



JOHN WESLEY FEDERATION

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STATEMENT OF THE JWF ON POSITION OF JWF ON GBV

Introduction

JWF 2nd Conference 29th May 2025 that assembled at John Wesley Methodist Church, 9 Frere Road Mthatha, under the theme “Our aim is to empower, leadership capacity and reclaiming our Wesleyan heritage.”

Sub-Theme: THEME: “LET THY KINGDOM COME: WE ARE IN NEED OF HIS KINGDOM”, intentionally took time to reflect deeply in a formal structured statement on Gender Based Violence. “The JWF must encourage and facilitate a gathering of Women of Our Churches, community so as to allow them to share with each other what it is to be a woman in these times, unmask the patriarchal nature of our churches and institutions and the culture that continues to treat women as second class citizens in their own homes. JWF laments that even in these changing times, societal stereotypes, biases and prejudice remain stubborn in both belief and practice, extending into our homes and private spaces. JWF laments patriarchy hidden in old traditions and cultural norms that still perpetuates discrimination, marginalisation and abuse of Women. JWF laments an exceptionally high number of absent fathers in South Africa with approximately half of the children in the country living without daily contact with their fathers, thus, increasing family disorganisation and disintegration with dire consequences socially and developmentally. JWF refutes the notion that women need to be developed before they can lead effectively and successfully and or once leading women are not allowed to make mistakes. JWF upholds that all leaders need to be developed irrespective of gender, social standing and sexual orientation. JWF laments the continued violence against women that takes many forms which include but not limited to physical, emotional, sexual, economic, psychological forms.

What the JWF believes

JWF believes that as a Churches that deals with psycho social support has a unique contribution to help society as a whole on gender justice and equity issues through awareness programs and intervention as well as education across the entire community. JWF maintains that Education and Formation can help re-orientate society on women experiences of discrimination, abuse, femicides and all other forms of women violence, sexism and marginalisation. JWF affirms that God is the creator of all human beings, created as male and female in the image of God, in community; for God uses inclusive language ‘Let us’. JWF further upholds that God is fully reflected in the diversity of all creation in general and particularly humankind. JWF believes that God cannot be reduced to

any specific social construct especially gender and sexual orientation. JWF affirms that God embraces everyone.

JWF believes that gender is God's Creation. It's our culture, tradition, society and religion that socializes us into what the ideals of being a woman or man are. It is this socialisation that gives birth to prescriptions, limitations, behaviours, social status, power and relationships that are gender specific that are oppressive to women. JWF further affirmed that everyone is gendered not only women, men are gendered too. JWF believes that in the bible women play a central role in the creation and salvation narratives in our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. JWF believes in the centrality of women in family and societal structures including the economic life of families and the nation as well as land ownership. JWF believes the time is now for males as partners to stop using their physical power to demand attention from women, thus infringing women's rights to dignity, respect, and protection and having a voice that must be heard. JWF believes that all forms of violence and abuse against women's sinfulness, it must stop!

JWF's Call to Action

JWF calls on the church to arise and walk with the times and intentionally create spaces for conversations that challenge the predominant cultural, traditional norms and beliefs that continue to sustain and defend the unjust systems of patriarchy. The church should intentionally create these spaces for conversations targeting: - Social Development, organisations, political parties, Schools, to reimagining together and seeking to break down the stereotype's barriers, old beliefs and practices replaced with new norms.

JWF calls on the Church to champion the advancement of robust empowerment and educational programmes that shall unseat patriarchy with a new reimagined way of relating as men and women created in the image of God. JWF calls on the Church to intentionally focus on gender socialisation programmes targeting families, individuals who are child rearing aiming at deconstructing the roles for girls and boys as well as persons. Targeted socialisation programmes should aim that, all children grow up believing in the power within each and every one of them as God created, taught to respect and recognize each other as equals, irrespective of gender and or sexual orientation. JWF calls on through service providers to lead in education programs on all the matters that have been raised in these reflections, including workshops. JWF calls on all men in the Church and society to engage in deep reflection of their own complacency as men in the oppression and the exploitation of women lack of rejection and defences of patriarchal oppressive systems and norms to women. Where necessary JWF calls on all men to create spaces for confession forgiveness and reconciliation for the sake of the renewal of the Community and society at large.

JWF calls on the men in Church and society to accept their parental role of care-giving that goes beyond financial contributions. We call on the Church in general as well as the Men in general in particular to be in the fore-front of the conversations – educating men as target audience that his presence, role modelling and support as a parent are just as valuable as the financial contribution, if arguable not more important ... JWF calls on all men to intentionally step aside in leadership position contestations so as to fast-track the transformation agenda, gender justice and equity. We believe the time is now not to ask whether women are ready to lead but to ask how we can

support women in order for women to express their God given potential for the benefit of the society as a whole.

Conclusion

JWF believes the time is now for the Church to be part of the movement that breaks us all free of Gender stereotype barriers and prejudice often demonstrated in society institutionalised culture, ethos, structures and systems. JWF affirms that now is the time for the Church to allow women and children 'to be' in the Church leadership and not try to fit women boxes". The time is now to let women as God-gifted. Therefore, JWF believes the time is now more than ever before to be bold, courageous enough and to be willing to embrace the discomfort created by critical needed conversations on gender justice and equity as well as those marginalized. These conversations should be structured, facilitated, accompanied and informed by JWF content reflections and guided programmes. JWF believes the time is now more than ever before to question our positions of privilege and power derived from our gender, class and sexual orientation; the time is now to reimagine Gods Kingdom where there is no race, no gender but seeing each other as Gods Children!

Condolences to all the victims of Gender Based Violence and be comforted.

John Wesley Federation President

Thembekile Gqwaka