# RE-INVENTING THE CAVEMAN

**Narrative discussions on Maleness**

by

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**DECLARATION**

I, Aiden Grant Choles, declare that

**RE-INVENTING THE CAVEMAN**

Is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature                                                    Date

(AG Choles)

**ABSTRACT**

The state of Maleness has received much attention in academic and public discourse of late. One such instance is the play *Defending the Caveman*, which depicts men in their "natural" settings as Cavemen, thereby justifying Caveman-like behaviour. On the other hand, much writing exists that find men culpable of discrimination, violence and abuse towards others. Discourses like these have real effects on the ways in which men choose and act on their Maleness. Six men engaged in narrative therapeutic discussions in an attempt to share their stories of Maleness, to discuss how society constructs men, and to re-evaluate the Maleness chosen by the participants.

**Key terms:** narrative approach, social constructionism, discourse, postmodernism, deconstruction, Maleness, patriarchy, homosexuality, practical theology, feminism, gender roles.

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**Chapter 1**

## 1.1   Introduction

In recent years a theatrical production known as *Defending the Caveman*[1] has influenced South African gender knowledge second to none. This comical show is a one-man exposition of what it means to be men and women, and how that meaning is played out in our social interaction and contexts. Originally an American play, *Defending the Caveman* has been adapted by a South African actor and has sold out performances for a number of years.

This production has influenced South African social interaction to such an extent that when a gender issue arises in conversation, the inevitable question is *Have you seen Defending the Caveman?* From this production it is understood that, by nature, men are "hunters" and women are "gatherers". According to Caveman logic, the man is the hunter who is focussed, goal driven, power hungry and aloof while fulfilling the role of provider for his partner and offspring. The woman on the other hand is the gatherer who concerns herself with household chores, nurtures the offspring and generally tends to the needs of the hunter. Despite its comical nature and intent, *Defending the Caveman* has generally become a point of reference in conversations concerning the differences between men and women and how we choose to live with those differences.

I believe that the potency behind *Defending the Caveman* lies in its ability to construct and sustain an almost archetypal understanding of the "true nature" of men, women and how the two sexes are intended to interact. It is my belief that such a truth-claim has the potential to constitute gender along patriarchal lines, and that the *Caveman* is far from the ideal role model for men in South Africa. In my experience patriarchy has neither provided a safe place for men, women and children in our society nor within the landscape of history. My experience also resonates with the assertion made by Van Greunen, Kotzé and Kotzé (2001:103) that there are long standing historical and legal precedents that have sanctioned and

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[1]   Originally written and performed by Rob Decker in the USA. Defending the Caveman is performed by Tim Plewman in South Africa.

legitimised violence and sexual exploitation of "subordinates" by "superiors" within families. In short, it seems as if the patriarchal man has left a trail of hurt, domination and very little salvageable good.

As background to this study, I will draw on my experience as a young South African male as well as the stories of fellow South African men that I have been privileged to witness. For the most part I am interested in the stories a group of close male friends told of their lives and how they came to describe their Maleness, both positive and negative. At times these stories and experiences reflect dissatisfaction with the current state of manhood/maleness/masculinity/man's culture, and recognise that a change is needed in men's attitudes as we increasingly "observe the very negative effects of the dominant men's culture" (White 1996:163). It is my intention in this study to deconstruct the discourses of Maleness to the extent that, with the aid of my fellow co-searchers, we can proverbially re-invent the caveman.

However, before more is said, I need to make a note concerning the choice of words used in this project.  Throughout this research project I will use the terms manhood, masculinity, maleness, men's culture interchangeably. The motivation behind not limiting myself to the use of one term comes from the realization that there are numerous discourses that constitute men's lives, and I wish to give room for the expression of these discourses. Secondly, globalisation has generated greater gender plurality whereby masculinity is now not one fixed form (Connell 1998:18-19). Finally, referring to "manhood/maleness/masculinity/men's culture" would become tedious and tiresome.

## 1.2   Inspiration for the study

The inspiration for this study has been borne out of my own personal distress at what men have done to women, children and themselves. Along with the men that White (1996) has met, I experience distress, shame and outrage in relation to those men who abuse, rape and at times kill women, children and other men. In addition, there are men who feel alienated and at odds with being male as a result of the hegemony that dominant male culture holds over men, such that it represents all men and their experiences. These men have their "manhood" dictated by the

dominant cultures and are not free to discover their own manhood, and as a result feel alienated.

Then there are men like myself who willingly attempt to separate ourselves from the dominant perceptions of men and of men's cultures that we perceive to be negative or destructive. I believe that it is possible for men to construct their own manhood, one that is separate from the harmful dominant men's cultures, and one that embraces different ways of being men. There are also men who resist change altogether, men who are unwilling to relinquish the privileges that have yielded a whole range of opportunities unavailable to other groups (Pease 1997:7).

There was a time in my early career as a high school teacher and training as a narrative therapist when I felt the need to take a stance concerning the damage that I had seen done by men, as well as recognising the frightening potential within myself to do the very same. As a result of this need I addressed a letter to my Maleness, voicing my discontent and resolutions I wanted to make. I invited people close to me to witness this stance so that I could be held accountable in future. In reaction to the letter, a close friend wrote to me on behalf of Maleness. Below you will find a copy of the letter I wrote to Maleness, as well as the reply from Maleness.

> To: Maleness
> From: Aiden (your former loyal subject)
> Re: Declaration of Independence
>
> Dear Maleness
>
> I have just recently begun to realise your ever-subversive presence in my thoughts and relationships. I want you to know that I am not happy with the way you have influenced me, and I am standing up to you. This is a big step for me since, by nature, I am a male and it involves challenging the very core of who Aiden is. Despite this, I believe I can turn you into a reformed way of being male, NewMaleness. A NewMaleness that other males can witness and learn from. NewMaleness has prompted me to challenge your place in my life, the

place you have tricked me into giving you. I am claiming that space back for Aiden.

Maleness, I'm not sure I should believe the things you tell me. "People should listen to and obey you because you are a male" is just one of these lies you have whispered in my ear. I'm not happy with what you have said. I do not own other people and they have no right to obey me, nor to listen to me... in fact, it is their choice to do so, not my right! Yep, I know you don't like to hear this, but I refuse to listen to you anymore.

Since I have become a teacher your voice has become more and more evident to me, as have all your lies and deceptions. Unfortunately, the way my school works has been informed by an old maleness. It upsets me that your brothers have managed to grip our world so tightly. You tell us that we cannot let you go, that we need you! Well, Maleness I think I would be better off without you! I don't enjoy the way you decide for me how I have to interact with students (I don't care if they stand with their hands in pockets or if their hair is too long!). You tell me that a learner has to obey me, my authority, and me as a person. The problem is when a learner does not do so. Oh boy, then you scream at me! Maleness, you make me feel inadequate, and guilty for not being adequate! You tell me not to let them get the better of me! Well, unfortunately because your brothers pay my salary, I have to enforce those stupid rules you came up with. But what I plan to do is not to take it personally when another person (yes, that is what learners are) disobeys me. That is a lie you tell me, that I have to take things personally and I am creating my power over you by trying not take a student's insubordination personally anymore. It is not my fault they have been recruited to be that way. I don't believe I should take responsibility for their parents' lack of responsibility.

Another lie you have tricked me into believing is that I own people. This is a blatant lie!  Who gave me the right to own anyone! Shakespeare was right when, in *Julius Caesar*, he wrote that no bar, chain, nor wall can contain the human spirit. Why is it so important to you that I own people? You also tell me that people have to respect me, and you get

very upset when they don't. To some extent I believe that I deserve respect, and only out of their own free will, not by coercion. So, I will use your voice against you. I am choosing to offer respect in order to gain respect. There! How deep does that cut into your sense of entitlement? Hang on, that is another lie! Maleness you have lied to me again by telling me that I am entitled to a whole bunch of stuff. You wont like it, but this is Aiden making Aiden small in your eyes. This is something I know you will resist, but that does not surprise me, and I am ready (I wont be surprised if I have to write you a few more letters until you get the message).

Cassius proclaims, again in *Julius Caesar*, "Cassius will from bondage Cassius deliver". Maleness, you have for too long ruled my life. I am formally telling you that I am denouncing the influence you have on me! I am serving your eviction notice!

Aiden.

This is the response from Maleness:

Hi Aiden,

Thanks for your sincere and open letter. I must say it was not easy for me to read and I've taken some time before responding. I have to admit that at first it was hard not to be hurt and even angry over your letter. I felt unfairly treated and a little betrayed. But I have tried to understand your perspective and have taken time before responding so that I don't just respond defensively.

Still there are some things that I want to say to you!

Aiden, you are a man. This is not something you can change. Either you will choose to embrace me (your maleness) as a part of yourself - as a gift - or you will live uncomfortably alongside me in that body of yours. It seems that many men live without ease - and this is often the cause of many of the problems that you raise in your letter. Many of

the things you have come to question and even rejected are things that ARE unacceptable. I agree. I have never wanted to make you disrespectful of the needs and rights of others - women in particular. I have always encouraged you to embrace your identity as a male and express that identity in healthy and meaningful ways.

But as you have rightly noticed - there is a strong pressure in our society to live differently - to take ownership rather than to celebrate and respect - to control rather than to honour and allow space to become.

So what is happening to you then? Are you turning your back on me?

No. I think that in fact you are learning to embrace me. Although you may not realise this yet, perhaps you are closer to me than you have ever been. Up till now you have let the world, in many ways, determine your concept of maleness (understandably). Now you seek to discover and forge your own way. This is a coming of age - in the very best of ancient traditions. When a boy becomes a man. When a boy comes to terms with the power and physical strength of being male - and learns how to harness this power without abusing it for personal gain - or at the expense of others.

You are also coming to terms with your sexuality. You have seen the very worst side of men and the way that they have caused me great embarrassment. And you are clear in your rejection of this hunger for power over others. In this I would like to encourage you. You are male. I am all you have when it comes to sexuality. Keep walking this road. And may I accompany you on the journey? Let me be a participant and a player in the identity that you will confidently establish in the coming years. Let us clearly identify our opponents - Hunger for Power, Insecurity, Selfishness etc. and let us make a clear and strong stand against such distortions of the true maleness which God had intended in the creation of male sexuality.

I remain...

Your ardent supporter,

Maleness.

This exchange prompted me to inquire into Maleness further in the form of *Re-inventing the Caveman*. I am not the first to have such an interest within the South African setting, as displayed by Cloete (2001) who was interested in men's culture and the ways in which men are constructed through, and influenced by, social discourses.

Cloete explored how five male members of a Dutch Reformed congregation were influenced by social discourses concerning men. These middle-aged men, through a narrative conversational approach, identified five social discourses that had a decisive influence on their ways of life. These discourses were:

(a) A man is a breadwinner and the primary provider for the family;

(b) A man is goal-orientated and focussed on success;

(c) A man is dominant and aggressive;

(d) A man does not value emotions and relationships, and

(e) A man does not change easily.

In addition to identifying the discourses, these five men were able to develop alternative ways of being men in spite of the way the social discourses had influence over them. Morrell (2002) believes that men have a responsibility to assist in gender reform as they have often been interpolated as the "cause" of gender oppression. Men can assist in many possible ways where a primary area would be an "attempt to create new models of masculinity and new ways of 'being men' " (Morrell 2002:313). The socially constructed man that Cloete and his associates identified resembles the *Caveman* in many ways. It is heartening to see that these men were able to find ways in which they could resist the "caveman" discourses and construct alternative ways of being men.

## 1.3   My commitment in this study

I would like to invite you on a journey. It is a journey in which you will enter conversation with the text of our lives as participants in the *Caveman* discussions. It is also a journey that puts aside "the particular ways of writing that are seen as appropriate for university success "(Pease 1997:145) but instead attempts to represent our discussions accurately and uniquely. It is with this in mind that I try to achieve a sense of flow in my writing that will make this project accessible to everyday people who are not participants in academic circles, but that also validates this text as a contribution to academia. According to Pease (1997:146) some may say that unconventional ways of conducting research, when critiqued against academic principles of research, lack academic rigour. However, I have attempted to present our discussions in a somewhat unconventional manner that steps outside of the discourse of academic writing, and one that is committed to honouring and respecting people's experiences. I hope this study will contribute to your life and give you some food for thought. I will now outline some of the commitments with which I began the *Caveman* discussions.

My commitment in this study was to seek an understanding of what it means to be a male from an active, co-operative enterprise of co-searchers in relationship. I choose to use the term "co-search" in a way that grounds this study as a participatory search where the "researcher" and "subjects" become partners in co-searching for new knowledges in which all participants have a say (Kotzé 2002). A further rationale for reframing the research relationship lies in Kincheloe's warning that the "hierarchical relationship of the researcher and the researched" where the researched is placed in an inferior position could invite the presence of suspicion and mistrust, which could then in turn inhibit open and meaningful conversations (Kincheloe 1991:39).

When reflecting on the methodological approach of the *Caveman* discussions I am reminded of how Pease (1997: 148-149) summarises the emphases claimed from feminist research: a recognition of the open presence of the research, a non-exploitative relationship between the researcher and the researcher based on collaborative inquiry and turning the research process into one of reflection by the

participants. By inviting the *Caveman* participants to be co-searchers I also invited the *Caveman* discussions to enter the arena of feminist-informed research.

As such I will view Maleness as a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships. According to Kimmel (1996:223) Maleness is not the manifestation of an inner essence, but is socially constructed in culture. I am also of the opinion that all human understanding of reality becomes *text*, thus including our understandings of God, religion, the world and human activities. The same applies to theology and the ways in which we engage with theology. Myburg (2000:44) reminds me that in understanding Scripture, we must keep in mind that theology remains a human act drawing on the sensible and intelligible. As such, when speaking of theology one also speaks of life, and when one speaks of life one also speaks of theology. As such, I was committed to the reciprocal process of theology and life within our discussions.

## 1.4   South Africa at present

Adam Levin, in writing for This Day (September 7 2004), points out that in current day mass media, male role models are more menacing caricatures of manhood than gentle brother or father figures. He also points out that the adoption of such extreme positions signals a global crisis of masculinity.

> The fact that many young boys spoke of Nelson Mandela as a role
> model … signalled an absence of strong male figures in the immediate
> environment.
>
> (Criselda Kananda cited in ThisDay, September 7 2004)

If we consider the quote above and the impact of globalisation, we might find that the current state of Maleness in South Africa may not be all that different from the state of Maleness in other countries. It is well documented that men around the world are in a state of change (Munroe 2001; Venter 1993). Men around the world are experiencing a paradigm shift in what it means to be a man. The situation in our own country is similar. Recent affirmative action policies have resulted some men to feel threatened in the workplace and at home (Morrell 2002:312). Venter (1993:88) notes

that men are told that they are "too macho, too insensitive, too aggressive, too obsessed with sex" while they are also "too much like little boys, too soft and whimpish, too lost to lead and too lost to feel".

The dominant discourse of masculinity harbours a dichotomy of expectation of what it is to be a man. Men are expected to be powerful, successful and able to take control, while simultaneously they are expected to be caring and understanding partners and fathers in families. Men have found themselves in a position where they employ "splitting" in dealing with these expectations (see Munroe 2001). This is a sense of disconnection in which these irreconcilable expectations are simultaneously adhered to, and comes about when men who say they love their partners and children, abuse the very same people. Love and control become fused in relationships in which women and children are violated (Van Greunen, Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:104). Is it such a surprise that many men find themselves being confused when contemplating what it means to be a man?

One needs only to glance at the statistics relating to violent crime to see that men are more culpable than women as perpetrators. This fact alone suggests that South African men are "in the same boat". For instance, black African males share a common background with the situation of men in North America. Black African men find themselves torn between the tribal values of patriarchy, the aftermath of apartheid and the pressure of cultural assimilation pressure from Western culture due to globalisation. White South African men have also found themselves torn between the expectations of patriarchal ideology and the emancipatory opportunities opened up by globalisation.

Christian men also find themselves in a similar position. Traditionally, responsibility for the visionary and theological aspects of church life has rested firmly on the shoulders of men. Theology was also exclusively the playing field of men (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:16). Now men find themselves challenged by the growing influence of feminist theology and its challenges to place men hold within religious life. In summary, men are suffering alienation from maleness (Venter 1993:88).

Men are also feeling beaten up by women, who seem to have changed places with men in these transitional times. Not too long ago, as Rohr and Martos (1996:xvii) explain, men prided themselves on being successful in both private and corporate life, and in personal and business life. Now, women have access to opportunities that were previously reserved for men. Women are now able to occupy the positions of success to a greater extent. Rohr and Martos add that nowadays it seems that women are carrying the aggression for the culture and men in turn are seeking the feeling and sentiment women used to monopolise. Men are tired of being warriors and success objects.

## 1.5   Research interest

### 1.5.1   Discourse

Like Cloete (2001), the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions identified the social discourses that have had and still have a decisive influence on the lives of the participants, as well as identifying the discourses pertaining to our lives as we as men grow in years.

The participants in Cloete's discussions had an opportunity to reflect deeply on their lives and the events that were influential in their construction as men.  This study furthers Cloete's approach in that it invites the participants to reflect on the historical and cultural origins of the way in which Maleness has been constructed as well as the construction of the man they choose to be in the future. This is a pertinent issue for young adult men when one considers the life changes that often occur in the later years of life. A few of these changes that often occur are marriage, fatherhood, career development etc. It is important to remember that men become particular kinds of men through their histories and the histories of the societies they find themselves in (Epstein 1998:47).

### 1.5.2  Society

Rohr and Feister (2001) believe that we live in a deconstructed society - one in which people have lost basic trust and faith in institutions like marriage, the church and government. They also believe that humanity in general is suffering from a crisis of meaning.

Living in such a society introduces immeasurable amounts of anxiety, expressed in instances of abuse, murder and various other forms of violence. The solution for Rohr and Feister is to find ways of reconstructing our society. Their assertion makes it pertinent for us to reflect on the men we choose to be in the future, especially when considering the opportunities men encounter when engaging with the institutions as mentioned above.

### 1.5.3  Theology

The crisis of meaning that Rohr and Feister (2001) speak of, as well as the associated anxiety thereof, provides an opportunity for discussions on theology to enter the *Caveman* project. Traditionally, theology has been characterised by a speaking about God scientifically (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:3), while at others Scripture has been viewed as the object of theology (Venter 1996:2). The *Caveman* approach to theology embraces a third way, and that is to include God and Scripture as objects of theology, but to also include the participants "statements about God and about faith in God" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:3) as an additional aspect of theology.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:4) note how one may get the impression that theologians have to dissociate themselves from faith. I agree with them in saying that a theologian remains a human being and a believing person at that. Thus one cannot talk about God and do theology if that theology is not based on talk to God. The *Cavemen* co-searchers are men who "talk to God" and it was my interest to find out how the theologies of the co-searchers presented in the text of their lives as men.

### 1.5.4  Nature

In identifying and deconstructing the discourses that have constituted the lives of the co-searchers, attention was also given to the constitutive force that "nature" has on men as they construct and live out their Maleness. We then entered into a nature vs. nurture debate regarding the constitutive elements of one's Maleness. We kept in mind White's (1996:170) criticism of essentialist thought. In regards to Maleness, essentialist thought is that which reduces a man, his actions and the motivation behind those actions to a force that is essential to the genetic make-up of men. He argues that an approach to understanding men's culture that totalises men's lives as being a product of nature "enables us to avoid the moral and ethical implications of, and responsibility for, what we think and what we do". Such thinking blinds us of our role in the maintenance of the domination and abuse of others, as well as that of our support of structure that preserve and further men's privilege. As a group we did not disregard the "nature" element, but aimed to also foster discussion concerning the ways in which men may take responsibility for actions in the lives of the co-searchers.

Another way in which such domination and abuse is perpetuated can be found in how the essentialist approach "provides for a radical distinction between men and women in terms of their essence" (White 1996:171). This then allows men to juxtapose their nature with that of women and incites men to separate and distance themselves from women. In this sense "being a man means not being like women" (Kimmel 1996:229). This view of men is perpetuated again by social knowledge, as portrayed in *Defending the Caveman*.

Munroe (2001:13) believes that the issue concerning the lack of certainty amongst many men is not as a result of a biological problem of Maleness, but of a spiritual problem of identity. I agree with this statement, as does Venter (1993:89). However, Munroe argues that the quest for identity amongst men is a question of finding one's inherent purpose. Here I have to disagree with Munroe as this statement runs the risk of centralising a way of being a man and discourages any alternative approach. I would however agree with Munroe when he encourages men to journey deeper into

what is of ultimate value, the things that give meaning, vocation and harness all our relational dimensions as males in its service. Smith (1996:39) adds to my reservation concerning a man's inherent purpose by saying that by assuming men have a "true" identity, we create yet another yardstick for insufficiency amongst men. This statement is "true" of any truth claim – it gives validity only to the knowledge that fits within the parameters of the "truth", excluding anything that deviates.

In addition to investigating current and past discourses and reflecting on later life as a man, this study will reflect on the role models that have been present in the lives of the participants. The motivation in engaging in such a cross-section is borne out of the belief that in South Africa there are few adequate and respectable male role models for young men to look up to and learn from. We will discuss the men in our lives that have not been adequate role models and how the participants may learn from the mistakes made by these men. This interest is similar to the interests of the new men's movements (Morrell 2002) where energies are directed toward developing new male role models that differ sharply from orthodox patriarchal models of men-in-charge.

## 1.6  Men's culture

It is my belief that, as men, we are defined by men's cultures and can never stand outside of them. The implication of this belief is that we cannot hope to gain an objective perspective of men's culture or of what it means to be a man. As a result of this assumption, this study will focus on the ways in which views of men are constructed and the effects of these constructions on men and the people surrounding men.

Smith (1996) encourages men to accept the experiences of others and to provide space for their stories. In this way, space would be opened for alternatives without denying other experiences; not imposing a universal claim to the way men should act out their Maleness. In this way, we would not be so consumed by the question of *what the true Maleness is*, but more concerned with the effects our beliefs of Maleness have on women, the world and ourselves. By aligning ourselves with

these questions, Smith (1996) believes we, as men, would remain ethically and creatively alive.

> … as a hunter you couldn't talk and hunt at the same time because you would come home with nothing, cause you would be scaring away the animals […] so conversation among men is very low on the totem pole as far as importance. You never heard a guy say to another guy, "Hey, we don't talk enough. How come you never call?"
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:11)

This research project is primarily concerned with giving the co-searchers the freedom and space to share their individual and communal narratives as men. An integral part of the study is concerned with the ways in which the men describe and explain their world and themselves. Gergen (1985:266) outlines this approach as the principal concern of social constructionism, of which more will be said in chapter 2.

The forums in which men meet to discuss the issues they face have often been the topics of academic writings and research (see Pease 1997 and White 1996). Pease (1997:19) writes of one of his initial "men's consciousness-raising groups" in the mid-1970's as a group who were interested in achieving three major aims:

(i)     to explore the ways in which men felt stunted and limited by sex-role socialisation;

(ii)    to become more aware of sexist attitudes within themselves; and

(iii)   to explore alternative ways of relating to each other as men that broke with traditional forms of male bonding.

As you engage with this text, you will find that the interests and reasons for the *Caveman* discussions resonate with those of Pease (1997), with one distinct difference being that Pease began the discussions almost 30 years ago. Another similarity between the "consciousness-raising" that Pease was involved in and the *Caveman* discussions is that Pease's group shared a meal together as they delved into conversation. He also reminds me that:

> The issues are not altogether new. Men have been meeting together to consider issues of gender, to respond to feminism and to find ways of enriching their lives for some time.
>
> <div align="right">(Pease 1997:33)</div>

## 1.7  Research journey

Before I begin to describe in detail the process used in conducting the *Cavemen* discussions, I feel it is necessary to outline the epistemological and theological perspectives I have adopted as a co-searcher. A more detailed description will follow in chapter 2.

I have chosen a metaphor that I believe represents my epistemological, theological and ethical approach to life. This is the metaphor of an African beer basket. A beer basket is woven from various forms of grass and is coloured by different soils and ochre's. Inside my basket I find a spiral of words relating to how I weave my self as a constructed man and as a narrative therapist. You will find that my spiral has no ending and as such leaves room for new thoughts, experiences and constitutive influences. This open-ended spiral was my personal starting point in the discussions: I wanted to allow the co-searchers to share their stories with me and to allow them to impact on me, as well as for me to share some of my spiral with them.

I chose to conduct the *Cavemen* discussions in the format of a narrative group approach. I believe that a narrative approach resonates with my metaphor of a beer basket and creates space within a discursive event for ethical reflection. As the *Cavemen* discussions were to deal with men, their lives, and the people they share their lives with, I felt it necessary to create a space that generated discussion regarding the ethical implications of language, actions and decisions. Narrative therapy, Freedman and Combs (1996:35) argue, motivates us "to examine our constructions and stories – how they come to be and what their effects are on ourselves and others".

Rohr and Feister (2001:81) writes that our knowledge of God is participatory. I believe that in practical terms this means that one cannot "theologise" without living,

being present and being aware in the same moment. The Bible thus "becomes" as we discuss and live our faith in our various contexts. My theological starting point is one that aims to incorporate the emancipatory living that God offers into our contexts whereby theologising and living become inseparable.

What now follows is a description of the methodological process applied in conducting the *Cavemen* discussions.

## 1.7.1 Finding co-searchers

The aim of the study was to facilitate group discussions with young adult men who indicated a willingness to discuss their experiences of manhood. These men were invited to the group sessions with prior knowledge concerning the aim of the discussions. The co-searchers were acquaintances of mine, whom I have had the opportunity to share experiences with over the last couple of years. Again, by using the term *co-searcher* in naming the participants, space is created for how the meaning and importance of words depend on the reader as their "co-construer". In applying the word analogy to conversational therapy, the participants become co-searchers as they interact with each other's stories, and as they ascribe meaning to the words used in our discussions.

I invited each member individually to the discussions. I used this opportunity to introduce the topic in a language that I hoped was accessible to them. I also gave each participant a summary sheet that briefly explained the nature of the project (Appendix A) The motivation in doing this was recognising that for the duration of my clinical training I may have adopted a way of speaking an "in-language" that may exclude others from understanding and applying the narrative techniques and concepts I learnt.

In the hope of conducting research that is transparent and that fulfils Kotzé's (2002) exhortation to include participants at all levels, I offered a copy of the research proposal to each participant. I believe that in doing this I was encouraged to direct the research process in a way that was to take into account that not everyone was familiar with "intellectual" language, thus prompting me to produce the proposal in an

accessible manner. I was also reminded that the research would be conducted through and within language:

> Conversation in itself is not therapy, but therapy is an event occurring in conversation. Therapy happens between people within language.
>
> (Berg & De Shazer 1993:5)

Once the prospective participant indicated he was willing to join the discussions, he was given a consent form (Appendix B). The use of a consent form ensured that all ethical implications of the study were negotiated with the participants.

At this stage the co-searchers were made aware of who was invited to the group. Once the men had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the proposal I offered each an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns with me on an individual basis. This allowed me the opportunity to hear what thoughts and feelings were felt about being involved in discussions of this nature. Once the men were satisfied and comfortable with pursuing the *Cavemen* discussions I requested that each of them write an introductory letter to the group before we commenced with the discussions (Appendix C). Through the process of constructing these letters I invited the co-searchers to reflect on their origins as men and the stories that had influenced them in becoming the type of men they chose to be. The invitation took the form of questions such as:

> *What qualities do I believe I have that distinguishes me as a man?*
> *What would I say makes me a good friend?*
> *Who do I think would be proud of the man I am?*
> *Who may not be surprised by my approach to being a man?*
> *What do I value in myself?*
> *What part of myself would I choose to remain with me as I journey through life?*
> *Who can I thank for my passion?*

### 1.7.2  Negotiating the journey

In our first discussion, I discussed the research project in detail with the participants.

I shared with them my inspiration to conduct discussions with them, as well as my aims for the project and my initial thoughts on how we may journey together. This discussion was essential in that it allowed us, as a group, to decide on the language and terminology that would be used in the discussions, as well as allowing space for mutual agreement on the aims of the project and the ways in which we would journey together.

I had this discussion with the group, as I did not wish to be prescriptive of the outcomes that may be achieved from the discussions, but wished to aid the participants in a journey that we would construct together, and possibly a journey that might be totally different from the one I envisaged. This approach also links with the style of research proposed by feminist thinkers, where the co-searchers will help to set the agenda in our conversations.

Before every discussion we shared a meal together. This provided a time of fellowship together before delving into the topic. This also allowed the co-searchers to begin to relax around each other and enjoy some general talk before commencing with the *Caveman* content.

### 1.7.3  Hearing the stories

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality,
> the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied,
> and the situational constraints that shape enquiry. Such researchers
> emphasise the value-laden nature of enquiry. They seek answers to
> questions that stress how social experience is created and given
> meaning.
>
> (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:4)

The theoretical foundation that informed my approach to the *Cavemen* discussions was that of a narrative conversational approach. I believe that people live their lives by and with stories (White 1991). Our stories shape our lives and they have real - not imagined - effects on our existence. These stories also provide the structure of our lives. A person's narrative is constituted firstly by a temporal unfolding of events

that make up the story and secondly, by the interpretations of these events. In applying this narrative approach to our lives, we can see that we undergo a continual process of "storying and re-storying" of our experiences (White 1991:29).

This research was thus concerned with the ways in which the co-searchers storied and re-storied their lives. How the co-searchers came to describe, explain and account for their existence as persons (Gergen 1985) and as men was implicit in hearing their narratives as men. One of the values that characterises a narrative conversational approach is the attempt at always maintaining a stance of curiosity through which one ask questions (Morgan 2000). Here the co-searchers are seen as the experts of their lives and of their stories.

If stories shape our lives, then language is of vital importance in the process of re-storying. Special attention was given to the function that language served in the lives of the co-searchers. Social constructionism, as a movement, has highlighted the importance of keeping such vigilance for the constitutive power of language. Implicit in this vigilance is the process of deconstruction, a notion pioneered by the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Through the process of deconstructing narratives, a therapist searches for "unique outcomes" - those preferred ways of being that are neglected and un-storied (White & Epston 1990)[2]. In an attempt to deconstruct the discourses that constitute the lives of the co-searchers, a narrative conversational approach allowed us to co-construct alternative ways of being men in light of the discourses we identified.

Much scientific research has upheld the belief that research endeavours should remain as value-neutral as possible to validate the results. Thus the desire is to "avoid any politicized interest influencing the subjects" (Davis & Gergen 1997:3) within the research setting. This research study purposely rejected this assertion, as it is my belief that every word and action is political and that it is a lost hope to aim to cancel out any politicised interest in the research setting.

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2 Social constructionism and deconstruction will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 2.

The co-searchers thus had the opportunity to narrate their stories during the course of the conversations. With the prior consent of the co-searchers, these discussions were recorded, affording us the opportunity to reflect on these discussions at a later stage.

## 1.7.4 The client is the expert

Viewing the co-searcher as the expert in his own life is important in a narrative conversational approach (Morgan 2000). Implicit in the process of allowing the co-searchers to narrate their stories was my orientation towards their stories. During the narrative discussions I did my best to adopt what Griffith (1995) calls a position of *wonder* and *curiosity*. Griffith argues that as therapists we need to adopt a curiosity about the stories we encounter in therapy, as opposed to a certainty about what a person tells you. These sentiments echo the belief of Anderson and Goolishian (1992) and Morgan (2000) that the client is the expert of his or her story.

In this study then, I did my best not to assume that I had an expert knowledge concerning the stories I heard, but that the co-searchers were the experts. I could only but assume a curiosity and an unknowing wonder when hearing the stories. This position required that my understanding, explanations and interpretations were not limited by prior experiences.

On the other hand, I need to believe that I do know something, and that an absolute position of not knowing is impossible. This was especially true when considering the fact that I had friendships with the co-searchers prior to the study. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to manage this struggle within myself so that I did not limit the stories I heard because of some "knowing" I may have possessed.

Based on the social constructionist assumption that meaning and understanding come about through language, I accepted, with Kotzé and Kotzé (2001:4), that the hope of ever fully understanding a person may be futile. This is so because it is through dialogue with a person that we understand what the other person is saying. This process is open to own our interpretation affected by our history and culture,

and is thus not reliable. This concept was vital to me as a co-searcher as I had to be careful not to come to a place where I felt I understood my fellow co-searchers. This is also a reason why I chose to include a group of my friends as participants within the study. As a friend it is easy to assume that you understand the other party, and involving them within the group discussion meant that I had to challenge this belief directly.

### 1.7.5  Reflective summary of group sessions

With the permission of the co-searchers I audio taped our conversations and provided written summaries of each conversation. The aim was to allow the co-searchers the opportunity to validate our conversations. This process ensured that they were satisfied with the material I chose to report, and that my writing reflected accurately their experiences of our discussions. The summaries prove beneficial for me in that I was afforded the opportunity to ensure that I was hearing the co-searchers accurately and fairly. Lastly, this process opened opportunity for the co-searchers to reflect on the process of our discussions and to allow for criticisms of the process.

### 1.7.6  Invitations for alternative voices

It is enormously important for men to meet with other men.

(Smith 1996:47)

I am particularly interested in exploring the ways in which profeminist
men can take steps towards building partnerships with feminist women,
progressive gay men, and anti-racist activists.

(Pease 1997:6)

According to the three areas Pease has outlined as indicators of profeminist work, I believe that the *Caveman* discussions have in some way fulfilled two of the three. Smith expresses that men cannot redefine themselves in isolation, and that in addition to listening to each other, men also need to listen to women. By not doing

this, tackling Maleness would be futile, and would only perpetuate the injustices created at the hands of Maleness in the past. It is out of this argument that we as a group invited some women and gay people to join our discussions.

Hudson (2002:275) and his co-searchers invited *outside voices* to their discussions so that they had the opportunity to become compassionate witnesses, following on from the ideas of Andersen (1987); Weingarten (2002) and White (2000). In our discussions we chose to use the words *alternative voices* instead. We believed that we needed to hear voices that could witness our Maleness from a profoundly different perspective, which included the voices that Maleness had historically disabled or silenced.

There were some questions we wanted to ask Femaleness. These questions revolved around issues facing Maleness and whether they were peculiar to Maleness. We also recognised that Homophobia had established itself as a constitutive voice of our Maleness, and as such were interested in gaining perspective on this through hearing the stories of homosexual people.

Four people were invited to our alternative voices discussions; they were Celeste, Mandy, Des and Grant. All four guests were acquaintances of ours in some way and we believed this to be an important criterion when assessing whom we wanted to invite to the discussions. We aimed to create a discursive environment that was free, comfortable and welcoming. We were fearful that should our guest not know any of the co-searchers, they might not have felt comfortable to contribute freely in the discussions, nor feel free to challenge any aspects of our Maleness that they found offensive or unacceptable to them. These discussions will be expounded in more detail within chapters 3 and 4.

However, we did not address Pease's (1997:6) third interest. As a group, we also contemplated inviting a black representative of Maleness in light of how black people had been marginalised throughout our country's recent history. In the end we decided against inviting a black man due to time constraints within the parameters of our discussions. At this moment, many months since we finished our discussions, I wonder if we may have missed an opportunity in not inviting a black man to our

discussions. I wonder what insight he would have offered us as a representative of Maleness who would have experienced oppression at the hand of white Maleness. However, I am also aware that this research project could not have aimed to attend to all the potential marginalized voices created by Maleness.

### 1.7.7 Impact on my personal story

Kotzé (2002) exhorts us, as researchers, to take time to reflect on ourselves as researchers. This process is inspired by the feminist self-reflexive nature of research. Hence, it is important that I reflect on the ways power was used and constructed in the study, as well as reflecting on its effects. It is also important that I reflect on the knowledges we construct and how I need to take responsibility for these constructions. Please see Chapter 5 for an in depth discussion of how the research affected my personal story.

### 1.8 Summary

There are multiple influences that constitute and mould the social construction of Maleness. One such influence is that of the play *Defending the Caveman*. In many ways the play reflects the present day concerns and issues facing men and women, and how men and women relate to each other. The play poignantly reflects back on the origins of men from caveman times, pointing out that much of a man's behaviour can be attributed to his nature as a man who operates much like the caveman; the caveman is a hunter, who is focussed and cannot multi-task.

This study explored the origins of Maleness through narrative discussions with men who were interested in discussing their Maleness. This chapter has outlined the methodological approach to the discussion. A discussion of the socially constructed nature of Maleness will now follow in chapter 2, followed by reflections on the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions in chapters 3 and 4, ending with my reflections as a researcher in chapter 5.

I believe with Lester (1995:22) that human beings are multi-tensed. This means that we have a past tense, a present tense, and a future tense. In the chapters to follow you will find a diversity of tense when referring to the co-searchers and the *Caveman* discussions. This is no error. I have purposely chosen to report our discussions in such a manner that reports on our discussions as they have occurred in the past. But then we often discussed aspects of our Maleness that should not be left in the past, that should continue to walk with us, and as a result I have referred to those instances in the present (and sometimes future) tense.

> … time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the feature of temporal experience.
>
> (Ricoeur 1984:3)

**Chapter 2**

This chapter outlines the epistemological and theological underpinnings of the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions. The theories and writers who have influenced my approach and understanding as a co-searcher of Maleness will be expounded in a manner that I hope will offer the reader insight into my personal being as well as my role as a man.

**2.1 Social construction of Maleness**

In chapter 1 I alluded to the epistemological theory of social constructionism numerous times, and the time has come for me to explain what I understand social constructionism to be, while also describing the larger epistemological shift out of which social constructionism has emerged.

In my short experience as an academic and narrative therapist I have discovered that there exists a wealth of writing regarding the epistemological shift from modernism towards current day postmodernism. It is not my intention within the scope of this study to provide you, the reader, with a detailed description of each approach to knowledge. However, I believe that certain aspects of this shift, detailing some salient points regarding modernism, postmodernism and social constructionism need to be elucidated before we continue.

The epistemological shift from modernism towards postmodernism began in the 1960's and was characterised by the beginnings of a radical doubt in the taken-for-granted scientific knowledges that, had for long, constituted the truth about the world, reality and human experience (Gergen 1985). Modernist thought was firmly grounded in the subject of truth and it's *knowability*. Modernism was characterised by beliefs that reality is ordered; that reality is knowable by our human reason through objectivity and finally, that for humans to realise their full potential one has to know and discover all the laws of science and nature (Rohr & Feister 2001:10-11).

The postmodern mind is one that does not *discover* truth through objectivism and scientific enquiry, but constructs truth through social processes (Gergen 1985:268).

As such postmodernism begins with a radical doubt in the taken-for-granted world and asks the question:

> *Is truth primarily a means for warranting one's own position and discrediting contenders?*
>
> (Gergen 1985:268)

I believe that people live, interact and experience their lives through stories[3]. These stories are the ways in which people come to describe their experiences, belief systems, feelings, thoughts and relationships. Our stories shape our lives and they have real - not imagined - effects on our existences. These stories also provide the structure of our lives.

> … person's lives are shaped by the meaning that they ascribe to their experience, by their situation in social structures, and by the language practices and cultural practices of relationship …
>
> (White 1991:27)

In effect, these stories construct our lives through the constitutive power of language. Our experience of reality and the positions we assume in relation to that reality are thus socially constructed.  As such, our realities consist of discourses – collections of knowledges – that constitute the fabric of our lives. These discourses also form the 'truth' of our existence. Unlike the solitary 'truth' reminiscent of modernism, socially constructed truth is subject to scrutiny in ways that challenge the hegemony of that truth as well as by the influx of alternative truths that were once silenced by the 'truth' of modernism.

Through the course of this study, Maleness will be subjected to the scrutiny mentioned above. However, before we begin on this journey I believe it is necessary to elucidate some of the points referred to in chapter 1 regarding the state of Maleness and how men are challenged by the current state of Maleness.

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3 See White 1991, 1996 and 2000, White and Epston 1990 and Morgan 2000

## 2.1.1 The male in crisis

> The post-modern American man, disconnected from history and
> tradition, fears being held fast in any one position. He cannot just
> be, he has to fix, manage and engineer reality.
>
> (Rohr & Martos 1996:xvii)

Postmodernism has been described, in part, as an effort to restore the loss of meaning attributed to modernism (Herholdt 1998:215). This loss found its beginnings in the legacy of the idea that truth has to do with that which the scientist can determine objectively. The modern framework had excluded human subjectivity as a part of reality, thus removing itself from the very real worlds and experiences of people (Herholdt 1998:216).

Maleness has found itself in this disenchanted position, and as a result there are men who are actively seeking their purpose and position within an ever-changing world. Traditionally, within the parameters of modernism, men have defined themselves according to their roles within family and society. For a long time this was a privileged position for a man, as his identity and role were not forced to adapt to new definitions of what it meant to be a man.

In writing about *Defending the Caveman,* Stephen (2001) *writes:*

> There's no question about it; men and women are very different.
> Whether these differences arose from our evolutionary past, or from
> other sources, Becker's advice to couples applies.

As such, *Defending the Caveman* elucidates the view that a man's role stems from his caveman ancestors; a fixed, unchanging state that one can call Maleness. The roles within the family and home ascribed to the Caveman were also roles found in modernistic definitions that created and validated a man. Munroe (2001:19) describes some traditional roles that men were accustomed to:

1) A man is meant to be the breadwinner and protector.

2) A man is meant to be the leader and authority in the home.

3) A man should show chivalry.

4) A man is the defender of his family, property and country.

These constructs became pervasive and compelling, however, men have begun to redefine their roles. Munroe (2001) states clearly that men suffer from uncertainty when it comes to understanding what it means to be a man. He claims that society is currently exuding differing and often conflicting expectations of what it means to be a man. It is in the midst of this uncertainty that we found ourselves as co-searchers, reflecting on what it is that our society expects of us as men.

> Rob Becker's show *Defending the Caveman* … tells the truth about the
> harsh and hilarious double standard for being a man today….
>
> (Reynolds 2004:1)

Munroe (2001) furthers his point by writing that these views of manhood are vying for supremacy. Possibly this could explain the dissonance men currently experience as there are many types of man one can be. In times gone by, one view of Maleness was dominant within a society. Now days, with trends like globalisation, we find that there is much exchange between different cultures – or "colliding" as Munroe (2001:10) terms it – resulting in an influx of differing norms and belief systems into once seemingly static and rigid cultures. The outcome is that, in any culture, there are many view points vying for supremacy.

In addition, it is possible that the uncertainty men experience is because any specific form of knowledge attempts to secure its place as truth. The implication is that any alternative is marginalised, thus adding to the potency of the centralised *truth* (Foucault 1977, 1980 and 1982).

The shifting of gender[4] roles has taken place against the backdrop of the epistemological shift from modernism towards postmodernism. Postmodernism has created space for alternatives where there was none before. In light of this, gender

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4 In this instance "gender" refers to physical distinction of men from women. However later, gender will also refer to the "pervasive and compelling" constructs that characterise our images, ideas and inferences regarding men and women (Smith 1996:29)

roles have begun to hold less value in their claims concerning the truth about men and women. Munroe (2001) poses questions of men and their purpose relevant to the place men find themselves in where gender reform and shifting socio-economic norms have demanded a change in maleness:

- How can men gain their footing in the ever-shifting environment of cultural expectations?
- What does it mean to be male?
- What definition of masculinity should men adopt?
- How are men and women meant to relate to each other?

<div align="right">Munroe (2001:15)</div>

Unlike any writer thus far, I find that these questions outline the epistemological starting point of the *Caveman* discussions. These questions touch on the construction of men within our own contexts and in relation to the people who we find ourselves being "men" with. Above all, however, the questions reflect the current dilemma men are facing. Men are no longer "absolutely" sure of who they are and what their role is within society, the family, business and even within themselves.

## 2.1.2 The nature of Maleness

Venter (1993) suggests that dealing with the alienation from Maleness caused by the shifting of gender roles requires a rethinking of the male triad: warrior (protector), worker (provider) and lover[5]. Gergen (1985) notes that as far back as 1978 researchers – such as Kessler and McKenna – have been interested in the social construction of gender, but it has only been since the beginning of the 1990's that the question of what it means to be a man has surfaced (Balswick 1992:12).

Kessler and McKenna (Gergen 1985) examined how gender is defined according to the way in which cultures understand gender. Such a world presents Maleness with a unique challenge where the need to assess the epistemological nature of Maleness comes to the fore. Gone are the days when men justified their actions

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5 This suggestion also relates to a reformulation of the traditional gender roles that Munroe (2001:19) highlights.

based on roles that constructed men as figures of authority in family, social and economic life. These changes have come about because of insightful and incisive questioning on the nature of men on behalf of feminists, critical thinkers, religious leaders, women and in some (reluctant) cases – men.

It has also been purported that the problem of Maleness in the context of the questioning I noted above is not one of biology as a root of Maleness, but that it is a case of identity:

> The problem is not a biological one of *maleness* – but a spiritual one of *identity*. Male identity is not essentially a matter of *roles*, which vary with culture and shift with changing times – it is a matter of *inherent purpose*.
>
> (Munroe 2001:13)

In two simple sentences Munroe captures so much of the current question of what it means to a man – is being a man a product of *nature* and what is *essentially* male, or is it a product of *cultural* and *social* intimations? So, where do men find the truth about being men? Do we turn to our biological make-up as a source of truth, or do we consider the truth of what our roles should be as decided by society and general opinion? Clearly, the answer for Munroe to this question is the Christian answer. For him, men can find their purpose through identifying what constitutes men from an inherently spiritual perspective.

As we enter a place where we consider truth and its effects, we need to consider the shift from a modernist approach to truth compared to a postmodern one. Since the 1980's postmodernism has emerged as a constitutive force in defining reality, the problem of authority and that of truth. Writers such as Gergen (1985) have described these changes as well as the introduction of social constructionism[6] – the intellectual tool used in critically evaluating and defining reality.

As already stated, SC begins with a radical doubt in the taken-for-granted understanding of the world and thus acts as a form of social criticism. From such an approach an immediate suspicion arises when any essentialist notion is proffered

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6 From this point onwards social constructionism will be abbreviated as SC.

that assumes an objective and true essence to reality. SC asserts that we cannot access an absolute reality. In attempting to engage with reality, we do so by engaging in language and it is at this point that the way in which language constitutes reality takes precedence over the supposed observable/absolute reality.

As is common of SC, a basic deconstruction of what reality is and how we see it is applied to the understanding of men.  Writers such as White (1996) and Smith (1996) have given the SC approach a voice when understanding men and their social contexts from this perspective.

> Only after the social and behavioural sciences emerged have we begun
> to question the notion that physiology alone is responsible for sexual
> temperament and behaviour.
>
> (Balswick 1992:12 )

The premise of writers as mentioned above is that men are subjects of their social contexts. This approach is challenging to men as it questions the assumption that men have an innate character that makes them *men*. For the proponents of SC, the "nature" of a man depends implicitly on what his culture and history define a man to be. This approach proverbially 'swims upstream' of what Becker's *Defending the Caveman* tells men about their innate character.

> Throughout most of history it was taken for granted that men acted like
> men because that was their nature, and women acted like women
> because they were made that way.
>
> (Balswick 1992:12)

As a result of modernistic thinking it is believed that men do not develop their manhood, but that men just are. A man either possesses the *natural* elements of maleness, or a man does not. Smith (1996:38) states succinctly "there is no general recognition of people *training* to be men, of one *becoming* a man" [italics mine]. This view of Maleness is a remnant of the modern era in which an essentialist approach to knowledge and reality was dominant. An essentialist approach to knowledge and

reality purports that there is a true essential nature to reality; that reality can be known through observation and rational thought.

White (1996) proposes that essentialist thought has provided a claim to uncovering the very truth and nature of gender and that this thought has had very real effects on our understanding of the roles men and women have in relation to each other. The assumption of an essentialist approach to understanding gender is that there exists a "true" nature that is in opposition to a "false" nature of men and women. This dichotomy seems to create "true" and "false" men. In the light of SC, any such distinction can be called into question (Smith 1996:29).

The SC position also gives reason to be suspicious of the way essentialist thought is a vehicle for the transformation of men's culture. For White, essentialist thought effects notions of gender in that:

- it privileges so-called "authentic", "real" or "masculine" ways of being a man
- it then isolates alternative knowledge's or manners of being a man
- it therefore specifies and totalises men's ways of being.

By doing this, an essentialist approach to gender "promotes a dream that men can wind back the clock through time to rediscover the basics" of being a man (White 1996:169) as is done through Becker's *Defending the Caveman*. Kimmel (1996:223) writes, "we think of manhood as eternal, a timeless essence that resides deep in the heart of every man".  In so doing, it renders virtually impossible the recognition of the role that language has played in the constitution of men's culture. So, in relation to *Defending the Caveman*, the appeal behind an essentialist approach to understanding Maleness lies in the guise of turning back time to uncover and expose the true nature of man, located in anatomy, as the hunter, thus providing understanding and knowledge of how to be a "real" man. What we have not and do not realise are the ways in which discursive events such as *Defending the Caveman* and our social interactions construct manhood and the "true" man instead of merely uncovering our fundamental nature that we have somehow lost.

Thus far I have presented two approaches to discovering what it is that men should be: the one being an essentialist notion that listens attentively to what our physiology tells us, and the other is one that invites us to consider the ways in which men are constituted through their social contexts. I am left with the question: is it apt to pay attention to only one approach, or should I investigate both approaches?

It is after considering and personally witnessing the effects of the essentialist approach to gender (see chapter 1 and White 1996) that *Re-inventing the Caveman* sought to create a discursive space in which alternative approaches to understanding gender and men's culture were investigated. This space aims to bring to the discursive table the personal and political while at the same time enabling us as men to bear in mind the effects of our actions.

## 2.1.3 Deconstruction

Rohr and Feister (2001:41) show us how even in biblical times, Paul assumed that the institution of slavery was normal. It is only after many decades of ethical debate and litigation that we now recognise slavery to be unjust. However, Paul failed to recognise this within the current ideas and notions that constituted ethical action. This highlights how we cannot think outside of our own era and culture. This study not only aimed to construct new ways of being men, but also to identify the constituting forces that created us as men. Like Cloete (2001), this study aimed to identify and isolate discourses that hold truth claims concerning Maleness in the lives of the co-searchers and myself. The discursive technique employing to reach this end is known as *deconstruction.*

The word deconstruction is synonymous with words such as *un-packing* and, as referred to by Kotzé (2002), *re-interpreting.* Jacques Derrida originally used deconstruction in his post-structural analysis of texts and language. If we put this into the context of the current study, we did not attempt to uncover the innate "presence" of the discourses that had constituted us as men, and their truth claims, but to highlight and identify them; to un-pack them; as well as re-interpret their power in our lives as men. Deconstruction was then viewed as what Kotzé and Kotzé

(1997) call a "radical scepticism" towards the dominant discourses in the lives of the co-searchers.

## 2.1.4 Hermeneutic of suspicion

Rohr and Feister (2001) describes the era in which we live as a *disenchanted universe*. It is a place starved of meaning that grasps at anything and everything. People are identifying with the word *chaos* as an effective term used in describing our world (Herholdt 1998). In a world like this it is not surprising that we find ourselves in the downward spiral of universal scepticism.

Scholars within social constructionist circles call this scepticism a *hermeneutic of suspicion*. I first discovered the hermeneutic of suspicion when I encountered the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1987). Her model of biblical interpretation begins with the hermeneutic of suspicion, where authority and power are subjected to a "searching" much as a crime scene is searched where a crime has been committed (Ackermann 1998). This metaphor has been helpful in applying and facilitating the technique of deconstruction within the *Cavemen* discussions.

In a simple way the phrase 'hermeneutic of suspicion' can be understood as a way of viewing explanations with suspicion. Within the field of power and discourse, Derrida and Foucault would have applied this suspicion in terms of knowledges that have been subjugated by dominant truth-defining knowledges. A hermeneutic of suspicion is an awareness of how certain knowledges attempt to gain supremacy at the expense of other knowledges. The knowledge that becomes marginalised through this process is then seen as subjugated knowledge.

SC holds that any claim to reality should be viewed with scepticism. To a certain extent I agree with this statement. I agree in that a claim to an objective understanding of reality narrows down the possibility of alternatives. It creates a monopoly of knowledge, where any other forms of knowledge and language are excluded, thus rendering it invalid. SC, by virtue, allows the influx of alternatives and in many cases introduces freedom. This freedom can liberate people from bondage

to certain reality claims. SC allows for the opportunity of understanding gender differences from alternative perspectives (Gergen 1985). The manner in which SC creates this opportunity is in debunking "truth" and it's attempts at establishing hegemony, thus creating the space needed for alternative voices to be expressed and explored.

In stepping away from the dense language of theory we as a group addressed the issues raised in the above paragraphs in ways that were meaningful to us. We seriously debated whether there was a *true* and *essential* nature to our Maleness. This debate proved to be a constant thread through our discussions, where we found ourselves often agreeing that no such nature existed and then in the next moment finding some foundational essence to what creates us as men.

Smith (1996:29) argues that the constructs that have become pervasive in the construction of men have often remained unquestioned and almost unnoticed as guiding principles. So much so, that these constructs have been seen as part of the 'nature' of men. A hermeneutic of suspicion raises questions that interrogate any form of knowledge that has gained supremacy. It is at this point that a hermeneutic of suspicion applied to Maleness creates the opportunity for alternative principles of Maleness to be discovered and explored.

### 2.1.5 Deconstruction and a practical theology

By engaging in such deconstructive conversations, we generated a critical awareness that is needed when generating a practical theology. Following Poling's (1991:186) offering Myburg (2000:73) argues that there are a number of key components to a practical theology:

- Description of lived experience.
- Critical awareness of perspectives and interests.
- Correlation of perspectives from culture and the Christian tradition.
- Interpretation of meaning and value.
- Critique of interpretation.

I will now describe a few of these that are pertinent to the *Caveman* discussions.

To translate theology from an academic and cerebral discipline conversation need to be orientated around a *description of lived experience*. As such, the quest for truth becomes a discursive event in which participants treat knowledge and the process of understanding as local and plural.

A *critical awareness of perspectives* is then needed to ensure that any single perspective is not elevated to the ultimate perspective. As such, this awareness allowed us as co-searchers to create a discursive space in which we could honestly and intently consider the implications and possibilities of both biological and social perspectives on Maleness. It is also important that practical theology keep as a focus the concreteness of the lives of those who find themselves marginalized[7].

I believe it is important that people who earnestly seek to live out a practical theology hold hope and possibility as tangible options in a world where destruction and despair seem to reign.

## 2.1.6 Reconstruction

Too often the word *deconstruction* is interpreted as meaning the same as *destruction*. In the same context "radical scepticism" is interpreted as a total lack of faith or trust in everything. Rohr and Feister (2001) speak of how as a society we may adopt a scepticism born out of deconstruction that is totalising and subversive:

> What a deconstructed culture lacks, because of its deep cynicism and
> pessimism about reality, is a basic confidence and enthusiasm that is
> necessary to start almost anything.
>
> (Rohr and Feister 2001:51)

In their discussion of history and the current worldview, Rohr and Feister (2001) note

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7 See the introduction of alternative voices in chapter 4

that the postmodern mind is one with a deconstructed worldview. When addressing the postmodern mind they speak of a postmodern panic that has gripped society in the state that we know it. They state that the modern mind "doesn't not know what it is *for*, as much as it knows what it is *against* and what it *fears*" (2001:6).

The implication of the deconstructed worldview is that we are living in a time void of hope. This is so because people cannot put their faith and trust into institutions and beliefs that promise to keep them safe and deliver them from pain i.e. government, institutionalised religion, education, marriage and the family (Rohr & Feister 2001:45). People have lost hope. And, it is pervasive.

As a result deconstruction is useless without reconstruction, without a positive vision (Rohr & Feister 2001:52). Ackermann and Bons-Storm (1998:6) also believe that when engaging with practical theology, we need to hold on to hope for new and better ways of being and doing. Thus, reconstruction is necessary to restore the "basic confidence and enthusiasm" lost through the process of deconstruction. In our postmodern state, we cannot afford to be void of confidence and enthusiasm. As I have already stated, people had the 'truth' of their lives separated from their reality and then with the introduction of a deconstructed worldview, people have found themselves grasping for meaning and for avenues that may restore their confidence in knowledge, reality and themselves.

It is because of these warnings levied by Rohr and Feister (2001) that I adopted – alongside my curiosity – a position in our discussions that both attempted to deconstruct and to reconstruct our Maleness.


### 2.1.7 Suspicion, power, knowledge: A current example

I believe that in our everyday world the hermeneutic of suspicion is one that allows us as men and women to be utterly critical of anything that claims to be dominant or "true". It is thus easy to find ourselves in a position, as Rohr asserts, in which we are opposing situations, thoughts, beliefs, systems and structures. In South Africa I believe this suspicion can be seen in the current views towards the United States of

America (USA). These views provide a platform to explore an example of how the hermeneutic of suspicion is applied and experienced.

Over the last few decades the USA has established itself as dominant world power, both in military and economic terms. This advancement has been both passive and active. In many ways the USA has actively constructed itself as the dominant world power through warfare and technological advancement. Rohr and Martos (1996:xv) have this to say about their own American culture: "We create trends and destroy tradition at an amazing pace." But on the other hand the rest of the world has allowed the USA, through passive means, to become the global power it is. The rest of the world has constructed the USA as a global power through accepting the trends of globalisation and not resisting the US-lead advancement into world culture, a hegemonic culture (Chomsky 2001). However, if any nation has resisted this movement, they have been eliminated or ostracised by the US.

> ...the US is the only country that was condemned for international
> terrorism by the World Court and rejected a Security Council resolution
> calling on states to observe international law.
>
> (Chomsky 2001:41)

Since the attacks on September 11th 2001, many South Africans have become suspicious of the position the US holds within global power and economic markets. A simplified hermeneutic of suspicion has been employed by many South Africans when formulating their views on the US. This is so because the US has become a centralised power in the world. By virtue of this happening, the US has claim to what is right and what is wrong. It also has the privilege of believing that the place the nation inhabits is the true rightful place it should be. The US has become truth – in its own eyes. As a result many people and nations have begun to react against this. Why? Well because many nations have been constructed as subjugated and marginalised nations. A rule of thumb is that where there is power there is resistance (Foucault 1980). Thus it is not surprising that many people are showing resistance to the US and their attempts at holding their supremacy within the global power market.

The processes of power that I have outlined above can easily be seen at work within individual lives as well. The playing field of power has no boundaries and is not prejudiced. This was true when in our discussions we encountered what we named Conquer. George W. Bush's name was one of the first that was mentioned as a man who listens to Conquer extensively in the US lead war on terrorism. The topic of Conquer will be dealt with more in chapters 3 and 4.

Throughout his work, Foucault was concerned with how power was exercised through language. The discursive technique known as narrative therapy was applied throughout the *Caveman* discussions as a means of deconstructing and evaluating the power that certain discourses (such as Conquer) had on the construction of Maleness.

### 2.1.8 Narrative

Denise Ackermann (1996:48) quotes Joan Lairs as saying that "[t]he self-narrative is an individual's account of the relationship among self-relevant events across time, a way of connecting coherently the events of one's own life". As I have already noted, I believe - with White (1991) - that people live their lives by and with stories. Our stories shape our lives and they have real - not imagined - effects on our existences. These stories also provide the structure of our lives. As such a narrative therapist is interested in "discovering, acknowledging and deconstructing the beliefs, ideas and practices of the broader culture in which a person lives" (Morgan 2000:45).

These stories are influential in that it is "our immediate, day-to-day, concrete, personal apprehension of our lives – expressed through the 'stories' we tell … about our lives – that is primarily knowable" (Payne 2000:20), or as Hudson (2000:13) states, our stories are our dwelling places.

Narrative in this sense became a vehicle with which we could understand each other's identities as well as "particular ways of talking with people about their lives" (Morgan 2000:2). Narrative also allowed an opportunity for practical theology to become a discursive event within our discussions placed firmly within our very real

contexts. In using a discursive technique such as narrative to investigate the social construction of men, a significant challenge was levelled, as men are often "not required to be emotionally expressive... [being men] of actions rather than words" (Jenkins 1990:39).

> See, when hunters where going hunting they had to be quiet. It's a silent pursuit.
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:11)

The *Re-inventing the* Caveman discussions thus challenged this stereotype of men by inviting the co-searchers to actively share their stories with other men, women and gay people. One of the significant challenges Maleness has encountered of late are those posed by feminism and that changes in society affected by the development of feminist notions and practices.

## 2.2 Men and feminism

> A good feminist not only speaks for what's good for women in society, but also speaks for what's good for men.
>
> (Becker in Naiman 2001:2)

Before I describe the ways in which men have dealt with the challenge of feminism I believe it is pertinent that I outline my experience of feminism and espouse my orientation towards feminist thinking.

My first encounter with feminism in its theoretical form was within the context of my English sub-major at undergraduate level. At one point we dealt exclusively with texts that originated from African feminist writers such as Miriam Bâ. This introduction was influential in that it allowed me to assess, through the writings of the African feminists, the impact of colonialism on women as well as the entrenched African patriarchy that dominated the stories of African women.

African feminism aims as upsetting the existing matrix of domination and overcoming it, thus transforming gender relationships and conceptions in African societies.

(Arndt 2002:31)

As I registered for a Masters degree in Practical Theology I began to encounter the writings and stories of women from abroad who were passionate and fervent about gender and the solidarity that feminism offered for women. At this stage I was deeply challenged by my Maleness and my culpability in perpetuating patriarchy. In one radical moment I declared that I was a feminist, and in the next I believed that by virtue of being a man I could not identify wholly with the movement[8]. As a result I now identify myself as a profeminist man (Pease 1997); a man who actively engages with principles and ideas of feminism while at the same time recognising that to fully understand the plight of women in the face of oppression at the hand of men, one has to be a woman.

During my training as a pastoral therapist I was privileged to spend time with women who taught me much about feminism. During this time I also spent time engaged in therapeutic discussions with men who have abused and hurt women. However, one of these men failed to take full responsibility for his abusive actions. The words of Alan Jenkins resounded in my mind throughout this time:

In order to accept responsibility, the perpetrator must acknowledge fully the existence and significance of the abuse and understand the potential impact of his abusive actions upon the victim and others.

(Jenkins 1990:12)

These discussions were deeply frustrating for me as a man in witnessing how difficult it was for men in our country to face our "demons" head on. It seems to me that men are recruited into dominant male cultures that relieve us of reflecting on, and taking appropriate measures to correct behaviour that is potentially dangerous to others. This realisation came from hearing the dissatisfaction that prominent feminist writers (e.g. Phyllis Trible 1984, Lisa Isherwood and Dorothea McEwan

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8 It was also during this time that I composed the letter to Maleness referred to in 1.2.

1993) have shared about men's culture.

Arndt (2002:31) poses that "feminism is about possibilities; there are possibilities, there are choices". If this research endeavour is to believe that it is possible for men to change, it is fitting that a conceptual framework that allows for the possibility of men being able to change is introduced into the *Cavemen* discussions. Such a framework is found in African feminism, where the idea of complementarity between the sexes is asserted, as well as the concern to criticise patriarchal manifestations in African societies.

This study orients itself with *reformist African feminism* (Arndt 2002). This brand of feminism is found in African texts where individual, patriarchal-moulded attitudes, norms and conventions are scrutinised. A negotiation with patriarchal society is attempted to gain a new scope for women. Here men are criticised as individuals, not as representatives of men as such. It also asserts that society if capable of reform, and men are also capable of rethinking and overcoming their reprehensible behaviour (Arndt 2002).

In feminist circles patriarchy has been the discourse that has been attributed as the chief weapon used in the domination and oppression of women. In feminist theology patriarchy is often understood as the legal, social and economic system of society that validates and enforces the domination of men over women – especially within the family and household (Ackermann 1998).

## 2.2.1 Responses to gender reform

> Men are seeking to clarify their identity in relation to what feminism has
> raised.
>
> > (Venter 1993:89)

Men's responses to feminism have taken many forms, ranging from waging war on women to inaction. In South Africa especially, men have reacted in different ways to gender reform. It is commonly thought that men stand in the way of gender

transformation. However, in many cases this is not so. We find nowadays men who are willing to realise the injustices caused in the name of male dominance and patriarchy, and who are willing to aid in the changes needed to curb and prevent such wrongs (Morrell 2002).

Through meeting together, we as co-searchers constituted a *men's movement* in microcosm. Morrell (2002:315) defines a "men's movement" as an organisation or grouping – formal and informal – consciously constituted to appeal to men as gendered subjects. In South Africa men have formed larger men's movements in response to such things as the erosion of privilege, and in other times as reactive actions against feminism. These have been the men's movements of common, distinct from what may be called *new men's movements* who are pro-feminist and committed to gender justice. Men who have aligned themselves with groups of this new kind are directing their energies to creating new and more useful male role models that differ sharply from the stereotypical male patriarch.

As this study is an inquiry into men and how men can be better men, it is only fitting that as a researcher I commit to rejecting the ways in which males have constructed views of women that contribute to their subjugation (Gergen 1985). In addition, it is important that we keep in mind the following questions inspired by Kimmel (1996:226):

> *Where does this version of manhood come from?*
> *How does it work?*
> *What are the consequences of this version of manhood for women for children ... for other men and for individual men themselves?*

## 2.2.2 Men and power

I believe, that based on our history and the leaders I have seen bred by our political systems, as well as what various writers (see Munroe 2001, Rohr & Martos 1996) South African men need more role models, and I believe that by sharing our stories we can begin to curb the mostly-deserved negative perceptions of men. My wish

was that as a group of co-searchers we could re-invent ourselves into men that acknowledge our weaknesses openly and honestly, while at the same time being men that have no shame in taking responsibility for our actions. For the most part I believe this was achieved in the *Cavemen* discussions as we found ourselves discussing our weakness regarding our roles as men, partners and potential fathers.

If we, as South African men are to bear in mind the effects of the ways in which we construct our manhood, it is only fitting that we also bear in mind the power relations in doing so. Kimmel (1996:228) poses that the hegemonic definition of manhood is a man in power, a man with power and a man of power. Kimmel (1996) also argues that ideologies of manhood have functioned in relation to the gaze of male peers and authority. This assertion draws from what Foucault (1979:200 cited in White and Epston 1990:68-69) writes about the operations of power and how power inevitably has a "gaze" that regulates and dictates acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For men, this gaze regulates what is accepted as masculine behaviour … behaviour that is "manly".

## 2.2.3 Personal, political and theoretical

> To be consistent with postmodernist premises, academic thinking, researching and writing should move freely between the personal, the theoretical, and the political/institutional dimensions of experiences.
>
> (Middleton 1995:91)

White (1996) believes that men are at risk of reproducing problematic aspects of the dominant men's culture and that it is difficult for them to bring together the personal and political.  He is referring to how some men may align themselves with action-orientated political groups to transform men's culture, while others orientate themselves with personal means towards personal growth and self-help. White's argument is that in order for men to bring about the transformation that is needed in men's culture; they need to bring together the personal and political. His argument may echo a phrase that Weingarten (2002:1) uses: "The personal is political and the global is personal".

## 2.3 Pastoral care

It is enormously important that men meet with other men, particularly where it facilitates the breaking down of isolation, the sharing of emotional experience, and a development of intimacy with other men.

(Smith 1996:47)

This research project is interested in hearing how the co-searchers have come to describe themselves as men. The rationale for this approach lies in how people arrange their experiences sequentially in order to construct a coherent and ordered account of their world and their lives. Thus the stories, or self-narratives as men of the co-searchers – as White and Epston (1990:10) call them – become of utmost importance.

The primary focus of pastoral care must be the care of all God's people through the ups and downs of everyday life, the engendering of a caring environment within which all people can grow and develop their fullest potential.

(Gerkin 1997:14)

"The foremost thought guiding the search for new knowledges relates to living in ways that will be to the good of all" (Kotzé 2002:25). Right from the outset this study aimed to ensure that the way the participants lived their lives was to the good of all that they encounter, including that of their own.

In the 1970's Clinebell (1979 in De Jongh van Arkel 2000) proposed a model of pastoral care that this study aligns itself with in terms of the pastoral care offered to the participants: the growth counselling model. In growth counselling, growth is sought in several different dimensions, where growth in one stimulates and supports growth in the others. Growth can occur in our minds, bodies, relations and in the spiritual dimension of our lives.

As a facilitator I was interested in how the co-searchers may foster growth in any of these dimensions. Of importance were the relational aspects of the co-searchers lives. Stephen (2001:2) quotes Rob Becker as saying:

> If we spent as much time trying to understand each other as we do trying
> to change each other, we'd get along a lot better, and we'd laugh a lot
> more.

Here Becker is noting how men and women are prone to getting caught up on their differences and how this tends to restrict harmonious gender relations. It is often the relational side of our lives where we find hurt and pain, as well as the greatest joy and satisfaction. But one cannot separate this aspect from the others. As such all these dimensions received attention through the course of the discussions.

The spiritual dimension was vitally important to Clinebell. He believed that the spiritual-growth *enabler* was important. The goal was *liberation*, the freedom to grow, to love and care; to make a constructive impact on society, to become all that the Creator dreams for us to become.

Pattison (1993) offers a critique of pastoral care in asserting that often care is offered on an individual basis only, thus disregarding the communal and collective need for pastoral care. This critique forms one of the motivations for the study to be conducted through group discussions. Clinebell's model provides an excellent means for pastoral caring on an individual level. However, as Pattison points out, pastoral care aimed at individual wellness runs the risk of disregarding the community and it's need for care.

> The subject of care is shifting from that of a self-actualised individual for
> whom care functions primarily at times of crisis towards one of a person
> in need of nurture and support as he or she negotiates a complexity of
> moral and theological challenges in a rapidly-changing economic and
> social context.
>
> (Pattison in Graham 1996:51)

### 2.3.1 Research Ethics

It is my belief that for a community to have as it's prerogative the care and wellness of individuals, that community must align itself with the principles of a *just* community. I believe that a *just* community is one that "challenges oneself to become aware of and address issues of evil that one often is not aware of or does not want to face" (Van Greunen et al 2001:115).

Along with Kotzé (2002:21) I believe that research is not "a neutral or innocent act, but an ethical-political process". For Kotzé, to engage with stories is to engage with the "complexities and diversities of possibilities" associated with living life. For me, this process involves engaging with the very fabric of life in a way that is concerned with people's choices and their effects. Thus, this research endeavour cannot be objective and neutral, but it has to be by virtue, a process that is participatory. I am concerned with how as a (re)searcher I "ethicise" (Kotzé 2002).

Weingarten (2002) refers to witnessing that creates a synergy of recognition, support and action. It also becomes a crucial way in which we can respond to suffering and injustice in our daily lives. I believe that for men to live ethically, we need the synergy that Weingarten speaks of. Men do not find themselves in a vacuum, and as such need to reflect on the ways in which oppressive aspects of Maleness are exacerbated and perpetuated.

It is through such processes that witnessing and ethicising becomes participatory, where "knowledge becomes knowing with the other – a participatory process (Kotzé 2002:6).

### 2.4 Theology

### 2.4.1 Postmodern theology

Our world is one in which people are grasping for meaning and wholeness. What underlies this quest is a pervasive feeling of anxiety; an anxiety created by the belief that there is no order to reality – that we live on the edge of chaos. It is at this point

that postmodern theology offers an alternative in which meaning and wholeness can be found and restored.

Practically this translates as a situation in which Christians are afforded the right to human input that co-determines the "plan" for our lives (Herholdt 1998:217). In chapter 1 I cited Rohr and Feister (2001:81) as writing that our knowledge of God is participatory. As a person of Christian faith, I believe this begins with interpreting the Bible. I believe with Henry (1995:36) that "there is no original or final textual meaning, no one way to interpret the Bible or any other text." So, as I read the Bible form a postmodern theological approach, I actively create space for multiple interpretations of Scripture. This principle then also manifests itself in the way in which I live.

> The text is not only 'out there' waiting to be interpreted; the text 'becomes' as we engage with it. And yet, even this new hermeneutic approach is not going far enough. Interpreting a text is not only a literary exercise; it is also a social, economic and political exercise. Our entire context comes into play when we interpret a biblical text. One therefore has to concede that *all* theology … is by its nature contextual.
>
> (Bosch 1991:423)

I thus believe that God as a creative participant in our lives guides us. However this also means that we consistently ask ourselves to reflect on the moral and practical implications of our interpretations. Poling (1991) lists as another key component to practical theology the critique of interpretation. The key here is to take one step back and to ask critical questions about out interpretations; to interpret our interpretations as such. It is in this way that a practical theology, when applied, utilises the SC technique of a hermeneutic of suspicion.

Theology has to do with knowledge of God that is inseparable from the knowledge of the world and ourselves.

> Postmodernism is … a rediscovery of the value of human participation,
> a quest for wholeness and meaning, a perspective on the continuity
> between all levels of a multi-levelled reality.
>
> (Herholdt 1998:21)

A postmodern theology is one that invites all levels of our existence to participate in the act of meaning making. As such, theologising cannot take place only within a cathedral – the very familiar home ground of theology – but it needs take on a new challenge: context. In this regard I believe that truth is particular to our social context. Any "truth" that cannot be understood or applied with in our very real context runs the risk of being obsolete. Truth is only valuable in so far as it can be utilised and relevant.

Some may react sceptically to such an approach to truth because it resists being characterised, defined, tangible and prescriptive. My personal belief is that life is messy, and that we need a theology that will aid us making sense of a messy world; a world in which order seems not to exist and where a predominant question remains *Is God really in control?* Therefore our aim is not to describe God in a rational or exact manner, but to discover coherence between the ways in which we experience God and the ways in which we experience our world physically and morally (Herholdt 1998:224).

In furthering the postmodern ideas, postmodern theology would assert that knowledge of God is generated in relationships and language. As people come together to share their ideas and experiences, "truth" in constructed.

> …the subject of theology [is] God in relation to the world and ourselves…
>
> (De Gruchy 1994:6)

Rohr and Feister (2001:81) write that our knowledge of God is participatory. I believe that in practical terms this means that one cannot "theologise" without living, being present and being aware in the same moment. The Bible thus "becomes" as we discuss and live our faith in our various contexts. My theological starting point is one

that aims to incorporate the emancipatory living that God offers into our contexts whereby theologising and living become inseparable.

## 2.4.2 Contextual practical theology

I feel that at this point a few references need to be made about different approaches to practical theology. Typically, there are three approaches to practical theology; a confessional approach, a correlative approach and a contextual approach.

A confessional approach to practical theology is typically one that accepts Scripture as the only source of knowledge for study of God. In this, the church is considered to be the only benefactor in the approach, and thus the institutionalised church and its members become the focus (Myburg 2000:45). A correlative approach is one that recognises the bipolarity between the focus on Scripture and the importance of the contribution the social sciences play in theology. Here, both Scripture and society are drawn together (Myburg 2000:46). And then a contextual approach is one that is interested in the contextual situation of living. This approach is characterised by Burger (1991) as follows:

- The context and situational analysis of praxis is important.
- Scripture is used on a more selective basis.
- The community of believers takes precedence over individuals.

In outlining his approach to a contextual practical theology, Hudson (2000:29) emphasises the "importance of beginning in the lived experience of people and communities, taking seriously the wider social-ecclesial context, reflecting theologically on lived experience, having a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' and facilitating the transformation of life". Poling (1991:186) agrees:

> Practical theology is critical and constructive reflection within a living community about human experience and interaction, involving a correlation of the Christian story and other perspectives, leading to an interpretation of meaning and value, and resulting in everyday guidelines and skills for the formation of persons and communities.

If our knowledge of God is participatory, we need to discover ways in which we can bridge what Bosch (1991:422) calls the "ugly ditch": the ever increasing gap between the time and experience of the gospels and our own personal present day experiences of reality and our world.

De Gruchy (1994:7) comments that it is only through the witness of Scripture that we are able to remain in touch with the foundation of Christian faith, especially the narrative of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We should thus "become fellow players in the search for meaningful Christian life in our contemporary culture" (Rossouw 1993:901).

This notion is also applied individually following what Hudson (2002:282) calls "dogma versus the personal". We need to hold in creative tension preferred spiritual ways of being with traditional prescriptive dogmas of experiencing and knowing God. Hudson turns away from an approach to theology that insists that all people of faith locate their theology within specific theological discourses, and from the approach that sacrifices all dogma for individual preferences. Instead, Hudson argues that we need space for an ongoing and open-ended meaning-making negotiation between dogma and personal experience.

The biblical text is not "out there" but "becomes" as we engage with it. As we engage with the text, we do so socially, economically and politically, such that a person's entire context comes into play when reading and interpreting the Bible. An experimental theology is then formed that continually takes into account the place between text and context. This does not mean that there are an infinite number of theologies (theological relativism). We therefore affirm the essentially contextual nature of all theology, because each theology develops within a historical context, while affirming the universal and context-transcending dimensions of theology (Bosch 1991).

My theology extends further into believing that we need to *do* theology. De Gruchy (1994:2) writes,

> …the phrase 'doing theology' … indicates that theology is not simply
> something one learns about through reading … but through engaging in
> doing theology in particular contexts and situations.

This process also includes doing theology with people, not theorizing intellectually, but aiming for a relationship between "theologising" and living. Some of the essential components of practical theology are thus:

- the description of lived experience.
- a critical awareness of perspectives and interests, and
- interpretation of meaning and value.

Contextual theology needs to take sides, for life against death and for justice against oppression. The contextual approach to theology links with feminist theology in the way that both are committed to freedom. In Luke Jesus tells us that he has been sent to bring freedom to prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release the oppressed (4:18-19). Even if we are not equipped to decide between absolute right and absolute wrong, we should be able to distinguish between shades of grey and to choose for the light grey and against the dark grey (Berkof 1966:199 cited in Bosch 1991:431). Theology is thus not a neutral exercise (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:15).

It is also my belief that theologising is more than marrying together the principles of theory and praxis. Truth and theory are not enough for people who wish to apply a practical theology, nor is only praxis, but we also need beauty … the rich resources of symbol, piety, worship and love. It is my desire to include these resources within the framework of *Re-inventing the Caveman*. It is my hope that the resources of symbol, piety, worship and love may offer a new perspective on our quest to construct Maleness through contextual theology. *Poiesis* will aid in reminding us of ways in which we can find beauty, metaphor and love through the process of deconstructing our maleness.

To be faithful one needs to have imagination, to imagine a different order,
a new earth.

<div style="text-align: right">(Bons-Storm 1998:11)</div>

If we as a group of co-searchers are to meaningfully reflect on our maleness and the challenges confronted by maleness in a theological manner, attention needs to be given to the theological challenge presented by feminism and the emergence of feminist theology.

## 2.4.3 Feminist theology

For centuries, theology has primarily been the intellectual domain of men (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:9; Ackermann & Bons-Storm 1998:2), and of late the hegemony that Maleness has held over theology has been gradually displaced. This shift has also occurred in the light of the shift from modernism towards postmodernism that has subsequently created space for the insurgence of theology as understood and experienced by women.

Feminist theology does not only emphasise the well-being of women and children, but also has as its prerogative the liberation of all people (Ackermann 1996, 1998). Feminist theology is concerned with liberation and context. Feminist theology envisages a world "which is in the process of becoming and which achieves that most fully among people who live with justice and peace" (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:10). Feminist theology makes an attempt at integrating both women and men as agents of theology, while at the same time redressing the pain and hurt caused by patriarchal theology.

Feminist theology takes as its starting point the experience of women
and men and their interaction with each other and with society, as a
source from which to do theology.

<div style="text-align: right">(Isherwood & McEwan 1993:35)</div>

Feminist theology thus provides a "theory and strategy guiding women and men to find and value their common and shared humanity in each other and to liberate each

other from gender-specific restrictions" (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:111). Bons-Storm (1998:16) contends that a community of faith is the locus where the dialogue of faith takes place. It is through this dialogue where "truth" can be discussed, shared and experienced by all participants.

One can expect that the proponents of patriarchal theologies have not been so ready to accept the changes brought on by the emergence of a feminist theology. In fact, even today many women struggle to gain recognition as competently ordained ministers within the church. The resistance that Patriarchy asserts against feminism and shifting gender roles will be deal with further in chapter 3.

## 2.5 Summary

Until this point, I have addressed the methodological, epistemological and theological underpinnings of the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions. I have discussed how as a co-searcher, delving into the socially constructed nature of Maleness, I am informed and influenced by postmodernism and its approach to understanding the constitutive forces of discourse. I have also discussed how Maleness has been challenged by feminism.

It is now pertinent to delve into the narratives of the men who accompanied me on the quest to re-invent the caveman.

**Chapter 3**

**3.1 Introduction**

> We are being encouraged to discard the male script that was given to us
> at birth and has been our guide through life.
>
> <div align="right">(Balswick 1992:19)</div>

*How do six white middle-class men come to share their stories of Maleness? How do these men speak about their lives as men in the context of family, community and God? What are the challenges that men encounter when reflecting on their Maleness? How do the current challenges levelled against Maleness affect the stories of these men?* These are the primary research questions that guided the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions. What follows now and in chapter 4 are more detailed descriptions of the references to the discussions made in chapters 1 and 2.

This is the point at which you, the reader, encounter the substance of our discussions, and it where the journey of conversation starts with the text of our lives as men. Kotzé and Kotzé (1997:28) write that various discourses in society have a constituting effect on the personal discourses and lives of people. This statement was the orienting principle in many of the discussions that we as co-searchers participated in. As a group, we deconstructed numerous discourses of Maleness that create us and we excavated their origin within societal viewpoints and beliefs. I will thus attempt to excavate, investigate and share the dominant themes of our discussion with you.

**3.1.1 The supremacy of discourse**

Before we begin, I believe that I need to make a point concerning discourses and dominant discourses. It is my experience, based of Foucault's thinking that at any one point there exists a dominant discourse or knowledge that assumes a centralised position. At the very same time there are discourses that have been marginalized or subjugated as a result of supremacy of the dominant discourse (Foucault 1980:94 cited in White and Epston 1990:20).

> Truth is a thing of this world … it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true….
>
> (Foucault 1980:131)

Let me relate a relevant example of these power dynamics at work, after which I will apply the same to discourses of Maleness. During my childhood and early teens, I was only aware of one discourse regarding people of colour: that of the sub-human nature of black South Africans. This discourse was not contested, and successfully kept any alternative discourse silent, or as Foucault would say, subjugated. In my life, apartheid had successfully gained a dominant position over any knowledge that contested its supremacy.

As I grew older and began to participate in the formation of a new dispensation I began to be awakened to the knowledges of black South Africans that had so long been subjugated - the marginalized discourses.

In terms of Maleness, I was acutely aware as a young boy of how men were constructed as superior in relation to woman. This played out in a very simple manner: my father was the breadwinner, and my mother was the housewife. I was also aware of how when I would finish school, there were no fathers who arrived to pick their children up from school – only mothers. I interpreted this as being normal – the father had to be at work to earn money to support the household. I was also aware of how my mother's authority in the home was subsumed by my father's final decision. When I was in trouble, she would say "Just wait until your father gets home!"

My experiences of apartheid and Maleness early in life show how discourses attempt to marginalise those discourses that pose a threat to its supremacy. I am also aware that through discussion, one can only focus and excavate a limited number of discourses, which in turn may mean that some discourses remain unheard and potentially subjugated. I believe that the process of highlighting and discussing discourses and themes in this research is subject to a similar danger.

The themes that follow are by no means the sum of our discussions. I have done my best to extract what I consider to be the most pertinent and dominant points of the discussions, and in the same breath would like to affirm the many discussions we participated in that have not been given space in this text. As a co-searcher and writer, I can only give you a glimpse of the substance our discussions contained, and cannot do justice to the entirety of our discussions. I would like to invite you as a reader to allow these themes to enter into your frame of reference – allow them to create discussion with your own story. I believe that by reading this text you will participate in our discussions on a different level and in so doing will keep our stories fresh and alive.

## 3.2 The "Cavemen"

The six men who participated in the *Caveman* discussions were Barry; Ryan H.; Raymond; Ryan K.; Mike and myself[9].

### 3.2.1 Raymond

Raymond introduced himself as a man with a Maleness that was deeply influenced by the upbringing he received from his parents. His parents allowed him to experience "the freedom to be a boy and to endure the scares that came with being a boy". Raymond described himself as being adventurous, independent, sporty and an introverted thinker.

Raymond gave special mention to his mother and how she has always "encouraged … listened and sometimes given me a kick in the butt … developing in me a passion for life and a never say die kind of attitude". Raymond also mentioned, how in terms of Maleness, he found the example that Jesus set as the best example he could hope to live up to.

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9 These names are the real names of the *Caveman* co-searchers. When we began our discussions we discussed whether or not we believed we should use pseudonyms to protect our identities. We agreed that we need not do so as we were comfortable with the reader establishing a relationship with our stories.

### 3.2.2 Barry

Barry described himself as "a revolutionary, although … far too conservative to really claim that title" and gave some examples of the type of man he is:

1) Barry never believed that the man is the head of the household.
2) When entering into his first marriage, he offered to take his wife's name rather than "presuming she would take mine".
3) Barry decided: "I would not regard body hair as a problem on a female's body if I did not regard it as a problem on my own".

Barry told us that he did not think that "Maleness is necessarily defined by strength" and that he believes men long for intimacy with other men but struggle to find ways to express those desires. Barry also shared with us some of his struggles with both his own Maleness and the collective Maleness (of which more will be said as we progress through chapters 3 and 4).

### 3.2.3 Ryan K.

Ryan K. described himself as a well-mannered man who possesses qualities that respect women, a man who has a deep Christian faith and a man who does not give into peer pressure. Ryan K. also shared how men who treat their wives badly have challenged his Maleness, and how he has been brought up by his mother to be a man who knows how to treat women with respect.

Ryan K. expressed how it is often difficult to be a man, while at the same time "it's also awesome being a man".

### 3.2.4 Mike

Mike introduced himself as a man that has a variety of characteristics: some good, some not so good and some a little of both. He shared how his parents are really "proud of Mike the Man today". Mike told us he would choose his insatiable ambition and passion as characteristics he wishes to carry with him throughout life. Mike's passions include "puppies, cars, movies, sport, music and people".

Mike also shared with us his understanding of his faith: "I want to be more passionate about God … there are many truly beautiful people that have encouraged, and continue to encourage me to break new ground with God."

**3.2.5 Ryan H.**

Ryan H. introduced himself by describing his background as a boy and his family who supported him. He described the qualities that distinguish him as a man, some of them being "the need for brotherly love; the need to vent frustration; hate to lose; lazy".

Ryan H. believes his strong listening skills qualify him as a good friend, and believes that his family and close friends would be proud of the man he is. He would like to carry with him through life his invaluable friendships that have been built as a young adult, and thanks his family, friends, his golden retriever Ben, and God for his passion.

**3.2.6 Aiden**

I introduced myself in the context of the men that I had chosen as role models and how they encourage me to be the man I wish to be. These men are Nelson Mandela, who teaches me forgiveness, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who teaches me about being gentle but firm and Bono, the lead singer from the band U2, who teaches me how to be revolutionary.

I described myself as striving to be sensitive to others and their needs and I expressed how I believe that my admiration of my close friends makes me a good friend.

## 3.3 Creating the landscape

In our first discussion I invited the co-searchers to participate in three general parameters. These were parameters that I had generated from narrative theory, as well as an extension to the work that Cloete (2001) conducted.  These were,

1) To share our stories as men,
2) To discover how society constructed us as men keeping in mind the associated expectations that society placed on us and
3) To re-evaluate the Maleness we have chosen, and to consider how we may practically live out our chosen Maleness.

These parameters purposely allowed for flexibility and aimed to leave adequate space for the co-searchers to set their own agenda.

We also had a short discussion concerning the language we would use when addressing Maleness. We all agreed that "Maleness" was the word that best suited what we were aiming to talk about, and that other words such as masculinity, manhood, etc. may be too value laden. However, Barry raised a question concerning our flexibility in this regard. He wondered if we might not want to keep some level of flexibility in using words that connoted our male identity. He raised this point while reflecting on how the word "manhood" may also be a helpful term when addressing the future aspirations; hopes; goals and achievements we may aim for as men. "Maleness" may then, as per Barry's thoughts, refer to our current state as men.

Barry:      Maleness might refer to what I am in my immediate reality, while manhood might describe nicely the ideas, dreams and goals of my Maleness.

As a result of this discussion we discovered how the process of naming might be potentially limiting and prescriptive. Smith (1996:29) highlights the dangers implicit in naming and categorizing constructs and writes specifically of the dichotomies in the making of men. Smith's argument is that Maleness has historically been constructed in dichotomies – dichotomies that provide reference points for defining the nature of Maleness. I have already noted in chapter 2 how Becker's *Defending the Caveman*

highlights the double standard men experience in living out their Maleness, and Smith (1996) lists these as prevalent dichotomies that men are confronted with: rational versus emotional, individual versus collective and separate versus connected.

The danger lies in a dichotomy holding implicit assumptions that guide our view of what is "natural". In addition, the naming process may highlight some distinctions while at the same time neglecting others. Thus, by virtue of us naming the topic for discussion as *Maleness*, we were in danger of creating a dichotomy, where the opposite reference point for comparison might have been *Femaleness* – a dichotomy that may have limited our discussion to a comparison between Maleness and Femaleness. Later in the chapter I discuss the biological continuum as a model for analysing the difference in roles ascribed to men and women. However there are writers who suggest that a biological dichotomy is helpful in defining roles:

> … one cannot be defined without the other. Each is defined by it's opposite – and it's impossible to redefine one role without redefining the other.
>
> (Balswick 1992:13)

Although unaware of the danger, we began our discussions with an interest in the perspective that Femaleness, as an externalised voice, would hold of Maleness. We also found that from the very first discussion we were faced with the problem of a socially constructed Maleness. This problem took its form in the weight we perceived nature to hold in the construction of our identities as men, while also realising the role society plays in that construction.

## 3.4 Nature of Maleness

> So from an early age I had this idea men and women were two different cultures. That we make relationships differently, we have different customs and rituals that we use to make relationships. We use language differently, and so on.
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:2)

Throughout our discussions we were interested in what constitutes the nature of Maleness and how nature seemed to construct us as men. We wondered if there is in fact a natural, implicit nature to Maleness that characterizes us as men, or is Maleness constituted according to what society creates it to be. These questions seemed to bring to fruition the shift from an essentialist approach to knowledge towards a social constructionist understanding that has gained momentum since 1985 (see chapter 2, Gergen 1985 and more recently, White 1996).

### 3.4.1 The biological continuum

> The distinction between male and female is becoming blurred.
>
> (Venter 1993:90)

I noted in chapter 1 how globalisation has generated greater gender plurality (Connell 1998:18-19). As such Maleness is now not one fixed form, and this resonates with what Venter proposes above. At certain moments we were convinced that a certain quality was natural to Maleness, only to realise a moment later that the same may apply to Femaleness[10]. Stoltenberg (1989, cited in Smith 1996:30) speaks of a biological continuum that celebrates the individuality of each individual as opposed to categorizing a quality as either male or female.

> The question needs to be not "what is the 'true' masculine?", but "what
> effects do our beliefs have – how do our prescriptions for maleness
> affect ourselves, women, and the world?", so that we can remain
> ethically and creatively alive.
>
> (Smith 1996:46)

Smith's argument is that the construction of men over the last few centuries has been characterised by dichotomies. A typical example of such a dichotomy is that of irrational versus rational[11]. Here the constitutive power of the dichotomy has attempted to construct men as rational beings who are not subject to emotions as

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10  See the discussion regarding competitiveness in 3.5 and Alternative voices in Chapter 4.

11  As noted above in 3.3.

women are. Men are then meant to be in control of their emotions and as such should be able to assume a position of objectivity within situations, especially within the home and when it comes to decision making within marriages.

It is this polemic constructing of Maleness which Smith (1996) argues has contributed to the crisis that Maleness has experienced of late. He argues that the distinction between man and women should be based less on a polemic distinction and more along a continuum. The biological continuum does not categorise a characteristic as uniquely male, or female. Instead, it creates space and freedom for fresh and unique ways of constructing men and women.

### 3.4.2 Socially constructed Maleness

Rohr and Feister (2001) note that we live within a deconstructed society. It is a society in which ideas of old no longer hold authority as they once did[12]. This is especially true of the state of Maleness. It is then not surprising that within our society we as co-searchers would have encountered the cynicism of taken for granted knowledge that Social Constructionism highlights. My experience of SC on a discursive level took place within the parameters of academic institutions over a number of years. Until *Re-inventing the Caveman*, the majority of the co-searchers were not afforded the space I had in which to struggle with these post-modern questions. I believe my role was to allow them the freedom and space to express these questions and to discover the answers –if any – within the *Re-inventing the Caveman* forum.

As we progressed, the group was willing to admit that a large part of our Maleness was constituted through socialisation and knowledges of what men should be and choose to be. However, there was always a strong discursive thread that spoke of much of our Maleness being biologically informed. Venter (1993:90) agrees in saying that the biological aspects of our sex are inextricable intertwined with our social and spiritual aspects of our sex. For us, the dominant factor in this thread was that of sexuality.

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12 See the discussion regarding the crisis of maleness in Chapter 2.

The SC stance is at odds with our everyday notions that sex is an essentially biologically-based distinction (Davis & Gergen, 1997:5). From a SC perspective, as discussed by Pease (1997:154), we may be more able to legitimate behaviours that do not seem to derive from one's biological sex. During our discussions I became keenly aware that as a group we constructed what is male and female as distinctly part of our biological make up. I asked the group if we had been making this assumption. We then entered into a debate around this assumption that took into consideration that our sex is not intrinsically related to our biology. The result of the discussion still lingered on the side of the biological argument. Despite my belief that sex is not a biological distinction, I could not enforce it upon the co-searchers. This point will expounded in further discussions.

The nature versus nurture dichotomy constituted the underlying thread to our discussions. It was a thread that often provided a foundation for discussions on various other aspects of our Maleness.  What follows are the discursive struggles, pressures, joys and reformations of our Maleness. I have attempted to consolidate these discussions into cohesive, readable formats. However, I am aware that our discussions were often unsystematic, where we often found ourselves referring back to previous discussions, and then posing questions that we never managed to address.

My desire is that, through the headings to follow, you may come to an understanding of what we discussed, how we struggled and how we managed to come to an understanding of what our Maleness is.

## 3.5 Competitiveness, Impressiveness and Okay-ness

> See, when hunters were going hunting they had to be quiet. It's a silent
> pursuit. And you have to be aware of the other guy.
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:11)

For our first discussion, the co-searchers were invited to write an introductory letter to the group as a discussion starter for our evenings together. Mike was the first to

read his letter and I invited him to talk us through the experience of writing the letter. It was at this point that we discovered, with the help of Mike the voices of Competitiveness, Impressiveness and Okay-ness.

> So over the course of millions of years, this is what men do now. They lock onto things. We focus on something, we lock in on it and block all the rest out. Like we watch TV.
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:10)

Mike told us that writing the letter was a difficult task, as he had to constantly remind himself not to embellish his story. This was a dominant theme throughout his letter: his desire to impress the men he socializes with. As the conversation around this point evolved, we agreed that the word *Competitiveness* described the ways in which men want to be better than other men. Rohr and Martos (1996:xiv) note how in many young men a fascination with the archetype of the warrior prevails. They describe the warrior as a man with focus and determination. The warrior is also a man who listens to Competitiveness, much like Becker's Caveman. Initially Competitiveness seemed like a negative aspect of our Maleness. However, it did not take long for us to realize that there are positive aspects to Competitiveness. In fact, we realized that Competitiveness is one of the things that made us uniquely male.

Raymond noted how Competitiveness is good in moderation – that there are times when Competitiveness can be constructive to our Maleness, while there are also times when Competitiveness may also be destructive. Our discussion then moved towards dealing with the negative aspects of having Competitiveness as a component of our Maleness. We discovered that Competitiveness is a constitutive aspect of our Maleness. Foucault's (1980) analysis of power resonates with our realisation in that he came to the conclusion that power is constitutive, and not a negative and destructive force as many had assumed.

In our discussion however, we recognised the potential to use Competitiveness in the manner described by Smith (1996). We acknowledged that in many instances we use Competitiveness in a negative way, but that Competitiveness can also be used in a healthy, edifying manner. We agree with Smith in asserting that our

Maleness is linked with competition, but that the identity, if used ethically, is not a problem.

We questioned whether Competitiveness was a problem, or was it simply a symptom of a deeper problem within our make-up as men. Barry made the point that he believed that the negative aspects of Competitiveness are symptomatic of a "deeper need to connect with other men". Barry used the word "relational" in this point. This word reminded me of what Rohr and Feister (2001) write about people focusing their identities on being relative as opposed to relational:

> Because the contemporary mind has decided that everything is relative instead of relational (a theistic or personalized universe), it forces the individual to manufacture ("make by hand") his or her own greatness.
>
> (Rohr & Feister 2001:71)

In this way, as men, we often find ourselves attempting to create ourselves as more important and more successful than other men (see also 3.7.2). Raymond also noted how as men we tend to push others down to lift ourselves up. Barry put this tendency down to us, as men, not having a "basic Okay-ness" with ourselves as men. Smith (1996) speaks of how men link their identity with competition and success – how in order to be men, men feel that they should do better than others and overcome other men. Rohr and Martos (1996: xvi-xvii) also write in a similar light of the postmodern American man who "is disconnected from history and tradition … has little spiritual knowledge of his original shape – who he *already* is in God. Thus he cannot just *be*. He has to fix, manage and engineer reality."

### 3.5.1 God-given nature

This approach to understanding how men use Competitiveness can also be found in confessional-style writings such as Munroe (2001:105) who writes the following:

> Men have a deep desire to prove themselves strong. It is one of the underlying issues every male faces, whether he is a ten-year-old boy or a

ninety-year old man. Men's internal passion to prove their strength is inherent in their nature.

It can thus be seen that from a Christian faith perspective, the confusion amongst men and their use of Competitiveness stems from a disconnection between what God intended and created Maleness to be and how men use Maleness now. Men have thus lost the sense of purpose God created within their nature. From the creation stories in the book of Genesis, one learns that God created man to be responsible and hold dominion over all the earth. It is thus inherent in a man's nature to rule, but is the ways in which Maleness has attempted to assert dominion that has resulted in the path of hurt I spoke of in chapter 1.

The path is difficult for Christian men who actively pursue a Maleness that is ethical and responsible. On one side they have confessional approaches to theology and faith encouraging them to adopt the roles that God instilled in man's nature, while on the other hand they have the voices of Feminism and more contextual theologies encouraging men to find fresh and respectful ways of being men.

In discussing healthy male spirituality Rohr and Martos (1996:xx) talk of the language that characterises the first half of the male life-journey – the language of *ascent.* This is the language that characterises the first stages of a man's life where winning, succeeding and triumphing over obstacles is paramount to this success as an individual. In this sense Competitiveness can be used as a healthy expression of our Maleness. However, Rohr and Martos encourage men, as they get older to move beyond the language of ascent. Barry echoed this assertion when he said:

> It would be nice if we had something that signified becoming a man.

## 3.5.2 Maleness and initiation

Barry wondered if we as men might not be as perturbed by the negative aspects of Competitiveness as we grow older. This echoes the need for men to move beyond

the language of ascent, as we grow older, where men may use the language as disguised egocentricity, climbing at all costs and misusing power.

For centuries, men have had initiation ceremonies and rights of passage that have signified the transition into manhood. In our discussion Barry spoke of how we as Western men do not have any formal traditional action that marks a transition into manhood. Rohr and Martos (1996) note how initiation rites for young men have been rather universal except for the last thousand years in the West. Barry said:

> An initiation is about suffering, and for a lot of us we've had cushy lives.

In search for our "basic Okay-ness" as men, we addressed whether or not an initiation rite may provide men with a way of encountering the Okay-ness many men so desperately need. However, any discussion of initiation within the South African context involves deep controversy and resistance.

In our country we have become accustomed to what are called initiation schools. These are traditional schools that take young Xhosa men into the hills for a time of seclusion and education. It is not commonly known what takes place during these times except for the occurrences that make the news headlines occasionally. These are stories of pain and disgrace. Visuals are shown of young men who have been circumcised with infected equipment as well as practices that seem to humiliate the boys.

The common perception amongst many Westernised South Africans is that these schools are barbaric and serve no meaningful purpose. This perception dominates so much that there even exists an antagonism towards the word *initiation*. I believe that this antagonism stems from a lack of accurate and thoughtful knowledge of the motivation behind initiation rites. Adding to this I believe are shock tactics employed by the media to discredit these practices within our country.  Rohr and Martos (1996) affirm the necessity and purpose of initiation rites within the growth and development of men.

Personally, I agree with Rohr and Martos. The closest I have come to a transition into adulthood would be the party thrown for my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Despite the gathering being significant and fun, I came away not knowing how to be an adult, never mind an adult male. However in our discussion we noted how there a certain life events that encourage men to move beyond a shallow Maleness. This feeling resonates with Smith (1996:38) who notes how there is no recognition of people training to become men.

For Barry, the life event that allowed the transition into manhood was divorce, while for Ryan H., Mike and Raymond it was marriage. Through these events these men were not left in a  "lonely search for significance" as an initiated man *knows* he is significant (Rohr & Martos 1996:xxix).

### 3.5.3 Competitiveness & Femaleness

In response to our first discussion Barry asked some women friends of his some questions regarding the voices of Impressiveness and Competitiveness. His line of questioning aimed to discern whether these voices were distinctly male voices or whether they also influenced women. Barry said:

> The impression I got from their responses was that this was something
> they experienced as well ... they said they feel the pressure a lot. Some
> of them had been to an all girls school and that they felt the pressure to
> impress.

The discussion then turned to a perceived trend that over the last couple of decades women have become more competitive, or are they only **showing** it now more than ever? Immediately Barry raised his concern in the danger of aligning himself with such a statement. He refused to accept a statement like that because it assumes a generalisation of gender. He said:

> The reason why we perceive women as not being competitive is due to a
> stereotype ... that men are the aggressive ones and that women are not.

I wonder what Rob Becker would say in response to our discussion? The Caveman portrayed in Becker's show is one that is aggressive – a man who is to protect his cave and women at all costs. The Cavewoman on the other hand is gentle: a woman who nurtures the young and cares for her caveman.

This aspect of our discussion was also raised when we invited Mandy and Celeste to witness our discussions (see chapter 1.7.6). Ryan H. addressed how Competitiveness in the business place, for Maleness, revolves around "getting to the top, whereas our perspective on women, generally, is that they do the best they can, because that is what they want to do".

Celeste said that in her experience of the business world, women tend to compete with other women more than with men. She also said that women are more confident in a male surrounding and that she herself was fine when sitting in a boardroom filled with men. Celeste said:

> The minute another women steps into that situation, it becomes a competition between the two women.

When it comes to Impressiveness, Celeste said that,

> a lot of it is done for men, to prove that I can do this.

> Our society has taught us to regard the opposite sex with suspicion, and our culture has bred in us a spirit of competition for different forms of power.
>
> (Rohr & Martos 1996:12)

I asked if the ideas of Competitiveness for Femaleness automatically start from an underdog position because of past prejudices? Mandy and Celeste agreed that this was the case, but as Mandy pointed out it largely depends on the industry, where in some industries women have always dominated the field. For example nursing, where men then enter the field in the position that women would usually do. Mandy,

also told us how in her field, Information Technology (IT), women are regarded as not being as effective as men because there is a perception that the IT world is a man's world. We then identified that it may be the voice of Patriarchy that creates these perceptions.

## 3.6 Externalisation and voices

In our second discussion, Mike expressed intrigue at how in my first summary letter I treated the things society conveys to men as actual voices. In our first discussion we had named the voices of society i.e. Competitiveness, Impressiveness. However, Mike had not realised that we had given them a constituency, a personality and an actual presence within our lives. This of course was the narrative technique of externalisation and deconstruction being used through the summary letter (see Morgan 2000). For Mike this process allowed him to think of the problems we were discussing as separate from himself.

Mike also expressed how in our first discussion he felt that we had treated the ideas of Impressiveness as too much of a negative aspect, and that in reflection he felt Impressiveness could also be used in a positive way in his Maleness. Mike said:

> I thought a lot on that ... on treating the dissatisfaction...I really liked treating it in that respect and thinking of it as separate from all my other thoughts...trying to pull it out and analyse what it is, where it is coming from and where it may take me.

In this example Mike attempted to deconstruct the voices of Maleness in a way that did not limit the voice to one judgement. This process was to rear its head time and time again throughout our discussions. I noticed how the co-searchers were willing to delve deeply into the negative aspects of Maleness on a regular basis, but were never willing to lose sight of the assertion that many of the aspects we deconstructed were measured by the ways in which men chose to use and integrate them within Maleness. Further examples of this were seen in our discussions on Competitiveness, Conquer, Power and Patriarchy.

From this reflection Mike noted how bringing out voices like Impressiveness and Competitiveness has alerted him to the tendency to strive to be the best man. Now, since deconstructing these voices, he settled with striving just to be a better man by using these voices in a way that creates a healthy Maleness. In this instance deconstruction was applied through the highlighting, excavating and interrogation of the constituent discourses of Impressiveness and Competitiveness.

> Deconstruction conversations help people to "unpack" the dominant stories and view them from a different perspective.
>
> (Morgan 2000:50)

Raymond raised a concern regarding our use of language and how we refer to problems as being outside of ourselves. He said that if we were to not see ourselves as being the problem it would leave the door open for men to shift responsibility for the problems. I agreed with Raymond in that a danger does exist. Jenkins (1990) describes in detail how, through language, men often attempt to shift responsibility from themselves for their actions. With this in mind we agreed that we would need to be keenly aware of the ways in which we may want to shift responsibility in our discussions. Raymond said:

> It's the same for me as with apartheid. While we never invented apartheid, we are as responsible as the guys before us.

However, I said I believe that this approach makes us more aware of our responsibility and culpability for a problem as we can see it from a new perspective, one that is not threatening our person, but is instead encouraging us to use our Maleness in ways that are conscious of its effect on others. White (1996:177) writes that the social constructionist paradigm "confronts us ever more significantly with the ethical and moral implications of, and responsibility for, the real effects of the ways that we live and the ways that we think".

I used the example of how we are responsible for how we create and use Competitiveness. By saying that as men we *are* competitive, we run the risk of seeing ourselves as the problem. On the other hand, when we see Competitiveness

as a voice in our Maleness that we listen to, we are not the problem, but it is the way in which we use Competitiveness that may be the problem. Ryan H. agreed in saying:

> Where it helps is often when people are dealing with issues, they battle to distance themselves from the problem that they become so engrossed, whereas if you separate it, you can almost see it from an outside position.

Again, we found ourselves confronted by the question: are these problems innate to Maleness or are they created through another process? I said that by naming the problems, it enables us to assess their impact and to assess our response to them within our stories.

## 3.7 Patriarchy

> In the process of male self-examination men need to confess and repent over the fact that women have suffered at the hands of men in so many dehumanising ways (from gender discrimination to rape), and also over the fact that God has been portrayed largely in dominant male images, mainly because of male domination in the church and society. It takes a man to face both individual and corporate sin.
>
> (Venter 1993:100)

### 3.7.1 Patriarchy sitting with us

> If men can challenge the prescriptive ideas that they have operated under, they can begin to throw off the oppressive ways of acting towards themselves and others.
>
> (Smith 1996:48)

We identified Patriarchy as a voice that had constitutive powers in formulating our understandings of gender roles. We recognised that Patriarchy had set the

precedent of male behaviour and roles throughout history, and especially within the Bible. I invited the co-searchers to define what they experienced Patriarchy to be and the ways in which it had affected their lives and relationships.

Barry:     It is the systematic, structural oppression of women and is held together by ideology, where men think there is nothing wrong with their behaviour and where women think there is nothing wrong with the man's behaviour.

Reuther (1998, in Ackermann 1998) also understands Patriarchy as the enforcing of domination of male heads over women. Mike told us that from an early age he was aware of how Patriarchy defined what his mother should be as a wife and a mother. The concern for Mike was now how Patriarchy was defining –in his actions and mind – what role his wife should fulfil within their marriage and home. As I believed that our discussion should not take place within a discursive vacuum I encouraged Mike to pursue this line of discussion with his wife to ensure that Patriarchy did not impinge on his marriage in ways that both him and his wife were not comfortable with.

I told the group that in my experience Patriarchy "is any under-valuation of the opposite sex. So, it's not only a man thing, but can also be a women thing".

Ryan H.:     I see Patriarchy in terms of relationships ... towards stereotyping relationships ... where there is utter male dominance, and the female doesn't challenge the situation.

Ryan K:     Patriarchy is a male dominated thing, but it is fading away where women are now more involved in the business world and are more and more becoming the breadwinners ... it's as if we [as men] are taking a back seat.

It was at this juncture that I wondered whether Patriarchy might offer resistance in response to our descriptions? Accepted traditional view points of reality and ways of describing reality would naturally hold much appeal and show resistance in being dethroned of their hegemony, especially when their power lies in the investment and sense of security fostered by enduring knowledge's (Gergen 1985).

I asked the group the following question to gauge the fight patriarchy might have been inviting us into:

What do you think Patriarchy would say in his defence if he were sitting here with us?

Barry:    Oh, he'd be just totally pathetic. He'd be an old man and he would be defensive ... he would just be pathetic. He'd say things we would just laugh at. He'd be defensive of the myths that we have debunked.

I was reluctant to accept that we as men have debunked the myths that Patriarchy has established over the course of history, and especially biblical history. My experience of power – and the hegemony power always strives to maintain – prompted me to be sceptical in believing that a dominant knowledge would become decentralised for the sake of subjugated knowledges.

It's in men's interests to have positions of power and control within social institutions. Those interests, although socially constructed, are deeply imbedded in men's psyches. We are socialised into acting in ways that support those interests.

(Pease 1997:7)

I wondered aloud to the group whether or not we have actually debunked the dominant knowledges that Patriarchy attempts to bring to the fore in men's lives, or if we would just like to think we have? I sensed that this was a disturbing thought to the group as we were possibly reluctant to believe that we had been deceived into believing that we were influenced less by the ideas of Patriarchy than our ancestors.

In retrospect I believe it would have been pertinent at this point to introduce some discussion on the models of Maleness and how men have used Patriarchy within the Bible. Writers such as Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (1987) and Isherwood and McEwan (1993) –to name but a few - have noted how the Bible and the history of Christianity have been the playing ground for Patriarchy.  I wonder to what extent

this discussion would have aided us in working out our Maleness from a practical theological perspective. It would have been useful to consider some of the prominent male figures in biblical history and how they listened, or did not listen to, the voice of Patriarchy.

We then had a discussion about the assumption that gender roles have changed over the last thirty years, where it is more acceptable nowadays for fathers to take on some of the responsibilities that the mother was traditionally responsible for. I asked:

> What would Patriarchy say if he was the same age as we are *and* sitting with us?

We discussed how Patriarchy might be presently more subversive than he was when our parents were our age. We agreed that Patriarchy would still be very present in our every day thinking, however one of the ways we realised how Patriarchy may try to win us over as men is in the way we tell patriarchal jokes; jokes that degrade women, or even people of different races.

One of the other subversive techniques used by Patriarchy was identified in how translations of the Bible do not use language that is gender inclusive. Barry shared with the group how, as a minister in the Methodist Church of South Africa, he chooses to use versions of the Bible in his sermons that are gender inclusive, and in so doing, challenges the voice of Patriarchy. By doing this Barry subscribes to the assertion made by African female theologians that the concept "men" does not include women and that most of the time women delude themselves in thinking they are included" (Oduyoye 1998:361). Patriarchy has thus far been successful in recruiting women into the idea that when a "man" is referred to in the Bible that it also refers to women.

I now wonder how the rest of the co-searchers, including myself, could have adopted ways of challenging Patriarchy following on from the choice Barry had made? Our discussion then moved into dealing with the ways in which Patriarchy has enticed men into being violent towards their loved ones.

### 3.7.2 Patriarchy, Attraction & Violence

Raymond:     The fact that women have been oppressed and Sexism has existed shows that Maleness has gone wrong.

There was agreement in the group with what Raymond had said. At the time it did not occur to us, but I now realise that Barry had dealt with where Maleness may go wrong in his introductory letter:

> I am sometimes a little ashamed of the fairly strong sexual urges which seem to "plague" me and other males … but I also realise that these urges lead men to do things that I detest – and sometimes I fear I just might have it in me to do something despicable. I'm in search of a healthy sexuality, which acknowledges these things and gives me a way of being a sexual being without harm to others.

In retrospect I realise that as group we did not pay much attention to Maleness, sex and sexual health. I wonder what discussion we could have had regarding Maleness and how men construct their power through sex.

> The phallus has come to symbolise masculinity. To be erect is to have strength and determination, while to be limp is to be weak and wishy-washy. It is better for a man to big than small, to ride tall in the saddle rather than slumped over, to be hard rather than soft.
>
> (Balswick 1992:60)

Barry said how he felt that there are men around us, men who are "emasculated". These are white men who at one stage had jobs that were secured by the apartheid government, and have now lost that security. They are now unemployed and have lost the dignity that they once had. Smith (1996:44) describes these men as being "powerless", and Barry expressed how this powerlessness has resulted in much of the violence against the family that the country [South Africa] is now suffering from.

In writing of a similar situation amongst American men who were perpetrators of

domestic violence, Balswick (1992:18) poses that:

> … these men believed that they must be strong, dominant, superior and successful; but they themselves felt devastated and inadequate … in reaction to being dependant on their wives … the physical abuse was an attempt to cover up the inadequacy these men felt in relation to their wives.

According to Balswick, domestic violence is a by-product of the traditional roles men assumed in relation to women. Domestic violence can thus be seen in this context as a residual of the shift in gender roles and men's attempt to retain the roles that they believe have been taken from them.

Barry wondered at the source of Patriarchy in our time and society. He wondered if the power Patriarchy holds lies in the man's desire to "be on top, on top of the pile, being the best ... and this has to do with the man, that the male lion has a mane". I wonder if Becker's caveman would feel the same about his hunting spear?

Barry:      I'm not sure I want to know what makes me inherently male, because I'm not sure I can trust it ... it abuses.

This man (as portrayed by Barry) represents the desire to be more powerful than the woman. For Barry, Maleness is distinctly influenced by a sexual dynamic, a dynamic that forces men to be on top and better than any man or woman. It was at this point that I asked if our Maleness and its constituent aspects are a product of nature and what comes naturally to a man, or is there some other source for our Maleness. Barry said that he believed that Competitiveness is a human characteristic, but one that is adopted differently by men and women. For him, Competitiveness for Maleness may be more informed by the sexual dynamic, while for women it is informed by other constructs.

Our discussion on the sexual dynamic of Patriarchy led us into the arena of attraction. In his introductory letter to the group, Barry discussed how his Maleness had at one stage been challenged by ideas of attraction and what constitutes

attraction for men. For Barry, this challenge came in the discourse that women should not have body hair, and that body hair on women is regarded as unattractive. We then discussed women and body hair. We shared some stories of our experiences with women who did not shave. For the most part, the discussion was challenging as our stereotypes of women being silky smooth were confronted. I read somewhere that women started shaving their armpits and legs due to an advertising campaign from one of the shaving manufacturers. As a result, I could not help but wonder who decided that women needed to start shaving and what economic gain resulted from that decision? We asked ourselves what constituted attraction and what it is that makes attraction so significant in our lives as men.

In response, Barry spoke about the stereotype that men are stimulated more by physical appearance in comparison to women. Mike was unhappy with this comment and suggested that as men, it is possible that we express our visual attraction more than women. Mike also shared the belief, based on his experience, that an attraction based less on looks is a more lasting attraction. This conversation touched again on the nature versus nurture debate we had been having about Maleness. We wondered if there is a sexual-attraction dynamic that was or is natural to men.

Barry:     I think ultimately, when it comes down to it, we don't actually give a damn until we have had an orgasm. Our values our morals … we can make all that relative … and make excuses all along the way…and then it's over, we fall asleep, and then we're satisfied … while there is that sexual drive … it is all consuming … I know I'm generalising, but it is the one place that the generalisation fits. The reason I raise this is because it is difficult for me to be a good man because of that reality … when I am sitting in my office counselling a woman who has been abused by a man ... and I kinda feel guilty because I'm a man and men do these horrible things. I then wonder what is the relationship between that which drives me to look at a woman's breasts and that which drives men to rape a woman?

It was at this point that we asked what characterised a harmful Maleness and that of a harmless Maleness, and if there may be a link between these two ways of being a man? Barry also noted how easy it is for men to "get up on their high horse about

these rapists" and yet do not recognise that they have everything in them that makes a rapist. Ryan H. noted how it is when a man say's "It'll never happen to me" that you're in the greatest danger of it actually happening to you.

Venter (1993:92) believes that the horror of sexual violence committed by men is not a result of testosterone levels, but rather a complex of sexual alienation, rejection, powerlessness, low self-esteem and suppressed rage. Ryan H. wondered what it is in us that has suppressed the temptations to abuse and hurt others and what has stopped us from doing these sorts of despicable things? He wondered if it is what is at the core of our being that stops us from doing these things? I related the question to my discussions with a child molester and how in that case my question became "what has stopped you from respecting your daughter?"

We reflected on these questions: *Why is power such a major issue for a man? Is our Maleness power driven? Is our Maleness innately abusive? Is there a tendency within a male's nature to abuse and to seek power?*

Raymond told us that he didn't think that power is inherently a male struggle, but is driven by society as it tells us "a man must be powerful ... and based on that we push ourselves to be powerful … I do not believe God would create man to be abusively powerful!"

Raymond:     If you look at the reasons for sexual abuse "it never comes down to it being because that is what a man is [made to do]".

Mike:     I like to hope that I'm inherently good natured and honourable.

I asked: What is it about sexual abuse that a man finds enjoyable that a woman would not? This was a difficult question to answer, and we could not find an adequate response. We then agreed that if succumbing to abusive ways were not inherently male that it must be societal perceptions of Maleness that encourage abuse. We also agreed with the feminist standpoint that men are socialised into being abusive and are capable of change.

> What is desired is not the death of individual men, but of the gender relationships which privilege men and discriminate against women.
>
> (Arndt 2002:33)

Ryan K. told us how he had seen that being abusive depended on the way one is brought up, in family and in society.

Barry:     If it's not inherent, then the only other option is that the societal perceptions of maleness are inherently problematic … that the way we are encouraged to be male in society in family plays into the hands of power.

Barry:     The reason why we are reluctant to say what is natural to Maleness is because as soon as that is the case, we are unable to do anything about it. If it is a result of biology, we would still have to take responsibility for our actions … it would not excuse us of that.

Ryan H.:   Coming back to society, is it not mostly the male decision on what society portrays and is … who is in control of society, a lot of the time it is men.

Mike:      Is it about who is in control of society, or who is responsible for what society says?

We then acknowledged that there are active and passive positions that people may choose in terms of what messages society creates.

Barry:     Sometimes not taking a side is actually taking a side...like not having an opinion on apartheid was accepting the status quo".

From this we discussed how women have also played a part in the hegemony that Patriarchy has held over society. Ryan H. acknowledged his responsibility in perpetuating Patriarchy in how he accepts not being challenged with regards to the decisions he makes in the home. Alice told him that it could be comfortable for a woman if the man were the head of the home. She also gave another example that related to Muslim women and how they have to cover themselves. She related how Muslim women are the ones who have to be responsible for a man's sexual

tendencies, and as such, are required to cover all 'flesh' to prevent a man from being sexually attracted to her. For Alice, this was a classic example of how Patriarchy has worked in subversive ways to recruit women into accepting such knowledge.

I wonder what would have come out of a discussion with Alice concerning the perception that men are dominated by sexual urges, or in Caveman language, just want a piece of meat, or being flesh-hungry?

We then, at Mike's prompting, asked if there was any truth in the biblical notion that the sins of the fathers are passed down through the generations? We discussed how this notion might allow Maleness to escape responsibility. Ryan K. shared with us how, in his own life, he put a stop to that notion as a result of the way his father had treated his family when he was growing up.

Ryan K.:          I've learnt from my experiences of abuse and have taken a stand against that!

Ryan H.:          What makes a person like Ryan stand up against something like that, and other men have had similar experiences not take that stand?

We discussed how it is possible that some men find it easier to "palm off" responsibility instead of trying to make the right decision. I shared that in my experience of counselling a father who has abused his family, "why" questions were largely unhelpful. It is "why" questions that make it easier for a man to "pass the buck", and that maybe in our lives we need to make an effort to ask questions that are not interested in "why", and instead ask questions that encourage responsibility.

Barry:          Being able to apportion blame for the effect that other people's lives had on me is no great achievement, and that it is easy to do. It is not so easy to acknowledge how you and your actions are responsible, no matter how responsible you are.

Raymond:          It is important to take responsibility for *your* stuff...despite how difficult it is to admit your bugger up!

Mike also acknowledged how difficult it is as a man to admit that he is wrong. I wondered "what benefit there is in taking responsibility?" Raymond said he believed that in taking responsibility a man stops the "ripple effect" of his actions, and that "the moment you carry on blaming" the ripples continue. Perhaps this is what is needed to ensure that the sins of the father are not passed down through the generations? Mike also said that taking responsibility benefits a person, and how one is humbled and may learn a lot from taking responsibility. Raymond said he remembered his mom telling him "to be the better man" and admit that he was wrong.

I now wonder what it is that limits men in accepting responsibility for their harmful and abusive behaviour? Alan Jenkins (1990) proposes a theory of restraint as an answer to these questions. His premise is that men are fully capable of accepting responsibility for their actions, but that there are certain socio-cultural restraints that inhibit men from doing so.

> Males will relate respectively, sensitively and non-abusively with others, unless restrained from doing so.
>
> (Jenkins 1990:32)

I wonder how the co-searchers would have reacted to such a theory should I have raised it in our discussions?

### 3.7.3 Patriarchy, gender roles and better cars

> … when we drive, we lock in on the front of the road. A guy will miss his exits […] And your wife says, "There goes your exit." "Errrahhh, what happened?" We lock in on the front of the road, we tend to lock in on things, and it makes the woman feel like she's being ignored. How often do you say, every guy in a relationship spends 10% of the relationship going, "Honey, I'm not ignoring you, I'm really not ignoring you.
>
> (Becker in Harris 1997:11)

Men drive to a party, women drive back.

<div align="right">(Daily Telegraph 2004)</div>

For countless ages … human culture and society have emphasized the differences between men and women rather than their underlying unity.

<div align="right">(Rohr & Martos1996:12)</div>

One of the characteristics of our discussions was that we often held in tension many ideas regarding Patriarchy; dealing not only with one topic at a time, but somehow managing to deal with multiple aspects of how Patriarchy established itself in our roles as men, partners and husbands. What follows is my attempt to reproduce succinctly our discussions on this topic.

Mike shared with us some of the ways in which patriarchy had informed the construction of gender roles within his family and household. One of these ways was how Mike took it for granted that the laundry was always taken care of. This was a significant realisation for him since marrying Wendy recently had made him aware that a lot of work was put into ensuring a household was run smoothly. Mike had always relied on his mother as the "laundry fairy" – "how the dirty washing would just disappear and then reappear clean and ironed". Myburg (2002:59) tells of a similar experience in his upbringing:

> As a white male, I was to pursue interests clearly served by patriarchy. *Someone* would be responsible for domestic duties, *someone* would be taking care of the children, *someone* would provide constant nurturing and support.

We then wondered if there was ever a real choice available to women regarding the roles they fulfilled in the home and the family?

Raymond:    Surely it is the natural instinct of the woman to nurture and take care of that baby?

This question forms the basis of essentialist thought behind gender roles. Essentialist thought tells us that men and women are emotionally and physically different. Rob Becker remembers a motivation for creating *Defending the Caveman:*

> "I think we are different," Becker remembers thinking, an epiphany in the social climate of the mid-1980's, when little girls were encouraged to play with trucks and little boys with dolls to erase male-female stereotypical thinking.
>
> (Becker in Naiman 2001:1)

> I believe that men's material interests are clearly served by patriarchy. Not only men's economic interests – but also interests in having someone taking care of the children and doing the domestic labour, providing nurturance and support.
>
> (Pease 1997:7)

It is according to these physical differences that men and women have different roles. Again we were faced with the nature versus socialisation dilemma. I told Raymond that in my mind it seemed that was the case, but I also said that it was the "it is natural for the women" argument that has, in the past, given Patriarchy a foothold to subjugate women into roles in which they had no choice.

The examples we discussed were roles in the workplace, roles in the family, roles in education and roles within intimate relationships. We agreed that it definitely seemed as if there had been a definite shift in the roles and expectations of men and women. We noted for example, how men nowadays seem to be getting more involved in the upbringing of children, to such an extent that we wondered if this increase in fathering may just be a fashionable trend. Mike noted how it seems fashionable for fathers to be at their children's sports days. Despite this possibility, we agreed that it was a positive outcome of the shift in gender roles.

Our discussion then developed into the topic of values and what is important for men versus women. Barry asked if we as men are more susceptible to the trapping of cars and gadgets than women. Most of the group agreed that men are more susceptible than women. Raymond told a story of how he thought of a plan to get a

nicer car that involved Cindy selling her car. In response Cindy told him that her car was the one thing that she owned and paid off herself. Raymond told us that Cindy prefers the smaller things in life, whereas he prefers buying one big thing. Raymond also noted how car magazines do not appeal to a women market. Ryan K. wondered if this trend boiled down what a person's interests are? The question still remained: *Are the things that are traditionally considered to be male interests innate to our maleness or have we been socialised to belief that we need these things?*

In retrospect, I believe I could have asked the group whether two men in a same sex relationship would have the same differences? This question would have addressed the distinction between this being a 'man' thing or a 'woman' thing, or if we were really dealing discourses that had influenced what appeals to men and women.

> A woman is never truly her own master. God formed her body to belong to
> a man, to have and to rear children.
>
> (Luther 1933:327 in Isherwood & McEwan 1993:49)

Through our discussions on Patriarchy, Ryan H. took some initiative in speaking to his wife, Alice, to find out what she perceived Patriarchy to be. We learned from Alice that a stereotype does exist, created by Patriarchy that the life flow of women amounts to getting married, having kids and then giving up a job to look after the children. She said that in some cases, women are keen to do this, and do not see it as a negative Patriarchal expectation. Immediately the question came to my mind: *if that is the case, are these women not just buying into the power of Patriarchy unknowingly?* I asked myself if these women do in fact have the choice to live life as this type of women, or is it just Patriarchy that creates this life as a seeming option? My concern was based on Foucault's assertion that where there is power there is resistance. I wondered if Patriarchy would give up the fight so easily? Could Patriarchy not be just deceiving women into believing they have made their own choice?

Mike also asked his wife, Wendy, about the ways in which Patriarchy might establish itself in their relationship. Wendy said that on the one hand there might be a substantial presence of Patriarchy in their relationship, but that she may not have

noticed it because their family origins have been so similar. Here the roles of the parents were similar in both families such that Mike and Wendy may not have a difference in roles that allowed them to question to way things were done. Mike and Wendy acknowledged that Patriarchy might have made itself a significant part of their relationship through this process. Mike also spoke of an example of how Patriarchy had influence his thinking when he and Wendy were looking at cars.

Mike:    She made a valid point, and that was that I decided … that she needed a better car.

Here, Mike had made up in his mind that Wendy needed a better car without actually consulting her on how she felt about the issue. For Mike, it was an awakening example, as he had not realised that Patriarchy played out its influence in his marriage in such subtle ways. Barry extended the conversation to include how often women will drive the car in a relationship. He believed that in most cases, the man would drive.

Barry challenged our beliefs in asking: How do you feel about being the passenger in the car? Most of us agreed that this was an extremely challenging question and admitted to being terrible passengers, especially with our partners. This is a simple example of how Patriarchy influences gender roles and responsibilities. I began to wonder if women were better off by not driving as often, or if it was just the influence of Patriarchy keeping women in submission. Barry picked up on this thought and spoke of liberating people from oppressive situations.

Barry:   This had to be explained to me, but now I understand it. One of the struggles … is not only with dealing with the prejudicial attitudes of society, but also dealing with the potentially prejudicial attitudes of that person.

He used as an example his experience of black South Africans who, for so long lived under the oppression of Apartheid, believed that life was better for them living in a system of Apartheid and actually were not interested in being liberated from the system. Barry also applied this thought to women and asked if there may be women who reject the opportunity of being released form the oppression Patriarchy has for

so long held them under. He wondered if women like this may think that life is better in a society run by Patriarchy. He spoke of women who may just accept the way things are as the way they were meant to be, that they might be so deeply ingrained by the belief system of Patriarchy that women do not realize how they are being subjugated. For Barry, it is important to know that when women make the decision to abandon the restriction of Patriarchy they feel truly free to make that choice. The motivation for knowing this lies in how many feminists would say that women are not truly free to make that sort of choice, but are just re-enforcing a role that Patriarchy demands of women.

In reading the above paragraph, I am concerned that through this discussion we may have assumed that men were free from such concerns. I wonder if the same flow may apply to us as men when rejecting the prescription of Patriarchy on our Maleness? As a group of co-searchers I believe that we had attempted to dislodge the power Patriarchy held in our Maleness but I wonder to what extent we were truly free to make those choices?

At the time of this discussion Raymond had been without a car and had to rely on his wife, Cindy, to drive him around. An altercation arose when he assumed that he would drive her car because his car was in for repairs.

Raymond:    I have always just assumed, well, I'm the guy … I'll drive.

Cindy told Raymond that she gets frustrated because he assumed that he will always drive, even if it is her car that they were going to travel in. Raymond then realized that it was indeed her car, that she paid for it, and that she should decide whether (and how) she drives or not. Here Raymond had realised how Patriarchy had created in him the perception that it was the man's role to do the driving. I wonder now to what extent our perceptions of gender roles are influenced by the models our parents set for us? I would have liked to ask Raymond if the same norm existed between his mother and father?

Ryan H. told us how when he makes a decision as to what was important for his home Alice will go with it with very little questioning. This made him uncomfortable. I

then asked Ryan H. if he thought that Alice's reluctance to challenge his final decision might have something to do with the way in which Patriarchy says that the man makes the final decision. Ryan agreed with this.

From the points raised above, Barry highlighted that there was an assumption here that caused the problem, an assumption that came from Patriarchy. This assumption was that a man should be the one to make the decisions. Barry also said that this assumption has no basis, that there is no reason why the man should be the sole decision maker in a relationship.

Here we were highlighting the socially constructed nature of gender roles. As Barry pointed out, there was no basis for such assumptions. The assumptions that gender roles are constructed are particular to our culture, context and constitutive powers through language.

### 3.7.4 Patriarchy and the white male system

One of the significant questions that emerged from the discussion concerning Patriarchy and gender roles was:

*Why, as a man, do we think that the world revolves around us?*

I wondered if this assumption might be a by-product of the individualist culture we as men live in, or whether it is a part of our Maleness. This question reminded me of what Barry had said in his introductory letter to the group: "…it shouldn't be taken for granted that the woman should do all the accommodating in a relationship or marriage".

I reflected on the power a belief system has in constituting us as men. It seemed to me that both men and women are pressured into buying into a belief system that characterizes their view of the world. Often such a belief system is a pervasive in that it totalises how the world is viewed. Rohr and Martos (1996) outline a worldview

that is called *The White Male System* as first put forward by Anne Wilson Schaef in 1986.

The White Male System is a set of myths that define the mental world that most white men live in. The System is characterised by the beliefs. They are:

- *the white male system is the only thing that exists,*
- *the white male system is innately superior,*
- *the white male system knows and understands everything,*
- *it is possible to be totally logical, rational and objective.*

These four myths are then capped by the final myth, which is that *it is possible for one to be God*[13].

The question of believing that the world revolves around us lead us towards another influential voice that impacted on our Maleness, that of Conquer. Again, the sexual dynamic was raised and we discussed the possibility of this dynamic being the root of Conquer. In discussing Conquer we acknowledged that many men seem to buy into the influence of Conquer in seemingly negative ways. A significant example was that of George W. Bush who was currently engaged in the conflict in Iraq in an attempt to find alleged arms of mass destruction (see also the discussion on the USA in Chapter 2). Here the ideas of gaining territory and overcoming the enemy seem to be important aspects of Conquer, especially in the ways that George W. Bush adopted the voice of Conquer.

Raymond:     Since the war started, all I've wanted to see is America be *dondered* [beaten]. I feel bad but it's what I feel.

Feminists have expressed the belief that masculinity is about the drive for domination, the drive for power, for conquest (Kimmel 1996). It is because of assertions like these that we have to be ever mindful of the ways in which we as

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13 I only encountered this theory once we had completed our discussions. In retrospect, I believe it would have been pertinent in light of the previous discussions to offer this framework to the group for discussion and deconstruction.

men perpetuate and enforce power. It was at this point that we discussed our responses to violence, and how men may deal approximately with violence in our country.

In retrospect I wonder if it would have been beneficial for us as a group to deconstruct the voice of Conquer with George W. Bush in mind? I also wonder what would have come of discussing Margaret Thatcher's invasion of the Falklands in a similar light? Perhaps this discussion would have aided us in finding out if conquer was a distinctly male construct?

## 3.8 Maleness and violent crime

In discussing the way in which power may be abused by Maleness we discovered that both Barry and Ryan H. had experienced hijackings. As Barry's trauma was the most recent I invited him to write a letter to the group discussing his experience and how he had coped since (Appendix D). These are excerpts from his letter:

> Dear boy-friends,
>
> I am an impatient man with a relatively short fuse. I'm the one riding in the yellow lane to get to the off-ramp quicker, and also the one hooting and screaming because some one cut me off in the traffic….
>
> And, listening to the many stories of hijackings, I often wondered how I would react when it happened to me. I often expressed the fear that I would react aggressively and end up getting shot or worse. I always thought that the best thing to do would be to cooperate and let the hijackers take the car, cell wallet etc.
>
> Well, that's exactly what I did when it happened. I remained calm (mostly out of shock I think) and cooperated.
>
> Makes one think … so I lay down when they told me too. I lay there with a gun not far away from the back of my head. One of the robbers put his foot on my head when I tried to look up to see what was going on. So I just waited for what seemed like a very long time (probably not more than a minute or two), wondering, "will they shoot me?"

Thinking back, I'm obviously glad to be alive. And I do think that not resisting played a part in the outcome of the incident. But what kind of person just limply lets bastards with guns invade his personal space and take his hard earned possessions? I acted like a wimp – just lying down. So, there is the question that some people raise, when will this stop? And when are we going to stand up for what is right? And when are we going to resist and make it clear that this sort of unjust and unfair and criminal behaviour is unacceptable? And doesn't our wimpy, limp response only encourage these criminals to rob and pillage more?

What about the person who gives his life for his friend? What about the glory of the one who pays the ultimate price for that which is right and just and fair?

Well, none of that occurred to me at the time of the hijacking. Then, I went into survival mode and did what I'd rehearsed – i.e. that which I believed to be the response most likely to protect my life from harm.

But the angry thoughts about resistance etc. came after. I'm alive, but what kind of person just lies down takes the blows? Jesus certainly approached the cross in that kind of way… and it's hard to think of Him as wimpy, although maybe I just don't want to think of him in that way. Maybe going "voluntarily" to the cross in the most absurd idea the world's ever had to consider!

And maybe, a man should derive pride from knowing that he's resisted (as per The Patriot) and even paid the ultimate price. What is all this glory we have encouraged boys/men to believe? That giving one's life is a noble thing?

Well, I'm fascinated (I think I've spoken about this before) that most violent crime is a male phenomenon. Why are we men so violent? Why have we not learned from history? Why is peace such hard thing to sustain?

I want to seek to live a non-violent life, challenging in myself (and especially in my Maleness) the areas where violence is still prevalent. One thing that is convincing me at the moment is that violence will not be an effective response to stop the violence. So I have these things to think about:

- In my relationship with the woman in my life (at this point Elaine), how will I use, misuse power and my ability to manipulate… and to what extent am I "violent" in those aspects of my life.
- How will I approach my work situations in terms of being a driven person with vision and goals? Will I want to get my way at any expense and force and push things into being?
- How will I respond to the problem of crime? (Will we as a society believe that more violence and the death penalty will work?)
- How will I discipline my children?

Barry's story of his hijacking was one of co-operation. His letter reflected on how being hijacked impacted on his Maleness, especially with regards to how he reacts to violence and that reacting in a submissive and non-threatening manner, he believes, spared his life.

> While we live in a society that condones and legitimates men's violence, and in which men are not speaking out against it, men will always find excuses for their violence. I believe we have to create a cultural shift whereby men, whatever their hurts, whatever their desires or needs, will stop at that point, because they will have internalised so deeply that it is culturally unacceptable for them to be violent.
>
> (Pease 1997:9)

Barry also questioned our upbringing as men and how we are told that a man must retaliate when hurt. His letter also reflected on role models he has in terms of reacting to violence. One of these people was Jesus and the example that he set in approaching the cross voluntarily, and asked questions that challenged his Maleness in terms of how he might use violence, power and manipulation in his own life. I found that the way Barry chose to co-operate in the hi-jacking was in line with the Maleness he chose to live and with the "gentle" role models he has had in his life.

In my own personal experience of Maleness I find that there is pressure to bottle things up inside of oneself. Barry chose to stand up to this pressure in writing regular

letters to friends in which he shared his struggles in dealing the hijacking. I commended Barry for choosing to deal with the trauma in such a vulnerable and open manner.

Mike asked Barry what the good things might have come out of the hijacking? Barry replied in saying that most people feel the need to re-evaluate their lives and make some adjustment, but that for him, the hijacking confirmed that he was leading the life that he wanted to, and that he was "on the journey" that he wanted to be on.

As the discussion developed we turned to Ryan H's experience of his hijacking. For Ryan H. he found that his experience was very different from that of Barry's. The major difference was that Ryan H. witnessed Alice being hijacked and was forced into a position of powerlessness in not being able to come to her aid. The similarity was that Ryan H. also co-operated with the demand of the hijackers, but that afterwards, his reactions were different to Barry's.

Ryan H.:       I am normally a short fused person, and for months afterwards, my fuse was even shorter … I don't enjoy it when people force themselves upon your environment, and then you have to play their game. So, anyone that got in my face afterwards experienced the short fuse.

Ryan H. and Barry's experience lead us to reflect on the role Power and Powerlessness play in our Maleness. We realised that Powerlessness is a very difficult force to reckon with in attempting to create the Maleness we chose. Ryan K. told us that in situations where he finds himself feeling powerless, he feels the desires to retaliate and fight back. Mike also told us that after times where he has felt powerless, he has sometimes rebuked himself for not retaliating, especially when he was mocked in school. I wondered aloud what it is in us that tells us that if we do not dominate a situation, we're wimps?

We also wondered what was behind the desire to commit violent crime. This excerpt from the discussion's summary letter outlines our thoughts in this regard:

> I wondered if there is a difference between the male that I am and the man that would commit violent crime. What makes a man choose violent crime? We wondered if necessity was the motivation behind the crime, or if there was some other factor? Raymond you believe that most petty crime is committed out of necessity, but that violent crime has a very definite evil behind it. We also spoke about the ways in which people sustain crime by buying cars/parts that have been hijacked/stolen. Raymond you noted that it goes deeper than that, and expressed how "buying fake copies of DVD's seems pretty harmless, but that in fact it is not" and that it has greater and deeper repercussions.

We had a discussion about how men often use guns as a means of perpetuating a violent Maleness. For Barry, he shared how guns were offensive to him. What Barry finds offensive about guns is the way people use guns irresponsibly and how often innocent people are caught in the crossfire. Barry also believed that for men, guns are phallic symbols that allow men to feel that they are more powerful.

### 3.8.1 Jesus, Maleness and violence

As men of Christian faith, we often discussed how following Jesus informed our Maleness. This discussion was also prompted by Barry's reflections on Jesus in his letter about his recent hijacking.

Balswick (1992:50) notes how Christians often attempt to infuse Christian morality into the traditional model of what a man should be. He poignantly points out that it's all too common for Christians to assume that the particular gender roles of their culture are also God's ideal. In doing so, these people are not "so much interested in *discerning* a biblical perspective on gender roles in modern society as they are in *defending* how gender roles have been defined in the past" (Balswick 1992:50).

I wonder how Balswick's thoughts may be applied to Becker's *Defending the Caveman*? As you would have noted, there have been numerous references to the play throughout this study, and in most cases you will see that the play defends the

*natural* roles of men and how they should behave, and argues that the role men have assumed in the past are the roles that should be normative for men today and in the days to come.

On one occasion we discussed how violence was used against Jesus and how from what we had read of Jesus' story, it seems that he was a man that chose to have a Maleness that was non-violent. This excerpt from a summary letter describes our discussion around this topic:

> Raymond you shared that the gentleness Jesus exhibited is a quality that you long to see inside of yourself, and that Jesus depicts the ultimate man for you. You said that Barry's ability to accept what happened to him is strength, that it is a strong attribute. The fact that Jesus could forgive the people who crucified him was a strength that you admire. I shared that in my experience so much of the world is guided by the "eye-for-an-eye" principle in which people feel the need to retaliate, for example, the way the US handled September 11. So for me, Jesus shows an alternative to retaliation. Barry, you shared how you admire the non-violent response of Jesus. We also spoke about how the movie *The Mission* informed us in terms of violence and forgiveness.

> Although Jesus is known as the man of peace, he also demonstrates mature warrior qualities in his stand against the evils and injustices of his day.

> (Balswick 1992:53)

We wondered if coercive means were used in getting Jesus to the cross. We agreed that by and large, Jesus was a victim of violence although he went to the cross voluntarily. We agreed that this voluntary movement is a very difficult aspect to face in our lives as men. These thoughts lead us to ask questions about Maleness and it's often found reluctance to surrender. We also wondered if this "gentleness" of Jesus allows it to be easier for women to commit to a life that holds Jesus as a model.

However, this "gentleness" has also constituted Jesus as so "feminised (based on cultural definitions of femininity) that he bears little resemblance to a real man" (Balswick 1992:57). At other times though, he has been portrayed as "a cultural ideal of a saviour, who like a Western sheriff, was physically strong and stood up for what was right (Balswick 1992:57).

Barry:       I think women suffer a whole lot more than men…in a woman's biology is suffering, a monthly menstruation which is painful. It grosses us out, the only suffering we have had is that we may not have sex for a few days. The implication of this pain for women is childbirth…you loose control of your body…you give birth to a baby and then wants to suck on you…I can't argue that I'll never know what it is like. One of the reasons women are much more open to spirituality is because they encounter suffering far more within themselves…that is one of the reason's we are so lazy as men.

Mike asked: *I wonder if Jesus ever retaliated?*

Mike asked this question because he recognised that he struggles with retaliation, and battles to identify with Jesus in this regard. Barry forwarded the story of how Jesus lost his temper in the temple as an example that Mike could identify with. Ryan H. shared how he struggles with Jesus' example of forgive and forget. He also admires how Jesus managed to do this.

Barry :      How would you respond if you came home one night and your girlfriend and another man were on the couch together?

Out initial responses were on the side of a violent response. Ryan H. told us how he had been in a similar situation, but had walked way, without getting violent. After some discussion we agreed that walking away would be a more responsible act and that it would be very difficult for our Maleness not to retaliate.

Our discussion then moved towards dealing with revenge and how Maleness sometimes uses revenge as a form of retaliation. Mike asked how we might react if one of our loved one's was hurt through violent crime. Ryan K. shared how his dad

had been assaulted and his strongest need was to confront the people who did it to have it out with them. Ryan K. said that now, after the fact, he would not react in such a way having realised that revenge was not the way Jesus would handle such a situation.

Raymond:            For me, Jesus is the perfect role model as a man.

Raymond's comment resonates with Balswick's assertion:

> Jesus provided us with a perfect model of Christian manhood.
>
> (Balswick 1992:55)

I wonder if we perhaps did not dedicate enough discussion to the ways in which Jesus informed our Maleness? Yes, we discussed Jesus and his response to violence, but I wonder if we should have investigated further the ways in which we as co-searchers had allowed the model of Jesus to inform our Maleness and the ways in which we could apply a practical theology.

## 3.9 Reflection on the chapter

In chapter 1 I noted how Cloete (2001) identified the following discourses as being influential in the lives of his co-searchers:

(a) a man is a breadwinner and the primary provider for the family;
(b) a man is goal-orientated and focussed on success;
(c) a man is dominant and aggressive;
(d) a man does not value emotions and relationships, and
(e) a man does not change easily

In reflecting on these discourses I believe that some common ground exists with the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions. Although we may not have used the same language as Cloete and his co-searchers to describe the discourses that were influential in constructing our Maleness, we did however discuss the discourses in the following manner:

1) Our discussions regarding Competitiveness, Impressiveness and Conquer resonate with Cloete's discourse that a man is goal-orientated and focussed on success.

2) In terms of a man being dominant and aggressive, we discussed Maleness in relation to violence and violent crime.

Chapter 4 will deal with the introduction of the alternative voices as well as the formulation of our statements on Maleness as closure to our discussions.

**Chapter 4**

## 4.1 Alternative voices

> There's no question about it; men and women are very different. Whether these differences arose from our evolutionary past, or from some other source, Becker's advice to couple applies…. "If we spent as much time trying to understand each other as we do trying to change each other, we'd get along a lot better, and we'd laugh a lot more".
>
> (Stephen 2001:1)

> Gender transformation is not an ineluctable movement. For it to continue, both men *and* women need to contribute.
>
> (Morrell 2002:313)

Towards the end of our discussions we began to realise that as a group we were covering the same topics consistently throughout our discussions. We felt that we were reaching a point at which we were ready to invite alternative voices to our discussions[14]. The motivation behind this invitation lay in the realisation that we may have become too inwardly focussed in our discussions and through this may have wandered in our focus on Maleness. So, we chose to invite voices into the group that we felt may provide us with alternative, differing perspectives on Maleness.

The choice to invite alternative voices to our discussions also stemmed from very real interests that we experienced; interests that were eager to explore the opinions and perspectives of those who we believed may have held different viewpoints on Maleness. We were eager to first meet with women, and thus Celeste and Mandy joined us for a discussion[15]. We were then eager to listen to the voices of homosexuality, and thus invited Des and Grant to join us for a discussion.

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14  See chapter 1.7.6
15  Who have already been discussed in 3.5.3.

### 4.1.1 Femaleness

> We, as men, are encouraged not to listen to women, to devalue women's insights and understandings of the world. We have been encouraged to believe that, as men, we have a monopoly on the truth, and that, as men, our views and values are always more important than those of women. So, often, we as men don't hear what women are saying about their experience.
>
> <div align="right">(Pease 1997:8)</div>

Rob Becker, original performer and writer of *Defending the Caveman*, had this to say in an interview concerning the origins of the play:

> When I was in junior high school I had this friend named Michelle who lived down the street, and I would walk her to school everyday. She was pretty popular, so every day we would pick up five other girls and walk to school. So everyday on the way to school it was six girls and me. I was the resident guy. So everyday on the way to school they would pepper me with these questions, why does a guy do this? Why does a guy do something like that? What do guys think about this? And I would have to come up with answers. Then I would get to school … and the other guys would come up to and say "You walk to school with them, right?" and I would go "Yeah." And they would ask, *"What do they think about us?"* [italics mine]
>
> <div align="right">(Becker in Harris 1997:2)</div>

As an introduction, I outlined for Mandy and Celeste our aims and the significant questions we had faced as a group[16]. Ryan H. spoke about how we as a group had been struggling to identify whether the issues we discussed concerning Maleness (i.e. Patriarchy, Violence, Competitiveness, etc.) were "a worldly perception on what males are or if it's our perception?" I added to this, in telling Mandy and Celeste that we were investigating whether our Maleness was a product of nature (i.e. instincts, drives and biology), or if our Maleness was a product of what society creates it to be. Mike added to this in telling Mandy and Celeste how we had struggled with

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16  Prior to the discussion we provided Mandy and Celeste with a summary of the questions we had posed to Maleness up until that point. See Appendix E

apportioning blame and responsibility to aspects of our Maleness we were not happy with. He also added that we were trying to find out what is naturally "male", or what is constructed as "male"?

### 4.1.1.1 Competitiveness, Impressiveness

On this point Ryan H. addressed Competitiveness and Maleness in the business place:

Ryan H.:    It [Maleness] revolves around getting to the top, whereas our perspective on women, generally, is that they do the best they can, because that is what they want to do.

Celeste said that in her experience of the business world, women tend to compete with other women more than with men. She also said that in her experience women are more confident in a male surrounding and that she herself was fine when sitting in a boardroom filled with men.

Celeste:    The minute another women steps into that situation, it becomes a competition between the two women.

With saying this, Celeste answered our question regarding whether or not the voices our Maleness is influenced by is also experienced by Femaleness. So, in this instance Competitiveness is not a distinctively male voice. When it comes to Impressiveness, Celeste also said that,

a lot of it is done for men, to prove that I can do this.

Celeste's comment reminded me of what Isherwood and McEwan (1993:18) write of the history of women in relation to men:

It is almost a throw-back to the myth of man the hunter, who engages in dangerous pursuits while 'his woman' remains secure at home … women have had to play along and see themselves in the role of the object, the

object of protection … women who were self-affirming were cast in the role of whore … no wonder that women developed a surrender mentality.

Celeste's story is one of "the reclaiming of history by women" (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:21). The role of women as submissive in relation to the man as a hunter is not the whole picture of gender. Celeste has reacted against this typecast and has reclaimed some of her own ground as a women in relation to men in the business world.

Mandy and Celeste showed us that Competitiveness is a voice that both men and women are influenced by. I wonder what Becker's *Caveman* might have to say about women competing with each other? Would he be surprised at women feeling threatened by each other? I wonder if he would put it down to the discourse that women compete for the attention and affection of a male?

### 4.1.1.2 Patriarchy and Nature

This discussion led us towards dealing with gender roles within our time. Mandy pointed out that in her experience, women are beginning to reclaim their roles as mothers and housewives.

Mandy:      It is more of a male thing to want to be the CEO of a company, women have desires and goals that are more family orientated, centred more around the home and children than being in the workplace. If you think about it, years ago all the women wanted to be in the workplace, now it's the reverse and all women want to do is be at home to look after their children.

What Mandy said resonates with an excerpt from Gray (1992):

Instead of being goal-orientated, women are relationship orientated; they are more concerned with expressing their goodness, love and caring.

So it seems from what Mandy said that gender roles are undergoing yet another shift. When feminism first emerged in the 19th century, the primary goal was to reclaim the privilege and dignity that Patriarchy had for so long held from women

(see Isherwood & McEwan 1993, Ackermann 1998). In this time, women fought and defended their equality with men.

> "I think we are different," Becker remembers thinking, an epiphany in the social climate of the mid-1980s, when little girls were encouraged to play with trucks and little boys with dolls to erase male-female stereotypical thinking. Theoretically this was supposed to help seed improved relationships between men and women. But as Becker explains, "I believe our fights are based on misunderstandings because we believe we're the same. We're not."
>
> (Naiman 2001:1)

Celeste shared with us how she believes that "women and men are supposed to be what they are … women and men". She said she believes that when people speak of man and woman being equal, it does not mean that both do the same thing, and that feminism has failed to an extent, because women have been trying to be men. To a certain extent, this resonates with one of our prior discussions (see 3.7.3) where we identified that gender roles have shifted significantly, such that men are taking on the roles of the primary-caregiver.

Celeste:    In the home men and women have specific roles to play, but that does not mean that I must be in the kitchen cooking, for example!

I spoke of how we have addressed the seeming biological rationale for our behaviour and roles and men and women, and put forward the notion to Mandy and Celeste that as men we have biological and instinctual basis for our behaviour. Mandy, in response to my remark, shared how she believed that we are constituted by both nature and society, and that despite how society might try and mould one into something, you cannot become what you are not. Celeste agreed with Mandy, in that she believes that there are natural instincts, but that society has "taken it too far" in the form of laws that govern a woman's behaviour.

I am reminded here of Becker's comment above that in the 1980's there was a societal drive to shatter gender stereotypes such that boys were encouraged to

explore the feminine side by playing with dolls. On the one hand, I'm sure that Becker's Caveman would write off boys playing with dolls as being "sissies".

Mike shared how he embraces the idea that there is something inherently male and something inherently female. He then highlighted a danger in recognising that he might be obsessed with cars, but then assume that a woman couldn't possibly be. I then asked if there are interests that are limited to one gender only. Celeste said that maybe "limited" was a strong word and she preferred use the word "predominant". Mike then asked, "If my theory of what is inherently male is true, are there inherently abusive, violent or oppressive tendencies in being male?"

Celeste said that there is within each of us an ability to be abusive or to be violent. We then also addressed sexuality and the "driveness" of Maleness' sexuality that we have noted as a group. We acknowledged that we couldn't assume that women do not have a sexual drive, but that men do seem to have this "driveness" associated with their sexuality. In contrast Celeste spoke of how, when she is feeling "frisky", it is easier for her to accept that sexual intercourse may not happen – for whatever reason – as opposed to her experience of men who cannot tolerate not having sex when they feel the desire.

Mike:       I really battle not to make Wendy feel guilty about that sort of situation … it is a big struggle for me … it is so wrong of me to be feeling this way, it is so selfish, but at the same time it bugs me … I just put it down to selfishness. It also goes beyond sex; it's like being asked to wash the dishes and it becoming such a big thing.

I asked Mike how Wendy has dealt with this sort of situation. He responded by saying that Wendy has been surprisingly firm with him, which he never expected her to do. Wendy responds by telling him that it is not responsible to behave that way within a marriage, and that it is not what she considers to be the person of Mike that she knows.

**4.1.1.3 Maleness and Compromise**

Mandy told us that she believes that women are far more willing to compromise than men in some situations, and that "women may back down quicker than men". I asked if the ideas of Compromise were predominantly Femaleness' domain? Celeste said that in her experience men have been willing to compromise as long as the woman is the one who initiates it. I asked what she thought stops a man from initiating compromise?

Mandy:                    Ego!

> From the time of the Stone Age, men have been bred to focus on specific goals as hunters. The hunting down of prey, whether it's buffalo or "the guy with the ball", is essentially how the male mind works.
>
> > (Reynolds 2004:1)

I wonder if the "focus" that is often attributed to the caveman is what we were questioning here? I wonder if a man's quest for sex could be paralleled to the Caveman's hunting?

Celeste also told us that she perceives in men a willingness to push boundaries, such that a man will try to get as much out of a situation as possible. For Celeste, this means that the woman has to accept responsibility for setting the limit on a man's desires and behaviour.

This conversation reminds me of my case study entitled *Men's Narratives* (Choles 2003:19) that I submitted as partial fulfilment for the MTh. In this case study I had therapeutic conversations with a man, who had molested his daughter, and his wife. There came a time when George wanted his wife to be the "watchdog" over his behaviour:

> George's wife also expressed how she felt that now, since the molestation had come out into the open, she needed to be a "watchdog" over George's life. This comment was in line with what Jenkins had written: "... the man will

have developed well established habits of reliance upon others to worry about, try to prevent and avoid the abuse, maintain secrecy and set limits on his behaviour" (Jenkins, 1990:118). She told us that she needed to be this in order to make sure that George finished his healing and counselling.

What Celeste said about women often having to mediate and limit a man's behaviour resonates with this example of molestation. We then pursued the topic of compromise a little further and Raymond spoke about what he learnt about compromising when he was younger:

Raymond:     …compromise was always a form of quitting, giving up, and that was an Ego thing … it hurts my ego to have to initiate a compromise.

Ryan H. identified with Raymond in this regard, in that a compromise hurts one's ego because you are not getting what you want. I wonder how Becker's Caveman would respond to not getting what he desired?

Our conversation then began to deal with stereotypes of men and women. With regards to stereotypes, Celeste noted how women also perpetuate stereotypes.

Celeste:     Women have been happy to play the role of a dumb blonde…and often it gets you places to play the dumb blonde … it gets you places, and it is so easy to do … men are such suckers.

Of the *Re-inventing the Caveman* group she said:

Men like you are few and far between … to be sitting here and talking about these sorts of things.

Mandy said:

Maleness is very focussed on having security and being the provider … it does not see the woman as also being able to provide within the household.

### 4.1.1.4 Harmful/Harmless Maleness

> The concert posters of hip-hop star, 50 Cent, plastered around Johannesburg epitomize a current, global archetype of masculinity. Shirtless, tattooed and ripped with muscle, the ghetto rapper stares defiantly at the passers by. Wrapped in a stocking bandanna and heavy gold chains, he is angry, threatening and in control […] but under the magnifying glass of contemporary gender studies, there is something clearly exaggerated about this incarnation of maleness.
>
> (Levin 2004:8)

> Let us not paint a picture of a South African man, cowering in crisis, threatened by the advances of women's emancipation. South Africa has a long way to go before we reach that point. Ask 13-year-olds in this country what they're most afraid of, and the answer is 'rape'. Men have a lot of power as perpetrators of violence. That's the crisis.
>
> (Lebo Ramofoka cited in Levin 2004:8)

We then changed direction and discussed a seeming continuum between what is harmless in our Maleness and what may be harmful. We asked,

*Where is the line between what is harmless and what is harmful?*

Mandy asked the group why it is okay for Maleness that men go to strip clubs, and that it is offensive when women would like to go? As a group, we had no answer for this, but Ryan H. added that in relationships, it is the woman, and not the man, who runs the risk of being labelled as a "slut" when being unfaithful. Mike wondered about how men like Hugh Heffner, who started Playboy, become such heroes in our society? I wonder what this has to say about the way in which Patriarchy labels women?

Celeste admitted that she could appreciate a beautiful man's body, but has no need to go to a strip show. Mike wondered if Maleness has more of a desire than Femaleness to look at the naked form, and wondered when that desire becomes

harmful? In retrospect, this would have been a good opportunity to speak about pornography. I wonder why we did not do so?

### 4.1.1.5 Role models

We discussed with Mandy and Celeste some of the people they considered to be role models of Maleness and Femaleness within their lives – both positive and negative.

Mandy told us that her Grandmother has had a profound influence in her life. Mandy's Gran had six children and her Granddad cheated on her, and that she left him and basically raised the children by her self. For Mandy, her Gran taught her that you could achieve anything you set your mind to, and taught her much when it comes to family and setting an example in terms of togetherness.

Mandy also told us about her stepfather and the negative example he had set in how he used to lecture her on how she should call him "dad" and how he used to run her real father down to try and prove that he was her father. I asked if the example of Maleness that her step-dad has set for her has affected her views on men in general? Mandy told us that she has had enough men in her life to realise that not all men are like him.

For Celeste, her mother was the role model. Celeste told us how she was the one who ran the home, who was "head strong", while her father was more placid – which meant that Celeste was used to being a strong women. On the negative side, women in general have upset Celeste, especially women who regard their sole purpose in life to be marriage. For her, these women do not seem to consider carefully enough whom they marry. Celeste spoke about her situation at home now, where Allan – her partner - does not drive because he has a sight problem. This means that she is the driver in the relationship. Celeste also has a passion for assembling "things". For her this means that she has a unique situation at home, where gender roles are decided based on interest and what is more practical, and not on what is traditional.

## 4.1.2 Homosexuality

> Men responding to hugs, responding to any sort of physical contact with other men, not only get linked to a sort of homophobia, but the whole idea of having any sort of physical enjoyment in that way becomes associated with being unmanly.
>
> (Smith 1996:33)

> …I believe males long for intimacy, feel deeply and are sensitive creatures (despite the voices of our women stating the opposite). I believe men seek intimacy with other men and also with women. (If a special intimacy is found with another man, I don't believe we should find that abnormal or surprising).
>
> Excerpt from Barry's introductory letter

> Becoming fully male is also dealing with our homophobia by developing meaningful male friendships.
>
> (Venter 1993:3)

In discussing his Maleness Barry spoke of how he just enjoys doing things that are different from what others may choose to do for entertainment. For example, Barry enjoys watching art-circuit movies, and in one particular movie found his beliefs about homosexuality challenged.

Barry:     I always thought of homosexuals doing it [sex] as in doggy-style … but in this movie, they are in bed together making love and he gets up off … and they are lying facing each other like we would. The point is that I could never consider that they could make love in the same way as we do … and when you think of it … you're like "Oh, it can happen!"

Here Barry purposefully refers to the homosexuals as "they" in making the point that he had previously considered homosexuals to be different from "us", the heterosexuals. From this experience Barry found that his mind-set of homosexuals had changed. Raymond had a similar experience through our discussion with Grant

and Des, two gay people. Raymond had realized that prior to the discussion he believed that gay men were different from him, and had since realized that homosexual people were not as different as he had assumed.

In one of our discussions, prior to meeting with Des and Grant, we spoke about the Christian Maleness response to homosexuality. At one point someone said that we should love the sinner and hate the sin. This reminded me of what Rohr and Martos (1996:xxiv) write about this statement. They write:

> The young man with a blessed rage for order solves his own problem, but leaves too many victims in his wake: the weak, the outsider, the woman-as-partner, the homosexual, the non-Christian, the sinner whom he condescends to love "while hating the sin".

In this position, a man's ego remains untouched in its position of superiority and unavailability. It was while thinking of these points that I challenged the statement made. It was also born out of these statement and thoughts that we wished to meet with Des and Grant. We were ultimately interested in subjecting our perceptions, thoughts and beliefs regarding homosexuality to a deconstructive discussion.

We invited Des and Grant to our discussion as a result of a realisation that we as a group may have had an uninformed or slanted viewpoint on Maleness and homosexuality, and also out of a desire to witness differing viewpoints on Maleness. I was also aware of what Gary Dowsett (1998) in Morrell (2002:320) writes,

> Gay men find no solace in the men's movement for, when push comes to shove, the men's movement refuses the very centrality of sex between men as a challenge to patriarchy through its destruction of homosociality.

I suppose we assumed that gay people would have different views than that of the dominant heterosexual hegemony. However, as the discussion progressed we found out from Des and Grant that this is not commonly the case.

**4.1.2.1 Introductions**

We began our discussion by introducing ourselves to Grant and Des by sharing what we considered to be defining characteristics of our stories. I invited Des and Grant to do the same. Des shared with us that she was a lesbian and had been for sometime and included a light heartened story about her belief that her pets are also lesbian. Des shared how when she realised that she was gay she simply acknowledged the fact inwardly. Regarding matching spirituality and her sexuality she said:

> I've never had an issue in terms of going to church … and being gay, I've always just been okay with God.

Grant introduced himself as a man that was still married. As he continued with his story we learnt the reason behind such an introduction. Grant and his wife were still legally married but separated. He said:

> I felt far more happier being gay than not, although if my wife had agreed to help me work through it I would have tried to maintain a straight lifestyle. Although I am happy to be gay, I am also extremely unhappy.

Des then also began to share with us her recent journey with God and spirituality. She said:

> I'm not at church anymore and it has nothing to do with my sexuality … it has to do with a range of whole other issues … I've come to the belief that I don't believe Christianity is the only way to God. The first step was that I changed my picture of God and how I began to question things that I thought I knew but had just been told and believed.

> I saw a friend of mine on the weekend and she has also just come out recently…she was sitting watching TV with her parents and it was a Rhema-type programme and the message was about homosexuality and saying that you can still change. That just gives her parents such weapons and then I feel that is the banner of Christianity, and it is still saying homosexuality is an abomination.

When Des told us this it reminded me of how the DSM in the first editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM) homosexuality was a diagnosable condition, implying that homosexuality was pathological (Pirelli-Benestad 2001:76). Gradually, in recent versions of the DSM, homosexuality has been freed of its pathological nature and is now not a diagnosable condition. It is as a result of such conceptions that homosexuality has become seen as abnormal. I wonder now how much of Christian discourse does the same? I also wonder why homosexuality is still regarded as being "different" if it is no longer a diagnosable condition?

### 4.1.2.2 Heterosexual Maleness vs. homosexual Maleness

The first question we posed to Des and Grant was one that had become familiar to us through our discussion and it asked *if there is a difference between a heterosexual Maleness and a homosexual Maleness?* We also shared with Des and Grant how we encountered and recognised the influence that Homophobia often has in defining what Maleness is. We thus invited Grant and Des to challenge us on what our beliefs were surrounding Maleness and Homosexuality as well as what may be found offensive or harmful by a gay person. This was also an important journey when considering Poling's (1991:186) criteria for practical theology. A critical awareness of perspectives – as indicated in chapter 2 – is needed when engaging with people who have been historically marginalized by Christianity.

At this point Ryan H. noted that the issue of homosexuality in his experience has nothing to do with who you are as person but has everything to do with sex, the act of homosexual intercourse itself, and a sexual preference. Grant responded by saying that being gay is not a sexual thing but a need; that it is more to do with identity than with sexual desire. Mike wondered if a person who is afraid of homosexuality finds it easier to narrow homosexuality down to a sexual act?

Mike:   I remember as a teenager that was the first thing I thought about, before wrestling with it and asking my own questions and dealing with my own feelings of homosexuality and my own affections towards men, before that I

could only imagine the sexual act. Since then I have found that I moved from a place of fear to wanting to spend time with a gay person to speak about being gay.

Barry spoke about a generalisation that heterosexual men might wonder whether or not the passions, interests and focus in life changed with recognition and acknowledgement of being gay? Barry asked this with regards to a South African male's interest in typical man things such as rugby and beer. In a moment of wit, Grant answered that he was never interested in those types of things to begin with.

Grant:     I am more of a male now that I have accepted my sexuality than I was before. I'll take rugby as an example … I don't like rugby, but before I always felt if I sat amongst guys…. I always thought there was a possibility that I would say something or do something that would make them question my sexuality.

At this point, I really wonder what Becker's Caveman might have to say about homosexuality? Much of the play is based on using biological bases for behaviour as an argument for justifying men's behaviour. I also wonder now, based on what Grant had to say about never really being interested in what are typical male interests, how gay men might respond to the play? I believe that the Caveman would not hold homosexuality very highly. I'm pretty sure he would reinforce some of the stereotypes that gay men are less manly than heterosexual men. He might also say that gay men are more like women than "real" men.

Grant also told us that he believes it is a very small minority of gay men who show overly masculine or feminine qualities. He said that it is "the community as a whole that has said that if you are gay you have to be a certain kind of way". As Grant shared his story with us he told us that for many years he believed that he could not be gay because he did not consider himself as fitting in with the prescribed characteristics of homosexuality created by larger society.

Barry told us of a common stereotype of being gay that he experienced.

Barry:     I've encountered the perception that people think that in a gay relationship there is one who accepts the role of the *man* and another who accepts the role of the *woman.*

Des acknowledged that in some gay relationships there is a partner who is more dominant and "manly and butch" than the other woman, and that this is where the stereotypical perception may come from. She told us that personally she did understand why this was so. This showed us that being gay does not automatically place you within a prescribed set of criteria. Barry summed this up by saying that when it comes to gay relationships "the rules are not different … the challenges are the same" as with any form of stereotyping.

Grant:     In the gay community the negative presence of Competitiveness is probably more prevalent than in the heterosexual community.

Barry placed us within the South African context by asking Des and Grant what they thought it might take to reduce levels of animosity towards gay relationships in South African men?

Grant:     When you put a group of gay guys together, and who have accepted their sexuality in its totality, they are far more of a pleasure to be with than a group of heterosexual males, because the heterosexual guys are always so afraid that they are letting down a barrier, that they're going to upset one another or say something that might seem gay. It would be great if everyone could just turn around and say that I am who I am and I'm going to be the best who I can be…I am a man, I am a male, and I'm going to be the best male I can be…if I'm a gay male so be it, if I'm a heterosexual male, so be it. But if we come together as gay and heterosexual men, should it really interfere with our friendship or our ideas, our perceptions just because we differ concerning our sexual orientation?

Barry explained that men react in the way that Grant described because they may have been worried that a gay man would attempt to try and hit on them.

Barry:        But what the truth is of what you're saying is that gay men would be far more reflective of themselves and therefore more healthy because of the journey they have taken … so much more comfortable in their sexuality than many heterosexual men.

Des acknowledged that a gay man might actually hit on a straight man, but that in the end it was up to the straight man to say no and not feel threatened by it. She asked, "Why should they be so offended?"

Barry:        A part of my explanation is that it is about basic insecurity, that if you're afraid of being hit on by a man, what does that say about you … and your fears of finding out that maybe you might be gay. I think that inside of the South African male there is a sneaking little fear that maybe one day you'll wake up and think 'Oh, fuck I'm gay!' and then what? Because now this thing that has been joked about in the change rooms and scorned at every possible moment … you are it.

I shared that in my experience during high school it was little different, that if another man found me attractive I was afraid it might awaken a gay streak in me. I would also wonder that if another man found me attractive it might mean that I'm less of a man.

I am now wondering what our conversation would have looked like if we had discussed the versions of Maleness that are cast as less "manly" than the others? Becker's Caveman clearly portrays that there is one authentic role as a man. I wonder how men would feel who witness the play and who do not find their Maleness to be the same as that portrayed in the play?

I also wonder about the power that an authentic Maleness holds and what freedom of choice is given to men who find that their Maleness differs from that?

Aiden:        I don't ever remember a time that I chose to be heterosexual, or being faced with that choice. There was a time when I was at varsity where I had to face

some of my homosexual urges. This experience made me question whether I was gay or straight? It was a tough inward journey, and the heterosexual side won. In this I had to face a lot of the fears we have spoken about. At the end of it all I walked out thinking 'ah, now I have chosen my sexuality'. But now after hearing you guys speak, I am wondering if it is as simple as a choice as what your sexual identity is?

### 4.1.2.3 Homosexuality, society and religious dogma

Following on from a question that I had posed earlier about changing society's animosity towards gay people Des spoke of how attitudes and stereotypes may change within society.

Des:       I think that the only way things are going to change, a lot of the beliefs in society come from the church, whether people are religious or not … when the day comes when our ministers can stand up and say, boldly, homosexuality is okay. I think that will be when change will happen.

Barry:     The problem is that there are some Christian traditions, because of their Biblicist and fundamentalist views, will never be able to take that stance. And there are those of us who will happily and openly, and do, challenge those stereotypes even if we will be labelled as liberalist and non-Christian.

Raymond brought our focus towards a more local shift in perceptions and said that he had never knowingly sat with a gay person as "normal" as Grant and Des were.

Raymond:   This is why tonight has been such an eye opener for me, because you are as normal as any guy I have ever seen.

This was a telling statement made by Raymond on behalf of the group. To some extent there was a shift in all of our perceptions and beliefs about homosexuality. Moreover, we had dealt with Maleness' response towards homosexuality. In writing this paragraph now, I cannot help but wonder what the voice of Homophobia would have said if it had the chance to witness our discussion? If we had externalised

Homophobia like we did with Patriarchy, and asked what it would have thought if it was sitting with us, what would it have said?

I wonder if Homophobia may not revert to Confessional-type arguments that are defensive of the ways in which men were created, and what that "creation" has to say about men being made to be with women.

> God never gave Adam a man; He gave him a woman. God's design is male and female; not male and male, or female and female. We can know homosexuality is not God's plan because it does not fit His design.
>
> (Munroe 2001:173)

Stances on homosexuality, as quoted above, are topical in common social discussion. We also find that nowadays there also exists a tolerance of homosexuality greater than ever before in our society. The question is how do we develop a practical theology as men in relation to the "problem" of homosexuality? Poling (1991) encourages us to have a willingness to embrace differing perspectives, and to accommodate these perspectives. I wonder if the issue is really about whether homosexuality is theologically right or wrong? Poling also encourages us to allow conversation between cultural perspectives and Christian tradition. But how do we do this when it comes to the issue of homosexuality? I do not have the answers to these questions. What I do have is the knowledge that having discussions with Grant and Des allowed us as a group of men to listen attentively to gay people and to hear how they feel marginalized by dominant Maleness.

Once we had completed the discussions with Mandy, Celeste, Des and Grant we spent some time evaluating what we had learnt through the course of the *Caveman* discussions. We felt the need to assimilate all that we had covered into Statements on our Maleness.

**4.2 Statements on Maleness**

> We will always need promises and men who again and again commit
> themselves to those promises.
>
> <div align="right">(Rohr & Martos1996:xiv)</div>

### 4.2.1 Quest for closure

In our final discussion we aimed to come to a point where we could summarise or encapsulate what he had learnt about our individual Maleness' into statements that were representative of our individual as well as collective journeys.

What follows are the statements made by each of the co-searchers as well as summaries of the discussions generated by each of the statements. These are presented in no meaningful order, and though discussion was not generated from each statement, it does not detract from the significance of each statement.

### 4.2.1.1 Ryan H.

> The last couple of months have seen me look inwards to identify Maleness, rather than looking at how others perceive Maleness and how I fit into their picture of Maleness. I've discovered that the worldly view of the male figure pressurizes my Maleness to be dominated by the opinions of others. I feel like I can ease the pressures of the worldly view by taking a step back from Maleness, assessing the relevant situation, considering those close to me and then making a decision. My Maleness should then slowly start to transform into something less strikingly dominant, competitive and impressive, to something more pleasantly natural. In essence I think my Maleness should be a natural state of being that makes others feel welcome and safe around me. My Maleness should provide a non-patriarchal attitude to society, enabling me to enjoy the company of others and learn from them.

> My slogan: My Maleness ... personally driven, society approved.

Here Ryan H. identified his chosen Maleness as pro-active, as constructed through

his decisions and what is approved by those close to him. This is as opposed to a reactive Maleness that may be moulded by the expectations of society.

Ryan H.:     What I want to be is something that I can approve of, but that also makes other people feel comfortable. One of the things that we have picked up that males generally tend to have more of an aggressive streak … and it seems that's just the way males are.

I challenged Ryan H. on his choice of words in the way he phrased his slogan. I wondered if in saying that he wants his Maleness to be approved by society, it may be creating room for ambiguous interpretations, especially one that would see his Maleness as orientating itself to what society demands of it.

Ryan H.:     The society I speak of is not society in general … it is the community and the people I have influence over … the people who are affected by my decisions.

Barry wondered if what Ryan H. was describing would be what he would term as a *significant community*? Ryan H. agreed with Barry's terminology. I pursued this concept with Ryan H. by asking him how he would describe the journey he walked through the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions to someone outside of the group.

Ryan H.:     I would suggest to them, especially to a man, to take time out and figure out first of all what is important to you and not what other people think is important … and to assess if it fits in with your current lifestyle. If it doesn't, figure out how you can change it in the future to drive yourself towards something that is important to you. This has also been more of an inward journey to find out what the pressures are that I experience.

The discussion moved towards methods and people that we as men could find in keeping us accountable to the choices we make with regards to our Maleness. We acknowledged that women, or our partners would be useful in this regard but also realised that in asking them to do this they might feel like "nags". So to avoid this happening in our lives we realised that the best way to be accountable would be male on male.

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We also discussed how men might hold themselves accountable. We acknowledged that by doing this, men might find it easier not to be accountable. We also acknowledged that when it comes to personal growth and change, we ourselves are ultimately responsible.

Barry was uncomfortable with the notion of accountability and suggested an alternative in the form of mentorship. He said that he responds better in a situation where he can look up to someone and respect them as an elder and mentor when it comes to finding better solutions to his Maleness.

### 4.2.1.2 Raymond

> Before this journey, I was pretty much ignorant to my Maleness. A lot of who I was as a male, or my Maleness, was inherited and maybe dictated to by the norms of society.

> Presently, I have begun to realise that there may well be signs of Oppressiveness in my Maleness and have begun see areas in my Maleness that need work.

> In terms of the future, I don't have a complete picture of what my Maleness should be, but I do rely on role models to learn from. One of the ideal role models in terms of Maleness for me would be Christ. I would like my Maleness to be strong but also accepting, acknowledging that I cannot solve the world's problems. I would also like to learn to accept people more for who they are, regardless of how I feel about their activities or lives.

Raymond realised through the Caveman discussions that to a larger extent he had been ignorant of what his Maleness was.

**4.2.1.3 Mike**

We noted how in Mike's write-up there was a similar strain in how society has affected his Maleness prior to the discussions.

> My experience of Maleness, past present and future, in light of our Caveman discussions, is best summarized as follows:
>
> • Past:       Male role models (a perfect example being my dad) influenced my perceptions as I grew up – certain "old school" characteristics of Maleness (i.e. man = breadwinner; woman = child minder) became acceptable, or rather the norm, for me. I have felt though that I've always wanted to challenge the norm, not only when gender identity is in question, but more when faced with a generalization or stereotype. I'm not sure who has inspired me to question...
>
> • Present:     I've taken on social responsibilities i.e. full-time work, marriage, etc. – am "grown up" and so find myself swamped by societal ideals (we've spoken about men being dominant in the workplace, sexuality, etc.) and fortunately have surrounded myself with open-minded, challenging friends (both male an female) who do a great job of assisting me in asking questions that challenge my own prejudices. I find in myself a desire to be "a better man".
>
> • Future:      I've discovered words that I would like people to describe me as, when speaking about the kind of man I am. I wonder if these adjectives are the antitheses of what characterizes me now? Scary thought...anyway, they are: Loving; Humble; Giving; Forgiving; Content – and in light of the others – Successful.

**4.2.1.4 Barry**

> The most significant question for me has been: To what extent is my Maleness a physical, biological thing and to what extent is it societal programming. So for me in answer to the question What is my Maleness? I said it is a physical reality … I have a penis, but more than that there is

a biophysical aspect that makes me a male…and there is nothing I can do to change that, without it being an excuse, it is something I wrestle with … ultimately my Maleness is much more than physical.

This also makes me wonder to what degree I can change those things? I have then also been wondering about societies perceptions and expectation of me as a man.

I seek out a mentor - who I can look to as an example of healthy Maleness that would hold me accountable. This would be a man I respect who might be older than me.

The challenges that my Maleness faces: Aggressions, Control, Homophobia, Oppressiveness.

Barry found the societal expectations that his Maleness is pressurised into being are to be strong, a breadwinner and a protector.

Barry: Patriarchy is societies perceived norms and expectations, which is a package deal that has been programmed into me…and then I reflected on how all these things can be either positive or negative depending on how these things are expressed. So for example you can have a strong male who is a strong person, and that is a good thing, and then out that thing that makes a strong person it makes another controlling or abusive…so that is something that I would like to explore in terms of my Maleness.

A word that has become significant for me is the word gentle. Gentleness doesn't fit in easily into societies programmed package deal of what Maleness includes.

Barry at one stage felt comfortable to challenge me how I pursued accountability so often within our discussions. This was a significant challenge because it indicated that on a personal level Barry was not afraid of challenging me, but also that on a methodological level, Barry did not assume that as a researcher I could not be questioned or challenged. This is a benefit of aligning research with the participatory research model, in that it breaks the barrier of research-subject.

Barry: Why do you feel the need to set up accountability structures? Is it because you don't want this whole process to fail … you want it to be really effective in terms of life change?

Aiden: For me, it is shocking examples of Maleness … people who have shirked off all positive change. Me harping on about accountability … has that become my own agenda?

Barry: Yes, it seems like an outcome you would like … I would like to hear some stories of how accountability has been positive. I used to think that accountability would solve my problems in life, but it has never really worked for me.

### 4.2.1.5 Ryan K.

Let me start off by saying that the journey we've been on has been interesting and challenging, and I'm sure that all of us including myself have gained new insights into Maleness.

Looking at the past, I think one aspect of Maleness that sticks out for me is Competitiveness. I've always been Competitive. Another aspect of Maleness that has played a part in my life is the tendency to be a strong person. This is as a result of responsibility being passed on to me from my Dad. When I was younger, my dad often went away. During these times my dad would tell me to look after my mom and my two younger brothers.

If I look at my present situation, a lot with what I have brought up with has affected my being a male. I am still in most ways Competitive and I'm sure that Competitiveness will stay a part of me for the rest of my life. One question that sticks out for me, regarding Maleness, is what role does God play as I create my Maleness? I feel that He has a vital part to play in it, in the sense that I know that He is in control of my life. Because of this, everything I do, I intend to do to how people that I am different, to go against the grain of society.

Looking at the future, I think there is still work to be done on my Maleness with regards to the fact that I should question what society wants from me

as a male. There are certain aspects of Maleness that I want to carry with me into the rest of my life, while there are others that I want to leave behind.

If I look at what my dad has done to us in the past, the way he has treated us, that is what I want to leave behind. I do not want to treat my wife the way my dad has treated my mom and his family.

Raymond wondered what effect this type of discussion would have on society if the discussions were geared for more global terrain? Barry wondered what impact it would have if men allow women into the types of discussion we had and to let them set the agenda to address issues they feel need to be discussed. In retrospect, this is possibly an aspect we should have made space for in our discussion with Mandy and Celeste.

### 4.2.1.6 Aiden

I choose to be a man that:

• is aware of injustice, but chooses to follow a path of forgiveness rather than retribution.
• is gentle, but firm.
• is aware of my privileged background, but does not lord it over anyone.
• moves towards social responsibility.
• accepts responsibility, despite the temptation not to.
• expresses my Maleness in a non-violent manner.
• is inwardly searching for the harmful Maleness, to create a harmless Maleness.
• is keenly aware of the impact that Patriarchy has on my Maleness.
• creates space for a partner in my life.
• is aware of how my Maleness may marginalize people that are different to me.
• chooses not to get caught up on the Why, but to ask questions that encourage growth.
• is constantly on the look out for positive Role models that I can learn from.

### 4.2.2 Collective confession

Barry also wondered if there is a need for males to engage in a "collective confession" through which men could take responsibility for the hurt they may have caused. This type of confession is similar to what is found in the Promise Seekers movement (White 1996). Barry also wondered if in South Africa this type of confession might be needed from white citizens in terms of the ways they may have benefited from Apartheid.

### 4.3 Summary

Ackermann and Bons-Storm (1998:5) write that self-reflexiveness is an essential aspect of transformative research. As a group of co-searchers journeying our way through *Re-inventing the Caveman*, we have not attempted to proverbially "reinvent the wheel" but at the very least create an environment in which we could assess our Maleness. We have achieved this through various discussions dealing with issues and challenged we found influential to our Maleness. In this chapter I have elucidated the discussions with women and gay people who have aided us in gaining a perspective on Femaleness and homosexuality.

In the end, we have formulated statements that we hope represent our Maleness and the changes it has undergone through the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions.

What now follows in chapter 5 are my reflections on the conversations and the study as a whole.

# Chapter 5

## 5.1 Introduction

> Good gardeners are forced to be modest. They can provoke and prompt
> and support nature in certain directions, but they can't control it – they can't
> *make* anything happen.

<div align="right">(Wylie 1994:48)</div>

I believe that *Re-inventing the Caveman* was a journey that my fellow co-searchers and myself embarked on characterised by an exciting element of the unknown. As a gardener holds hopes of the blooming flower when planting a seed, I as a researcher had certain goals and objectives I hoped our discussions would address and achieve. My fellow co-searchers – I'm sure – had their own hopes and expectations regarding the outcomes of our discussions. However when we began, the flowers of our discussions were as yet unknown. We were willing participants in a process that bloomed as we progressed, reaping scents and colours that at times surprised, and at others, satisfied expectations.

I don't believe that I was the steering force in our discussions, but that we each actively constituted our discussions along the journey. In some ways we were like Wylie's (1994) gardener – we would prompt, provoke and support the nature of our discussions. Neither one of us was a gardener who controlled the outcomes of our discussions, but instead we each cultivated and nurtured our collective garden of discursive travelling.

By this stage, you as the reader have encountered the motivation behind my interest in the nature of Maleness; the rationale for the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions; the epistemological, theological and methodological underpinnings of the study as well as the substance of our discussions. It is not my intention in this chapter to provide you with a repetition, nor synopsis, of the study but I would like to invite you on yet another journey. I hope this journey towards the end of the written component of the project will provide you with some insight into my questions and reflections concerning the *Caveman* discussions.

I would also like to invite you to interact with my reflections as and when they resonate or differ with your own reflections on the topics we discussed. In fact I hope that by now, you would have some questions and reflections of your own that would have surfaced while wading your way through the previous chapters. Give them some airtime within your frame of reference. Let them settle, and then let them roam again. And if by some chance they are resurrected again at some point in your interaction with Maleness, I know that this project would have achieved something of worth.

I shall begin by reminding myself of the initial questions and curiosities that enticed and invited me into the study. I will then apply a more critical mindset to the study, reflecting on the outcomes of the project; on what worked well and what did not; and the seeds that may be utilised in future research.

## 5.2 Re-discovering the quest into Maleness

### 5.2.1 The research curiosity

I stated in chapter 1 that the aim of the discussions was to identify the social discourses that have had and still have a decisive influence on the lives of the participants. The following parameters were offered as a narrative means in achieving these goals:

4) To share our stories as men,
5) To discover how society constructs us as men, keeping in mind the associated expectations that society places on us, and
6) To re-evaluate the Maleness we have chosen.

There were also specific questions that guided our discussion from a methodological point of view. They were:

*How do six white middle-class men come to share their stories of Maleness? How do these men speak about their lives as men in the context of family, community and*

*God? What are the challenges that men encounter when reflecting on their Maleness? How do the current challenges levelled against Maleness affect the stories of these men?*

## 5.2.2 Reform

> Change in therapy is the dialogical creation of new narrative, and therefore the opening of opportunity for new agency. The transformational power of narrative rests in its capacity to re-relate the events of our lives in the context of new and different meaning.
>
> <div align="right">(Anderson & Goolishian 1992:28)</div>

It was also my intention to deconstruct the discourses of Maleness such that we as co-searchers could proverbially re-invent the caveman. In now reminding myself of that intent, I believe that I may have understated my desire that we actually *re-invent* ourselves as men.

Isherwood and McEwan (1993) provide a brief synopsis of the extremes of feminism that have emerged within the movement. In this synopsis they discuss the *Woman's Bible* published by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1898. This publication signified a strong desire amongst women for men to change drastically and for society as a whole to reform its patriarchal ways. The motivation behind Cady Stanton's work resonated with my initial confrontation with Maleness in the form of the letter addressed to Maleness in chapter 1[17].

When I re-read the letter I addressed to Maleness I now realise how militantly sure I was of the need to re-invent and redirect my Maleness. I also see now that this surety made me believe that the collective Maleness was also in need of reform – drastically. Thankfully, as we began our discussions I began to wonder if each of the co-searchers' Maleness did in fact need to be reformed? In fact, at times in our discussions I began to question my effectiveness as a facilitator when confronted by voices that told me change was not occurring at a pace that was congruent with my expectations.

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I found that I had to remind myself of another of the research goals for the study – my commitment to seek an understanding of what it means to be a male from an active, co-operative enterprise of co-searchers in relationship. This commitment I believe inhibited me from manipulating the discussions to achieve the reform I initially believed was needed.

## 5.3 What are the commitments with which I started the project?

In reflecting on what my initial commitments were, I believe I need to offer an account of what Cochrane et al (1991:16) call *prior commitments*. These are commitments that relate to a particular way of being in the world.

### 5.3.1 Faith commitment

In part, my understanding of one of the aims of practical theology is to generate a theologising that is relevant and rooted in the faith experiences of those who participate in the act of theologising. A theology is not useful if it is removed from the lived experiences of those in a community of faith. As such person of faith must also be a theologian. As Heyns and Pieterse (1990:4) argue:

> One might get the impressions that theologians have to dissociate themselves from faith. This is not possible.

One of my prior commitments, as a way of being, takes the form of a faith commitment. This commitment has a direction towards the kingdom of God, and I believe that the principle of 'kingdom' may be applied on both a personal and global level. For me, a practical theology is thus one that accommodates both faith and the "science" of theology.

In this regard I follow Willard's (1998:29) assertion that we are never ceasing spiritual beings with a unique eternal calling to count for good in God's great universe. In counting for this good, I am then committed to engaging in a prophetic

mode of theology (Cochrane et al 1991). This is a theology that seeks liberation, justice, transformation and peace.  Personally, then, my 'kingdom' is the range of my effective will. But this notion extends to exercising my will in union with God, as she/he acts with us (Willard 1998).

God's kingdom is the range of God's effective will, where what she/he wants done is done. It is my belief that this function of God's kingdom cannot be fulfilled without the active co-operation of the people who occupy this kingdom.

## 5.3.2 Commitment to transformation

As a South African male, prior to the *Caveman* discussions, I found that certain South Africa revolutionaries and thinkers profoundly influenced me. One of which was Nelson Mandela. Shortly after the first democratic elections held on 27 April 1994 Mandela had this to say:

> I stand here before you filled with deep pride and joy – pride in the
> ordinary, humble people of the country … this is a time to heal old wounds
> and build a new South Africa.
>
> (Mandela 1994:744)

I was also deeply influenced by Desmond Tutu and his story of his involvement in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Through reading his work *No future without forgiveness* (Tutu 1999), and Antjie Krog's *Country of my skull* (Krog 1998) I encountered many stories of how men in our country had crossed the borders of all that is good and decent and in doing so had committed crimes against humanity. Both Krog and Tutu tell of a horrific offence committed by men against women:

> It [the TRC] was particularly rough for our interpreters, because they had
> to speak in the first person, at one time being the victim and at another
> being a perpetrator. 'They undressed me; they opened a drawer and then
> stuffed my breast in the drawer which they slammed repeatedly on my
> nipple until a white stuff oozed'.
>
> (Tutu 1999:232)

It is out of my origin as a white South African male, and the challenges of Mandela and Tutu, that I believed prior to the *Caveman* discussions that transformation of Maleness is essential. This commitment was very militant and radical when I first discovered it, as I have already stated, but now I find that transformation cannot be forced – an invitation has to be offered. I have also discovered that the same invitation applies to living a reflective lifestyle.

### 5.3.3 Commitment to a reflective lifestyle

> … the study of God is inseparably linked to the study of our selves … this connection was expressed by John Calvin … when he argued that the knowledge of God and that of our selves belong together.
>
> (De Gruchy 1994:6)

In chapter 2 I wrote of how theology cannot be a distant discipline. For theology to have its meaningful place in our lives and in our societies it needs to be grounded in our experiences where we "co-determine" our lives with God. In this way our knowledge of God is participatory where theology moves from being an intellectual process towards *doing* theology in our contexts.

As I entered into the *Caveman* journey I had these beliefs ever present in my mind as I did my best to ground our conversations in practical ethical and theological reflection of our lives. However, I believe that to have made the conversations more *practical* allowing for space in our discussions for the people closest to us as well as those we interacted with everyday was of paramount importance in this process.

> [w]hen the self and the other are seen as belonging to the same consciousness, all living is moral…. To live morally requires … a relentless awareness of ourselves in the particulars of moment-to-moment living.
>
> (Heshusius 1996:133-134)

The process of praxis, as discussed in chapter 2, incorporates theological reflection as well as action. As such I was always encouraging the co-searchers to support our discussions with actions that spoke of the significance of our discussions in their moment-to-moment living.

The same principle also applied to me as a researcher following the exhortation made by Kotzé (2002) to take time to reflect on ourselves as researchers. This process is inspired by the feminist self-reflexive nature of research. Throughout this project I have inserted little questions that have questioned my approach as a co-searcher. At times I have asked why I did not pursue a line of questioning, while at others I have wondered what Becker's Caveman would say in response to our discussions.

**5.4 How has the project affected those commitments?**

Now, since the *Caveman* discussions, I find that that my commitments to faith, transformation and a reflective lifestyle have changed little. However, as time has lapsed I have noticed how these commitments begin to become watered down due to not having a group in which they can be reinforced and find fruition. Perhaps it would be a good idea to organise a reunion session in which we revisit some of the commitments we made collectively and individually as co-searchers?

**5.4.1 Pastoral Care**

I also now wonder to what extent I began the *Caveman* discussions with an unrecognised commitment to pastoral care as what Kotzé and Kotzé (2001) call a *participatory ethical care*. I was reluctant to make my desire to offer pastoral care to the *Cavemen* as I feared that such an approach, may in their minds, have spoken something of how I might have deemed them of requiring a pastoral intervention. Often, pastoral care is associated with the caring of those in need. I did not feel that my co-searchers needed care in this way, but what they needed was a social network where support, guidance, friendship, sincerity, responsibility and caring were in abundance. Sevenhuijsen (1998:15) argues that care needs to be located

within the citizenship of community and that in this manner that the importance of care as a social practice is embodied.

Perhaps, this type of social care is the pastoral care found within the *Caveman* discussions. It was thus moved "away from a caring response or Christian sense of guilt, away from a paternalistic care and undue protection, towards a care as social practice" (Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:7). This also resonates with what Graham writes in that pastoral care has shifted from:

> … a selfactualised individual for whom care functions primarily at times of crisis towards one of a person in need of nurture and support as she/he negotiates a complexity of moral and theological challenges in a rapidly-changing economic and social context.
>
> (Graham 1996:53)

This is thus a participatory process in we as co-searchers collaborated with each other in challenging the oppressive discourses of our Maleness and negotiated ways of living that were ethical and grounded in a contextual practical theology. This way of doing pastoral care 'implies a prophetic model of doing theology. It points towards the coming of God's justice and peace within the human community, or more specifically, within the particular contexts in which this task is undertaken' (Cochrane et al 1991:16).

### 5.4.2 Accountability

There has however been one new commitment that has come out the *Caveman* discussions – that of the need for accountability. As Barry noted during one of our discussions I had actively pursued discussion that encouraged us to find means of incorporating accountability into our Maleness. As a group we had discussed how accountability might not be what we as men needed, but perhaps it was mentorship that was needed. Whether it is accountability or mentorship, I still have the commitment to men being in conversation with other men.

I wrote the following in chapter 4:

> We acknowledged that women, or our partners would be useful in this regard but also realised that in asking them to do this they might feel like "nags". So to avoid this happening in our lives we realised that the best way to be accountable would be male on male.

As Barry had noted in one of our discussions, I placed emphasis on ways in we as the *Cavemen* and men in general could generate accountability as a means of ensuring that we would stay fast to our commitments. Since the project has finished, I find that this emphasis has also taken form in inviting my significant community into ways of discovering accountability. For me, my significant community consists of my family, friends, work colleagues and my partner.

Through the course of our discussions I noticed that some of the co-searchers seemed to have more of a dominant voice than others. In reflecting on my role as a facilitator, I recognise that I could have attempted to make more of a safe space for everyone to have an equal and fair voice within our discussions. For example, Barry played a significant role within our discussions, while Ryan K. was less vocal. I do not believe that this implies a value of their contribution, but I am nonetheless concerned that a person's voice may have been sidelined within our discussions.

As a result of this lesson, I find that in my professional career, one of my central thoughts in my work is to attempt to give less dominant voices a safe place to express themselves.

Davis and Gergen (1997:6) assert that social constructionism does not demand that we question every choice in every situation. They argue that, in regards to gender differences for instance, we may need to emphasise differences at times, while minimising them at other times. This is valid point that directs itself at the manner in which I facilitated the group discussions. In reflecting on the discussions, I find that I was hesitant to accept any difference that may have been identified between the sexes. Now, if given the opportunity to return to the discussions I would find myself being more open to the discussions that asserted the differences between the

sexes, as opposed to rejected the assertions purely because I understood SC to demand this.

## 5.5 What differences has the research brought about?

I would hope that the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions would make a difference in three spheres: In 1) my own personal approach to Maleness, 2) the Maleness of my fellow co-searchers and 3) the understandings and perceptions of Maleness chosen by the reader who interacts with this project.

### 5.5.1 My Maleness

I know that in my experience as a co-searcher there were differences that I noticed as we journeyed together. For example, I noted in chapter 2 how I was reluctant to accept that we as men have debunked the myths that Patriarchy has established over the course of history. I had wondered aloud to the group whether or not we had actually debunked the dominant knowledges that Patriarchy attempts to bring to the fore in men's lives, or if we would just like to think we have?

As I write this chapter I see how in my experience of Maleness the position of Patriarchy has been challenged through those discussions. I am not sure if they have been debunked as we had hoped as I notice subtle ways in which Patriarchy still guides my actions as a man. For example, my partner has noted how it seems as if I am reluctant to let her do the driving. This is pertinent for me because when we discussed Patriarchy and the ways in which it decides that men should be the one's doing the driving, I had assumed that I was not complicit in such workings of Patriarchy. Now I see that this is not true.

As I reflect on the time that has lapsed since our discussions I can see how there are moments from our discussions that have stayed with me as almost movie-type flashbacks. I also see how these flashbacks occur when I experience something that resonates with our discussions e.g. my partner highlighting my reluctance to let her drive. I see these flashbacks as a 'moment of insertion' as described by Cochrane et

al (1991:17).

> The moment of insertion locates our pastoral responses in the lived experience of individuals and communities.
>
> (Cochrane et al 1991:17)

These moments in my life serve as indicators of when a dominant knowledge needs to be challenged. In this way the C*aveman* discussions become living texts in my day-to-day existence.

Since the *Caveman* discussions I have changed my profession from an educator to a human resources manager. The change in working environment from educational institution to corporate environment has also had its effects on my Maleness. I find that the corporate environment is one in which voices like Competitiveness and Impressiveness are constantly vying for supremacy. It is my belief that capitalist business is built on the success of the individual, and as such an individual is placed under immense pressure from these voices that entice a person to prove that he/she is more competent and able than the next. I am reminded of Heshusius' (1996:133-134) encouragement that moral living is built on the awareness of ourselves within our moment-to-moment living and how this exhortation reminds me to check to what extent I am enticed by the voices I have just mentioned.

### 5.5.2 The Maleness of my fellow co-searchers

I hope that my fellow co-searchers would be able to identify some differences they experience as a result of our discussions. I know that for some of them, they also experience the movie-type flashbacks I have discussed above. However, I must hope that our discussions did not take place within a vacuum[18] and that there would be positive effects played out in the lives of the co-searchers that have led to positive happenings in the lives of their family and friends.

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18  See 2.3.1

I would hope that the change precipitated by the *Caveman* discussions in the lives of myself and the co-searchers would take its shape in the re-thinking and re-formulating of our responses as men towards prejudice. For example, we discussed at length the voices of Patriarchy and Homophobia, and the effects of these voices on our Maleness. We discovered that these voices had convinced us to believe certain things about women and gay people that were not necessarily accurate.

In addressing my initial desire to see change occur within the lives of the co-searchers I wonder if the Maleness of the co-searchers did need to be reformed, or did they just require affirmation?

In answering this, there needs to be some account given to benchmarking our Maleness. I believe this was achieved when we listened to the alternative voices and how Celeste had affirmed the work we had already done on our Maleness (see chapter 3 and 4).

Celeste:     Men like you are few and far between … to be sitting here and talking about these sorts of things.

I now wonder at the impact our discussion might have had on our individual Maleness. In my personal case, I believe I had formulated my chosen Maleness prior to the discussions, and found affirmation through the discussions. Then, there were instances in which Maleness was profoundly challenged and reformed. I am reminded of how Raymond realised his patriarchal approach to Cindy's car (see chapter 3 and 4).

Raymond:     I would also like to learn to accept people more for whom they are, regardless of how I feel about their activities or lives.

A little earlier in this chapter I wrote of how my reformist expectations had dominated my experience of our earlier discussions. Through airing these expectations in my mind and being a participant in co-operative group discussions allowed these expectations to be challenged. For example, I learnt that perhaps what men need to do in the face of challenges such as feminism and shifting gender roles is to

rediscover their Maleness. As such it was possible that the defining experience of the *Caveman* discussions was an affirmation and support of the Maleness they continuously choose to live.

Raymond noted in our discussion where we shared our statements on Maleness that before the *Caveman* discussions he had been largely unaware and ignorant of the role his Maleness played in his life. If anything, the *Caveman* discussions have created awareness in my life, as well as those of the co-searchers, of the role Maleness plays within our lives. We each began a journey that deconstructed Maleness and at times discovered influences we had not been aware of.

Raymond:    Presently, I have begun to realise that there may well be signs of Oppressiveness in my Maleness and have begun see areas in my Maleness that need work.

Through the *Caveman* discussions, the co-searchers had an opportunity to reflect on the Maleness they chose to walk on in life with:

Ryan H.:    My slogan: My Maleness ... personally driven, society approved.

Mike:    I find in myself a desire to be "a better man".

Barry:    A word that has become significant for me is the word gentle. Gentleness doesn't fit in easily into societies programmed package deal of what Maleness includes.

Ryan K.:    Looking at the future, I think there is still work to be done on my Maleness with regards to the fact that I should question what society wants from me as a male. There are certain aspects of Maleness that I want to carry with me into the rest of my life, while there are others that I want to leave behind.

### 5.5.3 The reader

There is a voice within me that would like to state that the *Caveman* discussions

might not have made any difference whatsoever in the lives of those who interact with this dissertation. So much of research is focussed on the results gleaned from the input of the participants for the benefit of the researchers project, while little thought is given to the impact of those who read the this document.

However I am reminded of how the narrative approach views life as text. As we interact with a text it becomes alive and we allow it to interact with our reality. As such, the very act of reading this dissertation would make a difference. And if research is not done in a vacuum, there are ways in which you as a reader will be affected by the substance of our discussions.

Derrida characterises deconstruction as "the in-coming of the other" (Caputo 1997:42), as a certain inventionalism. As such the ways in which the *Caveman* discussions have deconstructed Maleness would, according to Derrida, open opportunities for you as a reader to become a partner in the 'inventionalism' of the project. Thus, your reading of our lives and discussions as text constitutes a re-reading of our narratives.

In reading this project, you are effectively countering the problem democracy faces as described by Gergen (1991:108):

> For all the enormous scholarship on democracy, the constitutions
> guaranteeing it, and the rousing attempts to promote and defend it, there is
> no *it* about which such activities swirl. Democracy as an *in itself* lies empty;
> its life is confined to a history of textuality.

Maleness as a construct faces a similar challenge. Should this project not be re-read, Maleness could be confined to a history of textuality within this document. Yes, your reading of this project opens opportunities as deconstruction provides an "opening for the invention" (Caputo 1997:44).

It is my belief that we are not subjects of societal discourse, but that we through our actions constitute discourse. Implicit in this process is the element of choice. As such, you as the reader have the choice when it comes to the difference this study

will make in your world.

**5.6 What worked well?**

Before we began the *Caveman* discussions I had hopes that we would have discussions that were serious, committed, fun and significant. I shared these hopes with the participants before we began the discussions when they had an opportunity to review the research proposal. It was at this stage that we discussed how we would conduct our discussions and what would aid us in achieving these goals.

One of the significant aspects of our discussions was the fact that as a group we would share a meal together before beginning our session. As I listen again to the audiotapes of our discussions I realise how by the time we began with the subject matter, we had already broken the proverbial ice.

In addition to the purpose of the meal served, I also believe that being a group of friends allowed for deeper conversation sooner in the evening. In my experience as a narrative therapist and church group leader I found that when having conversations with people who were not acquainted, I needed to dedicate awareness to the potential dynamics that may have inhibited the flow of discussion and the willingness of the participants to contribute to the discussion.

Within the *Re-inventing the Caveman* format I found that as a facilitator I was relieved of dedicating this awareness to our discussions and could thus participate and contribute more as a co-searcher than researcher. I believe this also helped in ensuring I was perceived as more of a co-searcher in the discussions than an objective researcher.

By virtue of these processes, the *Caveman* participants felt at ease to share ownership and responsibility for where our discussions headed. However, the co-searcher would often wonder if we were discussing topics that did not fall within the agenda of the research. It was at times like these that I reminded the group of our broad parameters we had set in the beginning of the discussions (see 5.2.1) and that we were free to add to the open agenda of Maleness.

The feedback that I have thus far received from the co-searchers indicates that the use of the summary letters, as introductions to our discussions, were also helpful. They were helpful in that they reminded us of the points we had raised in the previous discussion, as well as in providing a starting point for discussion from the questions I had posed in the letters.

As I have noted before, our discussions had reached a point after the fourth meeting where we were interested in hearing the thoughts and opinions on Maleness of alternative voices. In my opinion the introduction of alternative voices went exceedingly well. These discussions offered us differing perspectives and challenges to Maleness, and in turn allowed us to reflect critically on the aspects of our Maleness that may hurt others and the people closest to our lives.

## 5.7 What did not work well?

### 5.7.1 Academic material?

From the outset of the research endeavour I was hesitant in having a research discussion group composed of men who were my friends. Two dominant reservations prevailed. The one had to do with the validity of the discussions with a group of friends being considered as *academic* material. However, what convinced me to go ahead in this regard were the questions: *What makes research valid? Who decides that research is valid? What makes a project academic?*

I also had to remind myself that as a researcher I was initiating a research process that espoused the principles of practical theology. The phrase *practical theology* in its simplest sense suggests that it is a theology that is practical and relevant to those who engage in theologising. The *Caveman* project needed to benefit the participants as well as the significant others in the lives of the co-searchers to be considered a work consistent with practical theology. What good would it have been to the co-searchers and their significant others if the *Caveman* discussions remained within

the arena of academia, and not circulated and engaged with by ordinary people who take their faith and relationships seriously?

## 5.7.2 Personal "issues"

The second reservation revolved around what I would call "issues" that I experienced with my friends. At times I identified with Pease (1997:155) who at different times through his research experience found himself often moving in and out of different roles as a participant and a researcher. The risk I took in this regard was that I would not be seen as the all-knowing researcher, but would be willingly placing myself on the same level as the participants in the group. This is a positive movement in that it levelled the power dynamics so that the participants were not put into the "gaze" of a researcher's interest. The negative side was that I found myself re-enacting my inadequacies I experience with my friends in a formal context. These inadequacies took the forms of voices that would interject in my thoughts, and would tell me:

*They do not regard what you say as important!*

*They do not think you are worthy!*

I do not believe that the co-searchers would have been aware of my internal struggle with these voices. However, they may have been aware of a certain "withdrawn" nature to my facilitation as a result of these voices. For those of you who are reading this project and are considering pursuing a project with a group of friends my desire is that you would be aware of the influence of such voices and take measures to make sure that they do not adversely affect your participation within the group, as they threatened to do with me.

## 5.7.3 Black South African men

In chapter 3 (see 3.7.4) I address what Rohr and Martos (1996) call the *White Male System.* I believe this framework aided in gathering an understanding of how Patriarchy had established itself within our Maleness. However, what was lacking

were discussions with the voices of black South African men. I have noted that I requested that we meet with black South African men, but the group had decided against it. Again, I could not force my prescriptions for the project onto the co-searchers. Despite the possibilities created by a narrative approach to therapeutic conversations, I found that in some respects I was also bound by the choices made by the collective as we chose voices we were interested in inviting to our discussions.

## 5.7.4 Life events and composition of the group

In listening to the *Caveman* conversations again, I have been challenged by the moments in which I – as a facilitator – may not have recognised moments in which someone within the group may have felt marginalised by what we were discussing. For example, at one stage we discussed how men are encouraged to enter more mature stages of life through what we called "life events". We discussed these events in the context of Barry's divorce as well as the marriages of Ryan H., Mike and Raymond. I did not realize how this discussion might have marginalized the men who had not experienced a "life event". This included Ryan K. and myself. So, how did this silence our stories and the aspects thereof that may have added to a creation of a significant Maleness?

A limitation of the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions could possibly be the trend within South Africa for 'consciousness raising sessions' to take place amongst men where introspection and personal transformation are put into action in the privacy and safety of suburban houses in the company of like-minded, racially similar men (Morrell 2002). Personally, it is difficult to decide whether this comment is levelled as a criticism towards such groups of men.

However, in and of itself, the comment raises a valid concern. This concern centres on alternative voices. From the very beginning of the research endeavour as a researcher, I was aware that the composition of the *Cavemen* group was biased towards white heterosexual men. As a result of this awareness, I was always on the look out for how we, as a group, may invite voices into our discussions.

Towards the end of our discussions, once we had had the opportunity to learn more of each other's stories, it was agreed that we should broaden our discussions by inviting people who may – in society's eyes – be classified as different to the norm of Maleness. We identified certain voices we were interested in hearing from. These voices were the female and gay voices.

## 5.7.5 A position of not knowing

> Not-knowing requires that our understandings, explanations, and interpretations in therapy not be limited by prior experiences or theoretically formed truths, and knowledge.
>
> (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:28)

Alice Morgan (2000) in her short introductory book on the central ideas and practices of narrative therapy explains how a therapist should ask questions that he/she does not genuinely know the answers to. In other narrative writings this approach to questioning is known as *adopting a position of not knowing* (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). When a person does not adopt this position, Roux and Kotzé (2002:146) state that these "questions" are nothing but statements in disguise, which the person asking the question already knows what the answer is.

Based on the above, the *Re-inventing the Caveman* discussions were prone to questions that already had answers. As a facilitator I found it extremely difficult to adopt a position of not knowing, as I constantly found myself asking questions with ideas in mind of what I thought the answers should be. I have learnt that such a position, if it is to be attained, is one that requires constant practice and re-enforcement as a technique. I also suppose that we grow up in the midst of discourse, which by its constitutional properties defines and characterises our realities. Is it realistic to believe that one can ever adopt, in its entirety, a position of not knowing? Surely, we must possess some prior knowledge and frameworks that guide our conversation and supply us with anticipated outcomes?

## 5.7.6 Theological emphasis

In pursuing a project such as *Re-inventing the Caveman* I now realise what other opportunities were available for us to engage with discursively. For instance, while addressing Maleness and theology, we did not discuss the role of men within the Bible. Nor did we engage with some of the stories of Maleness present within Scripture. I'm sure, that should we have done so, the *Caveman* discussions would have contributed more to understanding Maleness from a Scriptural point of view.

Perhaps the fact that we did not discuss these examples of Maleness provides a starting point for a discussion on what points of departure are provided by the *Caveman* discussions for future research.

## 5.8 Implications of the project for research

### 5.8.1 Friends

I began the *Caveman* discussions with an excitement. It was an excitement incited due to the methodology behind our discussions, that they were comprised of co-searchers who were friends of mine. I have not encountered any project thus far that has attempted to do research with friends. To my knowledge this is a new way of doing research, and introduces different notions in terms of ethicising and feminist research.

As a group of friends we could pursue a just community (see 2.3.1) in which we could challenge and affirm each other. In listening to our conversations again, I see how we achieved this movement toward a just community, where we formed a micro-community. And then, by virtue of us leaving the discussions each evening, we were entering our larger community in which we could pursue justice – especially in regards to the voices of Patriarchy, Competitiveness and Homophobia. I believe that the model used in the *Caveman* discussions could provide a spark that might incite future research into communities of friends and how those friends may address prejudice and injustice within their communities.

## 5.8.2 Discussions with men

I would hope that the *Caveman* discussions might provide some help for people interested in having therapeutic discussions with men. What follows below are some of the points I believe the discussions would provide for future projects of this nature.

- When I addressed the introductory letter to the co-searchers I invited them to reflect on the role models they had chosen in terms of Maleness. I also noted in chapter 1 how men in the South African climate are desperately short of adequate role models. I wonder to what extent this plays a role within the lives of younger men as they grow up? I wonder if it may be worthwhile for teenage South African males to discuss their chosen South African role models.

- It may also be worthwhile to have discussions with men who have reached "role model status", men who have already surpassed the stage in which the language of ascent is important as described by Rohr and Martos (1996:xx) in chapter 3. I wonder what these men would have to say with regards to developing a respectful and wise Maleness. And then, it may be worth deconstructing the ideas of what constitutes a role model.

- The *Caveman* group consisted of six Christian men. I wonder what discussion would be generated concerning Maleness amongst men who identify with other religions.

- I believe that the *Caveman* discussions have not addressed all the possible alternative voices they could have within the South African climate. I wonder what benefit there would be in conducting research projects with men who are black or disabled. I wonder what their approach may be towards Maleness? I also wonder to what extent dominant forms of Maleness have subjugated them?

- In the beginning of chapter 3 I discussed how we as a group negotiated the words we would use in describing our Maleness. Now that the project is over I wonder what may be gained from discussions with black South African men and their Maleness. I wonder what discussions of this sort may yield when taking into account our discussions of male initiation rites.

- I believe now that through the course of the *Caveman* discussions the concept of gender might not have been addressed adequately. I noted in chapter 3 Venter's (1993:90) belief that the distinction between male and female is becoming blurred. In retrospect I think that our discussions may have used the terms sex, sexuality and gender too loosely without having dedicated discussion to deconstructing these terms so that we may have referred to them more effectively. Perhaps, deconstructing gender with Maleness in mind might be fruitful?

- I wrote this in chapter 4:

> Raymond wondered what effect this type of discussion would have on society if the discussions were geared for more global terrain? Barry wondered what impact it would have if men allow women into the types of discussion we had and to let them set the agenda to address issues they feel need to be discussed. In retrospect, this is possibly an aspect we should have made space for in our discussion with Mandy and Celeste.

Rohr and Feister (2001:10) warns that unless we recognize and admit our own personal and cultural view points, we will never learn how to decentralise our own perspectives. Being unable to do this we will then live in a world of illusion and blindness, thus leading to much suffering and pain.

Barry also wondered about the needs for a collective confession in terms of Maleness for being privileged i.e. that way white people need to take responsibility for benefiting from being white in the apartheid days. Cloete's (2001) project also dealt with white men within the South African context, but I

wonder what his group would have had to say about their Maleness in the context of the NG church's support of apartheid?

## 5.9 Conclusion

*Have we re-invented the Caveman?*

Rob Becker's argument in *Defending the Caveman* rests on defining and expounding the nature and roles of modern men and women based on what comes naturally to both, as depicted by our cavemen ancestors. We as a group of South African, Christian, white men have discussed what we perceive to be our place within society. Perhaps we have not been re-invented, but I am sure that at the very least, we have reflected critically on our roles and responsibilities as men.

I am reminded of what Heshusius and Ballard write about participatory research, that research is a relational activity, "a relation that acts in the world … blurring the boundaries between self and other" (1996:172). As you have read this dissertation I consider it a privilege to have shared our journey with you, and hope that through your act of reading you have been able to interact with our stories and our journey into our Maleness'.

## 6. List of Works Consulted

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**Appendix A – Information Sheet**

**Re-inventing the Caveman**

Information sheet for participating men

Thank you for your interest in this project concerning men and the way we live our lives. The terminology, language and purposes of this study will be negotiated in our first group discussion together. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to join this journey, I thank you gratefully. If you decide that you wish not to join us, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind.

The aim of the project

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Practical Theology – with specialisation in Pastoral Therapy. The aims of the project are to:

1. explore the influences that society has on being a man, the dominant ideas and notions that construct men as "man". Discuss the impact that these views have on the participant's sense of self, relationships and spirituality.
2. identify and discuss role models that have had an impact on the lives of the participants, both positive and negative. Discuss possible ways of becoming positive role-models in South Africa.
3. Discuss and co-construct ways of being men in the future as the participants move forward in life, especially in terms of life choices (e.g. marriage, career).
4. Co-construct preferred ways of being a man.

Participants needed for the study

Between four and five young adult men will be included in the group discussion, telling their stories and sharing their experiences of being a man.

What will be required of the participants?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to give consent for the information obtained during the group discussions to be used in the research project.

If you decide to take part in the project, you will be required to write the group an introductory letter and to participate in approximately six fortnightly group sessions of about one and a half hours each. After each session, you will receive a summary of the session. You will be asked to make comments, corrections and/or provide feedback regarding the summary.

Free participation

You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time without any consequences to you.

Confidentiality

The information obtained during our group sessions will be discussed with my supervisor and will be used in the project. With your prior consent, the group sessions will be audiotaped.  Should you not choose to have the sessions recorded I shall make notes during the session. A summary of the sessions will be available at the conclusion of the group sessions for your review. Your comments, corrections and/or feedback will be included in the final report. The information obtained during the project will be securely stored in a locked safe and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project.

Results of the study

The results of the study will be written up in the form of a research report, and may be published. At your request, details (names and places) will be changed to ensure your anonymity. You will have the choice to use your own name or a pseudonym of your own choice. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

Questions of participants
Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me:

Aiden Choles
Tel:
Cell:
Email:
Or my supervisor Emarie Kotzé (D Litt et Phil) at the Institute for Therapeutic Development.
Tel:
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Practical Theology, Unisa and the Institute for Therapeutic Development.

## Appendix B – Consent Form

Re-inventing the Caveman

Consent form for participation by co-searchers

I have read the Research Proposal concerning the study *Re-inventing the Caveman* and I understand what the project is aiming to do. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I understand that:

1. My participation in the study is entirely voluntary.
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. I am aware of what will happen to my personal information (incl. tape recordings) at the conclusion of the project.
4. I will receive no payment or compensation for participating in the study.
5. All personal information supplied by me will remain confidential throughout the project.
6. I am aware that Aiden's supervisors will read the material.

I am willing to participate in this research project.

(Signature of participant)                                    (Date)

(Name of participant in capital letters)                      (Signature of witness)

**Appendix C – Introductory Letter**

Dear Friends

I would like to thank you all for choosing to be a part of this study. I hope that this will be an interesting and fulfilling journey for all of us as we learn more about each other. At the outset, I would like to tell you that we are pioneering a different way of doing research that is different from commonly accepted approaches.

The first obvious difference is that, as a group, most of us already know each other. I believe this will benefit the group in many ways and will lay aside the usual ice-breaking amenities. We may also learn things about each other that we may have taken for granted or never have thought about before. And then finally, this is a journey that we will plan together where everyone has a say and becomes a co-searcher.

As a means of initiating the journey I would like to invite you to write a letter to the group. In this letter I invite you to reflect on your origins as a man and the stories that have influenced you in becoming the man you are today. As a guideline for these letters I will provide some questions that you might like to reflect on, but by and large, this letter is your own creation. I would like the guiding principle of this letter to be one that asks what your fellow group members may learn about you by reading this letter.  If it is alright with all of you, I would like these letters to be forwarded to every member of the group before our first discussion. Here are some of the questions I want to reflect on in my letter:

1) What qualities do I believe I have that distinguishes me as a man?
2) What would I say makes me a good friend?
3) Who do I think would be proud of the man I am?
4) Who may not be surprised by my approach to being a man?
5) What do I value in myself?
6) What part of myself would I choose to remain with me as I journey through life?
7) Who can I thank for my passion?

I trust that these questions will help and encourage you as you construct your letters.

In anticipation,
Aiden.

## Appendix D – Barry's Letter

Barry's letter to the group concerning his hi-jacking:

Dear boy-friends,

Aiden asked me to write a letter reflecting on my experience of being hijacked this month. I'll try and keep it short, considering your general low reading skills…

I am an impatient man with a relatively short fuse. I'm the one riding in the yellow lane to get to the off-ramp quicker, and also the one hooting and screaming because some-one cut me off in the traffic…

It's not a quality I enjoy or encourage.

And, listening to the many stories of hijackings, I often wondered how I would react when it happened to me. I often expressed the fear that I would react aggressively and end up getting shot or worse. I always thought that the best thing to do would be to cooperate and let the hijackers take car, cell wallet etc.

Well, that's exactly what I did when it happened. I remained calm (mostly out of shock I think) and cooperated. The result being that Brian and I escaped unharmed from the incident. Interesting that I had to visit a man in Joburg Gen just a few days later who had been shot in his driveway in Hurlyvale (the same suburb that I stay in) and he had resisted… so he saved his 1987 Corolla but took a bullet to the groin… fortunately not too serious, so he'll live a few more days.

Makes one think… so I lay down when they told me too. I lay there with a gun not far away from the back of my head. One of the robbers put his foot on my head when I tried to look up to see what was going on. So I just waited for what seemed like a very long time (probably not more than a minute or two), wondering, "will they shoot me?"

Thinking back, I'm obviously glad to be alive. And I do think that not resisting played a part in the outcome of the incident. But what kind of person just limply lets bastards with guns invade his personal space and take his hard earned possessions? I acted like a wimp – just lying down. So, there is the question that some people raise, when will this stop? And when are we going to stand up for what is right? And when are we going to resist and make it clear that this sort of unjust and unfair and criminal behaviour is unacceptable? And doesn't our wimpy, limp response only encourage these criminals to rob and pillage more?

What about the person who gives his life for his friend? What about the glory of the one who pays the ultimate price for that which is right and just and fair?

Well, none of that occurred to me at the time of the hijacking. Then, I went into survival mode and did what I'd rehearsed – i.e. that which I believed to be the response most likely to protect my life from harm.

But the angry thoughts about resistance etc. came after. I'm alive, but what kind of person just lies down takes the blows? Jesus certainly approached the cross in that kind of way… and it's hard to think of him as wimpy, although maybe I just don't want to think of him in that way. Maybe going "voluntarily" to the cross in the most absurd idea the world's ever had to consider!

And maybe, a man should derive pride from knowing that he's resisted (as per The Patriot) and even paid the ultimate price. What is all this glory we have encouraged boys/men to believe? That giving one's life is a noble thing?

I'm reminded of a poem (YES a POEM!!!!). The Latin means: "Sweet it is and beautiful to die for the fatherland."

### Dulce Et Decorum Est

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!-An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,-

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

--Wilfred Owens

Well, I'm fascinated (I think I've spoken about this before) that most violent crime is a male phenomenon. Why are we men so violent? Why have we not learned from history? Why is peace such hard thing to sustain?

I want to seek to live a non-violent life, challenging in myself (and especially in my maleness) the areas where violence is still prevalent. One thing that is convincing me at the moment is that violence will not be an effective response to stop the violence. So I have these things to think about:

- In my relationship with the woman in my life (at this point Elaine), how will I use, misuse power and my ability to manipulate… and to what extent am I "violent" in those aspects of my life.
- How will I approach my work situations in terms of being a driven person with vision and goals? Will I want to to get my way at any expense and force and push things into being?
- How will I respond to the problem of crime? (Will we as a society believe that more violence and the death penalty will work?)
- How will I discipline my children?

Oh well. Enough for now.

b

**Appendix E - Questions to Maleness**

**Impressiveness & Competitiveness**

• Is the pressure to be impressive a uniquely male struggle?

• When is it ok to listen to the ideas of Impressiveness?

• When are we as men most vulnerable to Impressiveness?

• To what extent are Competitiveness and Impressiveness linked in our maleness?

• How are ideas of impressiveness different for women and men?

• How do ideas of dominance affect our maleness?

• Is dominance different from leadership?

• To what extent does the voice of Conquer impact on our maleness?

**Power and Abuse**

• Where do we draw the line between a harmless maleness and a harmful maleness?

• What restrains us from abusing other the ways we have seen other men do?

• Why is power such a major issue for a man?

• Is our maleness power driven?

• Is our maleness innately abusive?

**Stereotypes**

To what extent are stereotypes of maleness justified?
  • Is maleness more competitive than femaleness?
  • Are women becoming more competitive?
  • Are men aggressive, and women not?
  • Are men notoriously bad passengers?
  • Men should be strong.
  • Men should not get emotional in the workplace.
  • Men are more visually stimulated than women.

**Patriarchy**

• Has Patriarchy changed over the last few decades?

• How do we recognize the place that Patriarchy has in our maleness?

• How do women define Patriarchy and the effects it has on their lives?

• What Patriarchal assumptions have we not questioned?

• What does it mean to an equal partnership with a partner?

• Are women truly free to make their own choices unmediated by the voice of Patriarchy?

• How do the principles of business differ from the principles of business?

• Has maleness kept women from certain spheres or activities? E.g. sport, business.

**General**

To what extent is our maleness natural, or socially learned?

What role does God play as we create our maleness?

What can Jesus teach us about maleness?

In what ways do we accept the status quo in regards to maleness?

How do we accept responsibility for our maleness?

What work is still to be done on our maleness?

Who in our lives holds us accountable to maintaining a respectful maleness?

What benefit is there in taking responsibility for our actions and the maleness we create?

What is about our maleness that makes us think the world revolves around us?

What hidden dangerous potential might there be lurking in our maleness?

How do we foster a healthy sexuality? (Who decides what constitutes a healthy sexuality? Men or women or perhaps in partnership?)

How is a sexual dynamic present in our maleness?

Who decides what "attractive" is?

What impact does age have on our maleness?

Have we lost out by not having a right of passage into maleness?

How do we gain a better perspective on our maleness without shirking off responsibility?

Can we trust our maleness?

What makes good friendships work?

What is it about intimacy with another man that we find threatening?

What does it mean to be accepted and significant as a male?
- What makes us valuable as men?
- Where do we locate our Ok-ness?