



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Foundational documentation for a social message on ...*

Gender-based Violence

With a social message on gender-based violence and this accompanying documentation, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America speaks to both church and society. (Adopted Nov. 14, 2015) This documentation is intended to be used for in-depth analysis and reference.

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1. WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Gender-based violence is physical, sexual or emotional harm directed at a person in order to create or maintain power and control. This power and control is linked to gender, sex and sexuality. Some people hurt other people because of **biological characteristics**, because of perceived or self-identified **gender** or sexual orientation, or because of

* The ELCA Church Council adopted a social message on gender-based violence along with this foundational documentation as a fuller explanation and deeper analysis. The social message can be found at <http://www.ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages>, select "gender-based violence." The ELCA also has addressed other aspects of violence in God's world in several social teaching documents, also available on the website.

their difference from social or religious definitions of masculinity and femininity. [Fonts in bold and italics throughout this document indicate a word in the glossary.]

Gender-based violence is also an expression of power through coercion and threat of another's well-being. The person committing the violence violates someone's physical, psychological and/or spiritual integrity. Gender-based violence occurs in a multitude of forms and may be experienced at any point in a person's life. This violent exercise of power may occur for a brief moment or may be a long-term pattern. This power dynamic is possible in every relationship. Everyone is, therefore, potentially affected by gender-based violence.

WHERE IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HAPPENING IN OUR WORLD?

People of all classes and of all ethnicities in all nations suffer violence inflicted on them by others for reasons based on gender. Gender-based violence happens in both private and public situations. It occurs in families, other social relations, the church, the state, education and in society more broadly. It is a problem in the United States and globally. What happens in this church and in this country is interconnected to manifestations of gender-based violence around the world.

The ELCA social message and this foundational documentation address the U.S. context in which we have immediate call and responsibility. While focused nationally, however, these documents recognize the global character of the problem and the importance of working worldwide to address it. The ELCA celebrates the relationships of ongoing accompaniment concerning gender-based violence with global partners and companions. It is through shared service, advocacy, theological dialogue, and ecumenical and inter-faith relations that it becomes possible to care wisely for people's immediate needs and to address the sources and contexts of gender-based violence.¹

¹ The work of The Lutheran World Federation is one example of the global efforts in which the ELCA participates. See, e.g., "Churches Say 'No!' to Violence Against Women" (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2002), www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Churches%20Say%20No%20to%20Violence%20against%20Women.pdf, and Elaine Neuenfeldt, ed., "Lutheran World Federation Gender Justice Policy" (Geneva, Switzerland: The Lutheran World Federation, 2013), www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy, which is implemented through all realms of The Lutheran World Federation service, advocacy and dialogue. The ELCA participates in such work in several ways, e.g. The Lutheran Office for World Community.

2. WHO IS INVOLVED?

WHO IS ESPECIALLY TARGETED?

While many different people, including men and boys, are affected by gender-based violence, women and girls² are especially targeted. Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner. Globally the percentage rises to 30 percent.³

Girls are especially vulnerable. Of the 18.2 percent of women who have survived rape⁴ or attempted rape, 12.3 percent of those were younger than age 12 when they were first raped, and 29.9 percent were between the ages of 11 and 17. Girls ages 16-19 are four times more likely than the general population to be the victims of rape, attempted rape or sexual assault.

In addition to women and girls, those who are *gender non-conforming* also live with the memory and/or the fear of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. Three-fourths of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming have been targets of some form of violence related to gender, sexuality and intimacy.⁵

There is increasing awareness of sexual and physical violence against men and boys, particularly in sports teams, prisons, hospitals, and in churches and schools.⁶ Though much less pervasive, women, girls and gender non-conforming people also may carry out gender-based

2 “Women and girls” is here used as an inclusive term.

3 All statistics were current as of the writing of this message. See the Appendix for more.

4 The literature refers to both victims and survivors. This document uses both terms. The term victim stresses that someone has hurt someone else by exercising their power; the term survivor indicates the reality for many people after violence.

5 To-date there is not enough research in the United States to be able to express the actual number of gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender non-conforming targets, but an estimated percentage is available, given current research. See the Appendix for further information.

6 See e.g., Lara Stemple and Ilan H. Meyer, “The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions,” *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (June 2014): e19-e26. This research focuses on male victimization in institutions such as mental health and criminal justice. There is also growing public knowledge of male victimization by clergy, coaches, teachers, caregivers and peers (such as through sexual harassment and hazing). Notable in this research is that when men and boys are in situations in which they are vulnerable to the power of others over them, it can lead to physical and emotional harm to them. Age, race and class can be contributory factors in situations of vulnerability. For greater insight into violence against gender non-conforming men, see Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

violence; for example, intimate partner violence can be against men by women. Gender-based violence also includes intimate partner violence within same-gender relationships, as well as some forms of elder abuse.

WHO INFLECTS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ON OTHERS?

Those who perpetrate gender-based violence can be acquaintances, friends, strangers, family, intimate partners, caregivers, clergy, teachers and work supervisors. Perpetrators include a surprising number of individuals from every statistical category and yet, research indicates that heterosexual men make up the majority of perpetrators. Among gender- and sexuality-based hate crimes, one study identified White men as the largest racial/ethnic group of perpetrators.⁷

INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Every act or threat of gender-based violence, every perpetrator and every survivor is influenced by *intersections* of identities and systems of privilege and oppression. Intersections of race and ethnicity, age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity can increase the likelihood of violence. In the United States, for example, some women of color experience higher rates of intimate partner violence and rape than all women on average. What is universal about gender-based violence is that gender is a central motivating factor, even while it may not be the only one.

3. WHY DO PEOPLE INFLECT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Though the sources and contexts of gender-based violence are complex and multiple, this church recognizes that its fundamental source is sin. This sin is rooted in the ways people create and misuse power over others. It is simultaneously a personal responsibility and a sin rooted in social systems. Faithful work against gender-based violence requires a deep understanding of the pervasive and complex personal, social and religious dynamics of the problems. Thorough analysis helps us to care well for our neighbors.

PERSONAL CHOICES

Acts of gender-based violence always involve sinful individual choices. What an individual chooses to do is often influenced by personal factors. For example, alcohol consumption or drug use does not cause gender-based violence, but some studies indicate that it can increase the severity

⁷ See the Appendix for further information.

of injury.⁸ A person's experiences, such as familial abuse or post-traumatic stress syndrome, may increase the likelihood of gender-based violence.⁹ These factors are important to take into account when seeking to hold perpetrators accountable or to help them change.

How human beings think and act, however, is closely intertwined with systemic and social forces, including the dynamics of power and control. While each act of gender-based violence may be an individual's action, it is always shaped by power dynamics and social factors. This exercise of power may occur for a brief moment or may be a long-term pattern. The power dynamic is possible in every relationship. Everyone is, therefore, potentially affected by gender-based violence.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Regardless who is the perpetrator or target of gender-based violence, this dynamic of power and control is rooted in the values of a particular social system. Internationally, the dominant social system is widely recognized as patriarchal. While the many acts of gender-based violence are each sinful, they are sourced by and interrelated with the more obscure sin in this social system.

A patriarchal social system is *dominated* by the voice and authority of men. In such a social system, what is most highly valued is *identified* as male-oriented. A patriarchal social system is *centered* on males; the world is portrayed with men as the main actors in life and reflects their ideas and values. Women, gender non-conforming people and non-dominant men are socially de-valued, diminished or controlled.¹⁰

The definition of patriarchy as a social system is not a description of every person, social relationship, Christian congregation, etc. It is, instead, a description of a complex array of social relations, habits, laws, ideas and beliefs in which *everyone* participates in varying measures.¹¹ Though there has been much social progress toward gender equity in the United States, patriarchy is still the dominant social system in the United States and within Christianity.

Patriarchy remains in place through tools of power and control.

8 Brecklin, L.R., "The role of perpetrator alcohol use in the injury outcomes of intimate assaults," *Journal of Family Violence* 17 (2002): 185-197.

9 See e.g., P. Tjaden and N. Thoennes, "Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey" (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000), 33.

10 Allan G. Johnson, *The Gender Knot*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University, 2005) and *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

11 Ibid.

Gender-based violence functions as one such tool, whether as threats, discrimination, actual acts or inadequate responses. This tool is used across time and place in varying degrees and in multiple forms. For example, sexual harassment in schools and work places serves to intimidate girls, women and gender non-conforming people from asserting themselves and from developing their gifts fully.

Rape also serves as a means of control, whether within dating, marriage or war. As particular targets of rape, women thus learn to live in fear, wrestling with this ceaseless threat and its implication that they are objects of control.

In light of this systemic sin, the reduction of gender-based violence requires changes in social and religious beliefs and practices that support conditions for violence. Existing efforts like therapy and counseling focused on different needs in response to cycles of violence must be strengthened and encouraged. Advocacy for changes in law and policy must continue. Both are beneficial and essential.

Years of activism, research and scholarship demonstrate, however, that these alone cannot address the depth and tacit approval of this society's gender-based violence.¹² Gender-based violence must come to be understood in the context of the patriarchy in which individual choices or beliefs and multiple social factors operate.

Intertwined with personal choice and patriarchy, specific social factors influence and support the nature of gender-based violence. The factors named here include racism, the media, commercial sexual exploitation, fears of sexualities and bodies, economics, and the legal system.

RACISM

Racism increases the likelihood of gender-based violence and decreases the likelihood of justice.

12 Elizabeth M. Schneider, *Battered Women & Feminist Lawmaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 20-56. Advancement of international human rights – women's rights as human rights – is important in the creation of global change based on universal claims. Working to end gender-based violence and other gender-based discrimination through human rights arguments and standards can provide empowerment for people's legal consciousness, sense of identity, psychological health and political and moral agency. Addressing gender-based violence depends in part on human rights-based arguments. Nevertheless, human rights assertions alone cannot create the conditions to weaken the prevalence and intensity of gender-based violence. Rather, lessening gender-based violence depends upon changes in social and religious consciousness; thus, part of this church's work is to address the ways we see and think about God, the world and ourselves. If there is no social and religious change, people who are harmed by gender-based violence will only be able to continue to ask for mercy and protection in a world that sees and thinks about them as deserving the violence.

Racism is an inherently evil force that has shaped not only the history of the United States and the world, but also individual lives and the social fabric of the present. Racism is rooted in the sinful idea that skin color determines the social value and ability of people.¹³ In the United States, racism profoundly affects gender-based violence in at least two important ways.

First, women of color are more often targeted by men both outside of and within their communities. Multi-ethnic women and American Indian and Alaskan Native women are far more often the targets of gender-based violence than all women on average.¹⁴ The legacy of White privilege shapes the way bodies are viewed and treated, causing inordinate suffering for millions of women of color who are overwhelmingly targeted.

Second, racism may affect how victims and survivors of color think about turning to the U.S. legal system for justice. In a marginalized community, the risks to expose each other to the U.S. legal system may be high.¹⁵ A survivor in the same racial or ethnic community as the perpetrator, especially an immigrant community, may, therefore, be less inclined to press charges. This situation may account for the fact that women of color are less likely to report intimate partner violence than the average rate of reporting for all women nationally.¹⁶ (See also *intersecting identities*.)

MEDIA PORTRAYALS

Females are objects of desire, control and violence and are made to seem “naturally” subordinate to men.

“Public imagery of women is the text for all the other forms of violence [based on gender],” notes one expert.¹⁷ There is a steady message in this society that women are subordinate to men, which is communicated through advertising, news and magazines, gaming, music, movies and television.

13 ELCA social statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture” (Chicago: ELCA, 1991). <http://ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture>.

14 See the Appendix for statistics as of publication.

15 See *The Church and Criminal Justice: Hearing the Cries* (Chicago: ELCA, 2013) for a discussion of risks such as dramatically higher incarceration rates, effect on employment prospects and others, 13.

16 See, e.g., “Statistics on Violence Against API Women,” Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, <http://www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php>.

17 See Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence against Women and the Church's Response*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 66.

As “entertainment,” music and many video games, TV shows and movies commonly incorporate images of violence against women or girls as central elements in their story lines. Viewers of mainstream media are exposed repeatedly to subtle or not-so-subtle messages that women and girls are largely sexual objects, or deserve and enjoy pain and humiliation, or are so irrational that they need to be dominated.¹⁸ This fosters stereotypes learned at an early age and legitimates the “everydayness” of gender-based violence.

The steady message that women are subordinate to men is also communicated through a variety of ways in the social glorification of sports and athletes. The history of protecting and excusing star athletes from accountability relating to gender-based violence is one example. This problem exists from high school to professional circles.

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Women and girls are targeted as objects of sexual and sexualized violence.

The ELCA defines commercial exploitation as organized, for-profit sexual exploitation. It includes audio or video sex, prostitution, human trafficking, pornography, stripping and related activities that express deep desires for power over and fear of women.¹⁹ Approximately 80 percent of all victims of human trafficking are women and girls. In addition, pornography demeans and devalues people as thoroughly objectified, typically through violence.²⁰ Most often, the objects of pornography, even when a male is in the scene, are female.²¹

FEARS OF SEXUALITIES AND BODIES

Fear of and hatred for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or gender non-conforming is connected to patriarchy because both assume the superiority of the heterosexual male and strict gender roles for men and women.

Although often not recognized, violence against anyone who does not act according to predominant gender and sexual expectations is also a form of gender-based violence. For example, violence against gay men because

18 See, for example, the film *Miss Representation Dir.*, Jennifer Siebel Newsom (2011).

19 See “ELCA Social Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation,” (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2001), 1-3. <http://ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Messages/Commercial-Sexual-Exploitation>. See also ELCA study resources on human trafficking. www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Justice-for-Women.

20 Cooper-White, 64-65.

21 Ibid., 78. According to Cooper-White, an exception is gay male pornography.

they are gay is gender-based violence. So is violence against people who are transgender because they are transgender. The memory or fear of violence shapes the lives of anyone who does not conform to socially dominant gender and sexual expectations. (See also *intersecting identities*.)

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Gender-based violence can threaten and destroy survivors' economic security and/or be a means for perpetrators to make money at their expense.

There are at least three general ways that experiences of gender-based violence and money are intertwined. First, people who have experienced or are experiencing gender-based violence may lose their jobs. Survivors of gender-based violence may be so significantly traumatized that they are unable to work, or they may suffer severe depression from the experience. They may miss work repeatedly for legal or medical appointments, and they may be seen as a risk by employers *simply* for having been victimized. Any of these situations may be the reason for the loss of a job with the accompanying hardships for a survivor and family.

Second, some victim/survivors feel compelled to remain in situations of gender-based violence in order to maintain economic stability. For instance, someone abused by an intimate partner may be compelled to remain in the abusive relationship because that partner earns the necessary income to care for children. In other instances, victim/survivors remain in jobs or situations, such as schooling, in which they are sexually harassed, coerced or abused because the job or the education is their only means to economic stability.

Third, some victim/survivors of gender-based violence are psychologically, emotionally and physically forced or coerced into gender-based violence by people who want to make money at their expense. Such is the case in the systems of human trafficking, prostitution, pornography, "mail-order brides" and other forms of forced marriages.

LAWS AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Despite significant progress, gender-based bias in the law and its enforcement still foster a culture of gender-based violence.

This church recognizes and affirms the proliferation of laws pertaining to gender-based violence in the last 50 years. For example, it is now illegal to sexually harass a co-worker, to rape a spouse and to abuse a spouse. It is good that there is increased realization that people should not have to experience gender-based violence in various forms.

Research reveals, nevertheless, continued gender bias in the law and the legal system. For example, in many jurisdictions a substantial proportion of intimate partner defendants are given deferred prosecution or dispositions that do not involve findings of guilt. A trio of studies found that at least 25 percent of the defendants that received deferred sentences will re-abuse or re-offend.²²

A recent study also found that only approximately *half* of sexual assault cases that resulted in an arrest were ever prosecuted. Prosecution was more frequent when the victim was viewed by the prosecutor as “blameless.” It was less frequent where the victim was viewed as having engaged in “risk-taking behavior” or where the person’s “reputation or character were questioned.”²³

Rape is not solely a crime by men against women. However, until 2011, the Federal Bureau of Investigation defined rape exclusively as a crime against a female involving the use of physical force. The FBI now uses a much more comprehensive definition.²⁴ Despite this advance, the law and the legal system continue to be more consistently biased in cases of gender-based violence against gender non-conforming individuals or people in same-sex relationships. In other words, laws and the legal system do not yet properly protect the freedom, autonomy and full participation of all people within our communities.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

While policies have been put in place on institutional levels, change requires everyone’s consistent participation in them.

22 “Practical Implications of Current Domestic Violence Research: For Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Judges: Chapter 6. Prosecution Responses.” National Institute of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. United States Department of Justice. June 2009. www.nij.gov/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/practical-implications-research/ch6/pages/diverting-first-offenders.aspx.

23 C. Spohn and D. Holleran. “Prosecuting Sexual Assault: A Comparison of Charging Decisions in Sexual Assault Cases Involving Strangers, Acquaintances, and Intimate Partners.” www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/199720.pdf. Among the author’s observation was that sexual assault prosecutions were most likely when prosecutors believed “the evidence is strong, the suspect is culpable, and the victim is blameless.” “In cases that involved friends, acquaintances, and relatives, prosecutors were significantly less likely to file charges if the victim engaged in risk-taking behavior at the time of the incident or if her reputation or character were questioned.”

24 Prior to December 2011, rape was defined as “the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will.” According to the new definition, anyone can be a victim of rape, as it is “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” See Federal Bureau of Investigation, “UCR Program Changes Definition of Rape: Includes All Victims and Omits Requirement of Physical Force,” www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/cjis-link/march-2012/ucr-program-changes-definition-of-rape.

The nature of violence against women in institutions of higher education and in the military further illustrates how multiple factors combine to support gender-based violence.²⁵ In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education found it necessary to write to all colleges to remind them of their obligations under federal law to provide a “prompt, thorough, and impartial” inquiry into allegations of gender-based violence. It reminded them of their obligations, consistent with state law, to determine “whether appropriate law enforcement or other authorities should be notified.”²⁶

Sexual violence also occurs at a high rate in the U.S. military. Women are over five times more likely to be the targets of sexual assault than men are in the military, even though women make up only 14 percent of U.S. armed forces.²⁷ According to a Department of Veterans Affairs mental health screening report, 1 in 4 females and 1 in 100 males say they were sexually assaulted while serving in the military. The extent of the problem suggests the difficulty in redressing and curbing systemic violence.

4. HOW DOES CHRISTIANITY SOMETIMES CONTRIBUTE TO THESE PROBLEMS?

While religion is not the sole contributor to gender-based violence, this church acknowledges how religious factors often contribute extensively. Religions across the globe must wrestle with their contributions; among Christians there are several failures that need to be addressed. These include the harmful use of Scripture, church tradition and theology, as well as the problems of silence, denial, resistance and inadequate practical responses.

HARMFUL INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Some interpreters point to Scripture as an expression of God-ordained gender and sex hierarchy. In particular they point to the depiction of humanity’s creation in Genesis and to New Testament texts associated with Paul. Likewise, interpretations of sin, based on Genesis 3 for

25 Kristen Lombardi. “A Lack of Consequences for Sexual Assault.” The Center for Public Integrity. <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2010/02/24/4360/lack-consequences-sexual-assault>.

26 One in five women is sexually assaulted in college, but colleges often fail to respond appropriately. In a study of data submitted to the Department of Justice by 130 colleges, the Center for Public Integrity found that just 10 to 25 percent of perpetrators were expelled from college, leaving many victims of sexual assault to attend classes or live on the same campus as their rapist. www2.ed.gov/print/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201104.html.

27 “Sexual Assault in the Military.” U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. [http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/09242013/Statutory Enforcement Report Sexual Assault in the Military.pdf](http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/09242013/Statutory%20Enforcement%20Report%20Sexual%20Assault%20in%20the%20Military.pdf). See also “Military Sexual Trauma.” US Department of Veterans Affairs. http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/mst_general_factsheet.pdf.

example, have led to ongoing ideas that some people are more inherently sinful and responsible for sin than others. Such interpretations create a hierarchy of sin among humanity.

From these angles, it can seem that some people deserve sexual violence. The ELCA, however, is called to speak out against interpretations of Scripture that cheapen the treasure of faith and give license to those who harm and fail to stand with victims.

This church has its own treasures to address the harmful ways Scripture and its interpretation contribute to gender-based violence. At the heart of Lutheran biblical interpretation is Luther's own ardent priority: Interpretation of Scripture should reveal God's love to humanity. Interpretation of Scripture should "carry Christ" to the listener or reader.²⁸

This biblical interpretation challenges some contemporary Christian theology in the United States that supports the "value" of submission, the praise of suffering as a "good," and forgiveness without accountability. For example, some Christian leaders argue that if people would act according to biblical gender roles ("feminine" if you have female biology and "masculine" if you have male biology), violence would not happen. Other Christian leaders are hesitant to support the well-being of women because they interpret Scripture to say that women must be obedient and submissive to men.

This church has the opportunity to engage communities of faith and wider society to affirm a biblical understanding that does not explicitly or implicitly support gender-based violence. At the same time, this church has the opportunity to attend to its own theology, seeking to address what is harmful and remaining attentive to the needs of the neighbor.²⁹

HARMFUL CHURCH TRADITIONS

The faith community also participates in perpetuating gender-based violence whenever it holds to ways of thinking and speaking that

28 The ELCA has an important opportunity to lift up and support reinterpretations of texts that have for centuries been used to keep women and girls in social and religious positions "below" men and boys, such as creation and sin in Genesis and New Testament epistles commonly referred to as the "domestic texts."

29 Texts that portray violence against women that the ELCA at-large has not addressed include, for example, Abraham's use of Sarah for his own safety (Genesis 12:10-20), Lot offering his daughters to rapists in order to protect male guests (Genesis 19:1-11), Schechem raping Dinah (Genesis 34:1-19), King David's response to do nothing in order to protect his son Amnon when he rapes his half-sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13), and the second wife who was betrayed by her husband and raped and murdered by a gang of men (Judges 19). Texts that reveal God in diverse ways include Genesis 1:2, Isaiah 49:15, Matthew 23:37, and Luke 15:1-10.

deftly reinforce gender-based violence. These ways can include holding onto certain church histories, harmful biblical interpretations and harmful theologies.

Historically, church and society both have supported the idea that there is a necessary earthly hierarchy accorded to gender and sex. This pattern serves to reinforce women's lesser status and deprive them of legal and economic rights necessary to make their own decisions and care for themselves and sometimes their children.³⁰ Lutherans need to acknowledge our own history in perpetuating these, including the use of Martin Luther's writing on women and "domestic discipline" and the long church history of blaming victims for violence.³¹

HARMFUL THEOLOGIES

This church needs to reckon with forms of Lutheran theology related to the cross, suffering and forgiveness that urge people suffering from gender-based violence to unjustly endure it.³²

30 Only by 1993 was marital rape declared illegal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Historically, this slowly formed change is related to the common-law doctrine of "coverture," which stipulated that a free, married woman did not have a separate legal existence from her husband. Married women could not own property in their own names, sign binding contracts, file suit, or, except under specific circumstances, control their earnings; in the event of their husband's death, they were not able to act as guardian to their own children. See "Women, Enterprise & Society: Women and the Law" (manuscript collection), Harvard Business School and President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass., 2010, www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/. Slave women had no legal existence apart from those who claimed to own them. They were traded, used and sometimes forced to have children by those with power over them. See "Women, Enterprise & Society." Early laws and judicial decisions gave "legitimacy" to these concepts by permitting physical "chastisement" by husbands of their wives, permitting marriage to be asserted as a defense to rape, and by denying aid to victims based on their theory that judges should "not interfere with family government in trifling cases." It would take more than 100 years before a state would enact a law criminalizing a physical assault by a husband on his wife. See *Bradley v. State*, 2 Miss. (Walker) 156 (1824) in "History of Battered Women's Movement," *SafeNetwork: California's Domestic Violence Resource*, 1999, www.icadvinc.org/what-is-domestic-violence/history-of-battered-womens-movement/.

31 See, e.g., Mary Pellauer, "Lutheran Theology Facing Sexual and Domestic Violence," 2nd ed. (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2011), http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Violence_Theology_Booklet.pdf. Pellauer outlines Luther's strong writing on the "proper" submission of women to men and his ambivalence on child abuse and wife-beating. Although he exhorts husbands to be peaceable, he writes, "[T]he female sex inclines naturally to what is forbidden to it, to reign, to rule and to judge. From this there come marital discord, blows and beatings." ("Titus, 1527," *Luther's Works* 29:57). See, e.g., Joy A. Schroeder, *Dinah's Lament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007) for a disquieting historical explanation of Christian theological victim-blaming.

32 Careful analysis of the way that religion and culture are intertwined and attention to the effects of religious ideas and beliefs on gender-based violence is key to Christian action. See, e.g., Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014). Thus, Christian attention to all doctrine and theology is in order. This includes the doctrine of God, theological anthropology, the doctrines of sin and salvation, christology, ecclesiology, eschatology and ethics.

The sacrifice of the cross sometimes is interpreted to mean that any suffering “like Jesus” is good. In instances of gender-based violence, this can be an incredibly harmful teaching because people can be led to believe that any suffering is being like Jesus.

Instead, the New Testament reveals that Jesus does not seek suffering for its own sake. Rather, Jesus sought above all to live out God's love in the world and then accepted the cross as the consequence *for him*. Those who follow Jesus, likewise, are called above all to live out God's love in the world. Sometimes suffering will be the consequence of living God's love, but this does not require living with gender-based violence.

In a similar vein, sometimes the ideas and practices about forgiveness are problematic. When forgiveness is encouraged in a gender-dependent way – when victims are told they should easily and quickly forgive perpetrators – people are more likely to continue to be hurt. Coerced or premature forgiveness runs the risk of re-inflicting trauma. We must distinguish accountability, justice, confession, and repentance from forgiveness.

Because language shapes how people know and understand reality, a further Lutheran theological consideration involves the language of faith. Some people are asking this church in its concern about sources of gender-based violence to wrestle more particularly with the predominance of male references to God. They are asking this church to consider the ways that predominantly masculine and male-associated language for God not only denies the fullness of who God is but perpetuates the assumption that men are closer to the image and likeness of God.

SILENCE, DENIAL AND RESISTANCE

Far too often people of faith have been silent even when becoming aware of horrific acts. Silence sometimes seems to flow from not seeing what is everywhere. Sometimes it takes the form of willful ignorance: when we choose to be uninformed or deliberately turn away.

Christian people and institutions often deny the presence of gender-based violence because it is easier to resist naming what is happening than to confront it. For example, when intimate partner violence is misidentified as marital misunderstanding or anger mismanagement, what is really happening is denied and resisted. In such cases the dynamic of power and control that is strategically used by one partner to harm another is not seen or acknowledged.

Resistance is manifest in congregational or institutional attempts to discredit hints or reports of gender-based violence by victims. Resistance is often rooted in fears of confronting people, appearing to take sides, or triggering traumas for others by talking openly about gender-based violence.

Different forms of silence, denial and resistance result in failures to care for victim/survivors of gender-based violence. Far too often, far too many of us have failed God and others by remaining silent or oblivious and by failing to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. God calls God's people to care for the neighbor: God calls us to stop, listen, see, name and minister in the midst of ugliness and pain. God calls us to confront honestly these realities for the sake of those whose lives are affected by gender-based violence.

INADEQUATE RESPONSES

When Christian people or institutions respond, they must take care to do so wisely. When the response is carried out inadequately, it actually may intensify the problem. Insufficient and misguided Christian responses include victim-blaming, failure to demand accountability, and remaining ill-equipped to respond.

Direct and indirect forms of victim-blaming, on either religious or social grounds, do irreparable harm to survivors. Likewise, when the church fails to hold perpetrators and society (i.e., the law and criminal justice system, health care, child care, education, etc.) accountable to prevent, address and redress gender-based violence, we fail to care and so participate in the perpetuation of gender-based violence.

Being ill-equipped to respond to and prevent gender-based violence also perpetuates the violence. For example, those ministering to a person abused by an intimate partner cannot provide appropriate care if they do not understand the cycle of power and control in abuse or do not seek out the help of professional advocates. Likewise, an emphasis on saving the relationship above all else enables abusers and denies the needs and safety of the person who is being abused.

Finally, faulty practical responses include Christian institutional policies that stand in the way of caring for people suffering. These policies are harmful and inadequate when they, for example, do not make victims the priority of situations, do not allow everyone to name and respond to gender-based violence, or are outdated or inaccessible.

5. WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF THIS PAIN AND SUFFERING?

God's beloved creatures suffer gender-based violence at the hands of each other. Such violence violates human dignity, divides humanity and abuses power. The pain and suffering of people confronts this church as a body and as individual members. Where is God in all this, where do we turn, and what do we do to end such terrible violence? We turn simultaneously to God and to neighbor. While reaching to care for people suffering from violence, we remember that our faith resides in the triune God. God's grace through Jesus Christ binds the Christian church to God and the body of Christ one to another.

GOD WITH US IN PAIN AND SUFFERING

Within the Lutheran tradition, there are a number of theological emphases with implications for understanding, addressing and preventing these problems. The biblical theme of the incarnation teaches that God shares fully in human life. In particular, on the cross Jesus Christ shares fully in our deepest need and vulnerability. Jesus was betrayed, laid low, and his very being was ripped apart; his whole body suffered from the evil of violence. Whoever is likewise laid low, made into non-being, and ripped apart by gender-based violence is fully known by God. God is there, in the depths of suffering.

THE SACRAMENTS: BEING ONE IN CHRIST

Scripture proclaims there is a future determined by the risen Christ as ruler of God's realm of peace and justice. This means that the marked body of the risen Christ is drawn toward healing and transformation. To confess Christ means that the church as the body of Christ knows and sees itself as the violated body, as the body that is marked in the flesh, together. Not them, us. We are marked.

God draws us into this future now through word and sacrament. Through these means of grace, God binds us with God and each other. Sacraments are enacted Word, God's communal acts that are the very meaning and root of our relationships.

Through baptism, we die and rise in Christ as we are washed by the Spirit through water and marked with the sign of Christ, the cross. Through the gift of baptism, God holds the body together in its vast plurality, in its dying and rising in Christ.

In sharing bread and wine, our very bodies become part of Christ's body. And through the work of the Holy Spirit, we experience the body of

Christ as relational – “one inseparable body and flesh.”³³ Through Holy Communion we participate in “all the unjust suffering of the innocent, with which the world is everywhere filled to overflowing.”³⁴

CONFESSION OF SIN³⁵

Through the means of grace, we are knit together in our vulnerabilities through Christ, who is active in our beings. This church and its members are, therefore, free first to confess our failures and then free to begin anew to understand, to care, to educate and to take action.

As part of the church catholic, the ELCA confesses its sin. We have contributed to gender-based violence through actions and inaction as individual and corporate sin in which we are bound and cannot free ourselves. Such confession allows the truth to be told and orients our efforts to address all aspects of gender-based violence (1 John 1:5-9).

We believe confession is not the end but a beginning. We pray that such confession would turn us by the power of the Holy Spirit to new paths that completely alter our understanding of and our response to gender-based violence. We give thanks that we are freed to take the risks of the cross to love and serve others and pray such confession might turn us to work that better conforms this church to the life-giving ways of God.

LAW AND GOSPEL

Lutherans emphasize that we simultaneously live under the law while we live because of the gospel. When this church thinks and acts together in the face of gender-based violence, it does so in light of God's relationship with creation. That relationship is expressed through the civil use of the law to order society. God's law is expressed summarily as a baseline for the common good in the Ten Commandments. The commandments refute the belief that any human being has the authority to make someone else into an object, especially through violence. The Fifth Commandment, for instance, teaches that we should “neither endanger nor harm the lives of our

33 “Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6-8,” *Luther's Works* 23:149.

34 “Word and Sacrament I,” *Luther's Works* 35:54.

35 Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes the call to communal confession very well: “It is not enough for individuals to repent and be justified. ... [T]he church must likewise repent and be justified. The community that is from God to God, that bears within itself eternal meaning, endures in God's sight and does not melt into the fate of the many. It is willed and created and has become culpable; it must seek repentance, believe in and experience justification and sanctification, and experience judgment and grace at the limits of time.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 119.

neighbor, but instead help and support them."³⁶

Christians live by God's grace, which frees us to take action so that every neighbor is served with love and justice and not harmed. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God's grace is active in us to see the neighbor's need and to take action for change now.

6. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

The following recommendations identify means to confront and change the problem of gender-based violence. This church commends those individuals, communities and institutions already engaged in any of these efforts. Yet, it clearly is time for widespread efforts toward change in the face of the multiple sources supporting gender-based violence.

A. WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO WITHIN THIS CHURCH?

The commitment of this church to recognize violence, ensure care, provide for education and create accountability calls for efforts among:

Congregations and other ministry sites to

- pray for healing, wisdom, guidance and the courage to face the issues;
- put in place and enforce congregational policies and practices that promote safe and healthy congregations;
- provide information for visitors and congregants on access to crisis care and safety plans in ways that maintain confidentiality and safety;
- provide safe spaces for members or others who experience gender-based violence to tell the truth of what happened to them;
- provide support for survivors that entail very practical needs: safety, shelter, food, clothing, mental health care, legal counsel, work and transportation, child care and education;
- be clear with anyone experiencing gender-based violence that God condemns how they have been hurt;
- be clear that God calls perpetrators to repentance, accountability and the obligation to make amends; this includes calling church leaders to the same;
- provide support for perpetrators seeking to repent and change;

³⁶ Small Catechism. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 352.

- understand and uphold ELCA “Vision and Expectations” for church leaders;
- employ liturgy, steadfast prayer and Bible study to counter those forces that legitimate or encourage gender-based violence in any way;
- engage in education through dialogue, analysis and careful study of the social and religious factors that contribute to gender-based violence;³⁷
- learn about and be prepared to respond to the specific contexts, needs and characteristics of various forms of gender-based violence;
- learn about social science theories and practices that have proven effective in addressing gender-based violence and dialogue with others;
- support and teach healthy relationships, including sexual relationships; and
- love unceasingly, in the midst of pain, violence and ugliness, as a visible manifestation of the love of Christ for all.

Rostered and lay leaders to

- be prepared to respond to crises with the help of experts in the fields of gender-based violence through training, education, dialogue and collaboration with local and national partners;
- care for people experiencing gender-based violence by believing them and helping them find the resources they need;
- collaborate with local experts in care and advocacy to respond to survivors’ needs;
- preach about gender-based violence in order to speak the truth and care for others; and
- provide leadership to foster discussion, education and discernment.

Synods to

- review and put in place transparent policies and practices that provide for safety, confidentiality and due process for survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence;
- provide and make public their policies on sexual harassment at public and sponsored meetings and events;

³⁷ See for instance the resources available at www.ELCA.org/justiceforwomen or the document “Churches Say No to Violence Against Women,” available at www.LutheranWorld.org.

- identify a means to make available lists or guides to resources for those responding to gender-based violence;
- partner with local experts and agencies to provide services to survivors and education for the community;
- support education for congregations and pastors about laws and practices concerning mandatory reporting of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence; and
- require training and education of their leaders on responding to and preventing all forms of gender-based violence.

The churchwide organization and its ministries to

- review its organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the safety, confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence;
- review ELCA “Vision and Expectations” to ensure the text adequately expresses standards and expectations regarding gender-based violence;
- provide a concise online resource communicating the core ideas of this message appropriate for a catechism setting, or one like it, for middle school age youth;
- provide a study guide to this social message that includes resource lists and ministry illustrations;
- collaborate with leaders in all expressions of this church to encourage discussion and discernment around the ways that theology serves to prevent or contribute to gender-based violence; and
- collaborate with theologians and ecumenical and interfaith partners to discuss the ways theology serves to prevent or contribute to gender-based violence.

Seminaries to

- review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence;
- include theological and practical preparation among seminarians that considers the problems and resources found in Scripture and the Lutheran theological tradition; and
- provide the means for seminary communities to discuss and reflect upon the intersections of gender, violence, theology and ministry.

Church-related educational institutions to

- review or put in place policies and practices that ensure safety, confidentiality and due process for both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence;
- give appropriate attention to policies intended to curb gender-based violence and to foster appropriate responses that avoid “re-victimization” of those who have suffered gender-based violence on their campuses;
- review their curriculum to break silence by ensuring that matters regarding gender-based violence are treated fully in courses appropriate to the subject matter;
- review the possibilities for educational or informational events that encourage awareness among students of the nature of gender-based violence and the means to dialogue; and
- provide for community-based conversations on gender-based violence, its sources and ways to respond.

Social ministry organizations to

- review their organizational policies and practices to ensure that they provide for the safety, confidentiality and due process among clients and staff, who may be both survivors and perpetrators of gender-based violence;
- provide care through protection and support of the many needs of survivors for safety and well-being as appropriate to the kind of service offered by the organization; and
- communicate crisis-based expertise with appropriate ELCA partners.

B. WHAT DO WE SEEK AND ADVOCATE BE DONE IN WIDER SOCIETY?

The intent to become allies, seek improved laws and social patterns and adopt improved policies leads the ELCA to call upon:

Congregations, church leaders and members to

- be local advocates within schools, judicial systems, health care and social services for transparent and appropriate responses to survivors and perpetrators and for measures to decrease the possibilities of gender-based violence;
- collaborate with others who advocate for legislation that reduces and prevents gender-based violence and provides services for intervention, protects victims and ensures accountability for perpetrators;

- advocate for improved crisis response in their communities through dialogue and partnership with various public services;
- advocate for improvements in social discourse and practice about the intersections of gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and age;
- serve as witnesses and advocates for individuals going through legal processes;
- speak words of both law and gospel that counter religious contributions to gender-based violence; and
- call for accountability from prosecutors, the judicial system and those in power when they fail to respond, appropriately, to gender-based violence in society or their institutions.

The churchwide organization to

- advocate for legislative and administrative efforts that reduce gender-based violence, provide care for victims and survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and empower people to work for continual safeguards and change through local, state, federal and global initiatives; and
- make clear in appropriate public address that this church opposes religious contributions to gender-based violence.

Social ministry organizations to

- seek from their experiences in ministry with survivors to support passage of preventive laws and the encouragement of alternative models of responding to gender-based violence; and
- expand means that empower survivors of gender-based violence to be leaders for change, advocates and caregivers on behalf of others also hurt by gender-based violence.

GLOSSARY

Biological characteristics: The physical and physiological traits that we often associate with either males or females, but observation and research show that such physical and physiological traits do not exclusively belong to one or the other. These traits include not just genitalia, but also body hair, facial hair, height, muscle mass, body fat, body shape, breast tissue and the size of hands and feet, to name a few. These traits often shape how people are perceived or identify in terms of their gender.

Gender: Categories into which cultures/societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually considered masculine or feminine. The most common gender identities are *woman and man*, but other identities exist and are becoming more widely used and understood.

Gender non-conforming: Within this message, gender non-conforming refers to people whose gender identity, gendered way of acting in the world, and biological characteristics do not completely fit within predominantly expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. There are many identities and experiences included under the umbrella of gender non-conforming.

Intersection: Human identities that are tied to systemic privilege and oppression can *intersect* with one another and thus shape the unique ways that people experience gender-based violence. These identities have to do with sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social class, economics and religion, to name a few. This means that the gender-based violence and oppression experienced by a lesbian woman of color will be different than that experienced by an economically impoverished gender non-conforming White person. All human identities and all forms of privilege and oppression are made up of many intersections.

Justice: Generally justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment and reciprocity. When someone uses the word, that person may have a particular kind of justice in mind. Some of these include: retributive justice, corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, or biblical righteousness. In this document, the term justice emphasizes the latter half of these meanings but always with the biblical emphasis on justice as right relationship with God and within community.

Patriarchy: The social, institutional, legal, political, educational, economic, religious and interpersonal systems of society that best serve men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system functions with men at the center. This means that, sometimes unconsciously, people participate in systems that control and oppress women, girls, gender non-conforming people, LGBTQ people, and all those who are not normative, heterosexual men.

APPENDIX: GLOBAL AND NATIONAL STATISTICS

- Globally, an estimated 30 percent of women who have been in a relationship have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of their intimate partner.¹
- Nationally, 25 percent of women over the age of 18 have experienced sexual or physical violence at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.²
- Nationally, race and ethnicity significantly affect the frequency of intimate partner violence.³
- Globally, an estimated 38 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.⁴
- Nationally, almost 33 percent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner.⁵
- Globally, one in five women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.⁶
- Nationally, one in six women will be a victim of attempted or completed rape in her lifetime.⁷
- Nationally, 97 percent of rapes committed against adults (both men and women) are committed by men.⁸
- Nationally, 60 percent of sexual assaults are not reported to the police, and 97 percent of rapists will never spend a day in jail.⁹
- Nationally, 83 percent of girls aged 12 to 16 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in public schools.¹⁰
- Nationally, of those people who express a gender non-conforming identity while in grades K-12, 78 percent are made the victim of harassment, 35 percent are made the victim of physical assault, and 12 percent are made the victim of sexual violence.¹¹

- Nationally, 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people have been the victim of rape, and 72 percent have been the victim of other forms of sexual violence.¹²
- Nationally, an estimated 20-25 percent of lesbian and gay people experience hate violence within their lifetimes.¹³
- Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 53 percent of victims were transgender women.¹⁴
- Nationally, of gender- and sexuality-based hate-crime homicides in 2012, 73 percent of victims were people of color.¹⁵
- Nationally, in 2013, White men were more likely than any other racial and ethnic demographic to be perpetrators of gender- and sexuality-based hate violence. Of all men who perpetrate gender- and sexuality-based hate violence, the majority by age were 19 to 29 years old.¹⁶

APPENDIX ENDNOTES

1 World Health Organization, "Violence against Women: Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women," WHO, last modified October 2013, www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/.

2 According to this survey, almost 64 percent of women who reported being raped, physically assaulted and/or stalked since the age of 18 were targeted by a current or former husband, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or date. Likewise, those reporting assaults within the past year averaged more than three assaults per year. See Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 2000), iii.

3 According to *Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence*, women of color are more likely to be victimized than average, with American Indian/Alaskan Native women experiencing significantly higher rates of intimate partner violence (37.5 percent) than do women of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. According to the Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 41-60 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander women experience intimate partner violence, "Statistics on Violence against API Women," *APIIDV*, www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php. See A. Raj and J. Silverman, "Intimate Partner Violence against South-Asian Women in Greater Boston," *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association* 57, no. 2 (2002): 111-114, and Mieko Yoshihama, "Domestic Violence against Women of Japanese Descent in Los Angeles: Two Methods of Estimating Prevalence," *Violence Against Women* 5, no. 8 (1999):869-897, cited in "Statistics on Violence Against API Women," *APIIDV*, www.apiidv.org/resources/violence-against-api-women.php.

4 World Health Organization, "Violence Against Women."

5 Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports "Crime in the United States, 2000," (2001), cited in National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "Domestic Violence Facts," *NCADV*.

6 United Nations, "Ending Violence against Women and Girls," *Resources for Speakers on Global Issues*, www.un.org/en/globalissues/briefingpapers/endviol/.

7 Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1998), 11.

8 Percentage was calculated from data in Tjaden and Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women*, 47.

9 The 3 percent statistic has been calculated by taking reporting rates into consideration. See, *National Crime Victimization Survey*, Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008-2012, and *Felony Defendants in Large Urban Countries*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, 2002-2006, cited in "Reporting Rates," RAINN, www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates.

10 American Association of University Women, "Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School" (Washington, D.C.: AAUW, 2001), 20-21, cited in United Nations, "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women," *UNWomen.org*, www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures.

11 Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A Mottet, and Justin Tanis with Jack Harrison, Jody L. Merman, and Mara Keisling, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011), 3.

12 Of the 25 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual people who have been the victim of rape, survey statistics showed that all of them were lesbian or bisexual women. Both percentages were found from our own calculations of survey data from Mikel L. Walters, Jieru Chen, and Matthew J. Breiding, *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation* (Atlanta, Ga.: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013), 6-11.

13 Shelby Chestnut, Ejeris Dixon, and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2012* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2013), 10-13.

14 Ibid., 8.

15 Ibid.

16 The most recent studies of hate violence show in 2013 that 39 percent of perpetrators were perceived as White by victims, as opposed to other racial or ethnic backgrounds, 72.45 percent were male as opposed to female or transgender, and 30.7 percent were between 19 and 29 years old. See Osman Ahmed and Chai Jindasurant, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2013* (New York, N.Y.: National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014), 51-53.

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