. The interviews may be held at your congregation, or at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60621, whichever you prefer.

## **RISKS**

Your participation may involve some risks as follows. Discussing domestic violence may be uncomfortable and may raise issues that cause emotional pain. Talking about domestic violence may challenge the belief that "This does not happen in our congregation." Memories of abuse may surface in persons who have been abused in the past. It is possible that current instances of abuse may be spoken about and these should be responded to in a responsible and compassionate manner. The researcher will provide information for referrals to appropriate resources (including community therapists, pastoral caregivers, or shelters) should this occur. Since there are no drugs or medical procedures involved in this study, there is no physical threat to you if you participate in this study. However, some questions may be asked that are difficult to talk about. You are free to refrain from answering any questions that you are not comfortable addressing. If the information that you do give in the interview triggers feelings of anxiety or memories that are painful for you, you will have the opportunity at that point to have the tape recorder off and the interview stopped. In the possibility that you become extremely upset sometime after the interview, you will be referred to a counselor of your choice. The research project necessitates that Rev. Dorothy Valin not be that counselor, so that researcher and counselor roles are kept distinct.

## **BENEFITS**

There may be no direct benefit to you or your congregation by your participation in this research study. The possible benefits to you from participation in this study may include the following: You may become more aware of the need to address domestic violence within your congregations and your community. In addition, the study may contribute to the body of literature demonstrating the importance of religious belief and practice in studying the spiritual, psychological, and social aspects of domestic violence and abuse for survivors, for their religious congregations, and their surrounding communities. It may contribute to the pastoral care of persons who have experienced domestic violence. It may assist congregations to set norms of accountability for abusers and compassionate response to survivors and their families. It may advance the theological understanding of such concepts as forgiveness and repentance in the communal context. You may have an opportunity to think and talk with the researcher about you and your congregation's current ways of dealing with domestic violence. This may encourage people to do more to respond effectively to those dealing with domestic violence in the future. The results of the study could identify areas in which religious communities could educate and care for their families experiencing domestic violence. Your participation could also encourage and confirm areas in which your community life already promotes practices that prevent and respond to domestic violence.

**ALTERNATIVES**

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your name and the name and identifying characteristics of your congregation will be disguised. Tape recordings will be destroyed following the completion of the research study and only the disguised names in the edited transcript will be used for the final research project.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you or to your congregation. All costs for conducting the study will be the responsibility of the researcher. There will be no payment for participating in this study.

**CONTACT PERSONS**

You may contact the researcher, Rev. Dorothy Valin at (847) 256-3577 to raise any concerns related to the research study. You may use this number on nights or weekends, as well as during the day. In addition to this, you may contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University, at telephone number (312) 503-9338. The Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University can provide further information about your rights as a research subject and is where any research-related problems should be reported. Resources for persons impacted by domestic violence are available through the Chicago Area Domestic Violence hot line 1-877-863-6338. Payment for any treatment to which the subject will be referred is the subject's responsibility. Dorothy Valin will not be the therapist to whom you or parishioners will be referred, so that the roles of researcher and therapist are kept distinct. You may have a copy of a summary of research results should you desire to have one after the completion of the study.

**SUBJECT'S RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate will in no way affect any rights to which you are entitled. You and your congregation may discontinue participation at any time. The investigator may discontinue your participation in this study if the investigator thinks the discussion of this material may cause undue emotional distress or place you and your congregation at risk.

**CONSENT**

I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

---

(Signature of Respondent)

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Researcher)

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

## NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM FOR GOVERNING BODY OF THE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION #2  
 Name of Congregation\_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE: "Do You Hear Our Cries?" Core Narratives of Two Religious Congregations and the Challenge of Domestic Violence**

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: Dorothy Ann Valin MS MSN MDiv

FACULTY SPONSOR: Dr. Cristina Traina, Northwestern University Religion Department

**INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE**

Your congregation is being asked to take part in this research study because it has been identified as a congregation that is concerned about the experience of domestic violence for your parishioners and your community. The purpose of this research is to explore ways that congregation's faith story experience of religious faith and practice either blocks or promotes justice and healing for people experiencing domestic violence. In particular, it explores how congregations keep abusers accountable, provide pastoral care, construct worship services or provide educational classes that help or hinder healing from domestic violence. Rev. Dorothy Valin is conducting the research for the fulfillment of her Doctor of Philosophy requirements of Joint Program of Northwestern University and Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

**PROCEDURES**

As participants in the study, your clergy and lay persons will be asked to participate in an interview with the investigator, Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin. Each interview will last about an hour, and will be conducted over the period of a year. The interviews will be held at your congregation or at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Rd. Evanston, IL 60621 wherever the interviewees feel most comfortable. About 15-30 10-20 people will be interviewed. Dorothy Valin will visit and participate in one to three of your worship services. She may also collect some information on the members of the congregation such as marital status, age, number of family units in the congregation and information about the cultural backgrounds of the members. She may ask to see transcripts or tapes of sermons, worship bulletins, newsletters, educational materials, or committee notes. You will be asked to describe the religious congregation. Your clergy, laity, and survivors interviewed will be asked questions about domestic violence and asked to relate domestic violence to your faith and to the faith life of the congregation. Support personnel such as clerical persons will be asked to assist in securing archival documents and this may take several hours of their time to remove materials and replace them following their examination. The researcher may ask to attend a worship service or an educational program of the congregation.

*Method of Recruitment of Clergy:* Clergy will be contacted by letter and by phone calls after informed consent is granted by the governing body. Clergy will be people known to the researcher as interested in domestic violence, or supportive of domestic violence education as evidenced by their past participation in local efforts to prevent or respond to domestic violence.

*Clergy procedure:* Following contact by letter or phone, the researcher will schedule a meeting with clergy to explain informed consent, answer questions and to conduct a semi-structured interview which will be audio-taped. A transcript will be made of the tape and analyzed. The tapes will be destroyed at the completion of the research study. The interview takes about an hour.

*Method of Recruitment of Laity:* Non-clergy staff and lay persons (I will include here ordained elders and deacons who are not clergy) will be recruited by response to fliers, announcements in the church bulletin, or announcement in the church newsletter. I may recruit some non-parishioners since those outside the congregational context often have perspectives on the congregation that would provide important data. These persons would be people known to me.

*Procedure for Laity:* Laity will participate in a semi-structured interview of about an hour which will be taped. A transcript will be made of the tape and analyzed. Tape will be destroyed after completion of the study.

*Recruitment of Survivors:* Survivors will be recruited by flier, announcement in the bulletin, or announcement in the congregational newsletter.

*Procedure for Survivors:* Survivors will be given the option of being interviewed at the congregation or at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, wherever they feel most comfortable. The interview will follow the semi-structured format and the questions asked will be those on the interview sheet with some follow up questions. The interview will be audio-taped. A transcript will be made of the tape and analyzed. The tape will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

## **RISKS**

Your participation may involve the following risk:

Individuals may risk raising issues that relate to domestic violence that cause emotional pain for the participants. Memories of abuse may surface for some participants and referral to a therapist or pastoral counselor would need to be made. If this does happen, collection of research information will stop. It is possible that current instances of abuse may surface during the interviews, and these would need to be responded to in a compassionate and ethical manner. To help minimize risk, *only those survivors who are currently not living in a violent situation will be recruited.*

Congregations may risk challenging the belief that "This does not happen in my congregation." This may be upsetting to some parishioners. While this may be upsetting to congregations, it is better to report abuse than to allow it to continue. Pastoral care and referrals to appropriate resources will be extended to all who need it (see Resource Sheet attached to consent forms). No children under 18 years of age will be recruited to interview for this study. If cases of child abuse become known to the researcher, she will report them to the appropriate authorities. (Moved the

section on keeping the name of an interviewee from a perpetrator to the confidentiality section and the referral information to the resource sheet).

### **BENEFITS**

There will be no direct benefit to your congregation or to the people who are interviewed. The congregation may become aware of the need to address domestic violence within their congregations and communities. The congregation may provide information that adds to the body of knowledge about domestic violence and the way religious faith and religious congregations can help or hinder the recovery process. The congregation may have an opportunity to think and talk with the researcher about the congregations' current ways of dealing with domestic violence and this may encourage people to do more to respond effectively to those dealing with domestic violence in the future. The results of the study could identify areas in which religious communities could educate and care for persons experiencing domestic abuse. It could also encourage and confirm areas in which their community life already promotes practices that prevent and respond to domestic violence.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

You have the alternative to choose not to participate in this study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Participation in this research study is confidential, subjects will be identified by pseudonym, not their real name. If the results of the study are published, you will not be identified. The name and identifying characteristics of the congregation will be disguised. Tape recordings will be destroyed following the completion of the research study and only the disguised names in the edited transcript will be used for the final research project.

Under no circumstances will participant's names be shared with perpetrators, or anyone requesting this information, in order to protect their identity. The survivors will be asked to provide the name of their therapist, if they have one. The survivors are in no way obligated to provide the name of their therapist. Survivors will not at any time be pressured by the researcher to provide the name of the therapist.

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Participation in this research study is at no cost to you. All costs for conducting the study will be the responsibility of the researcher. There will be no cost to the congregation or interviewees. There will be no payment for participating in this study.

### **SUBJECTS' RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you and your congregation are free to withdraw at any time. Refusal to participate will in no way affect any rights to which you are

entitled. The investigator may discontinue your participation in this study if the investigator thinks the discussion of this material may cause undue emotional distress or place you at risk in any way. If you withdraw from the study the researcher would like to discuss this with you in order to address any concerns you may have, but you are not under any obligation to speak with the researcher if you do not want to.

A copy of the summary of research findings will be provided after completion of the study should you request one.

### **CONTACT PERSONS**

You may contact the researcher Dorothy Ann Valin at (847) 256-3577 during days, weekends, or nights with any questions related to the research. In addition to this contact, the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects of Northwestern University, at telephone number (312) 503-9338, can provide further information about your rights as a research subject and is where any research-related injury or problems should be reported.

The possibility of raising disturbing memories or uncovering new cases of domestic violence during this research does exist. In the event of mental distress resulting from the research procedures resources for crisis psychiatric treatment are available through the Chicago Area Domestic Violence hot line 1-877-863-6338. Payment for this treatment will be the subject's responsibility. In the event of emotional injury resulting from the research or uncovering of memories of domestic violence and abuse, psychiatric treatment is also available from a therapist of your choice or from local and congregational counseling resources. These may include your current therapist, local Family Service Agencies, or the pastoral care and counseling services usually used by your particular congregation (see Resources Listed attached to the consent form). Other local resources and numbers are available from the researcher.

### **CONSENT**

We the

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(NAME OF THE CONGREGATION)

agree to participate in the research study described above. We will receive a copy of this consent form.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Names of Attendees to Meeting and Official Role:

[illegible]

## **TOPIC-Themes taken from interviews**

### ***THEOLOGICAL ISSUES***

Justice-sharing  
 Justice-Micha 6:8  
 Justice is about power issues  
 Justice-there is none  
 Forgiveness  
 Suffering  
 Loving the Abuser  
 Keeping the Abuser Accountable  
 Can an Abuser Change?  
 Theology of Grace  
 Repentance-not just saying I'm sorry, change restitution  
 Why does God allow abuse?  
 Reality vs. Church Doctrine/Hell  
 How do we make meaning out of abuse?  
 Mysticism  
 Hermeneutics-Bible  
 Hermeneutics-personal story  
 Miracles  
 Putting on our Sunday Best/Looking Good  
 Church-can't share deep emotional issues  
 Responsibility toward DV-brother's keeper  
 Victim-we need to protect & keep safe  
 Clergy abuse  
 Image of God/male and female  
 Banality of Evil  
 Patton's Model of Forgiveness  
 Atonement question  
 Bible and tradition-submission /mutuality, love enemies and neighbors, violence in Bible  
 Revenge  
 Enemies/not the abuser, gang banger-do good etc.  
 Priesthood of all believers-different functions, equality in the church  
 Not separating physical, spiritual, emotional  
 Grace-what is grace in domestic violence?  
 God's presence-during abuse, after  
 God's power-relieve fear of death, give serenity  
 God's loving gaze-seeing ourselves as God sees us

## **TOPIC-Psychological Themes Taken from the Interviews With Both Congregations**

### **Psychological**

Voice-finding voice as road to healing  
 Voicelessness/Silence  
 Self Image/self esteem-Survivor effects of abuse-invisible scars  
 Being true to myself-Integrity, survivor  
 Minimizing-Survivor  
 Blaming the victim-abuser, family, church, community  
 Survivor's role/responsibility in DV  
 Guilt-survivor, abuser  
 Shame-survivor, abuser, family, church, community  
 Feeling sorry for the abuser, empathy, ambivalent, angry  
 Victim role-survivor  
 Safety-victim and children-first priority  
 Suicide threats/self violence  
 Staying/freedom to choose/vs oppression  
 Labeling victim and abuser-bad  
 Giving up dreams-survivor  
 Pregnancy-women often assaulted more during this time  
 Trust/ or lack of trust  
 Counseling Yes-couple needs to go together  
 Counseling No-safety comes first  
 Mental illness/ both factor in abuse and result of abuse  
 Empathy-non judgmental for abuser  
 Self Identity/self esteem of Abuser-effects of abuse on abuser, grow up too soon  
 Economic Factors-Poverty Fear of Job Loss-Abuser  
 Abuser's Humanity/not demonizing  
 Defensiveness and Negativity-Abuser  
 Abuser can change/what causes transformation, healing  
 No accountability-just empathy good for abuser  
 Destruction of property by abuser (includes harming pets)  
 Men's violence-due to lack of skill in relationships  
 Men's fear of women's verbal skills-leads to frustration and abuse  
 Men as victims-men are abused and this leads to abuse  
 Psychological, Emotional, Verbal Abuse  
 Covert abuse-can't be seen, not done in front of others  
 What is the definition of abuse?  
 Veteran's combat experience in relation to abuse or men's experience

Isolation  
Vicarious Trauma-children watching  
Alcohol-a factor-Alcoholism and Drug addiction, survivor or abuser  
Internet Predators  
Internet Pornography-role of pornography in abuse  
Need for a definition of abuse  
Men's gender training-violence, TV,  
No right or wrong just model empathy  
single incident vs pattern-severity  
Abuser's insight and "getting it" or awareness when abusing  
Avoid quick solutions  
Emotional Abuse  
Depression  
Al Anon  
Small Groups  
Fear as motive for abuse  
Borderline Personality and how to handle  
Revenge-wanting to hurt abuser, victim, clergy, bystanders  
Role of the Therapist  
Boundaries in Church/or marriage, or between people  
Divorce and remarriage-not the answer-maybe abuse continues

Psych.  
Themes  
Cont.

THEMES OF RELATIONSHIP	Clergy 1	Survivor 1	Bystander 1	Clergy 2	Survivor 2	Bystander 2
Family pattern/history		1	1			
Dealing with differences		1				
Power Differences, Handling these	2	2	2			
Love for Children-Survivor motivation		3				
Importance of Supportive Relationships		2				
Parental Discipline	1					
Divorce			1			
Adultery			2			
Remarriage, Stepchildren etc.						
Family of origin support/denial		1				
In Law relationship troubles		1				
Setting Limits-in intimate relationships			1			
Reporting to authorities	1		1			
Teen violence-physical	1		1			
Teen verbal abuse of parents	1		1			
the emotional context of the couple			1			
Emotional abuse in the family of origin			1			
Summary	6	11	12			