



## Participant Information Sheet

Research Title: Reading the Bible after Violence: Understanding how the Bible can be used as a source of healing.

Researcher(s):

Dr Erin Martine Hutton, Moderation & Inclusion Manager, AUT

Dr Rosie Clare Shorter, Tutor in Gender Studies, University of Melbourne

Rev. Erica Mandi Manga is our Ministry Advisor and Research Assistant

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. Please read the following information about the project, so that you can decide whether you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about our involvement in the project.

If you decide to participate in this research, please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time during the focus group interview, and you do not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating. If you choose to stop participating, your data will not be used in the research.

The data from your focus group interview will be deidentified and you will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity. Only the researchers will have access to your personalised data. You will be given four (4) weeks to review the transcription of your focus group interview for accuracy and to decide if you wish to withdraw from the research. If you decide to withdraw from the research after these four (4) weeks have elapsed, every endeavour will be made to destroy your data and not include it in any research outcomes, however, this may not be possible if we have already begun to disseminate the research.

Participation in the focus group interview, and confirmation of the accuracy of its transcription, will be deemed to be giving permission to use your responses in the published findings from the research. However, if there is any information given by participants which might make you identifiable, this data will not be included in the final published findings without your explicit written consent.

You will be given this Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form to sign, and you will be given a copy to keep. Your decision to take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the Australian University of Theology, any of its affiliated colleges, Common Grace, The Wesley Centre, or the researchers.

## What is this research about?

Our research explores how the Bible is received and read after violence has occurred or been disclosed. We are seeking answers for how a person may move from biblical (mis)interpretations that have contributed to harm, towards interpretations that promote safety, equity, healing, and inclusion. This stage of the research is a pilot project with ministry workers who have experience in receiving disclosures of gender-based violence, and is focused on exploring how, and to what extent, ministry staff supporting victim-survivors read, interpret and draw on scripture after disclosures of violence. This research is supported by AUT, Common Grace, and The Wesley Centre, and has received funding from ARTFInc. Once this stage of the research is complete, it will be published as an academic research article, as well as disseminated in more accessible ways (e.g. in a "white paper" from The Wesley Centre).

## What will I need to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to contribute to one of three to four (3-4) focus group interviews, each taking place over approximately two (2) hours. One (1) focus group will be conducted in person in Melbourne in February, one in person in Sydney mid-year, and one to two (1-2) will be conducted online via Zoom with flexible timing. If you do not feel safe contributing to a focus group with people you may not know, you are welcome to form a focus group with ministry leaders, who have responded to disclosures of violence, whom you already know. Each focus group will be videorecorded and then transcribed. We will forward transcription of your focus group interview to you within four (4) weeks of the interview taking place, you will then have a further four (4) weeks, from the date you received the transcription, to review and confirm its accuracy.

## What are the possible benefits of taking part?

No incentives or reimbursements will be made to participants and, in that sense, there is no direct benefit to you from your participation in this research. However, you may benefit from contributing to, and the outcomes of, a research project (aligned with the objects of ARTFInc) which – through investigating Bible use (interpretation and theology) which promotes and supports healing and justice, and moving away from interpretations contributing to cultures of violence – aims to:

- further research on religion, theology and pastoral care in Australia,
- facilitate participation in a theological conference,
- generate and promote research into practical and applied theology,
- advance the study of religion in Australia, through the publication of an interdisciplinary (sociology, theology and gender studies) journal article, and
- increase interest in the study and teaching of religion and theology, through a pro-social research project.

## What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

We want to acknowledge that discussing how you have responded to disclosures of violence may bring up vicarious trauma for you. We also want to acknowledge that, though it is not the subject of our enquiry, you may also have directly experienced gender-based violence. As such, we recognise that your participation may cause you



emotional and/or psychological distress. To minimise the potential for this distress, we will include clear content warnings at the beginning of your focus group. We will remind you that you can withdraw at any time during the focus group interview without any consequences. We will not ask you questions about any gender-based violence you may have directly experienced. When asking about how you have responded to disclosures of violence, we will not ask you questions directly about the violence or harm, rather, we will ask or prompt you to reflect on your response(s) to disclosure(s) and how you have supported victim-survivors. Should the discussion become distressing, we may redirect the conversation. We will provide contact details for 1800 Respect, Lifeline 13 11 14, and for one of our researchers, Erin Hutton, who has been trained in trauma-informed pastoral care, is the Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Contact Officer for the AUT and responsible for responding to disclosures and formal reports of SASH, and who oversees student wellbeing. We may also refer you to your clinical pastoral supervisor (if you have one), or a qualified counsellor.

What will happen to the information about me?

All information collected about you will remain confidential, however, given the small number of participants among the focus groups, it might not be possible to guarantee complete anonymity. Your personalised data will be stored on a secure, external hard drive accessible only to the researchers. However, deidentified data may be stored in a shared drive which may be available to others (e.g., other researchers). It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and presented in a variety of forms. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission.

What will happen if I decide to withdraw?

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time without needing to provide any explanation, and you would not receive any penalty or bias as a result of your withdrawal. Should you decide to withdraw, all the information collected from/about you will be destroyed and will not be used in the research. Participants will be sent a copy of the transcript of the focus group interview and be given four weeks in which to review the transcript and provide feedback or withdraw from the project. After this period, it may no longer be possible to withdraw from the research project.

Can I hear about the results of this research?

The results of this research will be shared directly with participants. Research will be presented at academic conferences, through the publication of academic articles, and general audience publications. Resources developed from this research may be shared through social media, Common Grace, The Wesley Centre, and with the possibility of inclusion in AUT teaching and/or preventing and responding to gender-based violence resources where appropriate. Any revisions made to Common Grace's [Safer Resource](#) arising from this research will be available via the "Safer" resource. A short accessible report (a "white paper") will be shared with the support of the Wesley Centre.



Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This study adheres to the ethical review process of the Australian University of Theology and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and has been approved by the AUT HREC. If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researchers, Erin Hutton at [ehutton@aut.edu.au](mailto:ehutton@aut.edu.au) or Rosie Shorter at [rosie.shorter@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:rosie.shorter@unimelb.edu.au). If you have any concerns or complaints, please contact the AUT Ethics Committee: [ethics@aut.edu.au](mailto:ethics@aut.edu.au)

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