UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

# ADDRESSING THE PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL BEREAVEMENT NEEDS
# OF HIV AND AIDS ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS:
# A NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH

by

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Submitted for fulfilment of the requirements for the degree:

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

with specialisation

PASTORAL FAMILY THERAPY

in the

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Promoter
PROF J C MÜLLER

September 2010

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis entitled:

**ADDRESSING THE PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL BEREAVEMENT NEEDS
OF HIV AND AIDS ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS:
A NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH**

is my own original work.  All sources consulted have been properly acknowledged by means of academic references.  This work has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any other university for a degree.

Amanda Richter

September 2010

**DEDICATION**
**OPGEDRA AAN**
*DITEBOGO*

☺ **To my brave co-researchers:**

Annie, Dee, Dimakatso, Palesa, Zinhle, Michael, Moses, Shaun, Victor, Wiseman

Always honour the memory of the people you loved and lost. Remember the lessons they have taught you – to love as they have done, to work hard and to look after each other. I will never forget you guys! With love.

*Go banyakišišimmogo ba ka:*

Annie, Dee, Dimakatso, Palesa, Zinhle, Michael, Moses, Shaun, Victor, Wiseman

*Ka mehla hlomphang kgopotšo ya batho bao le bego le ba rata gomme ba le tlogetšego. Gopolang dithuto tše ba le rutilego tšona – go rata go swana le ka fao ba bego ba dira ka gona, go šoma gaboima le go hlokomelana. Nka se tsoge ke le lebetše bagwera! Ka lerato.*

☺ **To my parents – Johan and Julie Richter.**

*Dankie vir al julle opofferings en die menige geleenthede wat aan my gegun is!*

**ABSTRACT**

This study looks at the bereavement of adolescents left orphaned by and vulnerable to the HIV and Aids crisis that is crippling the continent of Africa. Their bereavement and the psycho-spiritual issues relating to this bereavement are examined by means of postfoundationalism as an approach to practical theology along with the narrative approach to research and therapy. This is done by integrating these approaches with the art of storytelling within the unique African context.

By listening to the stories of ten adolescents under the care of PEN, a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), this research gives them the opportunity to express their own unique stories of bereavement. Stories that would otherwise have been silenced by the wave of bereavement in the wake of countless deaths worldwide due to the HIV and Aids infection. It looks holistically at the multiple losses these adolescents have suffered and consequently how this has affected them not only physically, but also especially emotionally and spiritually.

In light of the above, this research attempts to show how these adolescents are in the process of – by means of storytelling – reformulating the story of their lives and the lives of those they care about in the true spirit of *Ubuntu* to find hope anew in the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

Please note that at times the stated abbreviations for some of the following key concepts are used in the thesis.

- ☺ Narrative approach
- ☺ Social-constructionism
- ☺ Postfoundational Practical Theology (PFPT)
- ☺ Transversal rationality
- ☺ African storytelling
- ☺ HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents (OVAs)
- ☺ Tree of Life (TOL) camps
- ☺ Psycho-spiritual needs of bereaved adolescents
- ☺ *Ubuntu*
- ☺ Pastoral care

**OPSOMMING**

Hierdie studie fokus op die verlies wat tieners ervaar wat wees gelaat is deur die MIV en Vigs pandemie wat besig is om die vasteland van Afrika te verlam. Hulle rousmart en die gepaardgaande psigies-spirituele aangeleenthede word ondersoek deur middel van die postfondamentele benadering tot praktiese teologie in samehang met die narratiewe benadering tot navorsing en terapie. Dit word gedoen deur die integrasie van hierdie benaderings met die vertelkuns binne die unieke Afrika konteks.

Deur te luister na die stories van tien tieners onder die sorg van PEN, 'n Nie-Regeringsorganisasie (NRO), gun hierdie navorsing hulle die geleentheid om hul eie unieke stories van smart te vertel. Stories wat andersins verlore sou gegaan het in die golf van verlies wat volg op die ontelbare getal sterftes wêreldwyd as gevolg van MIV en Vigs besetting. Daar word holisties gekyk na die veelvoudige verliese wat hierdie tieners beleef het en gevolglik hoe dit hulle nie net fisies nie, maar ook emosioneel en geestelik beïnvloed.

Asook hoe hulle in staat is om – deur die gebruikmaking van stories – hul lewensstorie te hervertel asook die lewens van diegene naby aan hulle, in die ware gees van *Ubuntu*, om nuwe hoop in die spreekwoordelike pot goud aan die einde van die reënboog te vind.

**SLEUTELBEGRIPPE**

Let asseblief daarop dat daar by tye van die onderstaande afkortings vir sommige van die sleutelbegrippe gebruik gemaak word in die tesis.

- ☺ Narratiewe benadering
- ☺ Sosiaal-konstruktionisme
- ☺ Postfondamentele.Praktiese Teologie (PFPT)
- ☺ Transversale rasionaliteit
- ☺ Afrika vertelkuns
- ☺ MIV en Vigs weeskinders en ander kwesbare tieners (AKT's)
- ☺ Boom van Lewe (BVL) kampe
- ☺ Psigies-spirituele behoeftes van bedroefde tieners
- ☺ *Ubuntu*
- ☺ Pastorale sorg

## KAKARETŠO

*Dinyakišišo tše di lebelela go hlokofalelwa ga bana ba mahlalagading bao ba tlogetšwego e le ditšhiwana le go ba kotsing ya mathata a HIV le Aids yeo e golofatšago khonthinente ya Afrika. Go hlokofalelwa le ditaba tša bona tša monagano le tša semoya tše di amanago le go hlokofalelwa mo di hlahlobja ka go šomiša post-foundationalism bjalo ka mokgwa wa Tiragatšo ya Thutabodumedi gammogo le mokgwakanegelo wa dinyakišišo le kalafo. Se se dirwa ka go kopanya mekgwa ye ka bokgabo bja go anega kanegelo ka tikologong ya Seafrika ye e swanago e nnoši.*

*Ka go theeletša dikanegelo tša bana ba mahlalagading ba lesome bao ba lego ka fase ga tlhokomelo ya PEN, Mokgatlo wo e Sego wa Semmušo (NGO), dinyakišišo tše di ba fa sebaka sa go anega dikanegelo tša bona tša go hlokofalelwa tše di swanago di nnoši. Dikanegelo tše di ka bego di ile tša homotšwa ke leuba la go hlokofalelwa ka lebaka la mahu a mantši lefaseng ka bophara ka lebaka la bolwetši bja HIV le Aids. Di lebelela ka botlalo go hlokofala ga batho ba bantši mo go dirilego gore bana ba ba mahlalagading ba be le mathata le ka moo se se ba amilego e sego fela mmeleng, eupša maikutlong le meboyeng ya bona.*

*Ka lebaka le, dinyakišišo tše di leka go bontšha ka moo bana ba ba mahlalagading ba lego gare ka tshepedišo ya – ka go šomiša go anega dikanegelo – go beakanya lefsa kanegelo ya maphelo a bona le maphelo a bao ba kgathalago ka bona ka moya wa mmakgonthe wa Botho (Ubuntu) go hwetša kholofelo ye mpsha ka pitšeng ya gauta ye e lego mafelelong a molalatladi ye go bolelwago ka yona ka se.*

## MAREO A BOHLOKWA

*O kgopelwa go lemoga gore ka dinako tše dingwe dikhutsofatšo tše di filwego tša mareo a mangwe di šomišwa ka gare ga thesisi.*

- ☺ *Mokgwakanegelo*
- ☺ *Kago ya tša leago*
- ☺ *Tiragatšo ya Thutabodumedi ya Postfoundational (PFPT)*
- ☺ *Transversal rationality*
- ☺ *Kanego ya kanegelo ya Seafrika*
- ☺ *Ditšhiwana tša HIV le Aids le bana ba bangwe ba matšwamahlalagading bao ba lego kotsing (di-OVA)*
- ☺ *Dihlophana tša Tree of Life (TOL)*
- ☺ *Dinyakwa tša monagano le tša semoya tša bana ba matšwamahlalagading bao ba hlokofaletšwego*
- ☺ *Botho*
- ☺ *Tlhokomelo ya semoya*

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**CHAPTER 1**

**PROLOGUE TO AN AFRICAN RESEARCH STORY –**

**INTRODUCTION, POSITIONING AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## 1.1    INTRODUCTION

*Once there lived a boy whose name was Magoda.*

*(Greaves 2004:106)*

Possibly – and even hopefully –, what we have here is an introduction to an intriguing African folktale. The story starts by introducing us to the main character, Magoda. No further information is given at this stage. All we know at this moment in time is that the main character is a young boy, maybe even an adolescent. Given even just a simple sentence like this, the interested reader or listener would be wondering about Magoda. What kind of a person is he? Were does he live? What do we know about his family – his mom, his dad, does he have any brothers or sisters? Who are his friends?  What makes him happy in life or drives him to tears?  What does he think about in his quieter moments when he is alone?

This young boy called Magoda will join me, as I prepare to set out on this research journey.   His story will form part of and inform the greater story that is this research.  This research is part of a journey to meet up with ten so-called Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescent boys and girls who have lost their parent(s) or caregiver(s).  We will look at the bereavement of these adolescents left orphaned by and vulnerable to the HIV and Aids crisis that is crippling the continent of Africa.  Their bereavement and the psycho-spiritual issues relating to this bereavement are examined by means of postfoundationalism as an approach to practical theology along with the narrative approach to research and therapy.  This is done by integrating these approaches with the art of storytelling within the unique African context.

We have all read a book and later found ourselves confused regarding the story and the plot of the story, all because our minds wandered earlier on. This is the part of the research story that if you lose concentration or interest now, you will need to continually turn back later in the research story (report) to better understand the research story as a whole. Chapter 1 is the metaphorical jungle of the journey. Like Livingstone and other early explorers to remote, untamed parts of the world including Africa, we need to tackle and clear this jungle as we proceed ahead on our way to finding the unique African stories awaiting us. Anne Lamott (1995:Backcover) tells the story behind the title of her bestseller *Bird by Bird* as follows:

> Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write. [It] was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, 'Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird.'

As a PhD student attempting to write a thesis on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, I can most certainly identify with the predicament Anne's brother found himself in. At the onset of starting out and beginning to put my research to paper, I also felt "… immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead …" (Lamott 1995:Backcover). However, I needed to remind myself often to take the process 'bird by bird', or in reference to the jungle metaphor above 'bush by bush'. Chapter 1 represents the denser vegetation of the jungle, and therefore some time needs to be spent to come to an understanding of my positioning before we can continue.

Journey with me…

In this first chapter, I will spend some time on positioning myself in postfoundationalism as an approach to narrative practical theology. Furthermore, I will look at how the narrative approach informs therapy as well as research.

**Introducing myself – the researcher – and my interest in the research field**

I am a white South African female in my thirties. I am Afrikaans speaking and come from what would probable be referred to as a typical Afrikaans upbringing. I was brought up in a strict and God-fearing household and my extended family also formed part of my upbringing. I have been working at the University of Pretoria, while I have been studying for the past 12 years in various positions and various departments. I have studied and worked in the Departments of Psychology, Biblical and Religious Studies as well as Practical Theology. My academic influences are interdisciplinary and therefore to a certain extent diverse, yet complimentary at the same time. This has helped me immensely with looking at the same phenomena from different perspectives. Currently, I form part of a research team within the Department of Practical Theology that focuses on HIV and Aids orphans and their lived experiences. I was appointed as the research coordinator for this research project and my thesis forms part of the greater research endeavour. I therefore see myself primarily as a practical theologian, working within a post-modern context within the greater context of Africa.

If someone were to tell me in my pre-graduate studies that I would one day be working within and researching the HIV and Aids field, I probably would not have believed them. Nothing was further from my own lived experiences at that stage than HIV and Aids. The story of my involvement with the discourse of HIV and Aids emerges in 2004 during my Masters studies in Practical Theology. Professor Julian Müller planted the seed that I should maybe think about not only looking at the bereavement needs of children, a subject I am passionate about, but to focus more specifically on the bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans.

**Challenges of the research**

Starting out on this research journey, I faced a three-fold language barrier, which had to be overcome to do justice to this research.

Firstly, there was the issue of the literal language barrier. As an Afrikaans speaking South African, I was worried that the chosen co-researchers might have trouble communicating their feelings in English, as I am well aware that it is easier for most people to express that which they hold dear to them, in their mother tongue. During the initial planning stage of the first *Tree of Life* (TOL) camp, Juanita Meyer and I contemplated the need for a PEN facilitator, who could speak a relevant indigenous language, to accompany us on the camp. Juanita Meyer is a fellow PhD student also working in the research field of HIV and Aids. This idea, did not pan out as PEN, the NGO with whom we collaborated, had a function during the specific weekend we planned to use for the camp. Luckily for us, as our co-researchers were adolescents and attended English medium high schools, they all had a good grasp of English and whenever one had difficulty in conveying their emotions in English, the group would help with the translation thereof into English.

Secondly, there was the issue of a cultural language barrier. Being a white female from a middle-class background, my circumstances were worlds apart from the circumstances of my African co-researchers and their life experiences. These mostly poor, urban African adolescents live in the inner city of Pretoria, some stay in the Houses of Safety under the guidance of PEN. Being more urbanised youth, in regular contact with Western ideas and ways of doing things, they were not as influenced by their African traditions as one might expect, yet to a certain degree, it did play a role. As urban youth, some of them were also very into the sub-culture of hip-hop. This was evident in their attire as well as in the manner they chose to speak. This searching for an identity to hold onto brings us to the third possible barrier regarding the research – the emotional barrier.

Thirdly, there was an emotional barrier as mentioned above. Adults often experience difficulty understanding the lived experiences of children and especially that of adolescents trying to find their place in this world. Throughout the research, I tried to incorporate the adolescents' perspectives by means of using their own language, as far as possible, to describe their experiences. This was done deliberately, as I am of the opinion that one can gain some insight in the individual's personality, by paying attention to their specific language use and style.

**Scope of the research**

As was also mentioned earlier in the introduction, the aim of this research was to look at the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans as well as that of other vulnerable adolescents who lost a parent or caregiver to a cause other than HIV and Aids. This was done mainly because within the HIV and Aids field and especially within the South African context, people sometimes do not know or acknowledge – due to various reasons – HIV and Aids as the true cause of their loved one's passing.

These needs were looked at from a postfoundational approach to practical theology as it is informed by a narrative pastoral approach.

**Limitations of the research**

Some limitations of this research include the following –

- A specific group of adolescents from a contextualised NGO partook in the research process. The results can therefore not blindly be applied to the lives of other bereft adolescents or used within the contexts of other NGOs without first understanding my ten specific 'co-researchers' stories and contexts.

- As I had ten 'co-researchers' on this research journey, it was an impossible task to include all of their stories in this research report with its limited pages. As far as I could, I did try to include as much of their research data as possible where relevant.

- Chapter 5 therefore also only focuses on the interdisciplinary conversations regarding two of these research stories – that of the two self-acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans, the girls Dee and Zee. There were two main reasons other than the lack of space I chose to approach it in this manner. Firstly, they were acknowledging the fact that they were indeed HIV and Aids orphans. Secondly, Zee was what the literature calls a 'double' orphan by first losing her mother to suicide as a toddler and later as an adolescent her father due to HIV and Aids infection. Dee was a 'single' orphan having lost her mother also due to HIV and Aids infection, yet for all practical reasons she could also have been a 'double' orphan as her father was never involved in her life, and his whereabouts are unknown. Their stories are to a great extent typical and representative of HIV and Aids orphans in South Africa. Yet, at the same time, both their life stories are very unique.

- This research journey plays off against the HIV and Aids discourse in South Africa. Attention therefore needs to be given to this discourse. As this research process is narrative in nature I have however decided against getting bogged down by all the technical concepts and statistics related to this phenomenon and have decided to only focus the discussion on concepts and other information relevant to this specific research study.

- Much literature exists about the narrative approach, postfoundationalism, practical theology and the phenomenon of HIV and Aids orphans, this study therefore does not claim to be comprehensive regarding these subjects.

Our research journey starts by situating the research within the epistemological and theoretical paradigm that forms the backdrop to the whole research process.

I will therefore spend some time in this first chapter on positioning myself in postfoundationalism as an approach to practical theology.

Furthermore, I will look at how a narrative pastoral approach informs therapy as well as research. To be able to do this, we need to start by looking at epistemology. What is epistemology and how does it inform our research?

## 1.2 THE ENIGMA OF EPISTEMOLOGY AND POSITIONING

### 1.2.1 Trying to grasp the concept of epistemology

Alcoff (1998:Preface) describes epistemology as "… a philosophical inquiry into the nature of knowledge, what justifies a belief, and what we mean when we say that a claim is true". Elgin (1998:26) agrees and states in reference to epistemological theories that "…epistemological theories share an abstract characterisation of their enterprise. They agree, for example, that epistemology is the study of nature, scope and utility of knowledge". Audi (2002:1) takes this description of epistemology further and proposes that epistemology is not only known as "… the theory of knowledge but also as the theory of justification". He (Audi 2002:1) continues by saying that "…knowledge is constituted by a belief (of a certain kind), which is a central psychological concept…" also that "… knowledge and justification are both closely connected with the perception, inference, memory, and other elements in human life".

Within the context of western philosophy, epistemology is frequently ascribed to have begun with the philosopher Plato, especially in the *Theaetetus*, where "… knowledge is first formulated as justified true belief; but as a self-conscious area of inquiry and as a coherent, developing conversation, it is usually dated from René Descartes' *Meditations*, .." (Alcoff 1998:Preface).

## 1.2.2 Some important thinkers' thoughts on epistemology

Greco (2002) refers in his discussion of epistemology to the following great thinkers of their times: Westphal, Heidegger, Gadamer as well as Derrida.

Westphal tried to equate hermeneutics and epistemology to each other. Westphal was of the opinion that epistemology in general must be understood and defined by its traditional task: "… an investigation into the nature and scope of human knowledge. But since hermeneutics addresses exactly these concerns, hermeneutics is epistemology" (Greco 2002:29).

According to Greco (2002:30), hermeneutics and more specifically the hermeneutical circle was of great importance for Heidegger's understanding of epistemology. He (Greco 2002:30) explains Heidegger's ideas as follows:

> The relationship between understanding the whole and understanding the specifics is circular in that each is a function of the other. … Heidegger turns such themes into a general epistemological position: all human understanding is interpretation, and all interpretation involves such hermeneutical circles.

Consequently, Heidegger chose to reject the modernistic tendency of the Enlightenment era to privilege theory over practice along with understanding over passion. Instead Heidegger proposes that theoretical understanding is subject to the practical understanding of the issue at hand, which in turn depends on the affective understanding thereof (Greco 2002:31). Gadamer also attacked what he called modernity's 'prejudice against prejudices.' According to Gadamer, prejudices or 'pre-judgements' do not distort the truth as many modernistic approaches would claim, but rather make understanding possible in the light of the tradition it comes from (Greco 2002:31).

Greco (2002:31) says that for Gadamer these "… prejudices constitute the contingent and corrigible foundations of knowledge".

Greco (2002:31) takes Derrida's claim that "(t)here is nothing outside the text" as his starting point to describe Derrida's understanding of epistemology. According to Derrida's ideas, "…all knowledge is already interpretation". In this line of thought, there is also no distinction between "…signs that signify and things that are signified..." as Derrida believed that "…all reality points beyond itself as a sign for something else" (Greco 2002:31).

From the discussion above, one can explain the concept of epistemology in layman's terms in stating that epistemology refers to how a person came to know that which he or she claims to know and regards as truthful. In the following section, I will attempt to explain my own epistemology as it is informed by others and the world around me and how my epistemological stance influences my research positioning regarding this research process.

**1.2.3   How do I as researcher know that which I claim to know?**

In order for us to position ourselves in the story of this study, it is important to realise and acknowledge certain perceptions we hold about our world we live in, as well as how these presuppositions we have, influences the way we see this world around us. As my German rooted surname 'Richter' (English translation – 'judge') implies, my paternal ancestors were from Europe. My maternal ancestors also originated in Europe – the Netherlands to be exact. However, my family on both sides have been calling the African soil home for at least 250 years. Where does this leave me in terms of my identity – am I a European as the government and some white South Africans referred to themselves during the era of Apartheid, or am I a Euro-African similar to the African-Americans in the United States of America?

Why, you might ask, do I address the issue with my identity here? I agree with Gadamer's statement above (Greco 2002:31) that acknowledging 'pre-judgements' or our prejudices, presuppositions if you will, and the tradition within which it took shape, helps with the better understanding of one's own point of paradigmatic departure – in life as well as in research.

As a white South African female, I am living in Africa, I am doing research in Africa and my co-researchers are African youths. Where does this leave me – am I an African or not? The fact that my passport classifies me as a South African national presupposes I live in South Africa. And, South Africa is on the African continent. But does that make me an African?

Shortly after I was appointed as the research coordinator for the Department of Practical Theology's research project entitled SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS, I had the opportunity to travel to Nigeria to attend and present a paper at the 5th African Association for Pastoral Studies and Counselling (AAPSC) Congress in July of 2006. A fellow theology student and assistant to Professor Müller, Pieter Visser, accompanied me. There we met up with a fellow South African practical theologian from the University of Stellenbosch, Llewellyn MacMaster. During this Congress and the time spent in Nigeria, I came to the realisation that we as white South Africans are sometimes the one's who do not want to acknowledge that we too are African. Race was never an issue with my fellow Congress delegates, and I, as a white woman from South Africa, was even elected to serve as the Association's project study secretary. I think it was during this time that I started to question my 'African-ness' and my place in Africa as a practical theologian. I also came to the realisation that our identities are indeed socially constructed. We as humans do not exist in a vacuum. We are what we became through our interactions with others and the world around us. Former president Thabo Mbeki's famous speech, "I am an African" puts it beautifully:

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say – I am an African!

My fellow South African delegate to the 2006 AAPSC Congress, Llewellyn MacMaster, has also written a poem about being in and being of Africa as a so-called Coloured South African entitled "I am". In this poem, he also relates his struggle to find his identity as an African:

I am from Africa,
Without doubt, undeniable –
No matter what people say!
Those who try to deny it
Dispute against themselves, in vain

I am Khoi-San, Brown, Coloured,
It does not matter any more what you call me
Fact of the matter is, I am here
South African, African,
Part of this country, this continent

Always have been here –
No matter what people say!

At the 6th AAPSC Congress in Stellenbosch, South Africa in 2009 a fellow delegate, Terence Cook, read a poem from a white male South African, Wayne Visser, who currently resides overseas, also entitled "I am an African":

I am an African
Not because I was born there
But because my heart beats with Africa's
I am an African
Not because my skin is black
But because my mind is engaged by Africa
I am an African
Not because I live on its soil
But because my soul is at home in Africa

Three different people, three different races, three different claims to being an African are represented in these poems. I have included the full versions of the three poems as Addendum A for the interested reader. If they can all see themselves and claim themselves to be African, I believe I can too!

So, what is my epistemology that guides my research as a white African theologian and researcher? This research is embedded in what is referred to in this study as postfoundational practical theology. The local and the concrete context are the starting blocks for the research, but it also acknowledges the different discourses within tradition that have an influence on this context. Furthermore, how other disciplines view this local context is also of importance to postfoundational practical theology, therefore much emphasis is placed on relevant interdisciplinary conversation (Müller 2004:7). During the next few chapters, I will position myself; listen to the narratives find time to better the understanding of the effects of HIV and AIDS on the lives of young teenagers affected by it. Furthermore, I will try and develop some suggestions that can make a contribution to contexts beyond this particular context.

## 1.3   PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH:  PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Our examples are like seeds on a windy day, they spread far and wide

- African Proverb -

During the Practical Theology of South Africa's (PTSA) 2010 Conference at the University of Pretoria 21-22 January 2010, Dr Christo Thessnaar posed the question of how other theologians can be convinced that practical theology is on the same level as other theological disciplines.  Müller (2005:2) says that practical theology is forever struggling to be taken seriously as a scientific discipline equal to other theological disciplines.  This might be because in all its efforts to obtain scientific status, it has lost its foothold with practice – it seems like there is an imbalance between theory and practice (Müller 2005:2).

Müller (2004:296) sees practical theology as always "… local, concrete and specific".  In light of this viewpoint of practical theology, Müller (2004:300) states:

> … the moment that we realise and accept the fact that identity, and therefore rationality, is socially constructed as part of a continuing process, we are liberated from the urge to defend theological rationality over and against other so-called scientific rationalities…

Lartey (2000:74) describes practical theology as a "… way of being and doing …". It therefore reflects an awareness of the socio-cultural forces on individuals, groups as well as on the Christian faith itself.  Bons-Storm (1998:15) describes practical theology as "… faith lived in context …".

Browning (1987:9) suggests that this way of being and doing, as lived in the context, should aim to move from practice to theory, back to practice.  According to him, theory does not, and cannot stand on its own, but it emanates from practice.

Academic theological thinking and writing and practical issues at grass root level are brought closer to each other. Practical theology not only brings theological thinking and practice closer together, but Gerkin postulates that it should also connect the "… varied stories of life and the grounding story of the Christian community,.." (Gerkin 1997:111). Ray Anderson said during the PTSA Conference, January 2010 that practical theology has a responsibility towards both the church and the world.

Demasure and Müller (2006:416) concur with the viewpoint above and state that "(p)ractical theology happens whenever and wherever there is reflection of practice, from the perspective of the experience of the presence of God".

According to Cilliers' (2009:625) understanding of practical theology, it

> … hinges on a hermeneutics of significance, which should not be seen as a new form of clerical or ecclesiological power or control, but rather as a collaborative and reciprocal way of serving and increasingly live as it is expressed and experienced in society. While practical theology has traditionally operated within a clerical and ecclesiological paradigms, this article proposes that the space within which practical theology comes to fruition, should be society in the broadest sense of the word. It is within the space of the contributions of the abovementioned eight paradigms are made operational through Practical Theology of significance, in other words Practical Theology that signifiers but also generates meaning. Significance forms the centre of the wheel of Practical Theology, which turns within the realms of society.

Cilliers (2009:624) postulates that:

> Practical theology will by nature always be in the process of reconstruction; will remain provisional and experimental; and exists in the creative tensions of empirical research and theological conceptualisation; confession and society, core identity and interdisciplinary approaches, induction and deduction, contextualisation and tradition, the Scriptures and communication, calling (*vocatio*) and denomination, spirituality and academic accountability, university and denominational partners, and so forth.

Cilliers (2009:624-625) consequently summarises eight paradigms within which practical theology could be understood:

- *Fides quaerens intellectum* (faith in search of understanding): Here the intention is to understand, interpret and proclaim the revelation of God in a logical and cognitive manner, especially with in an ecclesiological context. The emphasis is on teaching.
- *Fides quaerens verbum* (faith in search of words): This entails a narrative and non-directive approach, complemented by 15 modes of connotation and discourse. The emphasis is on the act of expression.
- *Fides quaerens actum* (faith in search of acts): The emphasis is on stronger integration of theory and practice, liberation, transformation, and ways of effecting practical theology. The focus is on the development of skills.
- *Fides quaerens spem* (faith in search of hope): Here the emphasis is on the understanding and experience of meaning, as well as the means to foster and facilitate such understanding through the liturgy, pastoral care and preaching. The significance of eschatology plays an important role in this regard.

- *Fides quaerens imaginem* (faith in search of images; symbolic expression): Although not meant to oppose the abovementioned emphases, it brings a new dimension into play, namely what has been called aesthetic reason or aesthetic hermeneutics. The emphasis falls on the art of imagination and creative expression.

- *Fides quaerens visum* (faith in search of concrete visualisation): This is linked to the notion of aesthetics. The intention is to aid people to discern traces of God's presence by means of visual and virtual realities. In this regard, the role of modern technology (Internet, mass media, and so forth) is considered.

- *Fides quaerens corporalitatem* (faith in search of embodiment): This is a holistic approach, with emphasis on the embodiment of humans, among others also as the "address" of revelation. Our bodies are central to what we perceive and experience, also in terms of our relationship with God. It is the prime locus of God's presence with us. This understanding of embodiment is of specific importance in practical theology, as it entails the notions of contextualisation, immediacy, encountering, embracement, communality, radicalisation and concreteness.

- *Fides quaerens societatem* (faith in search of social embodiment): This is a bridge-crossing approach, taking practical theology beyond its exclusively ecclesiological boundaries, striving to interact with a variety of communities (including faith communities) in order to serve and enrich these communities, but also to be served and enriched by them in a collaborative and reciprocal way.

Rick Osmer stated during the PTSA Conference, January 2010 that it is important to talk and think about the relationship between practical theology and other fields.

This eight paradigm described above, namely 'faith in search of social embodiment', also refers to practical theology's need to interact with other communities, which by implication could also mean other disciplines outside of practical theology and other theological disciplines.

This interdisciplinary conversation that is proposed by the above described paradigm, reminds of transversality (1.7) in postfoundationalism (1.6) as an approach to doing practical theology. It sees practical theology in relationship with the local and concrete context. While at the same time not losing sight of God and the Christian narrative, and does not only have an influence on the specific context and understanding of the Christian narrative, but is also in turn influenced and shaped by the context itself and the local understanding of the Christian narrative.

As my research focuses on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, please allow me the opportunity to end this section by relating the following adapted anecdote of an interaction between Hiltner, the pastoral theologian and Tillich, the systematic theologian, to illustrate the position of practical theology in working with children:

> Tillich: Let us say that there was a certain man **(child)** ….
> Hiltner (interrupting): What was his **(the child's)** name?
> Tillich: Oh, … err … let us say John**(ny)**. So, there was this man **(boy)** named John**(ny)** and ….
> Hiltner (interrupting): Was he married? **(How old is he?)**
> Tillich: Let us say he was. **(16 years old)**. So. There was this married **(16 year old)** man, **(boy)** John**(ny)**, who ….
> Hiltner (interrupting again): What was his wife's name? **(Who are his parents?)** Did they both work?
> Tillich (with exasperation): Professor Hiltner, won't you please let me finish? What is the meaning of all your questions?
> Hiltner: To speak of just *any* man **(child)** is to speak of no man **(child)** at all.

(Childs 1998:193)

## 1.4    AND SO THE STORY GOES:  NARRATIVE APPROACH

We all have stories, we just lack listeners
- Reverend Jackie Sullivan -

Regarding the stories we tell, Burns (2005:3) states that: "(f)rom time immemorial, stories, legends, and parables have been effective and preferred methods for communicating information, teaching values, and sharing the important lessons of life.  Tobin (2006:3-1) agrees and says that: "(s)tories and the telling of stories have probably been with us since the beginning of human existence – in one sense stories and storytelling help to define the nature of humanity".  Tobin (2006:3-2) states that "(t)he word 'story' has its origins in the 13th century, with roots in both French and Latin, and literally means an account of incidents or events".  Burns (2005:5) describes stories as:

> Stories are an integral part of life. Through the ages, they have been an inseparable part of human culture, learning, and values. Regardless of our language, religion, race, sex, or age, stories have been, and will remain, a crucial element in our lives. It is because of stories that our language, religion, science, and culture exists. … They accompany us throughout our existence, from cradle to cremation.

Burns (2005:4) goes on to say that as a species, we have stories that explain the world around us and its origins:

> We, as a species, have stories to explain our world and its origins. These stories help us to define and understand much of what otherwise might be unexplained. In doing so, they also enable us to *create* our world.

Stories also invite "…participation in a relationship in which teller and listener share an interactive bond" (Burns 2005:3). Tobin (2006:3-22) concurs saying that "(s)torytelling is certainly a collaborative activity, in the sense that at least two parties must be involved (the teller and the listener)".

Burns (2005:4) says that:

> While we may or may not notice it, the sharing of stories can build relationships, challenge ideas, provide models for future behaviour, and enhance understanding. In the characters and teller we may see some of ourselves and be influenced, little by little, by the attitudes, values and skills. It has been said before that once we have heard a story we can never unhear it, that something may have changed forever.

Burns (2005:4) also states that stories have many important characteristics of effective communication and lists it as follows:

1.  They are interactive.
2.  They teach by attraction.
3.  They bypass resistance.
4.  They engage and nurture imagination.
5.  They develop problem-solving skills.
6.  They create outcome possibilities.
7.  They invite independent decision-making.

White (1993:36) proposes in his discussion of the narrative metaphor that all people, adults and children alike, live their lives by stories. These stories are what he calls "… shaping of life, and they have real, not imagined, effects – and these stories provide the structure for life".

Freedman and Combs (1996:9) describe the narrative approach as " … an approach which permits people seeking help to use the thinking, knowledge, understanding, power and emotions in a way that best fits their scheme of life".

Since the narrative approach focuses on the personal meanings that people assign to specific events in their lives and how they tell the story of these meanings, reality is furthermore defined by the stories people live and therefore tell one another (Mills et al., 1995:373). Freedman and Combs (1996:268) concur by stating that the 'self' is socially constructed in relationship with other people.

This socially constructed view about the self is subject to "… many possible experiential realities…" (Erickson in Freedman and Combs 1996:11). These experiential realities – those the person chooses to accept and even not to accept, are constituted through language (Freedman and Combs 1996:12). To be able to tell these stories, one needs to remember it first.

Michael White (Morgan 2000:77) introduced the concept of 'remembering' to the narrative approach. In the sense White uses the concept 'remembering', it refers to the process whereby people have the option to choose whom they want to include and exclude from their so-called 'club of life' – who the 'audience' to their life stories would be. In doing so, people choose to use 'remembering' as a deliberate action to reconstruct their own reality after constructing and reconstructing their life stories (Morgan 2000:77). Regarding construction and reconstruction of stories, Tobin (2006:3-3) proposes that "(i)f a 'story' is the content then 'storytelling' is the method in which way the story is told".

Tobin (2006:3-22) further explains that the nature of one's audience is critical "… in terms of their ability to understand and interpret the story, to identify with the characters portrayed, to in a sense find the story credible".

Payne in Morgan (2000:10) describes narrative therapy as follows:

> … narrative therapy, like all therapies, begins with the counsellor giving the person respectful, interested attention in a safe and uninterrupted place. The person is invited to talk about her concerns, and the therapist listens.

Morgan (2000:2) agrees and states that narrative therapy is different from other approaches or therapies in that it aims to be respectful and non-blaming. It therefore seeks to empower people coming for therapy. This is done by allowing and inviting the conversation partner to become part of the whole process of therapy.

My adolescent co-researchers therefore became the storytellers of their own life stories, because they are the experts on their own lives (Müller 2000:56) and we, the researchers, formed part of an interested and involved audience to these stories as they evolved and took shape.

In other – one could say more modernistic – approaches the researcher tries to be an observer and to be objective about what he/she is observing, while the narrative researcher has subjective integrity in mind and sees the action as participatory (Müller et al., 2002:2). The researchers are therefore neither complete outsiders by being observers, nor are they insiders who are fully involved in the process.

Instead, the researchers are interested participants in a part of the process, who want to "… be faithful to the story as told by the research participants giving voice to their lived experience" (Freedman & Combs 1996:21). In order to maintain subjective integrity, it is important to remember that the researcher's aim is not to bring about change (Müller et al., 2002:2).

Müller (2000:1) states that:  "… people find themselves to be in a crisis when their stories do not want to take any shape.  The rock which is behind it is too far, and the one in front is unreachable".  Sometimes all that's needed to get the courage to jump to the rock in front, is someone to listen to your story.

In this regard, Freedman and Combs (1996:44) say that "… as simple as it may seem, in the face of permanent discourses and dominant knowledge, simply listening to the story someone tells us, constitutes a revolutionary act".

Freedman and Combs (1996:xiii)make the bold statement that "… people are people and problems are problems ... problems never define the person's entire being".  They go on to say that "… problems develop when people internalise conversations that strain them to a narrow description of self.  These stories are experienced as oppressive because they limit the perception of available choices" (Freedman and Combs 1996:48).

Also speaking about these problems and how it starts to dominate one's story, Morgan (2000:14) says that  "... as the problem story gets bigger and bigger and it becomes more powerful and will affect future events.  Thin conclusions often lead to more thin conclusions as people's skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies become more hidden by the problem story".

In more specific reference to the narrative approach to research, as it influences a research process such as the one documented in this thesis, Müller et al., (2002:3) state that in narrative research the stories that our co-researchers tell us and reconstruct, become the focus of the research.  We as researchers can and must assist our co-researchers to tell their specific story of need in as much detail as possible, because the narrative approach emphasises *storytelling*.

My research, or I should rather say – our research – that of my co-researchers and I, focused on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of orphans, some of whom are HIV and Aids orphans, but all of whom are vulnerable in the ugly face of the current HIV and Aids crisis in South Africa.

White and Epston (1992:16), like I, have also listened to and helped develop some of their conversation partners' stories regarding loss and bereavement. They describe how they have helped people to "… publicise and circulate …" their newly constructed stories as an alternative to the problem stories of loss and grief they initially told (Epston and White 1992:16). Like they proposed in their therapy with bereft people, our research challenged my co-researchers to talk about their grief and give voice to it and find an audience (the TOL group sessions) for the construction of alternative stories to their debilitating problem stories.

In reference to helping children in therapy, Burns (2005:16-24) lists ten guidelines for effective storytelling that is not only important when one tells stories for pure recreational value, but also in a narrative approach to therapy as well as to research:

1.     We are all storytellers
2.     Use your own enthusiasm rather than techniques
3.     Use your intelligence, integrity and ethics
4.     Make the story fit
5.     Make the story real
6.     Make an outline of the story
7.     Rehearse the story
8.     Tell it to someone else
9.     Observe your listener
10.    Be flexible

## 1.5 PARADIGMS AT WAR: FROM PREMODERNITY TO MODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY

*The reasonable man adapts himself to the world;*
*The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself.*
*Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.*
*- George Bernard Shaw -*

To adapt means to change. Whether it be yourself, as with the reasonable man, or the world around you, like the unreasonable man – change is inevitable. Sometimes these changes are met with resistance, other times it is welcomed with open arms.

Thus after the reasonable man has adapted himself to his situation, he would start to feel at ease with how he now views the world surrounding him. He and those who share his viewpoint will be able to give meaning to their existence in light of their particular thought system. This is known as what Thomas Kuhn referred to as a "paradigm" (Du Toit 2000:44). Moss (2007:243) describes a paradigm as "… an overarching system of ideas and beliefs by which people see and organise the world in a coherent way, a mindset for making sense of the world and our place in it".

Reasoning will take place within the broader context of the specific thought system. Questions will be answered and phenomena explained in light of how a person views himself, the people around him, life and the world. It is therefore important in this research process to realise and acknowledge certain perceptions about our world we live in, as these presuppositions we have, influence the way we see the world around us and how I as the researcher positioned myself in the storying of this research process.

As a narrative researcher, I need to place myself within a scientific paradigm in which to operate as a practical theologian. Through my years of training, I have journeyed through a modern and postmodern paradigm and now find myself in a postfoundationalist worldview. This section will describe the paradigms of premodernity, modernity and postmodernity and the effect it had on me as a researcher, and in some instances still do. The next section (1.6) will focus on social-constructionism and postfoundationalism.

Hoffman (2005) states that to be able to understand premodernism, modernism and postmodernism, we first need to understand how these concepts can be understood. He says:

> Each of these can be talked about as periods of time and as philosophical systems. When discussing them as philosophies, it is probably best to view them as "isms" in the sense that within each epoch there were many different approaches.

> (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com)

## 1.5.1 Alive and well in Africa: Premodernism

Describing premodernism as a time period in history, Hoffman (2005) states that premodernism can be dated from the beginning of history, up to about 1650. This does not mean that there did not exist modern and postmodern ideas during this time frame, merely that premodernism was the dominant paradigm of the time and that it was through this lens that the world was viewed (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com).

Erickson (2001:52) explains premodernism as follows:

- There is an overall explanation of things, in terms of inclusiveness with respect to the reality and of the whole of history.

- Reality has a rational character.  History is going somewhere, fulfilling some discernable pattern, whether linear or circular in nature.  It is therefore possible to make sense of reality.  Humans are capable of understanding reality, at least to some degree, whether that knowledge results from personal discovery or from acceptance of special revelation from a divine being.

- Observable nature does not exhaust all reality.  There are real and important entities lying beyond nature.  Indeed, these entities, whether personal or impersonal, are considered to have strong and perhaps even decisive influence on what transpires within the observable world.

- The happiness and fulfilment of humans is believed to require correct adjustment to these unseen realities.  Because they are the source of meaning or of life, they must be understood and followed.  Thus, full human existence requires an element of faith, as it were.

- Time, as we know it, is not the whole of reality.  An additional dimension of life, and in many ways its most important aspect, lies beyond time.

- The unchanging and permanent are most important.  Without these, the flux of experience would have no real meaning.

Hoffman (2005) compliments this discussion about premodernism by Erickson above, by describing the epistemology of the premodern period as being based upon revealed knowledge from authoritative sources.  It was believed that the so-called Ultimate Truth could be known, and that the way to this kind of knowledge is attainable through direct revelation from God or a god.  The primary sources of authority was therefore seen as the church as interpreters of this knowledge (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com).

Therefore, if one looks at the current situation in Africa, the traditional African to this day have a mostly premodernistic view on the world through their involvement with nature and beliefs in spirits and ancestors.  Since this research is set against the African context, it is also important to take note of premodernism as a mindset.

However, tension will be created when new knowledge – due to new discoveries, a life-altering event or changing situations – comes to the fore, for which there seems to be no satisfactory answer. For the time being those who support a specific worldview will hold on to their beliefs and try to ignore what is happening (Du Toit 2000:44). This is when the unreasonable man, in the quote above by George Bernard Shaw, steps forward and demands a change. The literature calls this a "paradigm switch" (Du Toit 2000:45).

## 1.5.2  Modern minds: Modernism

The first paradigm switch took place at around 1650 when modernism came to the foreground and overtook premodernism as the dominant perspective of the time. Hoffmann (2005) states that modernism was subsequently dominant in the Western culture for about 300 years until the 1950s (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com).

Modernism developed as a result of the scientific and technological revolution (Müller et al., 2002:18,19). Modernism believes reality to be restricted to the observable system of nature and that the laws of nature are the cause of all that occurs. Emphasis is also placed on the scientific method. Knowledge can be attained through observation and experimentation. Furthermore knowledge is seen as objective and therefore certain. What happened in the universe followed from fixed causes and by applying the scientific method these laws could be discovered and applied even to human behaviour (Erickson 1998:16,17).

Erickson (2001:73-74) describes modernism as follows:

- Knowledge is considered to be a good that is to be sought without restriction. Knowledge will provide the solution to humanity's problems. This confidence in knowledge therefore contributes to a belief in progress.

- Objectivity is both desirable and possible.

  It is believed that any personal or subjective factors can be eliminated from the knowing process, thus rendering the conclusions certain.

- Foundationalism is the model for knowledge. All beliefs are justified by their derivation from certain bedrock starting points or foundational beliefs.

- The individual knower is the model of the knowing process. Each person must access the truth for himself or herself, even though the truth is the same truth for everyone.

- The structure of reality is rational. It follows an orderly pattern. The same logical structure of the external world is also found in the human mind, thus enabling the human to know and organize that world. In most cases, this order or pattern is believed to be immanent within the world, rather than deriving from some transcendent source.

Wentzel van Huyssteen (1999:29) concurs with most of what has been said above, and describes modernism (also known as foundationalism) when he says that modernism:

> … is the belief that scientific progress and true discoveries are the result of adhering to a universally accepted, value-free, and objective methodology. This not only implies that truth results from an adherence to objectivity, but also reveals the foundationalist assumption that all true knowledge rests on a few unquestionable beliefs.

According to Hoffman (1995) two new approaches to the process of knowing became dominant during the modern period – empiricism and reason or logic. He describes it as follows:

> Two new approaches to knowing became dominant in the modern period. The first was empiricism (knowing through the senses) which gradually evolved into scientific empiricism or modern science with the development of modernist methodology.

The second epistemological approach of this period was reason or logic. Often, science and reason were collaboratively or in conjunction with each other (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com).

O'Donnell (2003:22) states that along with the triumph of reason came the repression of all that is imaginative, the poetic, the symbolic and even the ethical at times. The world as a place of wonder as it was seen in ancient times was no more. Materialism changed all of that – everything was now seen as a commodity and subsequently pollution and global warming became the order of the day.

As sources of authority during modernism, Hoffman (2005) mentions that the church and also politics (governments and kings) were losing the power it enjoyed during premodernism, and this role was taken over by universities represented by scholars and professors. Although not as dominant as before, a religious perspective was sometimes integrated into the modern sources of authority (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com).

## 1.5.3 Past the era of modernism: Postmodernism

The 1950s are commonly considered as the time when the transition from modernism to postmodernism started to occur according to Hoffman (2005) (http://www.postmodernpsychology.com). Another paradigm shift has occurred, this time from modernism to postmodernism. Müller et al., (2002:18) states that we are still experiencing such a paradigm shift. More and more people became disillusioned with man and his capabilities (Müller et al., 2002:19), thus opening the door of change and stepping into the so-called "postmodern era" (Mills & Sprenkle 1995:368). Yet, as a result of this ongoing paradigm shift, we are experiencing great uncertainty and instability (Du Toit 2000:56).

The only certainty is probably that of uncertainty itself. Characteristic of this postmodern era is "… shifting values and an increasing respect for personal meaning." (Mills et al., 1995:368). Postmodernism has its roots in the French school of literary criticism known as "deconstruction" (Erickson 1998:18), and influences all spheres of life – as can be seen in new architectural designs and even in literature. When we deconstruct certain discourses, we listen to what is not said (Drewery & Winslade 1997:43).

Burr (1995:12) describes postmodernism as follows:

> Postmodernism as an intellectual movement has its centre of gravity not in the social sciences but in art and architecture, literature and cultural studies. It represents a questioning of and rejection of the fundamental assumptions of modernism, the intellectual movement which preceded it (and exists alongside it, generating much argument and debate) and which in many ways embodies the assumptions underlying intellectual and artistic life that have been around since the Enlightenment, ..

O'Donnell (2003:6) is adamant that postmodernism must be seen against the background of modernism. Janse van Rensburg (2002:39-44) concurs by saying to understand modernism means that one will be able to understand postmodernism's reaction against it. Pieterse (2002:79) prefers to refer to 'reflexive mordernity'.

He (Pieterse 2002:78-79) is also in agreement with O'Donnell (2003) and Janse van Rensburg (2002) in that he makes it pertinent that modernism still has an active influence on our natural science research as well as on our Western way of doing things, and even on our economic systems. Modernism is therefore also represented in the perspectives many developed people of our time still choose to adhere to.

Hoffman (2005) states that postmodernism brought along a questioning of previous approaches to knowing, namely premodernism and modernism. Postmodernism also advocates epistemological pluralism which utilises multiple ways of knowing. These multiple ways of knowing can even include premodern ways, such as revelation, and also modern ways, such as science and reason, along with other ways of knowing such as intuition, relational, and spiritual. Pieterse (2002:83) adds that truth can be discovered in communication, relational, in relationships and in the interaction between insight, knowledge and the experience of people in relation to each other.

Therefore, according to this paradigm, reality is seen as "… a product of individually unique human processing." (Mills et al., 1995:369). The objectivity of knowledge is denied and knowledge is seen as uncertain, thus calling into question the scientific method as objective method of inquiry (Erickson 1998:19). On this journey I am about to undertake, it is especially this respect for personal meaning I would like to take with me. In doing so I hope to enable myself to listen to my co-researchers' (Müller, van Deventer & Human 2002:2) stories, focussing on what they make of their own stories and not meanings I might infer on their stories.

According to O'Donnell (2003:29), postmodernism is furthermore concerned with discourses that "… have been marginalised and atrophied under the influence of the Enlightenment. To explore the postmodern is to explore ourselves again and to link up with a partially forgotten past".

O'Donnell (2003:29) further refers to the belief that all human knowledge is limited and what he calls 'culturally conditioned', meaning that each age or generation thinks a certain way, it is part of humanity. As a result of this, O'Donnell (2003:29) proposes that there is no way to escape language or to stand outside the discourses of one's age in an attempt to get at a pure, raw truth. Moss (2007:243) describes discourses referred to by O'Donnell (2003) in the following manner:

By discourse I refer to ways of naming things and talking about them. Dominant discourses – what Foucault refers to as 'regimes of truth' – exercise a decisive influence on specific practices by determining some things to be self-evident and realistic and rendering subjective perspectives into apparently objective truths. In doing so, they exclude other ways of understanding and interpreting the world. Discourses are constituted within paradigms, and share the ideas and beliefs of the paradigm.

A concept closely related to that of discourses, is 'deconstruction'. Derrida coined the concept (O'Donnell 2003:58) to refer to the critical analysis of discourses as it is found in society. It is a way of looking at a discourse in the hope of finding that which had an influence on it, contradictions and other elements within the particular discourse that might point the way of looking at the discourse in a different light. O'Donnell (2003:58) discusses deconstruction and the misconception that sometimes accompanies it as follows:

> Deconstruction is often misconstrued as sceptical and destructive, like tearing down an edifice for the sheer fun of it. Derrida toyed with the little used French verb '*deconstruire*', meaning 'to dissemble a machine' (with the corollary that it can be reassembled).

> The noun 'deconstruction' is used for rearranging the grammar of words. Hence for Derrida, deconstruction is positive. It shakes, subverts, dismays, but it only pulls apart to allow new things to be built, new meaning to be reached. It is a remedy for closed thinking.

Erickson (2001:132) however notes that deconstruction has its limitations as well. He states that:

There are limits to deconstruction. Although all other views are proper targets of deconstruction, deconstruction itself is not. Nor is justice, which is the basis of and driving force behind Derrida's deconstructive endeavour.

In relation to discourses and the deconstruction thereof, Erickson (2001:133-149) says that Foucault was of the opinion that reality cannot be described by discourse, but rather that reality is construed by discourse. According to Foucault, power is employed to control communities.

This power is not created by knowledge, but rather power creates knowledge by explaining what can be viewed as the truth. To change this accepted truth, it is of no use to try and do so through the use of intellectual arguments. In order to do so, rather try to change the political situation, which puts the truth forward (Erickson 2001:133-149).

Apartheid in South Africa and the power it had over the discourses in society (different races are not equal) is a good example of how changing the political situation in the country helped to change people's perceptions and 'truths' about themselves and about others.

Discourses such as HIV and Aids and poverty played an important role in this research process. These discourses are deconstructed in chapter 3 in an attempt to give meaning to the life stories of my 'co-researchers', and empower them.

## 1.6 SOCIAL ARCHITECTS AT WORK: SOCIAL-CONSTRUCTIONISM AND POSTFOUNDATIONALISM

### 1.6.1 Constructing the world socially

Every stream has its source
- Zulu Proverb -

Social-constructionism was used as a vehicle on this journey. The post-modern paradigm is also sometimes referred to as the social-constructionist paradigm (Müller et al., 2002:2). Characteristic of the post-modern era is its "… shifting values and an increasing respect for personal meaning" (Mills et al., 1995:368).

In light of this, reality is thus seen as "… a product of individually unique human processing." (Mills et al., 1995:396). Knowledge therefore, "… cannot be a reflection of a given reality, but is the construction of a world." (Popp-Baier 2002:41). Social-constructionism consequently questions the idea of the 'objective fact' and chooses rather to put the focus on the different meanings with which our world becomes invested (Burr 1998:13). Mills et al., (1995:370) go further by describing reality as a product of relationships with other people, a description which coincides with the view in post-modern philosophy that knowledge is dependant on language, social practices and social relationships (Popp-Baier 2002:42). This links up with the Zulu concept of *ubuntu*, which means that a person is only a person through other people (Landman 2002:270).

In this way – as Mills et al., (1995:370) refer to it – social-constructionism is grounded in a "philosophy of community." In doing so the researcher now forms part of the community and as such "… participates in the social construction of new realities …" (Mills et al., 1995:370) for their co-researchers.

This opens up as Gergen (1999:vi) says "… unparalleled opportunities for creative deliberation and action … invite us into new spaces of understanding from which a more promising world can emerge".

The theoretical or paradigmatic point of departure of this research has been broadened, to not only situate the research within social-constructionism, and the narrative approach, as was indicated in the research proposal, but also within postfoundationalism as proposed by Van Huyssteen (1997).

## 1.6.2 Knowing what we know now: Looking back at foundationalism

With this epistemological option grounded in theology, Van Huyssteen (1997) tries to balance the scale between foundationalism on the one side and nonfoundationalism (or anti-foundationalism) on the other side. Müller (2009a:202) describes the foundationalism related to the modernistic paradigm as follows:

> The foundationalist approach takes it for granted that absolute truth is available to all of us. This would be a perspective faithful to the true foundation and which therefore would provide us with the "God's eye view". A theory built on such a presumption could be referred to as a "universal rationality". This is a rationality that is based on the idea of a universe of knowledge that functions as an overarching frame of reference. Accordingly there is only one theoretical truth and that must be pursued.

> Such an epistemological position can easily lead to an overestimation of one's own discipline and its possibilities. Scholars tend to take the rationalities of their own disciplines for granted. It seems to be quite natural to use your own expert knowledge as the unquestioned starting point and then to engage the other rationalities from there.

Seen from an epistemological viewpoint, the foundationalist approach proposes that a certain position would be held in an inflexible and infallible manner, thus ultimate foundations are constructed on which convictional beliefs are based (Van Huyssteen 1997:3). In light of this, Müller (2009a:202) says that interdisciplinary work by means of foundationalism is made difficult, because "… it leads to a process of assimilation, through which the other's point of view is integrated into one's own domain of knowledge". A unified perspective becomes the ideal of this approach, aiming at a universal rationality (Müller 2009a:202).

### 1.6.3  Like Lot's wife:  Glancing back at nonfoundationalism

Ultimately, foundationalism and its aim of a universal rationality became rejected in favour of nonfoundationalism (Van Huyssteen 1997:3) on the other end of the spectrum. Nonfoundationalism (or anti-foundationalism) stems from the postmodern paradigm. This paradigm (at least some versions thereof) holds true that there is no absolute or universal truth. All truths are claimed to be relative. Nonfoundationalism therefore denies allegations that belief systems might be grounded by strong foundations (Van Huyssteen 1997:3). Müller (2009a:203) describes the interplay between foundationalism and nonfoundationalism or the diverse perspective as follows:

> Where the previous approach works with the idea of a universal position that provides the answer to all problems, this approach takes it for granted that foundations or fundamentals don't exist and that we only have a diversity of opinions.

> The non- or anti-foundational position makes the interdisciplinary discussion even more difficult, because there is scepticism about any effort to create mutual understanding.

Understanding or knowledge according to this approach is always diverse. More tolerance with interdisciplinary differences can be expected here, but constructive discussions are difficult in a situation where everything is relative and subjected.

The context and community are emphasised in nonfoundationalism in such a way as to propose that every context and every community has its own rationality. In doing so, the possibility for interdisciplinary conversation is denied (Van Huyssteen 1997:3). Interdisciplinary conversation therefore becomes increasingly difficult to achieve in both foundationalism and nonfoundationalism.

## 1.6.4  Third time lucky: Postfoundationalism as a third way

Müller (2004:4) describes postfoundationalism as a 'third way' in response to the so-called objectivity of foundationalism and also in response to the extreme relativism of nonfoundationalism. It is seen as a way out of the 'stuckness' of modernism, as well as moving away from the fatalism of some postmodern approaches.

Van Huyssteen (1997:228) brings postfoundationalism and theology together and describes the relationship between the two and the subsequent relationship between theology and other sciences as follows:

> In a postfoundationalist theology the epistemological link between theology and the other sciences can be left open because the project of theological methodology and 'prolegomena' now becomes part of theological reflection as such, that is, as part of an ongoing interdisciplinary inquiry within the practice of theology itself.

In an article on early childhood education, Moss (2007) speaks about discourses that fall within different paradigms such as modernity and postfoundationalism and how this creates what he coins a 'paradigmatic divide' between the discourses in early childhood education. With reference to postfoundationalism and its relationship with modernity or foundationalism, Moss (2007:231) states that:

> This paradigm challenges the basic tenets, or foundations, after paradigms of regulatory modernity: the stable and coherent self, the transparency of language, the rationality of humans, the ability of reason to overcome conflicts between truth, power and knowledge and that freedom involves obeying rational laws.

Describing the positive aspects of postfoundationalism, Moss (2007:237) goes on to say that it does not only lead to abstract concepts and theories and criticism of what already exists, more importantly it can also be applied. In both policy and practice it therefore becomes worthy of serious attention. Regarding postfoundationalism's attitude towards science, Moss (2007:240) also states that:

> Postfoundationalism does not reject scientific attitudes and methods, instrumental reason and value neutral objectivity – no more than it rejects the opus of child development – but rather treats them as claims, not truth; partial and specific to particular discourses.

Regarding the relationship between postfoundationalism and modernistic science, St Pierre & Pillow (2000:3) in Moss (2007:240) concur with the statement above:

> … for instance, to question foundationalism does not mean giving way to disappear, paralysis, nihilism, apoliticism or irresponsibility, but instead opens up to possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people…

Comparing postfoundationalism with nonfoundationalism, St Pierre & Pillow 2000:5 in Moss (2007:240) come to the following conclusion:

> … postfoundationalism (does not) mean surrendering to an 'anything goes' relativism. Quite the contrary, discussions of what might be termed postfoundational ethics – … – place much greater ethical responsibility on each of us to make contextualised judgements and not to fall back on blanket moral codes. For if there is no absolute truth to which every instance can be compared for its truth-value, if truth is in the multiple and contextual, then the call for ethical practice shifts from grand, sweeping statements about truth and justice to engagement with specific, complex problems that do not have generalizable solutions.

Although from the discussion above, postfoundationalism seems like an ideal paradigm to depart from, Moss (2007:238) however cautions that postfoundational work tends to be difficult to comprehend. Another critique against postfoundationalism comes from Mark Bevir also a postfoundationalist. In an interview with Mark Bevir regarding his take on postfoundationalism, Stow (2005:194) quotes Bevir as saying:

> … well, I think that postfoundationalism entails, more than anything else, a rejection of epistemic foundations. That is, it entails a rejection of the belief that there are pure experiences or a pure reason that could provide our knowledge with a guarantee of truth or certainty. I'm exactly that sort of epistemological postfoundationalist…

> However, while I am an epistemological postfoundationalist, I don't see this postfoundationalism as leading to the views about human subjectivity and the nature of mind that are associated with poststructuralists.

Continuing his critique, Bevir talks about the relationship between the individual and discourse, as he understands and believes it to be (Stow 2005:194):

> In particular I am not at all convinced that being an epistemological postfoundationalist requires you to see the individual – the human subject – as wholly constructed by discourse. I accept that postfoundationalism implies the self is not autonomous, where the autonomous view of the self is that the self can reach beliefs or perform actions wholly owned influenced by society or context.

Without referring to it as such, Bevir uses the idea of social-constructionism, that reality is socially constructed, as he further explores the role of the individual and discourse in creating meaning:

> Epistemological postfoundationalism asserts that we cannot have pure reason or pure experiences, which surely means we cannot reach beliefs solely by ourselves, which, in turn, undercuts this concept of autonomy. However, to reject the autonomous view of the self is not necessary to see the self simply as the construct of discourse. There is a middle position available to us. We can take the self to be an agent. Agencies should be understood, in this context, in terms of the ability to modify or transform those believes that we inherit from society – the discourses we find in society – and to do so for reasons of our own. To ascribe to the self this ability to transform an inheritance – a social discourse, if you like – is not in any way to presuppose autonomy.

This section dealt with the interplay between social-constructionism, as a way of making sense of the world around us, and postfoundationalism as a possible 'third way' of making sense of the world. In order to understand postfoundationalism as a third way it was compared to foundationalism as well as nonfoundationalism.

## 1.7    CUTTING EDGE:  TRANSVERSAL RATIONALITY

Schrag, Van Huyssteen and others propose the notion of 'transversal rationality" as part of postfoundationalism.  To better understand what is meant by transversal rationality, we shall start by looking at and explaining the concept itself before moving on to the application thereof.

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary ([http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)) the word 'transversal' refers to "a line that intersects a system of lines".  The origin of the word stems from the Latin word *transversus*.  It can either be used as a noun or as an adjective ([http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)).  This modernistic dictionary definition of the word 'transversal', also explains the use of the concept in mathematics, as a line that "…intersect two or more lines or surfaces without achieving coincidence" (Schrag 1992:148).

Different disciplines or approaches, like mathematics, make use of the concept of transversality.  Schrag (1992:149) explains transversality as follows:

> The use of the concept/metaphor of transversality in all of these approaches exhibits interrelated senses of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and converging, without achieving coincidence. By way of complex manoeuvres of borrowing and conjugation, metaphorical play and reconfiguration, the various disciplines make use of these interrelated senses ensconced with transversality.

The word 'rationality' refers to "the quality or state of being rational".  Stated differently this refers to "the quality or state of being agreeable to reason: reasonableness ([http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary)).

If used as an adjective in conjunction with the word 'rationality', 'transversal' would then refer to a specific type of rationality or reasonableness. This type of rationality refers to the interdisciplinary discourse that is currently gaining momentum in the academics. Van Huyssteen (2006:9) explains this interdisciplinary discourse as follows:

> Interdisciplinary discourse, then, is the attempt to bring together disciplines or reasoning strategies that may have widely differing points of reference, different epistemological foci, and different experiential resources.

In doing so and bringing together different disciplines, sometimes even representing different reasoning strategies, "…different but equally legitimate ways of looking at issues of disciplines" are identified (Van Huyssteen 2000:429).

Transversality or interdisciplinary discourse proposes that different disciplines converse with each other in a respectful manner, in an attempt to learn from each other, and in the process gain a better understanding of the issue under discussion. By engaging in interdisciplinary conversation it becomes possible to identify "…possible points of consonance, but also possible points of difference between widely divergent reasoning strategies" (Van Huyssteen 1999:7).

Transversality is therefore not aimed at substantiating the claims of one's own discipline but rather to bring in more than just your own and your discipline's voice, by inviting other disciplines to converse as well. At times, these other disciplines might voice concerns regarding the issue at hand similar to your own concerns, but sometimes these concerns aired by other disciplines will differ from that of yourself. It is an attempt to bring together all the different disciplines' perspectives and listen and learn from them all. This is important in postfoundationalism if any form of interdisciplinary rationality is to be credibly achieved (Van Huyssteen 1999:3).

Bringing this in context with theology, Van Huyssteen (2000:236) states that the "… wide reflective equilibrium between science and theology is the shared rationality between us all". As "… a postfoundationalist theology … fully acknowledges contextuality, the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience..." (Van Huyssteen 1997:4), our context plays a crucial role in our understanding of the world. Van Huyssteen (2006:24) explains it as "… our irrevocable contextuality and the indebtedness of all belief and action in networks of social and cultural traditions, belief, meaning, and action arise out of our embedded life worlds". We as "… embodied persons, and not abstract beliefs..." (Van Huyssteen 2006:10) is therefore central to the construction of this rationality. This is because as humans, "… as rational agents, (we) are thus always socially and contextually embedded" (Van Huyssteen 2006:10).

Important characteristics or features of transversality, are "… the dynamics of consciousness, the interweaving of many voices, the interplay of social practices …". (Van Huyssteen 2006:19). These characteristics are expressed in a metaphor, and as also noted by Schrag (1992:149), refer to "… a sense of transition, lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and conveying without becoming identical" (Van Huyssteen 2006:19). In his argument for transversal rationality, Van Huyssteen (2006:21) refers to the work of Schrag and states that consciousness and self-awareness that form part of transversality become unified in the experience of self-presence; wherein different past experiences becomes transversally integrated as we reach out to others in an attempt to better understand. Van Huyssteen (2006:21) says that:

> Talk about the human subject is now revisioned by resituating the human subject in the space of communicative praxis. Thus the notion of transversal rationality opens up the possibility to focus on patterns of discourse and action as they happen in our communicative practices, rather than focusing only on the structure of the self, ego, all subject.

Interdisciplinary conversations between different disciplines therefore become justified and transversal rationality urges for the acknowledgement of many patterns of interpretation, one's sense of knowing moves across disciplinary and different reasoning strategies' borders (Van Huyssteen 2000:430).

Along with acknowledging of contextuality, postfoudational theology also "… claims to point creatively beyond the confines of the local community, group or culture …" (Van Huyssteen 1997:4). Epistemological postfoundationalism helps us, despite the strong beliefs, and maybe even prejudices we are bound to tag along to any interdisciplinary conversation, to

> … identify the shared resources of human rationality in different modes of knowledge and then to reach beyond the boundaries of our own traditional communities in cross-disciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 2000:430).

In doing so, it becomes possible to develop alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community (Müller 2005:82) and even beyond the specific contextualised issue under discussion.

In chapter 5 of this thesis, transversal rationality will be employed by engaging different people from different disciplines to bring together their understanding of the issue of HIV and Aids orphans' bereavement as it is embedded in the field of their specific discipline. The two co-researchers that are self acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans – Dee and Zee's – stories will be used as the point of discussion. Different disciplines took part in this interdisciplinary conversations in an attempt to identify and discuss these two co-researchers' concerns regarding their life stories. Disciplines that partook in this conversation or indaba, include – theology itself, represented by three theologians other than myself, psychology, social work, anthropology, information science as well as the perspective of a life coach.

## 1.8    THE COLOUR OF RESEARCH:  WHAT IS RESEARCH?

In preceding sections of chapter 1, we have looked at factors that influence a research journey like this.  We have looked at how we as postfoundational practical theologians see and approach knowledge, especially in a narrative way.   I attempted to ground this view within social-constructionism as an overarching paradigm to the research, and we have looked at the growing interest and importance of transversal rationality within the research process.

In this section, we need to address the issue of research itself as it is situated within these paradigms and how and where we get our data.  It is important to state it here at this stage of the research in order to put the research process in context for the reader.  We begin by looking at the broad discourse of social science within which this research process is situated, before turning our attention to a short comparison between quantitative and qualitative research and finally addressing narrative research as it is applied in this research.

### 1.8.1   What is social research?

In the process of describing the discourse of research, let us follow the example of Leedy and Ormrod (2005) and divert from the expected way of describing research – albeit just for a short while – to start by looking at what research is not.  Even in doing so, one gets an idea of what research is, by simply getting to know what research is not.  Leedy and Ormrod (2005:1-7) says regarding this that:

1.    Research is not mere information gathering
2.    Research is not mere transportation of facts from one location to another
3.    Research is not merely rummaging for information
4.    Research is not a catchword used to get attention

However, they also go on to describe research as:

"Research is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing and interpretation of information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned". (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:2).

They (Leedy & Ormrod (2005:2) go on to state that:

1. Research originates
2. Research requires clear articulation of a goal
3. Research requires a specific plan for proceeding
4. Research usually divides the principal problem into more manageable sub-problems
5. Research is guided by the specific research problem, question or hypothesis
6. Research accepts certain critical assumptions
7. Research requires the collection and interpretation of data in an attempt to resolve the problem that initiated the research
8. Research is by nature, cyclinical or, more exactly, helical

The last point, that of research being cyclinical or helical, is an interesting statement. They ground this statement further by saying that:

"Research is rarely conclusive. In a truer sense, the research cycle might be more accurately conceived of as a *helix*, or spiral, of research. In exploring an area, one comes across additional problems that need resolving, and so the process must begin anew. Research begets more research". (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:6).

In my opinion, this idea of the research cycle as being cyclinical or helical, links very well with the seven movements in postfoundational practical theology (PFPT), as specific to this research process that will be explained below in section 1.9. As Leedy & Ormrod (2005:6) explain further:

> "To view research in this way is to invest it with a dynamic quality that is its true nature – a far cry from the conventional view, which sees research as a one-time act that is static, self-contained, an end in itself".

Regarding social research specifically, Neuman (1997) who is seen as authoritative in the field of social research, and still widely used in various social science courses in research, states that:

> … research is a way of going about finding answers to questions. Social research is a type of research conducted by sociologists, social scientists, and others to seek answers to questions about the social world (Neuman 1997:1).

In looking for answers concerning questions about the social world, Holliday (2007:2) cautions that social research is a complex area and attempts to divide it in categories will lead to oversimplification thereof and this reminds of a modernistic approach to research, which we as postmodern social researchers should aim to avoid at all costs. Holliday (2007:4) continues to describe research in terms of:

> … human relationships and invokes the need to discover as much about how research subjects feel about the information they provide as about the information itself. Indeed, the people about whom the research is carried out are less 'subjects' than just people who happen to be in the research setting.

If it is true that research begets more research, (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:6) it is understandable that "… genuine research yields as many problems as it resolves". (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:7). True, probably more so for social research than any other kind of research, because in social research we aim to measure insubstantial phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:22) by looking into human relationships, whether we use deductive or inductive reasoning and logic to achieve this.

Deductive logic can be described as:

> **Deductive logic** begins with one or more *premises*. These premises are statements or assumptions that are self-evident and widely accepted 'truths'. Reasoning then proceeds logically from these premises toward conclusions that must also be true (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:31).

Whereas inductive logic which will be applied in this research process:

> … begins, not with a pre-established truth or assumption, but with an observation. …In **inductive reasoning**, people use specific instances or occurrences to draw conclusions about entire classes of objects or events (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:32).

Research and in our case, social research is therefore seen as a collection of methods people systematically use in order to produce knowledge. This in itself is a process of discovery and requires persistence, personal integrity, tolerance for ambiguity, interaction with others, and pride in doing quality work (Neuman 1997:2). I sincerely hope that these important characteristics of a good researcher mentioned above come to the fore regarding myself as a postmodern social researcher working in the field of practical theology in this research process.

## 1.8.2 Quantitative versus qualitative research

Holliday (2007:5) refers to quantitative and qualitative research as: "… two paradigms of research", where 'paradigms' refer to the whole way of thinking about something. He further suggests that quantitative and qualitative research represent very different ways of thinking about the world (Holliday 2007:5).

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:95) agree with the proposition above by Holliday in saying that "... quantitative and qualitative research designs are appropriate for answering different kinds of questions".

Holliday (2007:1-2) therefore states that:

It is fairly standard to introduce qualitative research by distinguishing it from quantitative research. This is an unadventurous way to begin, but necessary because when asked 'What is research?' most people refer to the more familiar, traditional quantitative research. Also, it is often argued that a major binding feature of qualitative research is its opposition to positivism, the philosophical basis for quantitative research.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:94) agree with Holliday in that positivism forms the philosophical basis for quantitative research, sometimes also refer to as traditional research, because as he puts it:

In general, **quantitative research** is used to answer questions about relationships' measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena. This approach is sometimes called the *traditional*, *experimental*, or *positivistic* approach.

In line with their positivistic approach to research, quantitative researchers mostly begin with a specific hypothesis to be tested. They do this by isolating the variables they want to study, while at the same time controlling for extraneous variables and using a standardized procedure to collect some form of numerical data. To analyse and draw conclusions from the data they use statistical procedures. Therefore, a quantitative study usually ends with confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypothesis that was tested (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:94).

On the other side of the research fence, on the side of qualitative research however, researchers often start with general research questions rather than specific hypotheses. They set out to collect an extensive amount of verbal data from a small number of participants and then organise this data into some coherent form and use verbal descriptions to describe and explain these situations they have researched. Therefore, qualitative research is typically attempting to answer questions related to the complex nature of phenomena, more often than not aiming at describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view. In light of this, the qualitative approach is sometimes also referred to as the interpretative, constructivist or post-positivist approach (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:94).

Different qualitative approaches all focus on phenomena that occur in natural settings or in other words the real world. Furthermore, they study these phenomena in all its complexity. Qualitative researchers rarely aim to simplify the phenomena they are observing. They recognise and acknowledge that the phenomena are multi-layered and attempt to portray it in all its dimensions (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:133). Therefore, a good qualitative researcher, needs to be able to interpret and make sense of what he or she observes during the research process as this is seen as critical for understanding any social phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:133). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) go on to say that in this sense "… the researcher is an instrument in much the same way that a sociogram, rating scale, or intelligence test is an instrument".

Holliday (2007:5) agrees with Leedy and Ormrod's (2005:133) notion that qualitative research tends to focus on phenomena as it occurs in the real world in stating:

> It is these qualitative areas in social life – the backgrounds, interests and broader social perceptions that defy quantitative research – that qualitative research addresses. Qualitative research does not pretend to solve the problems of quantitative research, but does not see them as constraints.

These studies concerned with real life phenomena, are open ended and "… set up research opportunities designed to lead the researcher into unforeseen areas of discovery in the lives of the people she is investigating" (Holliday 2007:5). The behaviour in specific social settings, as opposed to broad populations therefore warrants the researcher's attention (Holliday 2007:5). Working in specific 'local' social settings (see section 1.9) with specific individuals or groups of individuals, moves some qualitative researchers to believe that

> … there isn't necessarily a single, ultimate truth to be discovered. Instead, there may be multiple perspectives held by different individuals, where each of these perspectives has an equal validity, or truth. One goal of a quality study, then, might be to reveal the nature of these multiple perspectives (Leedy and Ormrod 2005:133).

By entertaining the notion of multiple perspectives, qualitative research invites the unexpected according to Holliday (2007:8). Every research design will ultimately be different as decisions about research instruments are made in response to the nature of the specific social setting being researched (Holliday 2007:8).

Agreeing with Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) that there isn't necessarily a single, ultimate truth to be discovered, Holliday (2007:19) says that:

> So, whereas naturalists believe that a meaningful social worlds can be discovered by 'being there', postmodernists 'argue that there is no "there" until it has been constructed'. Every act of "seeing" or "saying" is unavoidably conditioned by cultural, institutional, and interactional contingencies.

Therefore, '(t)he postmodern break from naturalism does enable a greater variety in procedure and scope, ..." (Holliday 2007:20) that simply means that the researcher has the opportunity to present the data in a more creative, colourful way, while at the same time being more open about who the researcher is and how she "… spins validity through argument". (Holliday 2007:20).

To acknowledge and be open about the researcher herself as part of the research, addresses the fact that postmodern qualitative researchers "… portray people as constructing the social world…" and as a person, a researcher also contributes to the construction of the social world through their interpretation thereof (Holliday 2007:19). Qualitative researchers do not stand on the periphery of the real world and that which occurs in it, but form part of it, through not only their interpretation thereof, but also their participation therein. Therefore, and with this we end this section, Holliday (20057:20) reminds us that:

> … qualitative researchers must never forget to approach their own actions as strangers, holding up everything for scrutiny, accounting for every action – and seeing how they speak and write what they have done is integral to the whole.

### 1.8.3 Tell me the (research) story: Narrative research

Everywhere you look and listen, there is a story or more to be found. For the interested narrative researcher, research stories are also in abundance. Narrative research constitutes the gathering of these research stories, the exploration (re-telling) thereof and the re-envisioning of it. The marginalised psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, is one such research story that warrants a narrative investigation.

According to Patton (2002:115-116)

> … people's stories as data can stand on their own as pure description of experience, worthy as narrative documentary *experience* (the core of phenomenology) or analysed for connections between the psychological, social logical, cultural, political, and dramatic lamingtons of human experience.

As Kotzé & Kotzé (2001:9) state it in reference to participatory action research which also forms the basis of this research process, research should "…primarily be to the advantage of the participants". Patton (2002:115) states that a narrative analysis of research should therefore seek to find what the research narrative reveals about the person as well as of the world in which it exists, because "(n)arrative studies are also influenced by phenomenology's emphasis on understanding lived experience and perceptions of this experience". (Patton 2002:115).

In addition, the researcher's own story becomes part of the enquiry into a specific phenomenon of interest because, as Patton (2002:116) states "… stories and narratives offer especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings".

Bringing in one's own story as researcher into the narrative research process, brings about a certain relationship between the researcher herself, the research and the research participants. Therefore, Müller, van Deventer & Human (2002:2) prefer to refer to the research participants as 'co-researchers', as they are also actively involved in the research process by not only reconstructing their own narratives relevant to the research, but also helping to construct the research narrative itself as it will be presented in the dissemination thereof.

This research therefore attempted to reflect this "… participatory interaction …" among all the people involved, where the researcher embodied the dialectics between the perspectives of the "insider" and "outsider" (Müller et al., 2002:2). The adolescents become the storytellers of their own life stories, because they are the experts on their own lives (Müller 2000:56) and we, the researchers, formed part of an interested and involved audience to these stories as they evolved and took shape.

In other – one could say more modernistic – approaches the researcher tries to be an observer and to be objective about what he/she is observing, while the narrative researcher has subjective integrity in mind and sees the action as participatory (Müller et al., 2002:2). The researcher herself is therefore neither completely an outsider by being an observer, nor is she an insider who is fully involved in the process.

Instead, researchers are interested participants in a part of the process, who want to "be faithful to the story as told by the research participants giving voice to their lived experience" (Freedman & Combs 1996:21). Becoming involved in the co-researchers lives and contexts wherein they live out their stories, means that the research data obtained is more localised as it pertains more to a specific situation, and context (Müller & Schoeman 2004:12).

In order to maintain subjective integrity, it is important to remember that the researcher's aim is not to bring about change (Müller et al., 2002:2). For some this could be a shocking revelation, since we as humans are constantly bombarded with change. Instead, as researchers we have to be involved listeners and let the research story speak for itself as it develops through the research process, since social-constructionism forms the basis of all narrative research. As researchers we take on a not-knowing position (Müller 2002:2), by listening to what is told to us and asking questions to better understand, without presuming we know what is important elements to the stories, but rather relying on the co-researchers and the research story itself to give us an indication.

To enable and promote this emancipation of not only the life stories of the co-researchers, but also of the greater research story itself, it is important to aim at asking deconstructive questions about the discourses that emerge as these stories unfold. According to social-constructionism as described by Freedman and Combs (1996:1-41), the community plays a pivotal role in the construction of knowledge as experienced by the group members.

The knowledge of importance that this research aims to study is the knowledge of the ten adolescent co-researchers chosen from the NGO PEN in the inner city of Pretoria. They are all bereaved adolescents. Some have experienced multiple losses in their short lives. Some have lost family members acting as care givers to them. Others lost a parent – either a mother or father or both. Some might have even lost their parent or care giver due to HIV and Aids infection. These ten bereft adolescents participated in two consecutive *Tree of Life* (TOL) camps (refer to section 2.4) and consequently they formed a new community in the small. What they shared was the experience of losing someone close to them and that experience having an impact on the rest of their lives, yet each individual adolescent's story of loss is unique and with different nuances. In doing narrative research, the focus falls on these lived experiences of these ten adolescents.

## 1.9    STRUCTURING THE RESEARCH STORY:  RESEARCH DESIGN

Marshall and Rossman (2006:58) are of the opinion that "(o)ne purpose of the research design section is to demonstrate that the researcher is capable of conducting qualitative research".  The paradigm that informs the research, in this case postfoundational practical theology, affects the researcher's role and position in the research (Marshall & Rossman 2006:72).

Postmodern paradigms also postfoundational practical theology "…assumes that all knowledge is political and that researchers are not neutral since their ultimate purposes include advocacy and action". (Marshall & Rossman 2006:72). Reflecting on one's identity and one's sense of voice and perspectives as a researcher as well as considering assumptions and sensitivities are therefore important to understand the researcher's choice of questions and of the researcher's role (Marshall & Rossman 2006:58).

Together with postfoundational practical theology, the narrative approach works from the perspective of qualitative research and a social-constructionist methodology.  This approach has been explored in an article by Müller, Van Deventer and Human (2001) and forms the basis for this research.  This article also forms part of a growing international school of thought on research methodology.

Also referring to the narrative approach, White and Epston (1990:35) state that:

> it has been demonstrated that independent knowledge can exist in a community and be passed on by other means, (than writing) including through the art of storytelling and through the medium of song and dance.

The main aim of this research and research report therefore is to employ this independent knowledge and the adolescents' unique stories to come a holistic understanding of the stories of these adolescent AIDS orphans as well as other vulnerable adolescents in the HIV and Aids minefield about their parental bereavement and psycho-spiritual needs in light of this bereavement.

As for the research design of this study, a practical theological research process consisting of seven movements as developed and refined by Müller (cf 2004, 2005, 2009) strengthened the basis of the research. These seven movements are based on the concepts of postfoundationalist theology of Wentzel van Huyssteen (1997:4).

Müller (2004:300) uses van Huyssteen's (1997:4) description and summary of Postfoundational Theology and re-phrases it in order to develop a practical theological research process, consisting of seven movements. The table below, reproduced from Müller's (2004:300) article, explains how he achieved this:

| POSTFOUNDATIONALIST THEOLOGY | POSTFOUNDATIONALIST PRACTICAL THEOLOGY |
|---|---|
| … **a postfoundationalist theology** wants to make **two moves**. First, it fully acknowledges **contextuality**, the epistemically crucial role of **interpreted experience**, and the way that **tradition** shapes the epistemic and nonepistemic **values** that inform our reflection about God and what some of us believe to be **God's presence** in this world. At the same time, however, a postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to **point creatively beyond the confines of the local** community, group, or culture towards a plausible form of **interdisciplinary conversation**.<br><br>(van Huyssteen 1997:4)<br>(Phrases in bold J Müller's emphasis) | **The context & interpreted experience**<br>1. A specific context is described.<br>2. In-context experiences are listened to and described.<br>3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with 'co-researchers'.<br>**Traditions of interpretation**<br>4. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation.<br>**God's presence**<br>5. A reflection on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.<br>**Thickened through interdisciplinary investigation**<br>6. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.<br>**Point beyond the local community**<br>7. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community. |

The research took place in two phases. The greater Departmental research project was launched during the first phase. Three different NGOs (Heartbeat, Hospivision and PEN) collaborated with the Department in the research. Field workers from the different organisations were used to collect data through one-to-one interviewing (Greeff 2005:286-299) with selected adolescents involved with these organisations. Since this study involved human participants, ethical clearance for the research was applied for and received by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria before the study commenced.

The inclusion criteria for participation in this first phase of the research was that the interviewees had to be adolescents (12-19 years), identified as an AIDS orphan (maternal or paternal) and who lost their parent(s) in the two years preceding the research project. This first phase of the research formed a backdrop to my own research for my PhD thesis. The scope of my own research and the *Tree of Life* (TOL) camps that were held as part of my research has been broadened to not only focus specifically on adolescents orphaned by HIV and Aids but also on the stories of otherwise orphaned as well as vulnerable adolescents.

This was done due to the fact that although care workers from the NGOs would sometimes suspects that the parent(s) died due to HIV and Aids infections and related illnesses, this could not always be verified. Bereavement was also not only limited to parent(s) dying, but also to care givers such as other family members dying.

Therefore, the discussion on the seven movements as part of the method of research would be limited for the purpose of this thesis to the second phase of data collection. This second phase made use of focus group discussions (Greeff 2005:299) during the TOL camps held in October 2008 and February 2010 at Sikelele Adventure Village, Magaliesburg, South Africa. A fellow PhD student – Juanita Meyer – and I (Amanda Richter) conducted these camps.

### 1.9.1  A specific context is described

In narrative research the focus falls on the stories that our co-researchers tell us about the action (Müller et al., 2002:3).  As researchers we must help our co-researchers to tell the story of need in as much detail as possible, thus putting the emphasis here on *storytelling* (Müller 2000:72,74).  The context or action field of this research is in the first instance the orphaned and vulnerable children living within the HIV and Aids environment of South Africa. The context expands to include the level of involvement and the discourses which determine NGOs' involvement in these children's lives.

**Methods used**:

- o  Facilitators from the NGO Pretoria Evangelism and Nurture (PEN) identified 10 adolescents (5 boys and 5 girls) who fit the inclusion criteria for the second phase of data collection.
- o  The data from the two TOL camps were interpreted on a social-constructionist basis, in other words the interpretations are made together with the interviewees ('co-researchers') and not afterwards without them.
- o  A literature study which will form the basis of parts of chapter 3 and the whole of chapter 4 of the thesis have been conducted in order to gain more insight in the problem of listening to children's narratives and understanding the world of children.

### 1.9.2  In-context experiences are listened to and described

When a child's parent(s) dies, the child's whole life is suddenly overturned.  In regards to this, Kelly (2001:51) says that "(d)eath, illness and divorce (leave) children with a terrific sense of loss…".

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Perry (2001:22) uses a beautiful metaphor in relation to this, by asserting that "(t)he loss of a loved one is like an earthquake that fractures our emotional landscape". He goes on to say that children are more vulnerable to loss than adults (Perry 2001:22). Juanita Meyer and I did empirical research on these adolescents' experiences of loss and how it influenced their psycho-spiritual needs. We listened to the stories of the bereaved adolescents in order to gain understanding of their in-context experiences.

**Method used**:

- o During the second round of data collection the *Tree of Life* programme was used to elicit stories from the children attending the camps relating to the experiences these children face in the context they live in.

### 1.9.3 Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with 'co-researchers'

Moules et al., (1997:378) asserts that "… grief is not a problem per se...". Kelly (2001:51) says that grief is a process that must be worked through. Central to this grieving process are two challenges – processing the events and handling the loss of a loved one (Perry 2001:23). The co-researchers are invited to tell us not only about the now, but also about their past, in order to put the action against a certain background (Müller et al., 2002:6). In doing so, the emphasis is placed on *storymaking* (Müller 2000:74). According to this research approach, the researchers are not only interested in *descriptions* of experiences of loss as experienced by the adolescents, but also and foremost in their research participants' (co-researchers') own *interpretations* of how this loss has influenced their life stories. The researcher in this phase does not, in the first instance; look for data, but for meaning / interpretation given by the co-researchers.

**Method used**:

- o Interpretation of the second round of data collection during the first *Tree of Life* camp (October 2008) was done as part of feedback looping, whereby the "co-researchers" – the adolescents attending the TOL camp – was brought together again during the second TOL camp (February 2010). Another round of focus groups was held during the second camp to get their evaluation of information gathered thus far.

## 1.9.4 A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation

There are specific discourses/traditions in certain communities and in faith-based organisations (such as PEN), which inform perceptions and behaviour. These discourses/traditions influenced the co-researchers experiences and how they came to view their own life stories. Listening to their stories as well as by using deconstruction of discourses that play a role in the action field, and by listening for what has not been said (Drewery & Winslade 1997:43), an idea is gained of how traditions of interpretations have an influence on the co-researchers' experiences. This was done by listening to the co-researchers, but also by listening to the literature, the art, and the culture of a certain context. The informative theological traditions were also listened to.

**Methods used**:

- o Discourses identified during the above-mentioned workshops that formed part of the first phase of data collection process, were integrated in the TOL programme and camp workbooks.
- o The adolescents' impressions of identified discourses like poverty, crime and HIV and Aids were discussed during the group sessions as well as in the camp workbooks.

## 1.9.5   A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation

Wolfelt (1996:43) rightly mentions that "(t)here are spiritual dimensions to every life crisis, particularly death".  This is not a forced effort by the researcher to bring God into the present situation. It is rather an honest undertaking in order to really hear and understand the co-researchers' religious and spiritual understanding and experiences of God's presence.  This is done because children often undergo major changes – especially on an emotional and spiritual level of functioning (Wolfelt 1996:65) – after losing someone significant to death.

**Method used**:

- In the second phase of data collection (TOL camps), the researcher and the fellow PhD student who conducted the camp, listened for clues in children's narratives about experiences of God, and interacted with those clues by means of the camp workbooks and subsequent group sessions.  Since the adolescents attending the camp were under the care of an NGO openly declaring itself as a faith-based organisation, it was not surprising that they were all very open and forthcoming in discussing their experiences of God and the impact it had on their lives – especially after losing someone close.

## 1.9.6 A description of experience thickened by interdisciplinary investigation

Müller (2004:303) states that interdisciplinary work is complicated and difficult.  He further states by referring to Midali (2000:262) that language, reasoning strategies, contexts, and ways of accounting for human experience differ between the different disciplines.

It is therefore challenging and because of this, no one-size-fits-all methodology can be applied. Yet, the interdisciplinary movement is an important part of practical theology. Not only does it include the conversation with other theological disciplines but also with other relevant disciplines. The researcher has to listen to different stories of understanding from these disciplines and try and make an honest effort to integrate them into one bigger story of understanding.

**Method used**:

- o The researcher requested and received feedback from colleagues from different disciplines regarding their understanding of the concerns of two of the co-researchers, in keeping the research in line with the postfoundationalism epistemology as supported by the research.

## 1.9.7 The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community

The research process is not a mere reflection on different stories collected during this journey, but it constitutes something new and exciting every time. Therefore, narrative practical theological research does not end with a conclusion, but with an open ending (Müller et al., 2002:10). An open ending not only for the life stories of the researcher and the co-researchers, but also for the greater research story as it evolved through the research process. It is also important to remember that narrative practical theological research is not only about description and interpretation of the experiences of the co-researchers as this informs their life stories. To look at "alternative interpretations" means that in this way of doing (practising) theology, deconstruction and emancipation is of utmost importance. The different stories of the research should be allowed to develop into a new open story of understanding that points beyond the local community.

The greatest pitfall here is if the researcher is not patient, and comes to an 'understanding' too quickly in trying to maintain control over the research (Müller et al., 2002:9). This is not what it is about – forcing the story to fit a presupposed agenda. Rather the researcher should be encouraged to wait for the understanding to form in a natural way (Müller 2000:73).

It is important not to confuse this process of looking at alternative interpretations with generalisation of the research story. Rather it is a case of doing contextual research with such integrity that it will have possibilities for broader application beyond the local researched context.

According to the narrative approach as applied within practical theology this cannot happen on the basis of structured and rigid methods through which stories are analyzed and interpreted. It rather happens on the basis of a holistic understanding of the research story and as part of a social-constructionist process in which all the co-researchers are invited and engaged in the creation of new meaning as informed by their own life stories and relevant experiences.

**Methods used**:

These methods are on the level of dissemination, and have been done in various ways, for instance:

- o An Aids Indaba presented by the Centre for the Study of Aids (CSA), University of Pretoria has been attended in February 2009 and a presentation made on the *TREE OF LIFE* camp.
- o A website ([www.hivorphans.co.za](www.hivorphans.co.za))[1] relating to the research has been developed.

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[1] Website due to go offline May 2011.

## 1.10 WRITING FOR RESEARCH:  THE RESEARCH REPORT

### 1.10.1 Set in stone (almost): The written word

Language and words make communication between humans possible and more effective.  No longer do we need to – like the Neanderthals of old – rely on grunts, sighs and hand gestures to make ourselves understandable.  With the help of technology and even the internet, we can have a document in almost any foreign language translated in the blink of an eye in a language that we are able to understand.  Leedy and Ormrod (2005:34) say that "(o)ne of humankind's greatest achievements is language.  Not only does it allow us to communicate with one another, but it also enables us to think more effectively."

Words form the building blocks of any language, and as such represent certain concepts as it is socially constructed.  Leedy and Ormrod (2005:35) go on to say that our thinking is enhanced by words and the concepts it represent.  Our thinking is enhanced in several ways by words:

1.    They reduce the world's complexity
2.    They facilitate generalization and inference drawing in a new situation
3.    They allow abstraction of the environment
4.    They enhance the power of thought

We use language and words when we want to communicate – with friends, family, possibly even with a specific audience.  We do not only communicate our thoughts by talking, we also communicate by writing.  Thinking naturally forms part of this whole communication process.  According to Bolton et al., (2004:xviv) "(t)hinking onto the page is part of life".  Bolton et al., (2004:xviv) therefore describes the act of writing down one's thought processes as follows:

Writing is different from talking; it is a power all of its own, .. it can allow an exploration of cognitive, emotional and spiritual areas otherwise not accessible, and an expression of elements otherwise inexpressible. The very act of creativity – of making something on the page which wasn't there before – tends to increase self-confidence, feelings of self-worth and motivation for life.

To write is to be creative. Clough (2002:183) says that "(w)riting is not merely the means by which we record and report our thinking, but a means by which we discover it". Leedy and Ormrod (2005:36) agree by stating:

Although the conventional wisdom is that clear thinking precedes clear writing, we have learned through both our own work and that of others that writing can be a productive form of thinking in and of itself.
Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that writing about a topic actually enhances the writer's understanding of that topic…

Clough (2002:183) therefore suggests that an important purpose of writing is thinking, as "… many of us do indeed *think* as we *write*. We used writing as a tool and process by which we decide what it is – precisely – that we *are* thinking". Writing down what we are thinking, actually makes it possible for us – and others – to, in essence view our thinking, "… for *discovering* what it is we want to say" (Clough 2002:183).

To harness this power of the written word, to make clear our thought processes, to enhance our own understanding of the specific topic under discussion, to be able to feel confidant about what we claim to know, we need to think. We need to think to be able to discover the message we want to convey to our audience – the readers of our text.

## 1.10.2 Penning it down: The story of the narrative research report

The result of any research is some sort of dissemination. For the purpose of obtaining a PhD, part of this dissemination is the writing up and presentation of the research report or thesis. Clough (2002:182) states that the focus of writing the research report falls on "… telling the story of the research".

Holliday (2007:15) states that this telling of the story of the research, the "… writing of qualitative research is not going to be an easy task". Qualitative research and in particular narrative research, encompasses a lot of raw data that needs to be truthfully represented in the analyses and dissemination thereof, as it was constructed and presented by the co-researchers.

This can complicate matters, as articulating and disseminating these socially constructed realities can indeed prove to be challenging. It is therefore of utmost importance that "… the qualitative researcher as writer should see every part of what she has done in the field as a fresh phenomenon" (Holliday 2007:20).

In penning down the research story, Clough (2002:183) mentions that it is important to remember the following:

> Writing as *process* must not be confused with writing as *product*. The task of committing our ideas to paper forces a permanence of articulation which the spoken word can sometimes evade.

We as researchers are thus required to write down and tell the story of the whole research process as it happened, this writing up process resulting in a research report as a product of the research process. Difficult as this might be, one must aim at clearly articulating that which became evident during and important to the research report.

This research report or thesis will ultimately be read and evaluated by representatives of the specific scientific community the researcher forms part of. Keeping these specific readers – or audience if you will – in mind from the very start of the research process is very important. Therefore, Flick (2007:43) states that "(i)n constructing the research design, you should reflect whom you intend to address as audience with this research and its results". Hunt (2004:36) agrees with this statement, by saying that "… a sense of the readership or audience (is) in the mind of the writer when a piece of writing was in progress". Hunt (2004:36) goes further my stating that "…a reader or audience is always present in the utterance and contributes to its shaping".

As a PhD candidate and researcher therefore writing about one's research project knowing very well that it will be evaluated, one tends to anticipate the reaction of these readers of one's work. In this regard, Hunt (2004:35) states that "… writers were not so much anticipating the reaction of real people in the outside world as that of an imaginary reader or audience implicit in the writing process itself…". Imagining these readers implicit in the writing process, the so-called 'implicit reader', has a definite impact on not only ourselves, but also on how we view ourselves as writers (Hunt 2004:35). Consequently, this 'implicit reader's' presence in the writing process "… will affect what is written and the way writers represent themselves through their writing" (Hunt 2004:36). The research report's aim is therefore to introduce the 'implicit reader', the examiner, to the research design, the research process, the paradigm from which the research evolved and to try and persuade the reader and examiner with grounded arguments that the research report indeed represents valid research. Hunt (2004:35) states that the role of any piece of writing is for the 'implied reader' to "… understand the intentions of the implied author and shares his or her facts and values". Important for the research report is for it not to aim to have the reader share the researcher's facts and values, but to come to an understanding of the intentions of the researcher.

## 1.10.3 Reflection-in-Progress: On the process of self-reflection

As we have seen in the previous section, the research report documents the story of the research process. Not only is it important – from the perspective of narrative practical theological research – to document this process, but also to reflect on it, on how one has experienced the whole research journey.

Regarding reflection Bolton, Allan and Drucquer (2004:197) state that: "(r)eflection is a natural process; it needs to be carefully facilitated and supported". Reflection according to them (Bolton et al., 2004:209) is important, because as they state it:

> A purely critical, rational, analytic approach will only access some of the experiences which need to be examined, and will only examine part of them. This is because the more tricky areas of our experience, those which are perhaps the most troubling, or the most difficult for us to sort out, are hidden from our immediate critical, rational analytic processes.

With reference to reflection by specifically counsellors, they (Bolton et al., 2004:196) believe that "(r)eflection upon action…: a process of deeply considering events afterwards in order effectively to enhance practice" is important. According to Griffith and Frieden (2000:82) writing about the experience gives the researcher "… an outlet for his or her reflections …".

For Kennedy (1998:107) it is not only important to 'reflect upon action', but the researcher must be "… able to reflect in action…" in order to become aware of the impact the action had and is still having on the researcher, the profession of research and counselling, as well as on the persons the researcher is in contact with (Kennedy 1998:113). Reflection by the researcher can therefore be seen as an ongoing process, not just limited to a few comments at the end of the research report but, rather integrated in the whole report.

Thus, whereas research and counselling according to the narrative approach acknowledges and favours "… the marginalised voices …" (Freedman & Combs 1996:21), reflection on the process can be seen as "… bringing one's own voice to the particular context …" (Kennedy 1998:110). Also referring to counsellors, Daniels and Feltham (2004:181) state that "(i)t is a long-standing tradition in counsellor training that trainees are required to write a personal journal as part of their personal development". The keeping of such a personal reflective journal by counsellors or even the keeping of a research journal by the narrative researcher, involves creativity. Bolton et al., (2004:198) state that employing creativity effectively means that areas of experience, otherwise difficult to access, are more accessible to the writer or researcher in this scenario.

According to Bolton et al., (2004:198) the "(r)eflective practice of writers needs to ensure they've covered what they *did*, what they *thought*, and what they *felt*". Since I concur with Kennedy's (1998:107) notion that reflection in action is important to the integrity of the research process, I have chosen not only to reflect at the very end of the research report, but instead to reflect throughout the whole research process as it is documented in this research report.

This is done through what I coined 'Reflection-in-Progress' alluding to the concept of 'work-in-progress' as seen especially with reference to ongoing road works. In focussing on the content of the research, as well as the thoughts and feelings experienced during this process, reflection thus not only contributes to the researcher's personal development, in a context of openness and transparency about the process and the researcher's own assumptions, but it can also enhance the analysis of the qualitative data. This 'Reflection-in-Progress' sections can be found throughout the rest of this research report at what I deem to be pivotal points in the research process, focussing on content and the analysis thereof as well as my thoughts and feelings with regards to the contents and the research process up to that specific point in time.

**Reflection-in-Progress:  Positioning myself with caution**

Chapter 1 certainly was the most difficult section of this research report to approach.  At times, it felt like I had no idea what I was doing.  Although I understood the need to position myself within the specific paradigms I was working in, it sometimes felt like these philosophical discussions got the better of me.  Philosophy was a discipline I intentionally steered clear of during my pre-graduate studies.  Most friends of mine – with the exception of one who went on to major in philosophy – who took the subject did not like it very much, especially those who were more religiously inclined, as some of them thought philosophy and religion were made out to be incompatible.  These philosophical discussions felt far removed from the in-context experiences of my co-researchers and I had great difficulty in maintaining to link these concepts to the research stories of my co-researchers as presented and developed throughout the research report.  But, as Professor Müller and his research associate Dr Lourens Bosman pointed out on more than one occasion during our PhD meetings, our studies towards a PhD in actual fact demanded a good knowledge of philosophy and application of this acquired knowledge to our subject field and research topic.  Yet, I had some pre-graduate exposure to some philosophical notions especially the postmodern paradigm through my studies in Afrikaans, and although I resented it at the time, that knowledge later proved to be invaluable to my understanding of paradigms and paradigm shifts.  Wentzel van Huyssteen's incorporation of philosophical notions with that of theology also helped to demystify philosophy as a discipline in direct opposition of religious thought and belief systems.  When it came to the research design and methodology section, I felt more at home.  The seven movements of postfoundational practical pheology was an interesting branching off from the ABDCE model of narrative research I was exposed to during my Masters studies.  Movements 5 and 6 of looking for God's presence in the research stories and of interdisciplinary investigation definitely enhanced my own research story.

## 1.11 RESEARCH OUTLINE

Chapter 1 focused on introducing the scope, limitations and challenges of the research. It also looked at the epistemology underlying the research, how the researcher positioned herself in the field of postfoundational practical theology. This positioning was supported by the narrative approach to therapy and research, social-constructionism, postfoundationalism and transversal rationality as an outcome of postfoundationalism. Furthermore, the research methodology was introduced. In order to do this in an effective and understandable manner, attention was given to social research, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research as well as narrative research before discussing the research design. Lastly, the research report itself came under the spotlight – why it is important to write up and reflect on the whole research process.

Chapter 2 introduces all the co-researchers and how and why we all came together as storytellers – to tell the story of the action. It furthermore contextualises the research story and the co-researchers' experiences. It begins by looking at the context of the NGO PEN and bringing in the idea of ethics-in-practice as it influences the research process and the context of the *Tree of Life* camps. To conclude this chapter, the importance of integrating my own context and story as researcher receives some attention.

Chapter 3 looks at HIV and Aids and related discourses and how these discourses have been interpreted. The situation of HIV and Aids orphans in South Africa is also discussed, before looking at how Aids and the impact thereof on the HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable children, are viewed and interpreted by the religious and theological communities. African storytelling as a tradition of interpretation within the context of Africa as well as within the context of this research, are also described. Lastly, the arts as a tradition of interpretation are also employed by making use of the co-researchers' own creativity.

Chapter 4 reflects on the interplay between the religious and spiritual aspects of the co-researchers' stories as they experienced it in the specific context and the other issues they are faced with after losing their parent(s) or caregivers. This is done because this research approaches the co-researchers' needs holistically and focuses on their psychological as well as spiritual needs. A breakdown of this psycho-spiritual bereavement needs into material needs, need for others, religious and spiritual needs and emotional needs are used to illustrate how all these stories of need are socially constructed and relevant to the co-researchers' stories and experiences of God.

Chapter 5 aims at thickening the description of the co-researchers' experiences through interdisciplinary investigation and transversal rationality. The chapter starts out by inviting interdisciplinary team members to the discussion and introducing them to the selected stories of the two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans amongst the co-researchers. Disciplines that formed part of this interdisciplinary investigation were theology itself, psychology, social work, anthropology, information science as well as life coaching.

Chapter 6 forms the climax of the research story and brings together the different storylines. The 'sense of community' or *Ubuntu* as the unique outcome of the *Tree of Life* camps are discussed. In an attempt to develop alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community, a suggestion for a pastoral care approach unique to the African context and by incorporating the art of African storytelling is made, before more suggestions for further research are discussed.

Chapter 7 concludes our research journey together. This chapter is socially constructed and reflective in nature. It tells of the hopes and fears the co-researchers described about the research as well as reflecting on how I as the researcher experienced the process. Some possible questions by religious communities and the academic community are mentioned and addressed before acknowledging the people who formed an audience to my life and research story.

## 1.12  CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 1

In this first chapter, which I called the prologue to an African research story, we were introduced to the character of Magoda as representing the art of African storytelling.  The scope of the research as well as the limitations thereof was set out.  Certain challenges faced during this research process also receive some attention.

Subsequently, I positioned myself within postfoundational practical theology by introducing and explaining the concepts of the narrative approach to therapy and research, social-constructionism, postfoundationalism and transversal rationality.

In the last section of this chapter, the practicalities of the research itself and how it fits into the postfoundational practical theology paradigm were addressed.  The research design and research methodology came under discussion, as well as the writing of the research report and the necessity of reflection in the research process.

The next chapter will focus on the context and the interpreted experiences of my co-researchers.  This constitutes the first three movements of postfoundational practical theology, namely the description of the specific contexts of the NGO PEN and the *Tree of Life* camps, the in-context experiences of my co-researchers as bereaved adolescents are listened to and described and these experiences are started to be interpreted in collaboration with the co-researchers.

# CHAPTER 2
# IN PERSPECTIVE –
# CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH

## 2.1    INTRODUCTION

*Magoda was an orphan.  His only possession was an ox that his father had left him before he died.  The women of his village gave him food to keep him from starving, and in return for the food they expected him to run errands and work for them morning, noon and night.*

*The poor boy never had a moment to himself and, for all his labours, seldom did he get a decent meal.  Sometimes he was too tired even to sleep.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:106-107)*

Here we learn a bit more about Magoda.  We now know that he, like my ten co-researchers, is also an orphan. He lives in a village and his only possession is an ox that his deceased father left him.  However, in order for him to survive day to day he needs to – maybe even unlike the other children in the village – work hard.  While we know more about Magoda himself, it is time to meet the adolescents who will also journey with me on this research process in the role of co-researchers.

The first chapter not only introduced Magoda, but also identified my epistemological positioning as that of a postfoundational practical theologian approaching this research in a narrative way, following the 7 movements to Postfoundational Practical Theology (PFPT) as proposed by Müller (2004). Chapter 1 subsequently paved the way for the individual stories that form the storyline of the research.

The focus in this chapter falls on the first three PFPT movements namely:

1) Describing a specific context, 2) Listening to and describing the in-context experiences and lastly 3) Interpreting these experiences as it comes alive in the specific context, with the help and collaboration of the co-researchers, in order to develop these interpretations to the fullest.   In doing so, I am in effect contextualising the research process here as well as referring to the methods by which the stories as research data were collected and analysed.

The chapter starts with an introduction to the story of PEN – the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) we worked with in the inner city of Pretoria – the context in which the research took place.  We look at how the organisation grew from a small weekly Bible club to an organisation assisting hundreds of vulnerable families and children in the inner city of Pretoria.

Conducting research within the greater context of HIV and Aids with adolescents – bereaved adolescents nonetheless – was a great challenge.  It is therefore of the utmost importance to look at how this research and its dissemination can be approached in an ethical and responsible manner.

The *Tree of Life* (TOL) program that was successfully implemented during the two respective camps and that was used as a research tool concerning the data collection and data analysis is briefly discussed before introducing my ten co-researchers.  To be true to the narrative nature of this research, I give the ten adolescents that acted as my co-researchers the opportunity to introduce themselves and their specific contexts. I focus firstly on their in-context experiences by listening to it and allowing the adolescents to describe their own experiences using their own voices and words, in an attempt to emancipate them as active co-researchers and not just passive participants in the research process, before integrating some of my own story and context with the greater research story.

## 2.2    SPEAKING OUT: THE STORY OF THE CONTEXT OF PEN

Some people might ask why I would include a section in this thesis, in this chapter, on the background of PEN.  The reason being – as an NGO as well as a faith-based organisation, (FBO), their story as an inner city organisation, and that of their director, Marinda van Niekerk, as the director of PEN and as former student of Professor Julian Müller, overlaps with that of especially the teen ministry of PEN.  My ten co-researchers are (or were at the time of the research) involved with the activities of PEN, especially the teen ministry, and as such PEN as an organisation and context has had a formative influence in their lives and on their life stories.  Dr Marinda van Niekerk (2006:25-26) summarises the establishment of PEN as follows:

> During 1990-1991 Pretoria's inner city Dutch Reformed congregation started working with children living in small flats in 25 to 30 floor high-rise buildings.  Two young people started the project.  They soon realised that these children's needs were too vast to be addressed by a Bible club (an hourly session held for ten to twenty children).  During Bible club the word of God was taught in a playful manner and combined with story telling, songs and games.

> It is under these circumstances (a poverty-stricken inner city) that PEN works to improve the lives of Pretoria's inner city population and offer a vision of what a city could be to its inhabitants were there a caring and loving community at its centre.

> PEN, Pretoria Evangelism and Nurture, was founded in 1992 and the name reflects the congregation's theology and aims.  The mission was formulated as to serve people living in the inner city as total beings in and through Christ.

Four areas of ministry that PEN focuses on (van Niekerk 2006:27-28) have been identified.  These are:

Voice

Amidst the noise of the inner city PEN strives to be a Voice of God bringing hope and dispensing love to our inner city communities.  This is done through a number of ministries.

Servant hood

A very important part of any community-oriented approach is to render certain much needed services to the people.  Food, clothing, medical care and other critical social services are provided where possible.

Community

Educational communities

Because of the initial emphasis on inner city children, their educational and general nurturing needs were identified as focal points of future involvement by PEN.

Residential communities

The second type of community that has developed caters to the enormous need for affordable housing and/or space in the inner city.

Stewardship

As is the case of many similar organisations, proof of success lies not only in the supply and demand of its product and services, but also with their management.

In traditional church language these would be *Leiturgia*, *Diakonia*, *Kerugma*, to which we added the concept of stewardship.

The vision of PEN as set out on their website ([www.pen.org.za](www.pen.org.za)) is stated as follows:

> The vision for this ministry started ten years ago when a discipleship group from the Pretoria Dutch Reformed Church became aware of the desperate needs that people in the inner city faced and started a process that crystallised into what is today known as PEN.
>
> The main focus of our ministry is to build long term relationships with the people whom we serve. To minister, not only through bringing the word of God, but to see to all their needs: food, clothes, social and academic care for the children, preventing family violence through therapy, helping with job creation, taking care of HIV-positive people, improving self-esteem and eventually, creating a new wholesome community.
>
> PEN is a <u>Section 21 Company</u> (Non-profit organisation, registered 1992) that works in close relation with local churches as well as other organisations (Governmental and NGOs). Its Board of Directors consists of a variety of people from different walks of life. PEN is financially audited by an <u>independent auditor</u> annually as required in the Companies Act.
>
> PEN is a non-profitable, non-denominational Christian-based organisation and as such sees itself as God's <u>VOICE</u>, <u>STEWARD</u>, <u>SERVANT</u> and <u>COMMUNITY</u> in the inner city of Pretoria.

The people, the children and teenagers whom PEN intend on serving and looking after, live in specifically the inner city of Pretoria, South Africa. Van Niekerk (2006:25) describes the unique needs of inner city dwellers when she describes the inner city of Pretoria as follows:

The inner city of Pretoria is a fast-growing and densely populated area. Great numbers of people flock from rural areas to the city with the dream of a better life. Sadly, reality is that they end up in the inner city, most often sharing a small, one-room flat with 10 or more people; there are very few job opportunities and sometimes there is very little to eat. In circumstances like these, family structures fall apart, moral standards drop and crime and gangsterism become a way of life. Amidst all this hardship it is women and children who suffer most... Basic needs like food and clothing become luxury items and things such as quality day-care and education for children only a dream.

Right from the start of PEN, it is evident that at the heart of this organisation is the well-being of the inner city community at large. Their teen ministry focuses on the needs of the teenagers within this community, the community my co-researchers call home.

With reference to dire poverty as also experienced in urban areas of South Africa as describe above, Müller (2009b:20) voices his concern that when poverty is under discussion, it is usually discussed as a phenomenon and little or no attention is given to the people involved. He himself therefore chooses to listen to the narratives of people, persons, individuals and groups, and in this research process, I will follow suit by listening to the stories my ten co-researchers, especially regarding their psycho-spiritual bereavement needs, have to tell. From this storytelling, we will move onto story development, because as Müller (2009b:20) also states, to be true to the narrative approach, the listening of a story also and especially calls for the retelling thereof.

In working with people from poverty-stricken circumstances, like in the inner city of Pretoria, PEN, Müller (2009b:22) and myself, therefore acknowledge that a poor person is still a human being capable of being reciprocal in relationships.

## 2.3 VOICING CONCERNS: THE STORY OF ETHICS-IN-PRACTICE

Before moving onto introducing the reader to the specifics of the research process as well as to my ten co-researchers, we need to pause first and emphasise the importance of ethics in conducting a research project of this magnitude.

In research, as in life, I think it is important to adhere to the so-called 'golden rule' of only doing onto others as you want done unto you. In more modernistic research, research subjects are sometimes seen and treated as if they are 'guinea pigs' in a clinical laboratory experiment, removed from the real life contexts of their lives. Narrative research in general and this research in particular, aim to break away from this grossly stereotyped and outdated version of approaching research.

As was seen earlier in chapter 1, research participants are seen and approached as co-researchers – playing as an important role in the research process as the researcher herself.

### 2.3.1 What is research ethics?

The human mind has a capacity for moral awareness, "… an innate sense for 'right and wrong'…" (van Huyssteen 2008:493). In light of this moral awareness of humans, Renold, Holland, Ross and Hillman (2008:430) conceive ethics:

- *as situated* (i.e. locally negotiated within each individual research project and thus contextually contingent, historically specific and always in-process);
- *as dialogic* (i.e. embedded in the intersubjective (sic) relations through which the personal is acknowledged, not denied);
- *as political* (i.e. always informed by our own individual and collective political aims…)

Their definition places emphasis on the importance of the context of the research, as does the PFPT to research. The inter-subjective nature of research relationships between the researcher and the co-researchers and between the co-researchers themselves is also stressed, similar to the narrative approach to research.

In light of this, Renold et al (2008:427) therefore sees the

> … intersubjective (sic), situated and negotiated approach to research as ongoing dialogue in everyday fieldwork relations. We consider the concept of 'becoming participant' to foreground the micro-ethical moments of complex and ambivalent engagements and disengagements within the research process.

Regarding Renold et al's (2008:427) notion that people 'become participants' in particular research projects, Clark (2008:954) agrees and states that "(q)ualitative engagements are actively experienced by those who engage and they continually make decisions concerning their involvement by reflecting upon their experiences". Therefore, "… developing and sustaining research relationships is at the heart of the qualitative research enterprise" (Clark 2007:954). These so-called research relationships should be ethical in nature – from the start to the very end of the research process, including during the writing up of the research report that will be disseminated to interested parties.

Our own discourses as it plays a role in the research process are also acknowledged in the definition of ethics by Renold et al (2008:427). We – researchers and co-researchers alike – do not come to the research process as blank canvasses we become part of the research as people-in-context. Our life stories, our culture, our specific situation all affect the research relationships we are trying to establish and maintain for the duration of the research.

## 2.3.2   On becoming participant: Informed consent

Informed consent is not just given.  People need to be informed why they have been approached to become part of a research project.  Informed consent is therefore always negotiated (Renold et al 2008:427).  This is also, and especially true in conducting research with children and young people such as my ten co-researchers.

In conducting participatory research with these adolescents, it was important to bear in mind that informed consent was part of a complex terrain and as such "… always in process and unfinished" (Renold et al 2008:427).  This means that consent in this research process was "… iterative and uncertain ... and open to revision and questioning" (Renold et al 2008:427).  In approaching informed consent in this manner, one can refer to it as "… 'ethics-in-practice' – that is, the actual ethical conduct of the research project." (Renold et al 2008:429).

In listening to the stories of adolescents and to their (mostly silent) stories of psycho-spiritual bereavement needs, I tried to recognise and respect their worth as human beings (Alderson & Morrow 2004:7).  My co-researchers had the option of choosing a pseudonym for themselves, to protect their privacy.  They all provided us with alternative African names for themselves, explaining the meaning thereof for them.  The alternative African names and the meanings thereof for Dee and Zee can be found in their complete stories in chapter 5.  I however chose not to use these names, as some adolescents actually insisted that their real names be used.  Dimakatso, one of the girls, stated she wanted to recognise herself if she was to read my research report one day, and one of the twin boys in the research group actually stated he wants his real name to be used, because he 'wants to be famous'.  The rest of the co-researchers in the research group also did not have a problem for me to use their real first names as used on the TOL camps in my research report.

In light of their socially constructed consent to use their real first names in my research report, I decided to use it. However, I still decided to use acknowledged nick names for the two HIV and Aids orphans in the research group, as so to still give them some sense of anonymity in the research process and to prevent them from being stigmatised should their real names be known. They both welcomed this decision of mine and supported it.

Although my co-researchers real first names are used in this research process, they were – understandably so – hesitant having photos of the two TOL camps' activities showing their faces to be published on the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS website (www.hivorphans.co.za), possibly because the domain name would implicitly imply they were all HIV and Aids orphans, which they are not. In light of this hesitancy of theirs, I furthermore decided not to show their faces in the photos taken on the TOL camps by the co-researchers themselves as presented in chapter 3 of this research report. Instead, I covered their faces with smiley face stickers, using specific stickers for each adolescent. In doing so, I still identify the co-researchers present in specific photos and the interactions between them, without explicitly exposing their faces, in an attempt to acknowledge my co-researchers right to privacy.

### 2.3.3 Ethics and the institutional implications of the research

As far as the institutional implications of this study go, I sincerely hope that due to the human element involved – the individual children's stories – this thesis will help in humanising this social dilemma situated within the broader field of HIV and Aids in South Africa that could otherwise just be a stack of statistics.

A copy of the research findings will be made available to interested persons and I would also be available to discuss it in person.

## 2.4 AROUND THE CAMPFIRE: CONTEXT OF THE TREE OF LIFE CAMPS

### 2.4.1 The field of research: Posing the research question

During my Masters in Practical Theology, I did a seminar for a class presentation on parent-bereaved children and how their grief affected them. The impact of HIV and Aids in this regard was mentioned in the passing, without attention being giving to Aids as a social factor in the African context. In discussing the seminar presented, it was mentioned that looking from an African perspective at the plight of parent-bereaved children would be an interesting research topic. As part of my research journey for my Masters degree, I subsequently set out to listen to the story of need of HIV and Aids orphans.

Having looked into the needs of specific children left bereft by their parent(s)' death due to HIV and Aids in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa I became interested in more specifically the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs these orphans might be experiencing. The focus for my PhD research therefore turned to look at psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of adolescents left orphaned or vulnerable by HIV and Aids in South Africa.

As my research formed part of the greater Departmental research project entitled SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS, and also because this project was launched in collaboration with the NGO PEN, the focus for my PhD research fell on orphans in Pretoria, South Africa who were in one way or another involved with the specific NGO. Since PEN is active in the inner city of Pretoria, this also meant that my focus had to shift somewhat from my Masters research – from listening to the needs of HIV and Aids orphans in the rural area of KwaZulu-Natal, to more specifically the urban context of Pretoria's inner city.

Another pressing issue was finding adolescents who were bereft because of losing their parents to HIV and Aids in this vast maze that the inner city forms. As the facilitators at PEN could not tell us with a reasonable degree of certainty that these adolescents lost their parents to HIV and Aids, it was decided to broaden the research scope, to include other vulnerable adolescents who might have lost their parent(s) / caregivers to causes other than HIV and Aids. I decided to address this research question of the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans, by once again employing the narrative approach to research. I wanted my co-researchers to be able to speak about their experiences of loss and grief and how these experiences have influenced their lives.

## 2.4.2 Testing the water: Launching a pilot study

As was already mentioned, my research formed part of a greater Departmental research project. In a sense, this formed a pilot study to my individual research, as it gave me the opportunity to refine my own research further before embarking on the data collection thereof. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:110) state quite clearly why the necessity for a pilot study in research exists. It is important to make clear and concise what exactly it is you want to research – the pressing phenomena in your designated field of expertise it is you want to have a closer look at.

The Department of Practical Theology's research project entitled SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS set out to do research on the bereavement and spiritual issues that might form part of this bereavement, of Christian HIV and Aids orphans and vulnerable children (teenagers) after losing their parent(s) or other loved ones to this dreadful disease. With generous funding from the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa, professor Müller, another PhD student in the Department – Juanita (Loubser) Meyer and myself set out to conquer the world, so to speak, of HIV and Aids as experienced by these orphans and vulnerable children.

With a good research proposal in hand and funding in our pockets we made contact with three individual Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in and around Pretoria in the greater Tshwane area. Professor Müller had a great foothold with regards to these three organisations – both Marinda van Niekerk – the director of PEN in the inner city of Pretoria and Sunette Pienaar the director of Heartbeat on the outskirts of Pretoria were former PhD students of professor Müller. They were both involved in a previous research endeavour of the Department on HIV and Aids and have since moved on to start and manage very successful NGOs assisting and helping people in and involved with the HIV and Aids landscape in Pretoria. Andre de la Port of Hospivision and president / founder of SAAP and professor Müller also had a good working relationship. Furthermore, Simon Mailula was also employed by this organisation, which gave us further access to this organisation and the people it was assisting in their daily struggles.

Regular planning sessions with the directors of these organisations as well as training sessions with field workers identified by the specific organisations helped us in the execution of the actual field research of conducting narrative interviews with teenagers under the care of the individual organisations to look into their experiences of bereavement and possible spiritual issues arising from this bereavement.

We as a research team decided on enlisting the help of field workers in conversation with these co-researchers rather than the researchers themselves due to:

- The language barrier between the researchers and co-researchers
- The field workers and co-researchers shared to some extend the same culture and context
- The field workers were known to the teenagers through their work within the individual organisations

Inclusion criteria for this initial data collection were as follows:

- Co-researchers had to be teenagers (13 -19 years)
- Willingness to partake in the research study
- Parent(s) have succumbed to HIV and Aids in the 12 months prior to the research

Exclusion criteria extended to an unwillingness to participate in the research study.

Data collection was done by means of interviews. Interviews with the caregivers of these children were done and then with their help with the children orphaned by HIV and Aids. Established NGOs (FBO's) formed part of the research team, and their professional workers and volunteers were trained in conjunction with these organisations to conduct the interviews with the teenagers. Open-ended questions were used in these interviews to provide space for the caregivers and the teenagers to voice their experiences. The gathering of their stories was done in the following manner:

- Field workers were asked to interview three teenagers for three consecutive times.
- Field workers received a stipend for every interview conducted
- We had lengthy discussions with the directors of the organisations as well as the field workers whether or not to pay the teenagers (co-researchers) as well for their stories, but decided against it, as we were worried that it might affect the truthfulness of the stories being presented.
- Field workers used opening questions designed by myself to get the conversation going
- Second session focussed on follow-up questions derived from the answers to the opening questions

- Third session was about letter-writing – addressing the questions and issues specifically around their parent(s) death and questions with regards to their spirituality and issues with God
- Field workers were asked to make short notes on how they experienced this whole process of talking to the children

A good amount of data was collected from this initial stage of data collection; we however did face some challenges during this round of data collection:

- Most of the interviewees were girls – not good representation of how boys are experiencing this issue
- Some interviews only gave bare, unemotional facts and there weren't much flesh to the stories to thicken the plot so to speak
- One of the field workers died during this period of data collection – somebody else had to finish his interviews
- One field worker interviewed a boy of 7 – good story collected, but falls outside the perimeters of this specific study which focused on teenagers

Suggestions for further data collection from this initial experience:
- One on one contact with our co-researchers
- Focus on one organisation – different focus areas in different areas of the community albeit all three are working in Pretoria
- Need to involve more boys in the research
- Need to broaden our scope – to include not only HIV and Aids orphans, but also vulnerable teenagers – those who might not have lost a biological parent to the disease, but nonetheless someone close to them like a caregiver or close relative

- The time frame in which they lost this significant person in their live, need to be extended. During the first year of losing someone it is more difficult to talk about the issue than later on.

### 2.4.3  Coming into being: The *Tree of Life* (TOL) camps

Professor Müller introduced Juanita Meyer (fellow PhD student) and myself to the TOL metaphor by handing us the article entitled: "The Tree of Life project: Using narrative ideas in work with vulnerable children in South Africa" written by Ncazelo Ncube (2006) in 2008.  His instructions were to develop a workbook from the article, directed at orphans who lost their parent(s) and or caregivers, as the greater Departmental research project focused up to that point on orphans left bereaved by HIV and Aids and aptly entitled SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS.

We thought it would be ideal to structure the workbook in such a way to help these orphans work through bereavement issues related to HIV and Aids and the role it played in their bereavement.  Juanita and I actually reinvented the wheel the weekend when we came together to compile a workbook and facilitators guide according to the article.  We couldn't find any reference to it on the internet at that stage, and decided to create our own based on the article.  When I eventually found the workbook on the internet (http://www.repssi.net) months later, it was with a feeling of pride that I called Juanita to tell her the news.  Not only did our version cover everything the original workbook covered but, our workbook was specifically orientated to our own unique research situation.  Looking not only into the psychosocial wellbeing of the children who took part in the TOL exercise, as did the original version, but also incorporating the psycho-spiritual wellbeing of the children that took part in our specific TOL exercise.  A copy of our TOL workbook and facilitators guide (first camp) can be accessed on the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS website (http://www.hivorphans.co.za).

We narrowed the research field down to only working with one NGO previously involved in the research project, namely PEN. We contacted Dr Marinda van Niekerk, director of PEN to help us to identify teens who adhered to the criteria. She referred us to Susan van der Walt and Jasmyn van Heerden whom were involved with the Teen Ministry at PEN. We had a meeting with them and Dagmara du Plessis as well as other role players in the process. This proved to be a very difficult meeting for us, because, as I would later describe Susan – we were battling with a lioness protecting her cubs against intruders. Rather reluctantly Susan and Jasmyn agreed to find eight (later changed to ten due to good funding) teenagers who met our criteria. They however warned us that due to disclosure issues on the part of the teenagers they themselves were unsure of what the direct causes of deaths were of most of these adolescents' parent(s) and or caregivers. This issue relating to disclosure impacted on our initial inclusion criteria for the TOL camps, and we had to therefore broaden our criteria. The final inclusion criteria for the first TOL camp were as follows:

- Adolescent (13-19 years) boys and girls
- Who were recently bereft (last 24 months)
- Lost a parent / parent figure / caregiver
- Possibly from HIV and Aids
- Actively involved with the activities of PEN
- Willingness to partake in the TOL camp and research
- The same number of boys and girls in the group

And so our research journey with our TOL co-researchers commenced. We chose to use the TOL camps and group discussions in working with the adolescent co-researchers. Van Niekerk (2006:33) states that teenagers are at ease within a group. They get the opportunity in a group to compare themselves and their experiences to that of the other group members.

And as Van Niekerk (2006:33) puts it: "…find reference points for developing their norms". In a peer group they get opportunities to see how other adolescents in similar situations reacted to problems and how they coped with it.

We (Juanita and myself) made the decision early on to also share similar stories from our own lives in the group setting, as we hoped this would help the group members not to feel vulnerable and 'under the microscope', and also in an attempt to build up a trust relationship with these strangers. Thereby I think we succeeded in creating a comfortable and safe environment for the adolescents to express themselves openly and as honestly as possible.

As our group sessions formed part of a weekend camp – we had 6 sessions with our co-researchers over the weekend of the first TOL camp, and a similar number of sessions during the second TOL camp. The last session of each camp was reserved as a ceremony session whereby the children received certificates acknowledging their individual strengths and skills as it was shown through the duration of the camps. During the first TOL camp, they also divided into two smaller mixed groups to perform an item for us – about the TOL camp itself.

After the first camp, I kept in contact with most of the co-researchers via telephone and the social network mxit. One of the co-researchers, Palesa, phoned me at the end of the year (2008) to tell me she passed Matric (Grade 12) and another, Moses, let me know that he got an IT (Information Technology) bursary to further his education after Matric. They tried to keep me in the loop with what was going on in their lives, although this was sometimes difficult for them by not having enough funds on their phones or phones being lost or stolen. However, they did appreciate the concern and interest I showed between the two camps in their lives. This became evident during a group discussion during the second camp when Shaun stated that:

Amanda kept in contact, sending smses over Christmas and New Year to hear how we were doing. Although I didn't have the money to respond, she kept on sending smses and this showed me she cared for us.

The camp in my opinion had a profound experience on most of the teens' lives, as those whom I kept contact with kept on asking me when we were planning a second camp. Due to budget restrictions and no funding, it was difficult for the Department to foresee the possibility of another camp. As I have already alluded to we, however, saw the necessity in holding another 'follow-up' camp or reunion camp as some of the teens referred to it nearing the end of our individual research. This took place during the weekend of 26-28 February 2010, again at Sikelele Adventure Village, Magaliesburg. This was an excellent way of concluding our research, as we had the chance to once again meet with our co-researchers, catch up on their life stories and hear how they had experienced the research process. I followed this up with a further meeting after I had the chance of going through their second TOL workbooks as well. This effort to thicken the research story is quite in line with what Alasuutari; Bickman and Brannen (2008:224) emphasise when they say that:

> With deep understanding of a case as the prime goal of case study, an attitude of openness may be the most fortuitous item in a case study researcher's dispositional toolkit. There is always more that can be learned about a case, more potential interpretations of existing data, and new events that create alterations in the case. Premature conclusions can foreclose on deeper understanding.

In light of the above, the following reflections that will guide the rest of my thesis: The process of reflection was one of continuous feedback from the group as we all shared our experiences and thickened the research story thereby. Reflections included:

- The impact of the group on everyone individually and collectively
- How the stories impacted the group as a whole
- My evaluation that the inner city, the African context and involvement with PEN influences the world and development of these adolescents

## 2.4.4  Selecting stories: On design, sampling and data collection

This research project situated within the TOL camps' context falls within the qualitative paradigm to research as explained in chapter 1.  Furthermore, it is descriptive in nature (Neuman 1997:19-20).  Neuman (1997:20) states that "(d)escriptive and exploratory research have many similarities.  They blur together in practice… The outcome of a descriptive study is the detailed picture of the subject".  To put it in narrative research terms, the idea is to present a thick research story at the end of the research process.

The method of sampling that was used – by asking facilitators at PEN to provide us with possible co-researchers for our research – is called purposive sampling.  It uses the "(j)udgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind" (Neuman 1997:206).  These facilitators know and work with these adolescents on a regular basis and therefore know at least something of their life stories.

The research made use of field research (the TOL camps) to collect the research data.  The stories of the ten co-researchers, can be seen in research terms as case studies, however Müller (2005:74) warns against using the concept of case studies with reference to practical theology, because "… it carries with it the idea of a linear approach", where the case study is seen as "… the empirical confirmation and verification …" of theories (Müller 2005:74).  The stories of my co-researchers presented here is therefore more than mere case studies.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:12) also describe the researcher herself as a "…tool of research…" in the research process. The TOL workbooks compiled during the two camps also yielded data to be used in the research process. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:88) describe data as: "…those pieces of information that any particular situation *gives* to an observer". Furthermore, by making observations during the research process, the qualitative researcher becomes "… a participant observer" (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:145), by entering the lives of her research participants or co-researchers (Marshall & Rossman 2006:72). Marshall and Rossman (2006:73) go on to describe these interactions as "… usually highly informative while remaining informal". All of which the TOL camps definitely were.

Not only did we as researchers observe our co-researchers and their interactions with us and each other, we also used the TOL workbooks to ask specific questions, which we then followed up in our group discussions. As part of these camps, the two groups – the boys and the girls – were issued with disposable cameras with which to also take photos. Even these photos – as seen in chapter 3 – formed part of the data we collected. In light of this, it is therefore evident that we did not limit ourselves to only one method of data collection. Concerning the various data collected during these TOL camps, the concept of triangulation comes to the fore.

Alasuutari; Bickman and Brannen (2008:224) describe triangulation as follows:

> Triangulation, a term derived from nautical procedures for locating ships at sea based on three points, does not presume three sources (or methods, observers, data collection events, or theoretical perspectives). More or fewer, as needed and as available, may be consulted.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:100) state "… that qualitative researchers frequently use triangulation – comparing multiple data sources in search of common themes – to support the validity of their findings.

Alasuutari et al (2008:222) describe triangulation (authors' emphasis) further by stating that:

> During data collection, *triangulation by data source* involves collecting data from different persons or entities.
>
> *Methodological triangulation* involves checking data collected via one method with data collected using another, for example, checking whether direct observation can confirm interview testimony.
>
> *Triangulation by time* involves repeated return to the site to track patterns of events and new trends and permutations.
>
> *Triangulation by observer* can help expand meaning-making, balance interpretations, and guard against undue researcher subjectivity.
>
> *Theoretical triangulation* in data analysis involves recourse to different abstractions that might explain the data. Various theories, models, typologies, and categorization systems may suggest different meanings.

From this description above, it becomes clear that our TOL data collection made use of triangulation by data source (ten co-researchers), triangulation by observer (Juanita and myself as camp facilitators), methodological triangulation (observations and group interviewing) and even triangulation by time (the two different TOL camps held in respectively 2008 and 2010). Furthermore, theoretical triangulation took place during the data analysis stage of the research process, as I made use of transversal rationality as explained in chapter 1. I also asked interdisciplinary team members to reflect further on two individual stories in chapter 5, as well as the one interdisciplinary team member who reflected on a song written and performed by the twins in our research group in chapter 3. These interdisciplinary team members were from various disciplines within the social sciences and adhered to different theories and paradigms within their field of interest. I therefore employed triangulation in my research study with the "…focus on promoting the quality of qualitative research" (Flick 2007:43).

## 2.5 SPEAKING UP: THE CO-RESEARCHERS AT WORD

Here, the adolescents introduce themselves and their own stories.  The rest of their stories will unfold – like the story of Magoda – as this research develops further. Important to note is that since the aim was to be true to their individual use and style of language, I did not make many corrections as far as this was concerned.

### 2.5.1 Annie – 'Talking is and always has been the best medicine'

My name is Annie, I am 18 turning 19 in June 2010. I just recently finished my Matric and I am waiting to apply for tertiary education to study further. After my Matric year I had plans to study at the College of my dreams (CTT) and I could not study there because of financial issues, that was my biggest storm because as much as I wanted to go there I could not because my aunt whom I am currently staying with could not afford it.

(I lost my mom). The memory of my mom still lives in me because whenever I am in situations or doing things there are certain things that she would tell me and those things guide me into doing things according to the way she would want me to.  Wow. My mom was the best mom I could ever ask (for). She was sweet, understanding and yet so loving.

The person who is most important to me at this point in time is my aunt because throughout my family she is the one person would take me in when I had nobody else to take me so she has been great towards me.  The TOL camp was great I really got to take out a lot of things which were on my chest and it taught me not to battle things inside and that talking is and always has been the best medicine.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Annie**

My impressions of Annie during our first TOL camp, was that she is a very shy individual. Although she replied to all questions directed at her and participated in group discussions in so far as she could not avoid being part of it, she rarely spoke up out of her own. When she spoke about her mother who died, she showed some emotion, yet she mostly kept to herself. Although she and Dimakatso seemed to get along well, she still seemed almost like an outsider to the group.

She did not hand in her first TOL workbook to be copied and although she did bring her second TOL workbook, she did not respond to several requests to lend her first TOL workbook to us. One can only speculate on the reasons for this – maybe she did not have it any more and did not want to acknowledge it, or maybe – while she did not contribute a lot to the first camp's group discussions, she poured her heart and soul into completing the workbook and felt it to be very private.

This all changed during the second TOL camp. From the get go Annie was full of energy, joking and chatting with the rest of the group. She even initiated interesting group discussions by challenging and differing from the rest of the group members at times. She spoke more openly about her mother and the impact her mother's death had on her.

Right in front of our eyes, she changed from the shy, silent outsider type of person to being part of the group and showing initiative. This, I later learned when they had to reflect on the TOL camping experiences, was due to her earnest fear that we (Juanita and myself) were abducting them on the first camp and that we were going to sell them to the human trafficking trade. Something we could all laugh about later on, but which was very real and frightening for her in that moment to the extend that it influenced her participation for the duration of the first TOL camp.

## 2.5.2 Dee – 'Loud and confident, but can't handle pain'

I am Dee, I live in Home of Safety, (my) mother passed away while living with aunt. (I am a) very independent person, loud and confident, but can't handle pain. (I) love poetry and writing and (am) grade 12 in 2010, turning 18 years this year.

Well I was the only child, no dad, mother was Rebecca, so was raised by many family members – Miona (grandma), John (grandpa), Rebecca (closest aunt), 2 other aunts and 2 uncles, Matebise (uncle like a father), best cousin ever (Basetsana)… and so on.

I never really liked my mom, but loved her, because we never knew each other. Rebecca my aunt, I loved her so much. She was the closest thing to me, like a mother, but she's crazy and I have (an) anger problem, emotional with her, she was my centre. My uncle, love him like a father. My grandma love her to bits, (but) want nothing to do with her because she broke my trust.

My aunt, she taught me to be independent, stand up, was my role model, taught me about life, how to do things and how not to do it, how to treat others, taught me that family is very important and that one thing she kept reminding me of. Then Zee, she became my comfort since there was no one close to me after me and my aunt separated.

Zee (friend) is very important to me. She is my close friend, we met in grade 9 (2007), she knows me better than anyone. She started in PEN then introduced me. And in 2009 we ended (up) living together in Precious Pearls because our parents passed away in the same year. Mostly God, because he wakes me up. He said he got good plans for us. I want to see them.

I lost my mother.  She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around.  We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth. My mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS. We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out.

Not really that important or it's just because I never saw the importance of them being in my life, but she was important because she was my mother (which does not mean much).  She is special because she was kind to other people (but me) and very loving.

(The impact of the first TOL camp) – I started talking to my aunt, I forgave her because we were both feeling pain. And because I forgave her and opened the door for her and even if it is tough. There was a time when she was crying and confided in me like we used to. So I try not to lay judgement on her, and she can move on with her life knowing that she is not the one to blame for my problems. That they are just storms that will pass.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Dee**

Dee's story is one of two stories I have chosen to form part of the interdisciplinary conversation that forms the cornerstone of the research methodology I am working with. Later on – in Chapter 5 – we will get to know Dee even better. I specifically chose her story to form part of the interdisciplinary conversation, because not unlike many in the group she also lost her mother, but because of her relationship with her mother as well as her aunt and how this has affected her life thus far. I will therefore limit my reflection at this point to a few comments and will reflect in more detail on her story in Chapter 5.

Dee was the 'braveheart' in the group, acknowledging from the start that her mother died due to HIV and Aids. The group seemed shocked at first when she told us – not in so much as they did not know, I think it was rather because they did not think she would be so open about the fact.

They nevertheless never treated her any differently than the rest of the group, and it did not seem as if they stigmatised her at all with regards to how her mother died.

She was in my opinion very open and upfront with her thoughts and feelings during both TOL camps, which helped the group discussions a lot. She became very emotional when talking about her situation leading up to her moving into a House of Safety and it was evident that her situation caused her a lot of emotional pain. She seemed very close to Zee and it was clear that she cared very much about Zee's wellbeing.

From the get go I felt very close to Dee, and had much empathy for her situation. She talked about her wish to one day become a writer, a dream I myself could still relate to. In a certain sense, she was me when I was her age.

### 2.5.3 Dimakatso – 'Never (to) give up in life'

I am Dimakatso. I am turning 18 in November 2010. I am in grade 12. I live with my grandmother who is my breadwinner, my favourite colours are blue and pink and I love 'Sponge Bob Square Pants'.

I was born in a village in Matjiejieleng in Limpopo. My parents are the late Mapula which is my mother and my father is Solly. I only know my grandmother who is Julia and my aunt is Christina. I love my family very much it's just that after losing my mother I felt empty in my life, but God and my grandmother Julia will always be there for me. My father abandoned me when I was still a child so I can't say anything about him.

I live with my grandmother Julia and Aunt Christina. They liked talking and having fun, I love them because they mean the world to me. My grandmother, mother and PEN (are the most important people in my life). I grew up with my grandmother. She taught me a lot of things, she told me never to give up in life. She also taught me how to talk, read and love people.  PEN people have taught me to say please and thank you.

Yes (I lost) my mother. You know when a child loses a mother she thinks everything is gone. I love my mother very much she meant everything to me, she used to do things for (me), she always wanted me to be a doctor, before she died she said to me " Bye bye Dimakatso I will always love you", that is how I can summarise my story about the loved one that I have lost.

(My mother) was a wonderful (person) who loved her kid. I was the only one in her life. She was really very special to me. She used to do anything a mother would do for her child/children. (My favourite memory of my mother is) going to visit her, she lived in Limpopo while I was in Gauteng. She wanted me to get the best education ever. What I liked about her (was) she loved going shopping and (to) drama theatres.

My mother was a very humble person. She was studying to become a nurse. I never had time to talk to her about my dreams and hopes. I love my mother very much and she died at the age of 27. I don't really know what (dreams and hopes) my mom had for me. It is because I was raised by my grandmother and I lived with her in my whole life while my mother was continuing her studies in another province. So I hardly spoke to her but the communication was good.

(The first TOL camp) was there for me. It helped me to focus on the brighter side of life (not?) sour fruits. I just told them God is there. Through good and bad times He is always there.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Dimakatso**

If I had to describe Dimakatso in one word it would be 'talkative'. She might even enjoy talking more than I do – which as Juanita (and others!) would put it, is almost impossible. She enjoys the company of other people and likes being part of a group. She became my mxit buddy and 'informant'. Whenever I wanted to know how the others were doing, Dimakatso would know and tell me. I think I got to know her better during these mxit conversations we had, than during the TOL camps itself.

She has a zest for life, is very honest to the extent that she wouldn't think twice to call a spade a spade and is very inquisitive in nature. During both TOL camps, she freely participated in group discussions and other activities. It seemed like she would be the one that would sometimes ask the uneasy questions – those questions that everybody wanted to ask, but was too afraid to do so. She has grown and matured a lot between the two camps and she seemed more accepted by the group during the second TOL camp.

Speaking about her mother who died, she was not too emotional. She focused more on the dream her mother had for her of becoming a doctor one day – a dream she herself has internalised – but in the same instance realising and acknowledging the fact that her marks were probably not good enough to become one, which I think pains her very much.

Her grandmother and aunt seems to be her main support system and a constant in her life, whereas her mother to a great extent, was not as she wasn't close by and present for the everyday happenings in Dimakatso's life. Yet, this did not diminish in any way the love, respect and awe that she felt towards her mother.

### 2.5.4 Palesa – 'Fight for my life to be better'

I am Palesa and are staying in town. My father's name is Albert Taele M and I am from a family of seven including my brothers and sisters.

I was born (in) Lesotho and I grew up there then left (for) South Africa in 2003. My parents also come from Lesotho but my mom passed away this year (2008). And my grandfather only live with my grandmother and (I) have one uncle, but I don't have aunts.

Okay. My father is a good person, he likes me to do good things always and he is giving me love, comfort and he is supportive but he does not like to do bad things. I also have supportive brothers and my sisters who are there for me always. My father (is an important person in my life) because he taught me how to fight for my life to be better and to (take) care of myself. And also my friend is also there for me whenever I need help he motivates me about my life, especially spiritual things. He taught me how to use my intelligent faith.

Yes, I lost my mom this year 4th of August (2008). It was painful but she was sick suffering so much, but it was not easy because she was the one who was in charge of my family, but any way she is gone. God is with her, and life goes on. (My mom was important to me) because (she) was my everything. She was always there for me in bad and good times, she was a good motivator and always supportive, whenever I needed something she would fight for me to get it. My mom had great dreams about my life because she wanted the best from me, and she was always guiding me all the time by making me believe in myself even today I still remember the words and I use her words in life. She was special to me, I loved her so much because she wanted the best from me in all areas of my life.

(The impact of the first TOL camp) – the first was that I learnt to forget about the past and focus on the future which means to forget about the death of my parent because she was not going to come back. It would make other people's lives better by telling them about the feelings, storms they faced during the process of their loss to tell what they feel and realise the pain and move on with life.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Palesa**

Palesa was the quiet one in the group, both during the first TOL camp and the second TOL camp. However, when she spoke up her contributions to the group discussions were significant. Being the eldest of the girls, she seemed to be an outsider to the group. She seemed more introverted and reserved than some of the other girls, shy in a sense.

She is very soft-spoken and seemed very vulnerable. She became very sad during the first TOL camp when she spoke about her mother whom she lost. During this camp, she did not indicate when her mother died, but I later realised when reading through her workbook that her mother died only two months before the camp. It was therefore probably a very difficult process for her to go through at that time.

What was evident from her story was the fact that she felt very loved and supported, even after her mother's death, by not only her father, but also her brothers and sisters. She comes from a big family, which probably helped her grieving process, in that she had the emotional support that some of the other teenagers on the camp might not have had.

Even though her family emotionally supported her, she experienced the loss of her mother as a very traumatic event. She did not only experience the physical loss of her mother, but also the loss of her mother's hopes and dreams for her, and her moral support.

It was still very difficult for her during the second TOL camp to speak about her mother she lost. Yet, it seemed like she matured a lot since the first TOL camp. She was now living on her own, supported by her father and furthering her education.

### 2.5.5 Zee – 'Crazy, smart and beautiful'


I am Zee, – the crazy, smart and beautiful young lady.  I was born in Queenstown, Port Elizabeth. I am half Mozambican and half Xhosa. I grew up most of my time in Johannesburg.  I lived with my father for 14 years, he was a mother also to me. I wouldn't say I know all of my family, because I never got the chance to know them all.  Getting to know new people is one of the things I enjoy doing and being around people.


From my father's side I know a few of them (my family members). I think they are lovely people, very cultural they are into much of the culture, which is a good thing. I won't say I know much from my mother's side, because she died before I even knew all my aunts and uncles.


Special person in my life is my dad, he will always be in my heart and always special to me.  LOVE YOU DADDY (*drew a heart*).  My father (is the most important person in my life), he has taught me to think wisely and to be strong (brave), he showed (me) reality. Also my friend Dee, she is one special friend, that means she is different from all my friends, she (is) my sister in a way.  Pal groups *(a PEN activity)* is also one of the important things in my life, it guides me through life because God is the guardian in my life.

I have lost my father because he was sick. And I also lost my mother by the age of three years, my (?) also passed away early this year it was traumatising.  (They were important to me) (b)ecause I love and care about them and knew them.  My dad used to be one of the important people in my life, but at the moment I would say my aunt and uncle are important in my life. Because they (have) taken care of me at the time when I needed support, they loved me like their own child, which meant a lot to me.  Mummy Angela was actually also one of the most important people in (my) life.  My dad wanted me to be successful in everything I do from education to getting a job one day. My aunt and uncle believe in me so much that they motivate (me) is to become a chef one day.  Mummy Angel made me realise that cooking, being a chef was my dream is.

(The impact of the first TOL camp) – It made me open up a little bit, expressing my feelings and thoughts to my friend Dee. When something bothered me I could tell Dee about (it) unlike before I keep quiet about everything.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Zee**

What I remember of Zee is the first time I saw her at a PEN group meeting at Grootte Kerk in the inner city of Pretoria in September 2008, a couple of weeks before the first TOL camp. The PEN facilitators asked Juanita and I to attend a group meeting before we go on the camp in order for the teenagers to be introduced to us within the safety of a bigger group setting. For discussions, we were divided into smaller groups, Zee was in the group Juanita and I were divided into.

I immediately liked her. She was full of life, chatting, asking questions and wanting to get to know us better. Susan indicated at a later stage that the possibility exists that Zee might be going on the camp with us, and I wanted to make sure that she did. I think Susan found this very amusing, because every time we spoke I wanted to know if Zee was still coming.

I chose Zee's story to be part of the interdisciplinary conversation in Chapter 5, mainly due to the fact that she – unlike the others who mostly lost their mothers – lost her father, also due to HIV and Aids as well as her mother a couple of years before. Therefore, I am limiting my reflections about her story at this stage.

During the first TOL camp, Zee spoke very lovingly about her father whom she lost, and it was very clear that she was close to him. She became emotional when speaking about his death and his preceding illness, without indicating what kind of illness it was.

At that stage, she was taken care of by friends of her father, an arrangement it seemed he made before his death. Although she missed him, she felt loved and cared for by the people who took her in. As far as I can remember, she did not speak about her mother during the first TOL camp, only about her father, and it was clear that his death was a great source of sadness in her life.

During the second TOL camp, I think it is safe to say Zee surprised us all during one of the very first group discussions with some news about her father's death. In the meantime, she discovered that her father indeed died of HIV and Aids, something she wasn't aware of at an earlier stage. During and after this session, her sadness about losing her father gave way to intense emotions of anger directed at her stepmother, who – according to her – knowingly infected her father with the HI-virus.

Summary of deaths suffered by the girls:

| NAME (BIRTH YEAR) | PERSON WHO DIED | AGE AT LOSS | WHEN | HOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annie (1991) | Mother | (?) | (?) | (?) |
| Dee (1992) | Mother | 16 | 2008 | "I lost my mother.  She died of Aids …" "My mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS" |
| Dimakatso (1992) | Mother ("My father abandoned me when I was still a child") | (?) | (?) | (?) |
| Palesa (1989?) | Mother | 18/19(?) | August 2008 | "She was sick suffering so much" |
| Zee (1992) | Mother Father | 3/4 16 | 1995/1996 2008 | Suicide HIV/AIDS |

## 2.5.6 Michael – 'Hold on(to) God in every situation'

I am Michael, a 17-year-old boy (in 2010). I am a twin brother, I live at the place of safety, I am writing my Matric this year and I am a rapper. I was born in Carletonville(?), my parents are Matsidiso H and Tayana L, sweet people. Grannies Mmamatsemela and Mr Molondolazi. Uncles Ntsikelelo and Fombata, aunt Neliswa H. (I) don't know much about my father's side, but my mother's side (of the family) are selfish people. Heartless and they're Xhosa but speak Zulu.

The first important person in my life will be my twin. He is the person I have always had, we do things together he goes through everything with me. He taught me never to run away from my problems. And (the) second person well (that will) be my late mother because she made me what and who I am today. (Also) people from the church they taught me to hold on(to) God in every situation. Victor and Wiseman 'is always good to cry (to)', but (I) don't do it too much. Doris - she taught (me) that we become strong from our mistakes.

I firstly lost my little sister followed by my dad then my mom. I can't remember about the first two people but mother was the best humble(?) at all times. Yep! (I lost) my mother, she used to live far from me and come see me at the end of every month because of her job. She had cancer then she passed on. (She was important to me because) she was my mother. My mother had big dreams about us. I am not from a rich background so my mother always wanted us to continue where she ended so that kind of gave me a motivation / support in what ever I do. After the (first) TOL camp I could then be open to people about anything and talk to my schoolmates about the importance of school and how hard life could be without education. Thanks to the organisers of (the) TOL camp.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Michael**

Michael is one of the twins. They both had the demeanour of a typical rap star when they arrived for the first TOL camp. To be honest, I must admit that at first I was very sceptical about these two brothers. This scepticism was purely based on their specific dress code – the big oversized shirts, baggy pants, big sunglasses and what one may refer to as 'bling-bling', the big dog-chain like jewellery they wore – and the kind of 'slang' language they used to introduce themselves during the first TOL camp's very first focus group meeting the Friday night.

Michael arrived on time for us to leave for the campsite during the first TOL camp. However, Shaun was not with him and it seemed like Michael was a bit irritated by the fact that Shaun has not arrived on time. Yet, when Shaun finally arrived Michael seemed very relieved to see him. From the start of the first TOL camp, it became very clear that Michael was very close to his twin brother – Shaun. All my fears about the twins (and also the other teenagers) appeared to be totally unfounded the moment we arrived at the campsite. Michael and Shaun – like the rest of the teenagers – were very kind, well-mannered and polite boys, which is evident even from Michael's answers in his workbook: "Thanks to the organisers of (the) TOL camp".

When talking about their mother whom they've lost, Michael became extremely emotional – which was very disturbing to the group and especially Shaun. Shaun at one stage of the camp even tried to calm Michael down by telling him something to the extent of: "just answer the question, don't give them anything more". From this, it seemed like Michael was more in touch with his feelings about the loss of their loved ones, than maybe Shaun was – who tried to appear to have more control over his emotions. Michael also at face value seemed to have a deeper connection with God by the way he brought God into a discussion, without necessarily any mention being made to God otherwise.

### 2.5.7  Moses – 'They see me as a role model'

My name is Moses. I am 20 years old (in 2010). This year (I) am doing my second year in IT (three years degree) at PC training and am also a DJ.  I was born in Nylstroom somewhere in Limpopo. My parents were Christinah and David, I never knew my grandparents, they died when I was very young. My parents were separated since I was a baby.  I live in a family of three, with my brother and my cousin. My cousin is in college and my brother is in the music industry. They like music (any kind). I love them because they understand me and they are very open people.

The most important people in my life are my family. This is simply because they are the ones that give me courage and hope so that I can take my life seriously. My mom is on top of my list as she gave me life and let me experience it with a different perspective, meaning growing up differently.

So far the most important person in my life is my brother. He taught (me) lots of stuff like music and he teaches me maths and science. From life itself I have learned many things from my brother.

In 1998 (1998-05-28) I lost my mother after a long illness and two years after I lost my father. It didn't hurt by that time because I was little but now for the fact that I start(ing) to experience life it is starting to hurt. In 2003 I lost my cousin after he committed suicide. Lastly it was my first brother during my Matric year in 2008 October.  What is special about my mother is that she was there from day one. She was able to look after 5 boys and being a single parent. My dad is not that special because he was never there and I wished to spend more time with him.

I get most of my courage from those people who died by doing my level best because I tell myself where ever they are, they are proud of me after my each and every success.

The first camp made me realise that GOD is the most important person in my life so I should make (the) most of my life. So that is what (I) am doing right now, (I) am playing a very important role to people around me! I give them hope and courage by the way (I) am handling my life at this moment. They see me as a role model.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Moses**

Juanita and I both agreed that Moses was the gentleman of the boys. With the first TOL camp, he offered to help carry our luggage and boxes containing the goods for the camp. When anybody needed help during the TOL camps Moses was always willing and close by to help, whether it was helping to carry stuff or helping the girls get out of the river during the obstacle course.

When Moses spoke about his family and the people he has lost in live, especially his mother, and after the first TOL camp his oldest brother, it was very clear that his family played a big role in his life. Since his mother's death his four brothers became his everything, and it was clear that fighting with them made him very sad.

As the eldest of the boys at the camps, it was clear that the other boys looked up to him to a certain extent. At one stage between the two TOL camps all five boys were residing at the same House of Safety. I got the feeling that this gave them all a sense of brotherhood and it was clear that although Michael and Shaun as twins, and Victor and Wiseman grouped themselves together, Moses gained the position of 'oldest brother' in this newly established 'brotherhood'.

Moses is a very honest young adult, who openly and full of shame admits to his mistakes in life, like playing the Lotto with money he did not really have. During the second TOL camp, the others (especially the boys) confronted him during a focus group session about the reason for him leaving the House of Safety when he did. It was evident from this that they did not know the true reason for him leaving. He honestly admitted to the fact that he and a girl had sexual intercourse during the Sea Camp at the end of the year.  For that reason he left the House of Safety, because as he put it: 'there are a lot of small children staying in the House of Safety' and that he did not want to set a bad example to them.  It clearly took a lot of courage to admit to this, and showed his growing maturity in life.

### 2.5.8  Shaun – 'To be positive in everything'

I am Shaun from (the House of Safety) and I do music. I would really love to study publishing after Matric.  I was born somewhere in South Africa but grew up in Lesotho, my father was a soldier on until 1996. My mother was a single parent from 1996 to 2005.

I don't know much about my family because I've never spen(ded) much time with them but the only thing I know is that they (are) very supportive and that's one thing I like about them.

Important people in my life are a people who are always there when I need them, those (who) care a lot about me. This would be my late mother, my twin brother and my mother's family.  One of my teachers (also) by the name of Daisy. She taught me to be faithful in God and never let my problems get to me. Mike, Michael taught me a lot in life to be positive in everything.

I lost a couple of people in my life, 1996 I lost my little sister, she was about three months and weeks old two weeks after her ceremony my dad got stabbed and he also passed away so nine years later my mom followed, this was 2005 on the 21 March. 2008 June my friend passed away, the worst thing is he was a twin, so he left his twin. Recently my grandmother died over a gunshot (wound).

They (were) important because some brought life to me and some help me go through a lot. My mother wanted / wished to see me successful one day. She wanted me to complete my school and be a doctor. It (the first TOL camp) helped me to express myself and be able to encourage other people going through similar situation and after all I was better.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Shaun**

Although I had deliberated long and hard about reflecting on the twins' stories as one story, I eventually decided against it. The reason for it being, that even though they are very close and share the same basic tragic story, their reactions to it needs to be acknowledged as their own individual take on it.

Juanita jokingly referred to the twins as my favourites. I must admit I do have a very soft spot for them. In my own life, the phenomena of twins play a big role. I am very fond of two of my male cousins who are fraternal twins and close to my age. In my group of friends, I also have two sets of male twins, one fraternal and one paternal, a bit younger than me. One of my dear university friends with whom I'm still close, also have twins – a boy and a girl three years of age.

Shaun might not find it funny, that I am again mentioning it here, but he was the one who was responsible that we left later than anticipated for the first TOL camp, because he was not on time.

Although not as late as the first time, he was also the last to arrive when we were getting ready to leave for the second TOL camp. This, along with his dress code and language use, had me very worried at first. I thought he was going to be the so-called 'bad boy' of the group. I was proved so wrong.

After receiving the camping goods – duvets, pillows, T-shirts and toiletries – we bought for them and thanking us, he made the extra effort of coming to our room – with tears in his eyes – to personally thank us for the goods, when he realised that it all would be theirs to keep. That for me just goes to show that you can't judge a book by its cover, or in the metaphor of the TOL camps, the fruits by the leaves of the tree.

He seemed sceptical to partake in the focus group discussions at first, yet I was pleasantly surprised by the open and honest answers in his workbooks.

### 2.5.9 Victor – 'I've been able to cough out what was eating me inside'

I'm Victor, 17 years old. I was writing my Matric last year (2009), failed physical science and mathematics and currently on a supplementary. I (was) born at Springs, the town in Mpumalanga(?). And father is Elias M and my mom Catherine M, with Elizabeth and Daniel my grandparents together with only uncle Thabiso and the aunts. My family are Pedi's, Zulus, Tswanas and there are a very good family as far as I know them. They like joy and dislike fighting as a family. I love them because they love me too. The most important people in my life are (firstly) my mom, she makes (me) look forward to it every day and yet want to conquer the challenge of life itself. Secondly, my own siblings, I just want to make sure, as their big brother that I do everything best for their own sake.

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(My) dad, my grandparents and also my close friends and everyone around me that loves me and support and comfort me in every situation I find myself in.

Unfortunately yes, I have lost someone very close to me which was my aunt, that always took me as her own son and I took her as my own mom, but I guess now it's too late for me to tell how much I love her and the way I appreciate everything she did for me. (Also) my two cousins which died the same year (2009), and my aunt or course in 2007. THEY WILL ALWAYS BE IN MY MEMORIES. (They were important) (b)ecause they always gave me what I completely needed in my life, they gave me support, they've shown true love towards me in such a way that I can't exactly show towards them. What I keep in mind is only the positive things they used to tell me, and what they always hope for me was, the great success (?) of all my true abilities.

(The first TOL camp had) (a) positive impact I guess, because I've been able to cough out what was eating me inside in black and white, and then became stronger. In other people's lives I am an inspiration I believe, in order to make the lives easier and even better.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Victor**

Victor is the youngest and smallest of the boys, and although his academic performance does not necessarily reflect it, I am of the opinion that he is very intelligent. He wants to be a clinical psychologist. Since both Juanita and I come from a background in psychology, I think we both felt a certain connection with him.

During the first TOL camp, he spoke very lovingly of his aunt that died. It was evident that he felt very close to her and that her death had a great impact on him. Although he does not stay with his family, it is clear that he loves them.

Victor also stayed in the House of Safety at the time of the first TOL camp, along with the twins Michael and Shaun, and Wiseman – whom he regards as his brother. In between the two TOL camps Victor and Wiseman moved from Pretoria to Thembisa to go and stay with Wiseman's older sister, Precious. While staying together in the House of Safety, Victor, Wiseman and the twins formed a very strong bond. Victor even featured in one of the twin's songs.

He seemed to really enjoy completing his workbooks during the TOL camps. Like Dee, he also enjoys giving his feelings a voice by writing it down and he contributed a lot to the focus group sessions by voicing his feelings especially about his aunt that he lost.

Since Victor and Wiseman moved out in the time between the two TOL camps, the people at PEN did not have contact with them anymore. Luckily, I stayed in contact via sms, and although I did not know they moved out after the House of Safety, the moment I smsed them about the follow-up TOL camp they immediately responded positively. It was clear at the follow-up TOL camp that they and the rest of the group (especially the boys) missed each other's company.

## 2.5.10 Wiseman – 'Living life to the fullest'

My name is Wiseman, turning 18 years this year 20 July (2010), currently at home finished my Matric last year (2009) but failed two subjects and now all I do is living life to the fullest.

Well I was born at Mpumalanga, I use to stay with my grandparents, then at 2004 I came to stay with mother in Pretoria, until last year (2007) when she passed away. Well my mom was a kind person, a person who likes jokes who likes to live a peaceful life. My grandfather is the same as my mother and my grandmother is a noisy person she likes to shout for no reason.

My mom is the most important person in my life even though she passed away but she still is important and nothing will change. (S)he taught me a (a) lot of things such as to respect, to care about people who care about me and to know how to take care of myself.

My cousin Victor and Busisiwe they are also important, and my sister who is now taking a good care of me she's also important. The special person that I lost was my mother who I loved with my whole life and still do.

(She) passed away last year (2007) on 3 August, well as I've said she was a kind person she wanted something big in life but Satan was so jealous and nothing worked and until she got sick for three months and then passed away.

(She was important) (b)ecause she was my mother and everything she did was special to me. The memories that I have of my mom, was that she was a person who doesn't give up in life so that helps me now and not to give up easily in everything that I do, and she wanted to see me being successful in life.

Well (the) tree of life changed my life in a way that I look at life in a different way now in a way that I'm starting to take it seriously and starting to set goals. And have plans for the future.

**Reflection-in-Progress: On meeting and getting to know Wiseman**

Funny enough, I remember Wiseman sitting to my direct right during the focus group sessions of both TOL camps. He was always full of jokes during these sessions, to the extent that I sometimes referred to him as the 'Wisecrack' of the group, or sometimes when he maybe did not want to contribute to the focus group sessions, I would specifically ask him for his 'words of Wisdom'.

It was evident from the very beginning that he and Victor had a close bond with each other. I think something he said his deceased mother taught him in life, namely: 'to respect, to care about people who care about me', he took seriously to heart, because when he moved out of the House of Safety to his sister's place in Thembisa, Victor – as he calls him, his 'cousin' – also moved in with them. I met his sister briefly at her place of work, when I went to drop off some stuff for Victor and Wiseman, and she seemed like a very kind and loving lady, who clearly did not only care about her younger brother, but also about his friend Victor.

I got the idea that he thoroughly enjoyed the obstacle course and during the second TOL camp, he lost his one shoe in the river and we all joked about this when watching the photos Juanita took during the obstacle course – to see when he actually lost his shoe. He seemed to be a great sport, and I would even dare to say that he offered comic relief at times in discussing the difficult topics at hand.

As I said in my reflection on Victor's story, the boys all seemed to be very close. A certain sense of brotherhood became very evident, especially during the second TOL camp. The others seemed very happy to see Victor and Wiseman again, after not seeing their friends for a couple of months. Mention of Wiseman and the advice he gave the twins is also made in their song '*Keep pushing*' written about their mother and other loved ones they've lost (please refer to section 3.6).

Summary of deaths suffered by the boys:

| NAME (BIRTH YEAR) | PERSON WHO DIED | AGE AT LOSS | WHEN | HOW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Michael & Shaun (1992) | Little sister | 4 | 1996 | "Died at 6 months" |
| | Father | 4 | 1996 | "My dad got stabbed" |
| | Mother | 13 | 21 March 2005 | "She had cancer" |
| | Friend | 16 | June 2008 | (?) |
| | Grandmother | 16/17 | 2009(?) | "My grandmother died over a gunshot (wound)" |
| Moses (1989) | Father | 7 | 1996 | (?) |
| | Mother | 9 | 28 May 1998 | "After a long illness" |
| | Cousin | 14 | 2003 | "He committed suicide" |
| | Brother | 19 | 2008 | (?) |
| Victor (1992) | Aunt | 15 | 2007 | (?) |
| | 2 Cousins | 16/17 | 2009 | (?) |
| Wiseman (1992) | Mother | 15 | 3 August 2007 | "She got sick for 3 months and then passed away" |

## 2.6     LEARNING TO LISTEN: MY STORY IN RELATION TO THE CONTEXT

How does my own story link with the context of the study and with the context of these ten adolescents' stories? For me, being introduced to the workings of the NGO PEN as well as the other NGOs who formed part of the Department of Practical Theology's greater research project entitled *SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS*, was an eye opening experience. I don't think I realised and really comprehended how much these people care about the welfare of these adolescents whose lives and well-being are entrusted to them. It was a humbling experience for me to hear about, see and experience the facilitators' care, love and protectiveness for and regarding these adolescents. I will never forget Susan van der Walt's initial animosity towards Juanita and myself regarding our intentions with our research, the TOL camp and the adolescents themselves.

As far as the TOL camps go – this was really my first encounter, not only with the planning and facilitating thereof, but also of camping itself, as I wasn't fond of the whole school and even church camping experience as a child. Luckily, for me Juanita was and she took to it like fish to the water. It wasn't as difficult or even as scary as I anticipated it to be, and come to think of it, I really enjoyed the whole experience thereof thoroughly.

Meeting the children and hearing their stories, as I alluded to earlier in my reflections on their stories (see section 2.5), was an amazing experience. I could not comprehend all that they have been through in their short lives, how they managed to cope and show resilience in the face of adversity. More so was my amazement that they so willingly entrusted us – total strangers at the onset of the research – with their sad and sometimes difficult stories. It is difficult for me to tell my own story here and only here and therefore my story and context as well my co-researchers' stories will rather be allowed to unfold as the research process progresses and itself unfolds.

## 2.7  CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 2

In this chapter, we have looked at the context of the NGO PEN who is actively engaged within the inner city of Pretoria.  They are as an organisation working from a faith-based perspective with the inner city community, especially with the adolescents on whom the focus of this study falls.  Furthermore, this research study was situated within the context of approaching research in an ethical manner, which is very important when doing research with human participants, or co-researchers within the social sciences.  Working with adolescents, and more specifically vulnerable adolescents and Aids orphans, furthermore emphasised the need to approach this research in an ethical and sensitive manner.  In light of this, situating the study within an ethical context not only seems appropriate, but indeed very important to the whole research process, as ethics does not end with getting informed consent from the adolescents' parent or guardian, but infuses the whole research process from planning through execution to dissemination thereof.

The macro levels of the context of this research, namely the research field of HIV and Aids and the bereavement of these adolescents within and bordering on this field, is discussed in chapters 3 and 4 of this study.  However within the PFPT approach to narrative research, it was firstly necessary to focus on the meso levels (PEN and the TOL camps) and especially micro levels of these specific adolescents' specific in-context experiences as experienced, lived, described and interpreted by themselves.

In this chapter therefore, I gave my co-researchers the chance to introduce themselves, their specific contexts and some stories related to their contexts.  As I was not the one introducing them but by letting, them take the floor and introduce themselves, the introduction was not done in my language, but in their own language and on their own terms, before I also introduced my own context as researcher in this study.

## CHAPTER 3
## THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES –
## TRADITIONS OF INTERPRETATIONS

### 3.1    INTRODUCTION

*Eventually Magoda had had enough of this kind of life, and he decided to run away. Early one morning, he crept into the cattle kraal and jumped onto the ox's back. It was as if the ox understood and quietly walked away from the village.  Together they took to the road. They travelled through villages with people going about their business. Nobody shouted at Magoda, or told him what to do, and he felt good.  Later Magoda began to feel hungry and wondered where he would find food.*

*Then suddenly a herd of cattle and a fierce looking bull charged towards them.  Magoda's ox spoke, saying: "Get off my back. I will fight this bull and I will defeat it!"  So Magoda jumped off the ox's back, and it rushed towards the bull, a furious fight developed, but this did not last very long, and soon the bull was dead. Triumphantly the ox said:  "Now I have proven my strength".*

*Magoda jumped back on the ox's back and they resumed their journey. By now, the boy was very hungry and, as they passed another village, he could smell the evening meals.  "What would I not give for a good meal?" he said with longing.  To emphasise these words, he smacked the right horn of the ox and, to his amazement, food began to pour from the horn. Beans, pumpkin, mielie meal and meat, all cooked to perfection, flowed forth, and he grasped the gifts with both hands and ate to his fill.*

*"This is wonderful!" exclaimed Magoda, and smacked the left horn with his hand. The right horn stopped yielding food, and that which he had not consumed disappeared back into the left horn. "So that is how it is!" laughed the boy. "Thank you, my good ox! My father truly did look after me that fortunate day he gave you to me. By striking your right horn I need never go hungry!"*

*They continued, but as the sun set they came upon another herd of cattle. This time the ox gave a deep sigh and said: "Here I must take leave of you! I have to fight this herd too, but they will kill me. When I am dead, break off my horns and take them with you. They will provide for you at all times, whenever you speak to them, but they will never work for anyone else". Magoda begged the ox not to fight: "Don't leave me, you are my only friend and companion". But the ox wouldn't listen and made his way towards the herd.*

*A fierce fight started and it looked as though the ox would win, but this time there were too many bulls and eventually, they killed him, and the herd trampled over his body. Sadly, Magoda took off the horns, hid them under his clothes and went on his way.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:106-109)*

Finally, things were going Magoda's way. He left behind his village where he was seen as nothing more than cheap labour, found a friend in the ox that was loyal to him and discovered that his beloved ox's horns could provide him with food. The euphoria he must have felt however soon was overshadowed by the death of his friend and provider when the ox died in a fierce bullfight. Feelings of despair must have surged through Magoda as he removed the horns from the dead ox.

Just like the two stampeding herds of cattle that approached Magoda and his ox, endangered their lives, and ultimately Magoda's ox was killed by the second herd's bull, so too is HIV and Aids encroaching on the lives of people – people who could have been Magoda's parents.

We live in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa to be more precise, the region hardest hit with HIV and Aids in the world. It is home to over 70% of the total world HIV-positive population (http://www.aidsinafrica.net/map.php). To try to ignore it is not only futile, but also ignorant and in fact extremely dangerous. Yet, many people – including the former president of South Africa – Thabo Mbeki as well as the former health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang tried their utmost to sweep the harsh reality and consequences of HIV and Aids under the proverbial carpet. Even the first democratically elected president of South Africa – Nelson Mandela – made and acknowledged mistakes he made during his presidency regarding HIV and Aids. Not even to speak of the current president – Jacob Zuma's – escapades. Being polygamous, he has entered into several marriages, and has fathered many a child. Not all of whom are with his legal wives. His adulterous behaviour even made headlines on numerous occasions. The HIV and Aids discourse are in constant interplay with other – like these aforementioned political – discourses and as such it is important to take note thereof if one wants to investigate HIV and Aids as a phenomenon, as well as look at the impact – directly or indirectly – it is having on the lives of my co-researchers. Although not all of them are so-called Aids orphans, HIV and Aids impacts on the contexts wherein they all find themselves and as young adolescents become aware of their own sexuality, HIV and Aids are an imminent threat, always lurking and waiting to charge like the bull in the second herd that ultimately killed Magoda's trustworthy ox.

This chapter therefore focuses on different traditions of interpretations as the fourth movement of PFPT suggests – interpretations of HIV and Aids, HIV and Aids statistics and parental bereavement.

## 3.2    MAKING THE NEWS:  AIDS AND RELATED DISCOURSES

### Mostly Manto Madness
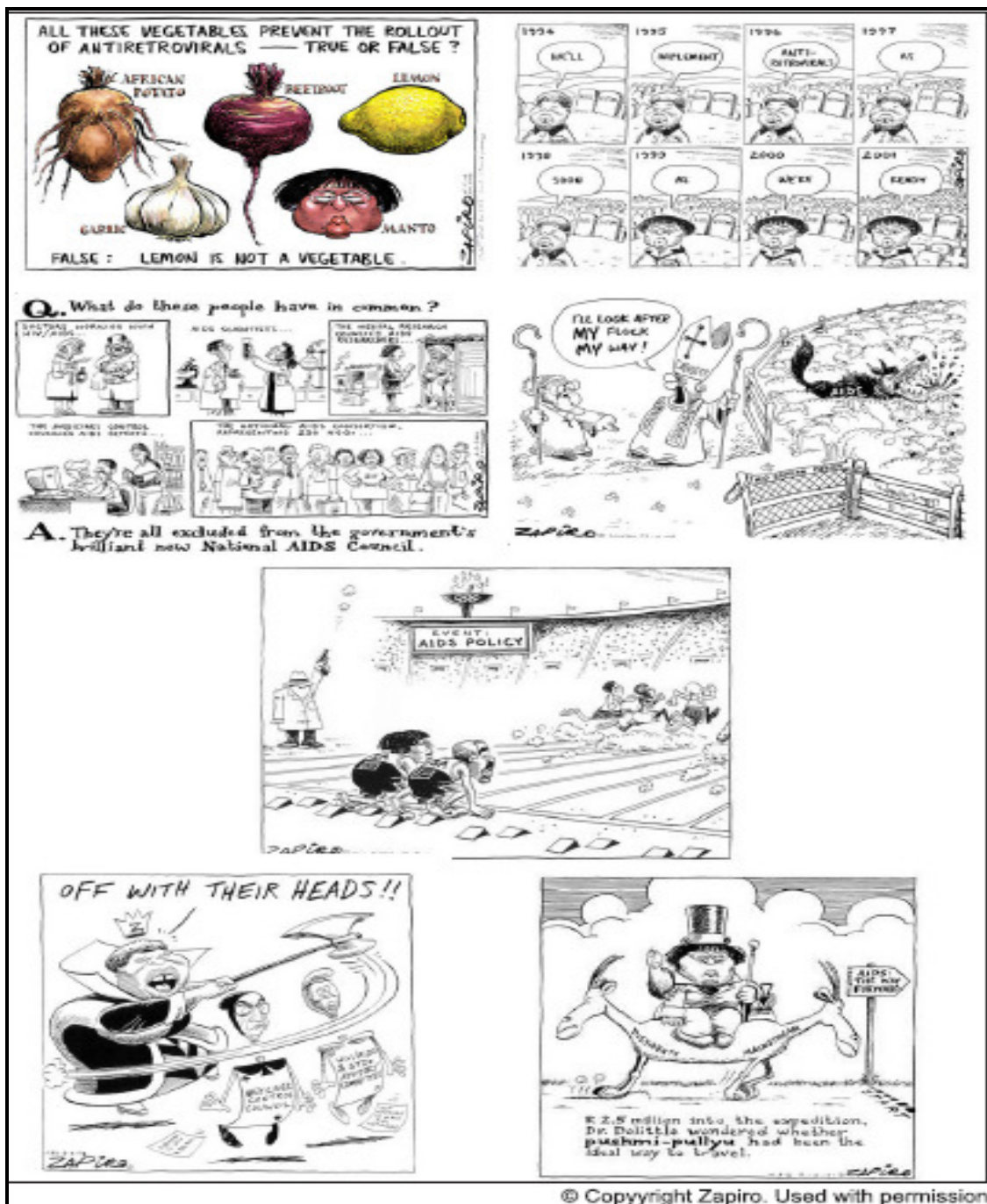
Aids – not again! I can almost hear some of my readers' sighing at reading the word 'Aids' in the heading above. Most of us know – at least something – about Aids and the consequences thereof. In order not to bore my readers to death with a regurgitation of well-known facts regarding HIV and Aids, I have instead opted to go a different route and make use of cartoons as a tradition of interpretation, regarding the phenomenon. Well-known South African cartoon artist Jonathan Shapiro otherwise known as Zapiro, has a knack when it comes to seeing the lighter side of serious issues. While I was playing around with the idea to incorporate cartoons about HIV and Aids and related discourses in my research report, I came across Zapiro's website (www.zapiro.com). If it is true that laughter is indeed the best medicine, then I found the best pharmacy ever the moment I accessed his website. While issues surrounding HIV and Aids made headlines in the media the last couple of years, he has built up a whole section devoted to these issues. I contacted him via his website and was granted permission to use cartoons relating to HIV and Aids in my research report. The cartoons on the previous page represent some of Zapiro's best work regarding HIV and Aids and statements made by the former minister of health, Manto Tsabalala-Msimang on the topic. The fourth cartoon – featuring Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Pope – will be referred to at a later stage in this discussion.

Doctor Manto Tsabalala-Msimang is probably most known for her statements regarding the value of foods like beetroot and garlic in the fight against HIV and Aids. There was a public outcry after the South African exhibition at the 2006 International Aids conference in Toronto when South Africa's exhibition showcased amongst others garlic and beetroot as a treatment for HIV and Aids. The United Nations' special envoy for Aids in Africa Stephen Lewis said South Africa promoted a "lunatic fringe" attitude to HIV/Aids (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5319680.stm)

## The Pope in Rome and Tutu in South Africa
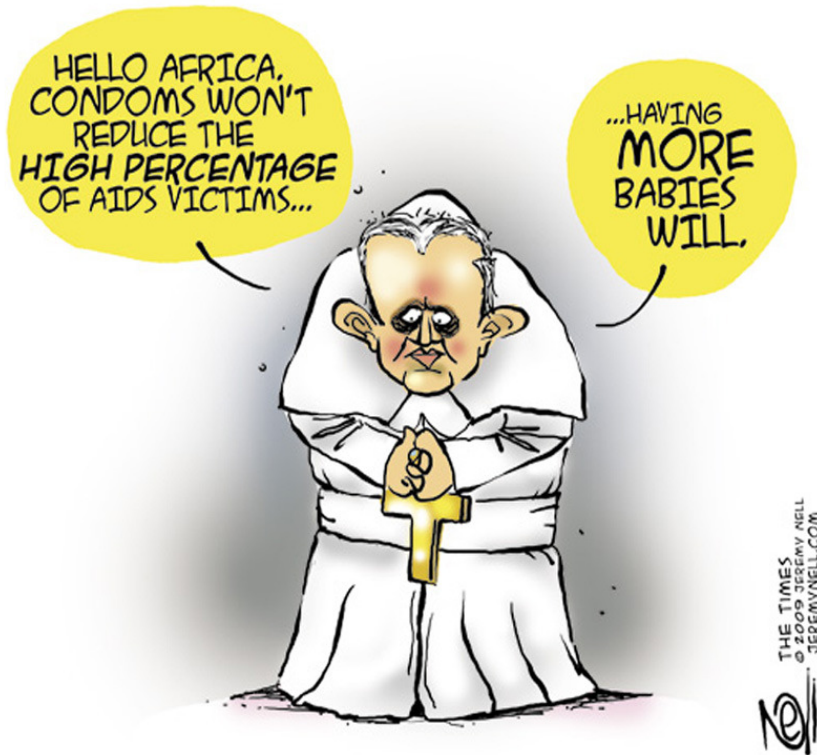
The cartoon at the start of section 3.2 depicts Archbishop Desmond Tutu's criticism of the Catholic Church's stance against the use of condoms. Along with the other two cartoons above, it is a tongue in the cheek look at how the Church and more specifically, the Catholic Church is involved in shaping believers' opinions about the use of condoms and protecting themselves against HIV and Aids infection. The cartoon first mentioned was sketched by Zapiro and was published on February, 24 2004 (www.zapiro.com). Zapiro also sketched the daring cartoon of the Pope in a condom on the previous page. It was originally published on March 22, 2009. An artist with the pseudonym of Jerm sketched the second cartoon on the previous page. It was originally published in *The Times* newspaper on March 19, 2009 (www.africartoons.com/cartoon/365).

The last two cartoons refer to statements made by the Pope in February 2009 during a visit to Africa about the use of condoms in the fight against HIV and Aids. The pontiff stated that condoms were not the answer to Africa's fight against HIV and Aids and that it can actually worsen the problem (Butt 2009). Rebecca Hodes of the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa reacted on the statement made by the Pope and said that if the pontiff was serious about preventing new HIV infections, he would promote access to condoms as well as about the spreading of information about how to use it (Butt 2009).

The Roman Catholic Church still chooses to object to the use of condoms, even after other Church leaders like Archbishop Tutu have urged them in 2004 already (see first cartoon) to change their stance in order to save lives. Instead, the Roman Catholic Church encourages sexual abstinence and fidelity to prevent the further spread of the disease. This policy has divided clergy working with Aids patients (Butt 2009).

## 3.3    HIV AND AIDS ORPHANS:  THE SAD STORY OF STATISTICS

A single death is a tragedy,

A million deaths is a statistic

- Joseph Stalin -

Africa south of the Sahara has the youngest population in the world (Watson 2001:12).   Youth is synonymous with new potential, a fresh outlook on life and boundless creativity.   What should be a continent full of new possibilities and endless growth potential, is rather a continent in dire straits.   As Van Dyk (2001:61) puts it:  "Africa is not doing well in her battle against Aids."  We are (not so) slowly losing our youth in the battle with the HIV and Aids pandemic.   Already before the turn of the millennium, it was recorded that Africa had 70% of the world's Aids sufferers and 83% of the world's Aids related deaths (Swanepoel 1999:3).   Since HIV and Aids infections among adults in Africa are mostly attributed to unprotected sex between men and woman (Van Dyk 2001:60), it is then no wonder that Africa also has 95% of the Aids orphans of the world (Swanepoel 1999:3).   These young adults are 'jumping the que (sic)' (Van Dyk 2001:62) when it comes to dying, or as Overberg (1994:3) puts it: "A generation of young adults is dying before its time, leaving many children orphaned...".

According to the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm) in 2008 an estimated 22.4 million adults and children were living with HIV and Aids in sub-Saharan Africa.  Also during that year, 1.4 million Africans died from HIV and Aids infection.  Two of these adults were Dee's mother and Zee's father whom both succumbed to the disease in 2008.  Also according to the Avert website, 14.1 million children have also lost one or both parents to the disease during 2008. Since these statistics only take children up to the age of fifteen into account, in reality these statistics are skewed.   Dee and Zee, both still at school and dependant on their parents, also lost their parents.

However, in Aids literature they would mostly not be included in statistics of this nature as they both were sixteen years of age when they lost their parents.

The situation regarding HIV and Aids statistics is no better in South Africa. Again according to the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm) 5.7 million people in South Africa were living with the virus in 2008. This amounts to 18.1% of the adult population of South Africa. In the same year it is estimated that 350 000 South Africans succumbed to the disease, which contributed to 1.4 million children left orphaned. Roughly speaking, the South African HIV and Aids orphans of 1.4 million represent 10% of the HIV and Aids orphans in sub-Saharan Africa (14.1 million). In 2002 Landman (2002:270) estimated that around two million children in South Africa would have been orphaned by the year we are in now – 2010. However, the official statistics tell a better story. But, if this story is to be believed is the question, as we have seen that most statistics only regard children up to the age of fifteen who have lost their parents as possible 'orphans'.

These statistics are shocking by any standards, yet most of these statistics are outdated by the time they reach the news media. Barrett and Whiteside (2002:199) state in this regard that the bare statistics are troubling and that these statistics "… tell of a generation of children deprived of their childhood". These children, deprived of their childhood are mostly also living in dire poverty, and in reference to the impact of poverty, Mandela himself stated in his 1964 "I am the First Accused" (Montefiore 2005:131/132) trial speech that:

> Children wander about the streets of the townships because they have no schools to go to, or no money to enable them to go to school, or no parents at home to see that they go to school, because both parents (if there be two) have to work to keep the family alive. This leads to a breakdown in moral standards, to an alarming rise in illegitimacy, and to growing violence which erupts not only politically, but everywhere.

## 3.4    FROM THE PULPIT:  THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Paterson (2009:3) underpins the importance of faith communities to become involved in the fight against HIV and Aids, for as he puts it:

> For us, the concept of 'compassion' has a particular theological significance, which includes an emphasis on the importance of long-term and sustained commitment that is modelled on God's faithful and compassionate commitment to God's people.   In Jesus Christ, who suffers alongside us, we find a non-stigmatising dimension of shared suffering that frees Christian understanding of 'compassion' from the 'us and them' baggage that often accompanies the notion of pity.

In reference to HIV and Aids prevention, Paterson (2009:2) actually pleads for transversality when he states that theology must partake in discussions of public interest, and that these discussions must involve other disciplines as well. Paterson (2009:2) goes on to say that the international community is becoming more aware of the role that faith communities can play in the process of development and change.   In line with postfoundational practical theology, Paterson (2009:3) also states that "(n)ext, we would wish to affirm the focus on the importance of context".  In terms of context and community participation, churches and Christian organisations have according to Paterson (2009:4) important contributions to make.  This is because "(o)f all local forms of organisation, faith communities are often the strongest, most effective, and most clearly embedded in family and neighbourhood life" (Paterson 2009:4).

Heath (2009:69) furthermore reminds us that "HIV is a virus, not a moral condition". This is important to remember because within the Christian concept of common good, is also the recognition that "…each person is created and held in being by God, and therefore has intrinsic dignity and value" (Paterson 2009:22).

For churches and other Christian communities to become active in the field of HIV and Aids care and prevention, churches must first become what Okaalet (2009:84) termed an 'Aids competent church'. A church like this will turn its back on denial and start to acknowledge the reality and enormity of the Aids problem. Okaalet (2009:84) describes this type of church as follows:

> It is a Church that knows its own strengths and weaknesses, and uses its strengths as a starting point for a scaled up response. It is a Church that recognises vulnerability and risk and works to reduce them. It is a learning Church that listens and shares; a Church that has zero tolerance for stigma and discrimination, a Church in whose ministry people living with HIV or Aids are playing a central role. It is a Church that is living out its full potential, both as an organisation and as a congregation.

In light of this and in reference to specifically the Zambian context, Mulenga (2009:97) hypothesises that the empowerment of church-based communities can contribute significantly towards the mitigation of the impact of the HIV and Aids crisis. Okaalet (2009:85) proposes a holistic critical approach to empower an Aids competent church. He uses the word 'CRITICAL' as an acronym for this approach that would bring together the following:

- **C**ommunity – how it influences our society;
- **R**eligion – how it imbues our actions;
- **I**nvolvement – what it means for us;
- **T**echnical capacity – what it means in a global health crisis;
- **I**nfrastructure – what challenges us in rural and urban Africa and elsewhere;
- **C**apital – why it is more than money;
- **A**ccess – how globalisation can pull Africa forward;
- **L**eadership – what is necessary for success at all levels: local, national, regional and international

## 3.5 AFRICAN STORYTELLING AS A TRADITION OF INTERPRETATION

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### UTSHINTSHA NOMNYAMA (Tshintsha and the rainbow)



A man named Tshintsha owned a garden. The garden was situated alongside a riverbed. One rainy morning Tshintsha went outside to watch his garden during the rain. When the rain cleared up, a rainbow (*umnyama) descended into the river. Some of the old people say that the umnyama is a sheep, which comes out of great pools. Others say that the umnyama lives with a snake, that is, where the umnyama is, there is also a snake. But as for Tshintsha, he neither saw a sheep, nor a snake in his garden that day. All of a sudden the umnyama came out of the river and into Tshintsha's garden. When Tshintsha saw the umnyama coming closer to him, he became afraid and tried to run away. The umnyama dazzled Tshintsha and struck his eyes with a red colour. Men say that the umnyama is a disease. If it rests on a person, some illness will befall him. Afraid Tshintsha wondered why the umnyama poisoned him. Struggling to see, he ran from his garden with the umnyama still chasing him. Because the umnyama poisoned Tshintsha, he became very ill, and developed swellings on his body which later erupted. As a result of the eruptions, his body assumed an unnatural colour. Sick with worry, Tshintsha finally decided to leave his home and family to undertake a great journey in search of a rainbow doctor, in an effort to rid himself of the poison of the umnyama.

(Adapted from Canonici 1993:58)

The Zulu folktale of Tshintsha and the rainbow (*umnyama)* tells the story of how a rainbow that appeared after a storm caused great illness for a man called Tshintsha and even led to his death. Although *umnyama* is translated in Canonici (1993:58) with the word 'rainbow', it literally means 'darkness'. When used metaphorically, as in the context of the story above, it can also be translated as 'pollution' (Ngubane 1977:78). I also used this folktale in my Masters dissertation and referred to the *umnyama* as a metaphor for HIV and Aids. I wanted to include it here again, since this folktale links up with the one told in chapter 7 also about a rainbow. The reader might wonder why I chose to use the art of African storytelling in this thesis. I am of the opinion that the narrative approach to therapy and research has much in common with the art of African storytelling. This research tried to employ this common ground as this section will explain. As I have already postulated in chapter 1 (Introduction), I, as an African, are doing research on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of African children, some of whom are HIV and Aids orphans. Chapter 3 is therefore not only about traditions of interpretation, of which the art of African storytelling is one tradition. It is not just about stories from African tradition that are told and interpreted, it is also about Africans – my co-researchers and I – that tell stories.

Orally transmitted myths and folktales of African people, such as "*Utshintsha Nomnyama*", are based on human experience. They tell of people's "… wrestlings with the mysteries of existence, life and death". These tales are products of African people's reflections on "… the relations among humans, .. responses to the challenges of the unknown, and to the universal need to create order and reason out of chaos and accident". (Courlander 1975:1). The following story – "Hare and the King of the Beasts" – formed part of an exercise with my co-researchers. The lion in this story became representative of the HIV and Aids crisis and some questions were developed to get the children actively thinking and talking of the dangers of this disease. The story, conversation questions and some of the co-researchers' responses to it follows.

### Hare and the King of the Beasts

The elders tell us that in the earliest of times Lion, the King of the Beasts, was the most feared of all creatures, and that his hunting skills were extraordinary. So many animals were being eaten by the King that all the creatures of the wild called a special counsel to see how they could be saved from extinction.

Eventually, they decided they should go to the lion and suggest a compromise - an offer to sacrifice a few for the safety of them all. When asked if he would agree to eat only one animal a day and leave the rest alone, the lion pondered on this offer at length. Eventually he nodded.

So the animals drew lots each day, and it was a task of the loser to present himself or herself to the lion to be devoured. The first day the steenbok was the loser. Bravely she walked to the lion's den and he pounced on her and ate at his leisure. Next, it was the turn of the impala, then the kudu, and then the reedbuck, and so it went on day after day.

Eventually, it fell to the lot of the hare to be the next victim, and the other animals prepared to drag him, kicking and screaming, to the lion's den. But Hare told them he was prepared to meet his fate, and that he would walk there calmly. There was no need for any undignified dragging. But the hare did not go directly to the lion. First he went home and slept till noon.

By then the lion was hungry and most displeased that his meal had not arrived in the agreed way. So he set off through the bush, roaring his displeasure as he went. Eventually he found Hare, who had climbed up a tree that overlooked a deep well.

As the lion drew near, Hare shouted down to him, 'What are you making all that dreadful noise for?'

The lion replied that his daily meal had not arrived, but that he was searching for it, and that he was very angry that it had not arrived as he had agreed with the animals. He was beginning to wonder if he should start hunting again, to remind them who really was the King of the Beasts.

'Well I was chosen by the lot to be your meal for the day,' replied the hare.

'And I had brought you a present of honey as well. But I met another lion and he took the honey from me!'

'Where is this other lion?' roared the King furiously.

'He is in the well,' said Hare, 'but he is not afraid of you and says that he is bigger and stronger than you.'

Now that made the lion angrier than ever, and he went straight over to the well. He peered down and saw another lion looking up him, and he looked angry. The King of the Beasts shouted insults at the intruder, but silence was his only reply. The lion then resorted to shouting every insult and slander at the impostor, even insulting his parents, but to no response. This incensed the King so much that he could no longer control his rage. He leapt down into the well and on top of the other lion.

Too late did he realise his foolishness, for it was only his reflection that greeted him before he splashed into a watery grave.

And that was how Hare tricked the King of Beasts, and saved the animals of the bush.

(Adapted from Greaves 2004:32-35)

***HARE AND THE KING OF THE BEASTS.*** **A Sotho tale.**

**Some conversation questions pertaining to the story.**

For group discussion:

- Why do you think Lion had such good hunting skills?
- Do you think he only hunted when he was hungry?
- If so – why was he still so feared by the other animals?
- How do you think the families of the animals who were hunted by the Lion feel?
- When do you think did the animals finally had enough of him terrorising them and what was the council thinking when they came up with the compromise?
- What did the rest of the animals think when the council announced their decision?
- Why were they willingly going along with the council's decision?
- What made Hare different from the other animals?
- Do you think he was afraid to die?
- Or was he the only one with courage to face the Lion? Why do you say that?
- Did he only act for his own benefit in order to stay alive?
- Or did he act for the benefit of the community as well? Why do you say that?

After talking and discussing the story and the questions with the adolescents, the idea of externalising HIV and Aids as the hungry lion would be suggested to them. The questions above will then be reframed to focus on HIV and Aids and how they experience this Lion in their lives.

By making use of an African tale, the discourse of HIV and Aids will be introduced in a non-threatening manner. Thus making it easier to discuss and educating them as to the dangers of HIV and Aids in a creative way, while also instilling an African sense of community; empowering them as only Mama Africa can.

We are all facing our own Lions (TOL – 'storms') at some point in our lives.

For some of you that Lion might be HIV and Aids lurking around your family, friends and loved ones. The AIDS Lion might even have already preyed on somebody close to you, like your parent(s), family and friends.

Even if HIV and Aids isn't a direct threat to you at this moment, we are all influenced by the presence thereof in society in general. Schools are integrating information on it in their programmes on sex education and even ministers are addressing the dangers thereof from the pulpit. It seems like more and more people and organisations are standing up and standing together against this raging AIDS Lion, yet much more still needs to be done before we can overcome and defeat this Aids Lion.

The following questions based on the story *HARE AND THE KING OF THE BEASTS*. **A Sotho tale** pertains to the presence and influence of the Aids Lion in your life:

1.     Why do you think the Aids Lion has such good hunting skills?

> I wouldn't say the lion has good hunting skills, it is just scary and it is very strategic plans before it attacks the (prey) - **Annie**
>
> Because he was the eldest and he had learned a lot from his past - **Dimakatso**
>
> Defined in skills means killing then yes because people go ahead and be caught by the Lion, they know he's dangerous but they still go. So the AIDS Lion has good skill because he knows his prey - **Dee**
>
> I think it is because it was (it) realised the weak points of the target. It has done its homework - **Michael**
>
> I think it is because it has to have a meal so it has to come up with the way to eat something - **Shaun**

2.     When do you think the Aids Lion likes to hunt?

> When there is a lot of promiscuity in the family - **Annie**
>
> When there are a lot of animals out in the bush - **Dimakatso**
>
> In the dark when no one is looking nobody will know if it got you are not and most of the time no one cares - **Dee**
>
> When it finds the weak points - **Michael**
>
> It is when it is hungry - **Shaun**

3. Do you think people fear this Aids Lion? Please give reasons for your answer.

Not really, because AIDS is not a physical thing meaning that it is not a sickness that people can see with the right treatment - **Annie**

Yes, because he ate a lot of animals per day and didn't only eat one - **Dimakatso**

I think it's only when one sees or is gotten by AIDS Lion that they fear. People think that it will not get them - **Dee**

I wouldn't say that because we still have people having sex without condoms - **Michael**

Yes I think so because it keep(s) us away from our loved ones through death – **Shaun**

4. How do you think the families of the persons who were hunted by the Aids Lion feel?

Some families don't understand AIDS so they end up isolating them because of their lack of knowledge - **Annie**

Very sad and maybe hurting - **Dimakatso**

Very sad and angry about it - **Dee**

Horrible, embarrassed etc - **Michael**

At some point I would say they are angry because of foolishness of someone who let the Lion catch (them) but the truth is they are sad - **Shaun**

5. How does these feelings you just described, influence their thinking about HIV and Aids in general and about contracting HIV and Aids themselves?

Some people just believe that they will never get Aids they tend to think they are immune to it - **Annie**

It makes them think that it kills. People think they will suffer the rest of their lives - **Dimakatso**

In general I think people do nothing about these emotions and just live with it.

And it only those that decided they will learn not to repeat the same path as those hunted - **Dee**

I think they see it as an enemy towards - **Michael**

They should be afraid of this virus and they probably don't want to get infected and they now believe that this disease is real - **Shaun**

6. Do you think enough is being done to combat the Aids Lion reign of terror in our country? Give reasons for your answer.

Yes, because I feel that Government can only do up to so much, the rest that people should meet the Government halfway - **Annie**

No, because the country and the people are not looking after themselves and AIDS is spreading - **Dimakatso**

Yes. It has gotten to a point where condoms are given at schools. And schools are supposed to be a safe environment. But the country (Government) knows it's not safe so they are trying their best. I just don't think about the nation since its 50/50 everyone -**Dee**

Yes! I think so. There are so much books about AIDS, the are condoms given away for free but people don't want to listen - **Michael**

I do not think so. The Lion still catch new people every day and people are still not responsible enough – **Shaun**

7. Who do you think needs to take responsibility to stop this Aids Lion in his tracks? Explain your answer.

Most of the time the man should take responsibility because for men they just go and sleep around - **Annie**

Yourself, because you have to protect and look after yourself - **Dimakatso**

That every individual, just like the hare - **Dee**

Myself and others because I'm the one who makes (the) decision to sleep without a condom - **Michael**

Everybody has to take responsibility because changes are brought on by everybody's commitment - **Shaun**

8.    What more can organizations like NGOs (for instance PEN) and Churches do to help in the war with the Aids Lion?  Explain your answer.

They can only teach and tell them the pros and cons of HIV and Aids - **Annie**

Pray, council them or give them more antibiotics - **Dimakatso**

To teach people more about AIDS and how to prevent it - **Dee**

Keep telling people about the danger of HIV / AIDS and sex before marriage is a sin - **Michael**

They can provide condoms and really encourage people to always protect themselves and built a place where they can teach about the Lion - **Shaun**

9.    What can ordinary people, like you and me, do to become like the hare in the tale – to be brave and face the Aids Lion to help to defeat him?

Accept that there is AIDS and we are not immune to it by treating ourselves well we will be okay -**Annie**

Help them because they seem to be suffering - **Dimakatso**

We can decide not to follow Aids lion and tell those around us to get away from AIDS Lion - **Dee**

Set an example to the next generation - **Michael**

Use a condom at all times or abstain from sex – **Shaun**

10.    What role can communities take in the war with the Aids Lion?  Explain your answer.

Just explained to them there is HIV and we have no choice but to accept it - **Annie**

Try and defend themselves and maybe kill them - **Dimakatso**

To teach the children the right morals and ethics and how to respect yourself and not just to surrender yourself up to be AIDS Lion -**Dee**

Campaigns could (be) worked out advising youth about condomising - **Michael**

If they get together and agree on one thing and that could be to protect themselves against the disease through condomising - **Shaun**

**Reflection-in-Progress: African storytelling as a narrative tool**

As can be seen from the responses to this exercise, stories like these can be well utilised to get children, even older adolescents like my co-researchers to engage in discussions on serious matters, like the HIV and Aids crisis. From their responses, it seems like most of them were able to understand the metaphor of the Aids Lion and responded well to it. Most of them showed good factual knowledge and interesting enough – during one of the last sessions of the second TOL camp – I asked the co-researchers point blank if any of them have ever tested for HIV and Aids. Only two girls responded negatively. Although I did not want to press the issue, some said they only tested because it was an organised group activity.

## 3.6 YOUNG PICASSO AT PLAY: USING THE ARTS TO EXPRESS

### 3.6.1 Roots and all: The *Tree of Life* metaphor in full colour

Art tells the story of the culture and the discourses informing it. This section focuses on employing the arts – drawing, photography, song writing and storytelling – as a narrative tool to elicit more of my co-researchers' own stories, thoughts and feelings regarding their bereavement.

As part of the second TOL camp's activities, they were asked to once again draw their own *Tree of Life* as representative of themselves and their stories. During the TOL camps, I gave the boys and girls two disposable cameras with which to take photos as part of the research. Collages of some of these photos follow the two Tree pictures as an insert.

They were also asked to write their own *Tree of Life* song as well as their own African folktale, similar to that in the previous section (3.5).

To be able to make sense of the two *Tree of Life* pictures on the following pages, the reader first needs to familiarise him or herself with the *Tree of Life* metaphor as explained by Ncube (2006:6). The pictures included are firstly that of Dee, one of the girls who lost her mother, and secondly that of Victor, one of the boys who were regarded as a vulnerable adolescent having lost his aunt, who was his primary caregiver.

The **roots** of the tree represent significant people from the co-researchers' ancestry, origins and family history. The **trunk** is representative of significant events that shaped the co-researchers' lives. Both positive events and negative events are included. The **leaves** represent people or significant relationships in the co-researchers' lives. Fallen leaves act as a metaphor to represent important people in the co-researchers' lives whom have died. The **branches** of the tree represents the co-researchers' hopes and dreams they have for themselves. The **fruits** were representative of the co-researchers' achievements – the things which he or she was proud of. The **bugs** on the tree that eat away at the fruits and the leaves are a metaphor for the problems and challenges the co-researchers are facing in their daily lives (Ncube 2006:6).

# MY TREE OF LIFE

Storms
- Losing someone.
- Being on a Supplementary.

Kind things
- Opportunities.
- Achievement

Dreams/hope
- Success.
- Happiness.

Loved people (lost)
- Family.
- Friends.

Bad people/things
- Pretenders.
- Failing.

SKILLS & ABILITIES
- Writing.
- Humbleness.

Roots
- Family

Nutrients
- God
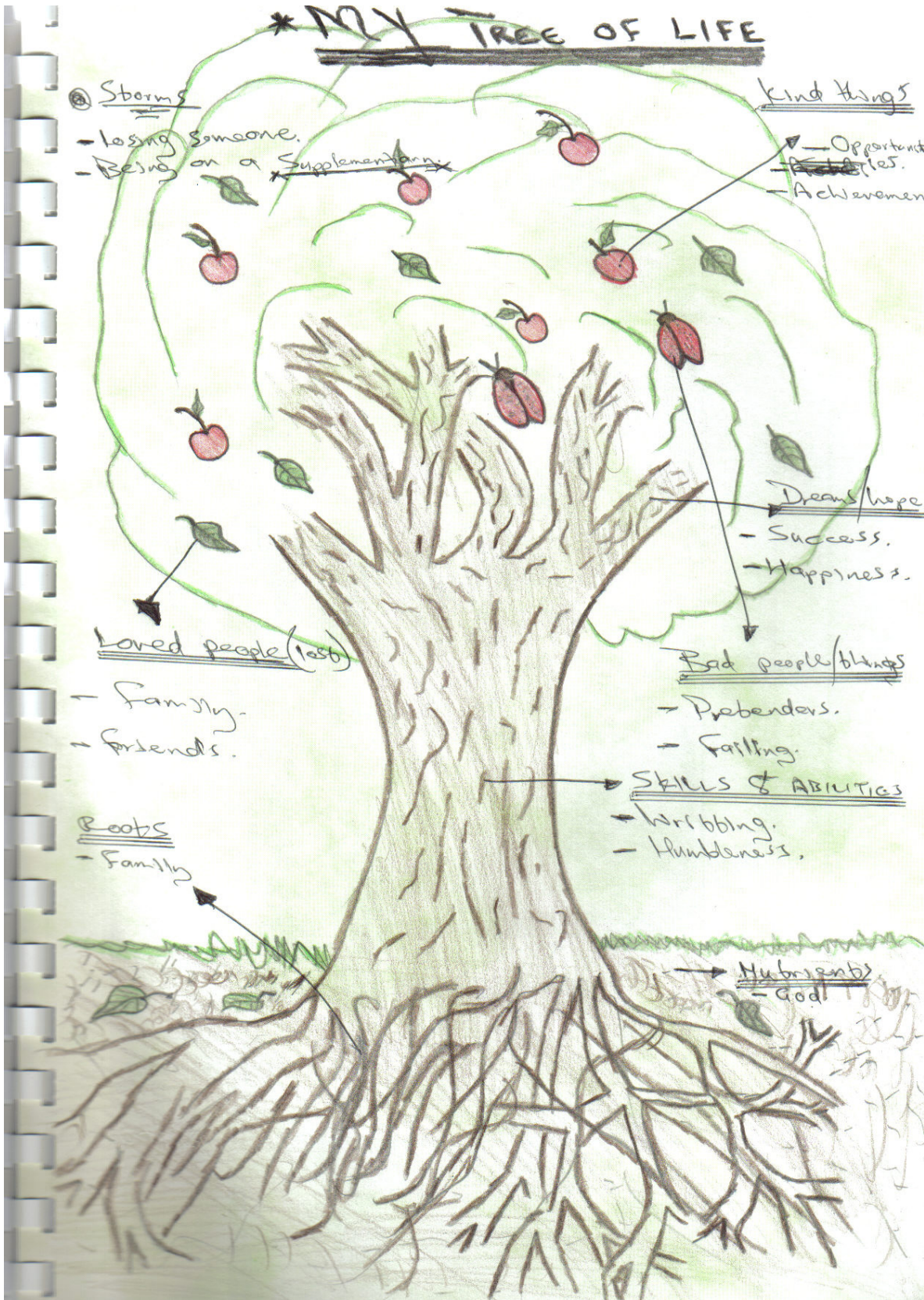
**INSERT TO SECTION 3.6.1[1]**


**A PICTURE'S WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: *TREE OF LIFE* PHOTOS**


As was mentioned earlier my co-researchers were equipped with disposable cameras during both the TOL camps. During each camp, I gave them two cameras, one for the boys and one for the girls. I wanted them to also capture the TOL camps as part of their own life stories. They enjoyed this activity very much, and all of them participated in taking photos. Although my co-researchers did not mind me using their real names and some even insisted, they did not want photos showing their faces posted on the research project's website (www.hivorphans.co.za). As I wanted to include some of these photos in my thesis, I came up with the idea to cover their faces with specific smiley face stickers. This way the reader are able to identify them, without actually being able to identify them. In doing so, the reader is able to gain insight into the interactions between my co-researchers themselves as well as with the researchers.

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[1] Please note that this insert has been omitted from the electronic version of the thesis.

### 3.6.2 Annie – 'Save me from my troubles'

**Own TREE song: Life Hurts**

Life has been hard / I have been in positions where I felt so unloved and neglected

and till this day Lord I ask

<u>Chorus</u>

Lord lead me into greener pastures / Save me from my troubles

Father I need you now more than ever / I am sitting in the stillness

and trying to find answers to my troubles / but all I see darkness but no light at the end of the tunnel

I have shed so much tears / Lord you say you will guide and protect me so Lord show yourself

Life has been hard / I have been in positions where I felt so unloved and neglected

and till this day Lord I cannot find / answers so Lord I ask you to

<u>Chorus</u>

I have shed tears I never thought / and Lord in your Word you say that

every tear I cry you will wipe it away / back to Father I always end up

asking myself whether you really (do) hear me when I call unto you

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**Own African folktale: Tshelane**

Tshelane was a young girl who had been staying with her grandmother, Tshelane was a girl who was self disciplined and a very helpful girl, the whole village knew that Tshelane was a girl who use to help old people.

  One day she was sent to go and fetch wood but on her way she saw the cloud covering in and then there came a huge storm started she had nowhere to go so she started running and hiding under trees and bushes but when ever she tried it would catch up with her after running the cloud ended up telling Tshelane that 'Why are you running away from me I am trying to protect you so please stay under my shelter.'

**Reflection-in-Progress: Annie's TREE song and African folktale**

Annie's TREE song reminds strongly of the well-known Psalm 23 – "Lord lead me into greener pastures".  It tells of the emotions the writer is struggling with: despair – "but all I see darkness but no light at the end of the tunnel", "Lord show yourself"; sadness – "I have shed tears I never thought"; and anger – "I always end up asking myself whether you really (do) hear me when I call unto you".

Annie's own African folktale entitled "Tshelane" refers to characteristics of Tshelane that is also easily recognisable in Annie's own character – self-discipline, helpful, kind towards others.  The cloud that at first scared Tshelane turned out to be her saving grace during the storm – "Why are you running away from me I am trying to protect you".  If one looks at this story in relation to Annie's TREE song, it seems like Annie as the writer of these two stories might sometimes feel as if God has forsaken her during the storms in her life.

At times, she might even run away from Him because she fears Him, yet she also acknowledges that He is always present during the storms in her life and that He wants to provide her with shelter and protection during these difficult times.

### 3.6.3 Dee – 'Feeling not so lightly'

**Own TREE song: Time Stopping**

Carrying all these bags, and / walking on bugs

Inside not looking that heavil(e)y / Feeling not so lightly

When did I pick it up

Chorus

Picking up feels undecided / so takes time

Stopping feels natural / The thinking takes time to stop

Takes time stopping

Ask for help to bring it up / Get company to walk up

Splitting to go further / Now it's time to put it down

Thinking takes time

Chorus

Ask again but no one there / Look around and there

Find no one / till Jesus put it down / Finally stopped

**Own African folktale: (Mmosteso and the helpful ant)**

Mmosteso (the questioner) was known in the village to help people with everything where he can.

One day he was trying to pick up a huge rock but he was alone. He looked around, he found nothing, he looked for (someone) but (found) no one. There he was alone and no one to help. Then it started to rain there was no way of running with out the rock moving.

As he was pushing and pushing the rock started moving. When the rock was moved the rain stopped. Mmosteso looked around to find the person who helped him and he saw a tiny, little ant still pushing the big rock. Mmosteso thanked the ant because if it was not for the strength of the ant and him the rock would have not been moved.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's TREE song and African folktale**

Dee's TREE song has elements in that refer to her self-acknowledged depression – "If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed". It tells of carrying many bags (troubles) and walking on bugs (represented in the TOL metaphor as bad things that have happened in your life). In her one TOL workbook, she even acknowledges her death wishes:

When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide. At that moment I was angry with God and told Him to take me away because I can't kill myself – **Dee**

The song goes on to tell of how thinking about these troubles takes up her energy: "Thinking takes time" and that it helps to ask for help and get some company: "Ask for help to bring it up / Get company to walk up". But in the end – even when no-one listens anymore, Jesus is still there, and He not only listens to her troubles, but takes it from her and frees her – "Find no one / till Jesus put it down / Finally stopped".

Dee's African folktale tells the story of how Mmosteso was helped by a little ant to move a heavy rock in the rain and when the rock started to move, the rain ceased. Something as small as an ant seemed to be the unique outcome in this story of Dee – as small as it was, it proved to be very strong and helpful. I would have liked to talked to Dee about her story and see what she sees as the helpful ant in her life. But if I read her life story as compiled during the two TOL camps and the TOL workbooks, it seems like the ant could represent courage in her life. Once she has enough courage to face the storms in her life, nothing seems to get Dee down, although she struggles constantly not to be pulled down by the storms in her life as is evident in both her TREE song, as well as her African folktale.

### 3.6.4 Dimakatso – 'I think about her each night and day'

**Own TREE song: I**

I sit and I stand / I think about her each night and day

I wonder why God took her / I wonder how life be

I turn to God day and night / I just think about her

Chorus

What goes around comes around / What goes up must come down

It does not matter who you are / but I just think about her

**Own African folktale: The One Way**

Long long back there was a shortage of rain in a village called Moholoholo. The water from the river had also dried out. They went up and down the hills, side to side just to go and look for the mother of rain Mapula. Some of them took shortcuts some decided to take the long way. While they were on the way there the clouds started to become black/grey. One of the people was happy and said finally! Just only to find out that it was soot. Some of them died from inhaling it and some manage to survive it. When they got to Mapula they begged for rain. All of a sudden it started to rain and people were excited. After the rain they saw something that they never saw before. It was seven colours up the sky. They called it the One Way.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Dimakatso's TREE song and African folktale

Dimakatso's TREE song simply entitled "I", tells of the heartache for the love of a deceased loved one, and how that longing never goes away: "I think about her each night and day". Furthermore, the onus is put on God for the mother's death – "I wonder why God took her". However, during this loss God is also always there to turn to for comfort – "I turn to God day and night".

Her African folktale entitled "The One Way" sounds vaguely familiar and I wonder if she has not adapted an existing African folktale for the purpose of this exercise. Yet, it is still a beautiful tale of people searching, struggling and ultimately finding the mother of rain, Mapula, to ask for rain during the drought, and not only receiving rain, but also hope in the form of the rainbow – the "One Way".

### 3.6.5  Palesa – 'We going to make it in life challenges'

**Own TREE song: (The pain of losing a parent)**

Life have full of challenges / Obstacles that we faced

As people, that makes / us to be strong in our

Faith to overcome the / storms or problems


It is very hard and / difficult to love someone

That you really care about / and lose that special

Person that means everything to you


And you have to live with that / pain for the rest of your life

Not having your parent or the love of your parent / very painful


**Own African folktale: A good shepherd strong and brave**

There was a boy called Thabang he was a shepherd for his father's flock. He was always humble, faithful and trustfully to his father's flock.  His father knew that when his animals are look by him everything was fine.

   One day he was at the field as usual looking for the animals and suddenly a lion just came near the animals sheep, goats, cattle etc.  And he was shocked and did not know what to do at all.  Because it was a brave guy or boy he just told himself that he is going (to) save is the life of that animal by fighting the lion.  He just stood up and fight the lion with a spear at the chest and the lion fall down and died immediately.

And that shows that he was brave and powerful men who make something that was impossible to become possible.

The story is related to our daily life storms.  It shows that nothing is impossible even if we can face problems but still we going to make it in life challenges.  They are not here to stay they will come to pass.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Palesa's TREE song and African folktale**

Palesa's TREE song tells of the challenges one faces in life, obstacles that make us stronger in the end and help to strengthen our faith: "As people, that makes / us to be strong in our / Faith to overcome the / storms or problems".  Sometimes one of these life challenges is losing your parent to death.  It is very hard to lose someone like your parent whom you love very much and this causes much pain in the life of a child: "Not having your parent or the love of your parent / very painful".

Her African folktale entitled "A good shepherd brave and strong", tells the story of a young boy, Thabang, herding his father's animals and caring for them.  He was very good at what he did, and his father was proud of him for being so responsible with his animals.  One day however the animals were in danger because a lion was trying to attack them.  At first, Thabang was "…shocked and did not know what to do at all".  However, because he was very brave he "…just told himself that he is going (to) save is the life of that animal by fighting the lion".  This he did and killed the lion with his spear.  Palesa related his braveness to the ability to "… make something that was impossible to become possible".

Palesa herself seemed to be a very brave individual, having lost her mother only the month (August 2008) before the first TOL camp (October 2008) and still having the ability to fully engage in all the camp activities.

Unlike the rest of the co-researchers, Palesa ends her story off with an explanation. Telling us, the readers, that this story is related to the storms we all encounter in our lives. She assures us that these storms too will pass and that "nothing is impossible" if we face our problems – like she faced the death of her mother head-on.

### 3.6.6 Zee – '(B)umpy drives sometimes happen for a reason'

**Own African folktale: (Bumpy ride)**

Our lives' is like a long road that we are trying to reach at the end of the road. But as we walking or driving along this road these potholes and bumpy rides. That's how I see life bumpy drives is sometimes happen for a reason and we don't know why these things happen.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's African folktale**

Unfortunately, Zee did not complete the exercise on writing her own TREE song, and she possibly misunderstood the exercise on writing her own African folktale, as her answer above does not really reflect a story format, but rather looks more like a life lesson. Yet, it tells us something of her life and experiences. If life is like a road, then Zee's life personifies the state that the South African roads are in – full of bumps and unexpected potholes when you least expect it. Much has happened in her short life – her mother committed suicide when she was still a toddler and her father died of HIV and Aids, due to possible infection from her stepmother. Her uncertainty regarding life and the death of her father comes through as she contradicts herself by stating that "bumpy drives is something that happen for a reason", yet she also says that "we don't know why these things happen".

### 3.6.7   Michael – '(M)y heart keeps bleeding'

**Own TREE song: (Without you mommy)**

Mommy I missed you / Life ain't the same

Mommy and without you / remember all the good day good time

When I used to cry / by your side

Yeh!  I miss that / my heart keeps

bleeding when I'm down / by your grave

I right now / mommy I'm somebody's slave

I wonder / how it feels

to be right where / you should my angel

<u>Chorus</u>

Throughout my struggles

through my pain

but I stand I stand

**Reflection-in-Progress: Michael's TREE song and African folktale**

Michael unfortunately did not complete the exercise on writing his own African folktale.  Yet, his untitled TREE song tells, like Palesa's TREE song, of the loss a child experiences when their parent passes away.  He acknowledges that life isn't the same after his mother's death, and remembers the good time, while also expressing his intense sadness "my heart keeps bleeding when I'm down by your grave".

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He feels confined by his life at present: "I right now / mommy I'm somebody's slave" and wonders how it feels to be where his mother is now: "I wonder / how it feels / to be right where / you should my angel".

I am uncertain if 'my angel' refers to his mother who is dead or if it refers to Michael himself as his mother would speak to him, but it does seem like he has contemplated what death would be like. Yet, as difficult as his life seems at present and how saddened Michael is by the untimely death of his mother, and though he feels despair at being without her in this world, he is still coping: "but I stand I stand".

### 3.6.8  Moses – '(S)tarted to take life as it is'

**Own TREE song: The morning**

I wake up every day / and I don't feel the morning shine

I took another look into the sky


Hoping that the sun will shine / and all I feel is the rain

that brings me pain


I keep on praying and praying / preparing for any pressures of life

until one day morning


When the rainbow was in the sky / The pain went away and I flew into the sky

I cry tears of joy and I prayed / Thank you Lord

**Own African folktale: Three magical stones**

Long long time ago, there was a boy named Molimi. He was a very lonely and sad boy without parents but only a brother was there to support him financially.

One day Sunday afternoon he decided to rest a bit and slept. He had a dream and in the dream he was very successful but not rich. He could afford life. In the dream he was visited by three angels and every angel gave him a wish stone.

The first stone, he wished that his parents were alive and they were staying together. The second stone he wished that he had all the riches in the world. The third stone he wished that he was the best DJ in the whole wide world. Everything was the way he wanted. He lived all his life with everything he wanted.

Until one day's parents had to divorce, everybody wanted all the money he had and his wife gave him HIV/AIDS. The phone ringed in his dream and that was an alarm waking him up. He woke up relieved that it was all a dream. So he started to take life as it is and stop blaming God for taking his parents. He started to work his way up and focus on God.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Moses' TREE song and African folktale**

Moses' TREE song entitled "The morning", captures the essence of the TOL camps beautifully. It tells of the writer waking up everyday looking forward to a beautiful sunshine day, but all he finds is one rainy day after the other, which causes him much pain. In response to this situation, he does two things – he keeps on praying, but also prepares himself for the struggles of daily life: "I keep on praying and praying / preparing for any pressures of life".

Moses' own African folktale entitled "Three magical stones" is an absolute gem of a story. It tells the story of an orphaned boy Molimi whose brother cared for him. In a dream he has, he sees himself as "… very successful but not rich". In the dream three angels visit him and provide him with three magical wish stones. As it usually goes in these kinds of stories, he uses his three wishes. But unlike the typical story of this nature all does not end well after the fulfilment of his three wishes and everybody does not magically live happily ever after. Eventually his parents, who were brought back to life through Molimi's first wish, divorce. Everybody is now only interested in his riches and he contracts HIV and Aids from his unfaithful wife.

This dream Molimi had about the three magical wish stones, made him realise that he had to face reality and he "… started to take life as it is and stop(ped) blaming God for taking his parents". Consequently he started to do two things – he took responsibility and "… work(ed) his way up …" and also made God a priority in his life by focussing on God.

### 3.6.9  Shaun – '(R)each out to my dreams'

**Own TREE song: (My treasure chest)**

I was born to live like a tree / growing through my challenges

The bad times, the good I live through it all

With the strength I hope I (have I) will make it through

as life pass different stage / nothing stays the same but I still though

After all that I've been through and I still keep pushing hard

even though it seems so far / I reach out to my dreams

I survived through storms and heavy rain

my pain and sorrow are hidden in my treasure chest

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**Own African folktale: Power within the believer**

Long time ago there was animals is living in the most biggest jungle in the world.  This animals were always boarded (?)  by hunters.  Every time they saw a rainbow that always made a wish for peace with in their lives.  With a very high hope that one day the rainbow will perform a miracle and they would be free from the hunters and other problem they had was a stormy season as the storm would blow away their food all the time.  One-day hunters were taking them on that day was very stormy, baby animals got together and throughout the storms they reached the top of the mountain and they made a wish and eventually it became true.  Through their powerful belief they were free and they lived happily ever after.
Written by Shaun.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Shaun's TREE song and African folktale

Shaun's untitled TREE song tells the story of how the writer compares himself to a tree that lives through life's different stages – good as well as bad.  And that by being strong and "… still keep push(ing) harder" the writer reaches for his dreams although at present "… it seems so far".  This reminds of the song 'Keep pushing' Shaun and his twin brother Michael recorded and graciously gave Juanita and myself permission to use in our research reports.  The lyrics of the song are discussed below as part of the interdisciplinary conversation process by a music therapist and a recording of the song is included on a CD as Addendum C.  In the abovementioned song lyrics of Shaun's TREE song, the writer survives the storms and heavy rains he is experiencing in life and packs away his sorrow and pain in his treasure chest.  This is much like I experienced Shaun during the TOL camps – he does not like to show his sadness and tries desperately to hide his feelings.

Shaun's own African folktale "Power within the believer" tells the beautiful tale of wild animals being hunted and experiencing hardships. Though they constantly wished upon every rainbow they saw, to be able to experience peace in their lives, it never came true. Until one stormy day when the hunters were after them again and the baby animals were able to save them all by going up the mountain and wishing. It was up to the youngest of all the animals to save all of them, not the strongest or the smartest, but the most vulnerable of them all – the babies. They faced their fears and climbed the mountain where they found the power within themselves to save the animal kingdom.

Like them, I experienced Shaun as someone who, though scared at times, faced his fears and in doing so relies on his own power to help him through difficult times, something that is both evident in his untitled TREE song as well as in the "Keep pushing" song.

**Lyrics to the song "Keep pushing"**

(Reproduced with permission from the songwriter. Transcribed by A Richter.)

Ay yoh man, this one goes out to anybody who has lost people they love the most - the most important people in their lives. I just want to give you an inspiration, you know what I mean? And it goes ah something like this –

I went through the struggles man, I cried in this life
Life goes hard when you ain't got parents, but you got to step it up
And focus on your dreams and the goals to achieve
Even though it's hard when I'm moving on my own, I pray for a ride
Questions running in my mind –
Is God really dead? Does He really hear? Wanna look alright

And my granny ain't here, she got shot - nine bullets on her body,

Mommy rest in peace, oh I miss her any day

I got backstabbed by a friend, I don't bleed,

My twin on the side, you're the person I can trust,

I can let my soul shine


And stay strong

Have faith in myself,

Believe that I can do it

And a future so bright

from the dark to the light

Tomorrow be a blessing if today was a gift


--- **Chorus**---

Life has different stages

Nothing stays the same,

But I still broke through (still broke through)

After all that I've been through, (I've been through)

I still keep pushing higher (pushing higher)

Even though it seems so far (seems so far)

I'm reaching up to my dreams (my dreams)

And you can't tell me a thing  ---


I can't go to sleep all alone on my own

My momma passed on last night

Why me?

Life goes on…

So I'm trying to get it on, man I'm doing all that I can,

But my mother on my mind, so I cry all day

My nigger Wiseman tell me - life's useless, make it better if we can

I'm praying –

Oh God, I need to be free from the world we're living in

Life's kinda house, oh my credit came around

Be the mother on the side

This thing we call life comes once, then it's gone

Life's never good, man my life's half lived

All the tears on my face but the things I've been

My momma came along in my dream as an angel

Only if you here to see your son grow

And now I'm all alone with the big boy Plat

Anything is possible you said that last

**Chorus**

Hey man, rest in peace to my mother, to my little sister,

Tell you about who passed on in my life – yoh, my mother man, you gotta

make it

Hang, do beats boy, it's your future, you know what I mean?

Now it's a must, we're all have to make it, you got to push hard

It is very sad you know

But I love you all man

**Chorus x2**

The lyrics to the song "Keep pushing" were analysed by a music therapist Hanré Hattingh and her analysis as well as my reflection on the song and her comments are given below. This section starts by Hanré Hattingh introducing herself.

**Hanré Hattingh**

I am a therapeutic music educator and have started my own practice at the beginning of 2010. I have obtained my degree in Music in 2009 with Music Education and Piano as main subjects. I am currently enrolled for my BMus (Honours) degree in Music Education, Music and child development.

## Lyrics (Keep pushing) summary

It is clear that Shaun uses the song as an outlet for his emotions. He feels that he wants to help people and he wants to encourage people that experienced similar sorrow as he has experienced, not to lose hope. He wants to inspire them with his music. He wants to have a voice in the world.

In the first verse he tells of how difficult his life is, but that he is overcoming it by focussing on his future and what he wants to accomplish. He wants to be better off than his current situation. The phrase where he says: "Is God really dead? Does He really hear?" and the phrase just before the chorus: "Have faith in myself, believe that I can do it" give the impression that he feels he can rather trust in himself than in God to get his life in order (See conclusion). He feels he has control over his life, despite the fact that situations are not within his control. He says throughout the song that everything changes but that his brother is his only constant. His brother is his pillar of support.

With the chorus, I get the impression that he, together with the fact that he wants to inspire others through it, rather wants to motivate himself. The phrase: "And you can't tell me a thing" says that he knows life, that he can understand other people's sorrow, but that not everyone will understand his situation and emotions (See conclusion).

"I can't sleep all alone on my own, my momma passed on last night": He is scared and uncertain and it is clear that he struggles with unresolved feelings, if it is still thoughts that he feels he need to capture in a song, even though so much time have elapsed. "Why me?": he feels powerless regarding his situation and he feels *it is me against the world*. Furthermore, he says that he still mourns his mother; that he is trying to move on but that he struggles immensely to accept it.

Shaun's life up to now made him feel as if life is never good and he says his life is half lived. Nevertheless, he tries to inspire others and tries to make their lives better by telling them how bad his life is but that he manages to live through it by relying on himself. In great contrast to the fact that he tries to inspire others is his anger, despondency and cynicism about life. How can it influence the people he tries to reach? He had experienced too much-unresolved traumas in his life and it is clear that it is still unresolved. He tries to convince himself and others that he will overcome it by ignoring it and trying to be better than his situation. It would be possible because he wants to overcome it but counselling, preferably trauma counselling, together with his brother to work through it would be more effective.

**Conclusion**

Shaun has written the song because he believes in his abilities as an artist, because he uses it as an outlet for his sorrow. He trusts himself and relies on his brother. Something that was striking is the fact that Shaun never refers to God or his religion in his story, but that there is reference made of it in his song.

Michael however refers to his religion and God in his story and says that he always turns to God in times of need. It may be possible that Shaun is experiencing inner conflicts relating to his religion, possibly because of his brother's religious influence. Does he feel that his brother turns to God in times of need but that he – Shaun – can't see how this will help? Does he also want to turn to God like his brother does, but is afraid that 'God will fail him again'? It is an issue that needs to be approached very carefully, specifically because it becomes clear in Shaun's song that he does not want to talk to other people and that he has already decided that he is the only one capable of helping himself. Shaun's trust must first be won before his problems can be solved. He shall need to WANT to talk. I suspect that he has been left with serious emotional scars due to al the deaths he has lived through in his life and that he is projecting all that emotions to his mother's death, therefore it is her death he has trouble accepting.

I furthermore conclude that Shaun is very confused and that he cannot identify the origin of his pain / emotions (based on all the different unrelated ideas in his song). The song does not have one stanza that deals with a specific theme. It is a lot of different thoughts and he does not seem to know how to express himself. It is an all-in-one song. I would have encouraged him to write more songs, it is obvious that he enjoys it and he feels that it gives him a purpose in the world. I would have guided him to write about one theme per song. Thereby he would have started to arrange and sort out his thoughts about his situation and other events in his past. It would help him and his counsellor to come to the realisation about what the actual problems are and this way they can address one issue at a time.

Shaun clearly does not have peace about his past that would be necessary to inspire other things. The message he now sends out is: "Life is crap, ignore it and keep on living". The message should rather be: "Life hits you hard, this is how I got up and how I hit life back". Shaun must be helped to come to that point.

When his songs carry that message, his soul is healthy. It is very clear that he needs help urgently to help him to overcome the unresolved issues of the past.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Music therapy addressing bereavement issues**

The music therapist mentions that it seems like Shaun trusts more in himself than in God: "… gives the impression that he feels he can rather trust in himself than in God to get his life in order (See conclusion)." She also mentions that it seems like Shaun "… feels he has control over his life, despite the fact that situations are not within his control". She also picks up that Shaun never referred to God or religion in his story, yet he makes reference thereof in his story: "Oh God, I need to be free from the world we're living in". She notices that Michael however refers to religion and God and "… says that he always turns to God in times of need". It must be mentioned here that the music therapist was provided with the lyrics of the song "Keep pushing" as well as an audio version thereof and the stories of the twins Michael and Shaun, as it is also provide in chapter 2. She furthermore states that it might be possible that Shaun is experiencing conflicting feelings regarding God and his religion – though he wants to turn to God like Michael he might be afraid that "… God will fail him again".

As mentioned earlier, Shaun did not at first want to speak as openly as Michael in the TOL group sessions about the losses he has experienced, his emotions as well as his religion. Although I do concur with Hanré Hattingh that Shaun is experiencing conflicting feelings regarding religion and the role of God in his life, I don't want to assume that he therefore prefers to rely on himself instead of on God for his well-being. While Michael was more in touch with his thoughts and especially his feelings, he did not hesitate to speak about God and religion, and he believed without question that God played a positive and caring role in his life. Shaun was more rational in his approach to life, God and religion. He did not hesitate to ask hard questions from God.

The music therapist continues with her analysis of the song and in reference to the chorus mentions that although his stated aim with this song is to inspire other people, he also uses it to motivate himself. She says that by mentioning the fact that he can't sleep on his own, because his mother died, he acknowledges that he is very scared and uncertain and still struggles with unresolved feelings regarding his mother's death, who did not "… pass (ed) on last night …", but a while ago. By posing the question "Why me?" he acknowledges his powerlessness regarding his situation, although she also mentioned earlier that he feels he has control over his life, although not over the situations in his life – like his mother's death.

Hanré Hattingh also mentions that Shaun tries to convince himself and others that he will overcome his feelings by simply ignoring it and trying to be better than his situation. According to her his anger, despondency and cynicism about life come to the fore even as he tries to inspire others with his song. It seems to ring true that Shaun tends to ignore his emotions in an attempt for it to simply disappear, as he at one stage, early on during the first TOL camp, became quite agitated with his brother Michael for becoming emotional while sharing his own story during one of the group sessions. Yet, later on when he trusted the group, Shaun also shared his emotions quite openly and even become overwhelmed by all the emotions he has cropped up for so long. He did appear to be very cynical about life during the two TOL camps, possibly because life has already hit him hard at a very young age – violence has claimed both his father, who was stabbed to death, and his grandmother, who was shot dead.

The music therapist concludes her analysis by mentioning that it seems like Shaun, together with Michael would gain from trauma counselling to work through their issues together. She also mentions that music therapy in conjunction with counselling will help Shaun and his counsellor work through the issues he is experiencing. This seems like a great idea to me as he and his brother both love music and uses it as an outlet for their emotions.

### 3.6.10 Victor – 'everybody deserves to see the light'

**Own TREE song: (We still stay green)**

After the pain / still we smile

We seem so fine / But I guess it's alright

'coz everybody deserves to see the light / In the world it seems so hard

When everybody make it and still you try / And then you don't cry

You let your tears fall they all dry / later on you feel better

Try to talk about it and then you feel better / But I guess it's alright

'coz everybody deserves to see the light

<u>Chorus</u>

Even though our leaves will fall / we know that we'll grow tall

We're like the strong trees / even though it's dry out we still stay green

(x2)

**Own African folktale: After it rains**

Well, in a black people's culture it is well-heard that when it rains or rains heavily, and even after the storm especially in those undeveloped villages around South Africa.  After it rains or even when the storm has just fallen, the sky clears and when all they can see is nothing but the red-orange like sky, above the wet soil with a smell of the pure heavenly water as a result of rain / even the storm; they say: "It is a symbol that a king somewhere has died".

Adapted from the logic of: Victor.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Victor's TREE song and African folktale**

Victor's untitled TREE song tells about life after loss and the pain it brings about. When one puts up a brave face and tries to go on with life, not showing the pain the writer is experiencing: "still we smile / We seem so fine".  Yet, this attempt to stay positive is made harder by people around you succeeding in life, though you feel to just cry: "When everybody make it and still you try / And then you don't cry". But, the writer eventually acknowledges that there is a place under the sun for everyone: "'coz everybody deserves to see the light".  The chorus section reminds us that even though we will experience loss (leaves falling in the TOL metaphor), that will make us stronger and "we'll grow tall".  The writer compares everybody who has experienced loss to strong trees that keep going on and growing, despite the hardships: "even though it's dry out we still stay green".

Victor ends his African folktale with the words "adapted from the logic of Victor", which gives the impression that he is actually referring to a known tale within the African culture "… in a black people's culture…".  He beautifully describes the earth after a rainstorm: "…when all they can see is nothing but the red-orange like sky, above the wet soil with a smell of the pure heavenly water as a result of rain …". According to him, this is seen in the African culture as a "… symbol that a king somewhere has died".  When I read Victor's story, I was struck by the sheer beauty of his description after a rainstorm.

If Noah received the rainbow as a symbol of hope from God after the devastating flood, I wondered how such an artistic expression would have looked in a painting with Jesus, our King, on the Cross.  For me, it would have made sense if a rainbow or a "…red-orange like sky …" featured somewhere in the Crucifixion narrative – to symbolise the hope His death and resurrection brought humankind.

### 3.6.11 Wiseman – 'My life is travelling'

**Own TREE song: (All that I do)**

My life is full of ups / and downs, and now

All that I do is x2 / Give praise to the Lord

My life is travelling / different places

And run through / different crises x2

So I ask the Lord / to help me to

Go through it once / again

<u>Chorus</u>

So my life it feels like a dream / challenges come and go

Lord Almighty help me once again x3

**Own African folktale: Sunny rain!!!**

Once upon a time in the place called Limpopo, there was two different villagers who had a serious argument and this argument was about what does it mean when the rain rains while the sun is still glowing.

One of the villagers believed that when the rain rains while the sun is still glowing it means that Baboons are getting married and the other villager believed when this happens sick people are being taken by God but both the kings from the different villages believed that when this happens it shows God's happiness.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Wiseman's TREE song and African folktale**

Wiseman's untitled TREE song tells of the writer's life as being filled with happy times and sad times: "My life is full of ups / and downs, and now". During all these situations – good and bad, he praises the Lord: "All that I do is x2 / Give praise to the Lord". Different crises have an influence on the writer's life: "My life is travelling / different places / And run through / different crises x2". He pleads with God to help him go through these crises again: "So I ask the Lord / to help me to / Go through it once / again". In the chorus the songwriter asks God to do what He has done many times before – help him: "Lord Almighty help me once again x3".

Wiseman's African folktale tells of two opposites meeting – sunshine and rain. They come together as one to show us according to the chiefs of the two villages God's happiness. Wiseman hereby tells us that God can also show us emotion, and He can also – just like us humans – experience happiness. What seems to be important from these two exercises by Wiseman is that we must not only turn to God when we need him and our lives are on the downward spiral – as we tend to do – but that what we all we must do, is "… (g)ive praise to the Lord". In good times and in bad. Then He will show His happiness to us as believers.

**3.6.12 Storytelling as a group effort: (The story of Kewame)**

Seven of the ten co-researchers and I met up one last time after the second TOL camp. We met at the Dutch Reformed Church Bronberg in Sunnyside, Pretoria on Friday 12 March 2010 in the afternoon. Moses, Palesa and Zee were unable to make it due to study and work related responsibilities. As part of this session I asked them to all help to construct a story much like the African folktales they did as an exercise. Together we all sat in a circle right in front of the pulpit, and piece by piece the following story was socially constructed. Each member of the group could only contribute one sentence at a time as we went round in the group.

Our contributions (they insisted I be part of the process) were transcribed by Dee:

There was a girl, Kewame (mine) she was 17 years old.  She lived in a village called Sun where everything seemed perfect.  There she lived with her uncle and aunt.  She lost her parents.  And in her life everything wasn't that perfect.  Her uncle raped her and she used to cry the whole night.

Then one day she told her friends and no one believed her.  She was very sad and angry about no one believing her.  (As the story goes).  And she cried even more.  Then she decided to go to the pastor.

The pastor told her about the story of Jesus and that the bible says that God has good and prosperous plans for her.  After that she started to worship God and go to church.

And as God was healing her she saw her Father is good and started to trust male models again.

As she grew older young adult she never told anyone what happened to her.  But inside she wished she could stop woman and children being abused.

Later on she met a wonderful man.  And at last she could find someone she could trust and tell her story to.

Soon they got married and had 3 children.

Watching her children grow it gave her the courage to start a campaign against woman and child abuse.

And the campaign was successful and many were helped.

During this time she communicated with other abused people and she started to doubt her husband with her children.

But she knew her husband was innocent.  And even with her feeling she knew she had to trust him all over again.

**Reflection-in-Progress: True African storytelling in the making**

We took about thirty minutes to compile this story, and if it wasn't that we were pressured for time, I am sure that this story would have evolved even more. As I also took part in the creation of the story, I tried not to make any leading comments, but rather let my co-researchers direct the direction the story was to take as I was interested in their combined effort to create a narrative. One of the girls, if I'm not mistaken, Dimakatso started our story and gave our main character her name – Kewame, meaning 'she is mine'. Later on she stated that that was the name she wanted to give her firstborn daughter as well.

The story starts out where Kewame is approximately the same age as the co-researchers – 17 years of age. She lived with relatives – her aunt and uncle, since she – like most of the co-researchers – was also an orphan. On the surface her life seemed good – although losing her parents, she was in the care of people who had a bond with her and who loved her. One should think they should love her, being her family and all, but unfortunately for Kewame this was not the case. Her uncle did the unthinkable to her and raped her. As bad as her life was before – having to go through adolescents and young adulthood without her parents and having to be dependant on family members for her survival and well-being – her life suddenly took an even worse turn. She would cry herself to sleep at night thinking about what happened. When she eventually tried to talk to her friends about it, they did not believe her and she probably felt even more isolated. Then she met up with a pastor who helped her, she took Jesus as her Saviour and as a result started to trust men again. She met and married a wonderful man, and had three children with him, and started to realise her dream to help woman and children who were also experiencing abuse and trauma. Although this campaign of her helped many people, it also made her remember her own pain and as a result she started to distrust even her husband with their children.

However, she managed to overcome these insecure feelings of her which once again crept up on her, and she saw him for the good husband and father that he was.

Although as far as I could ascertain none of my co-researchers went through the trauma of being raped like Kewame did, they all showed empathy for children who also went through hard times growing up.  One of the co-researchers – Annie – stated during the first TOL camp that she wanted to open a house for orphaned, neglected and vulnerable children.  Her own experience of losing her mother, gave her new insights into what it means to go through tough times, and like Kewame she wants to use this experience not only to help herself, but also other people and children in similar situations.

For many of my co-researchers God, religion and even the NGO PEN, played a significant part in overcoming their grief after the death of their parent(s) / caregiver.  Kewame also found solace in God and this relationship with Him helped heal her relationships with others – even her future relationship with her husband.

The fact that Kewame eventually lived the life she always dreamt of – being married and being a parent herself and also being able to help other people – it did not protect her from her past sneaking into her life and threatening to destroy all she held dear.

I suspect that my co-researchers might themselves feel threatened by how their past of losing their own parent(s) / caregivers and the associated trauma they went through is going to affect their futures; not only their futures, but also their future relationships with their husbands and wives.  I would have liked to have heard from Dee and Zee how they felt about the impact HIV and Aids and the fact that their parents died due to it might have influenced their lives socially – now and how they perceive it to influence their lives in the future.

## 3.7   CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 was a very interesting chapter to compile.  Looking at the phenomenon of Aids and related discourses through the satirical lens of cartoons as a very specific tradition of interpretation proved to not only be informing, but also handling this very serious matter more tongue-in-the-cheek style.  Looking back in 20/20 hindsight at Aids related discourses as represented in these cartoons, as well as at the statistics related to the phenomenon it seems like much of the fears that were expressed regarding this phenomenon and HIV and Aids orphans have not been realised – at least not yet.  Some of the earlier statistics – much of which is skewed due to incorrect and even blatantly falsely reported information – appear to be exaggerated.  However, while statistics look at the bigger picture, the aim of this research was to focus on individual stories – like those of Dee and Zee – who form part of this bigger picture.  We also looked at theological interpretations of Aids and related discourses and how theology proved to be a tradition of interpretation in its own right regarding this research.

Closely related to tradition, is the concept of culture.  In our research context this happened to be the African culture.   In talking and interacting with my co-researchers, it seemed like for them, as more urbanised African youths, their African culture and background might not always play a big role in their daily struggle to survive, as some scholars would have us believe.  Yet, I found a willingness and a keen interest from the orphans' side to engage with storytelling as a research collection method, and to get acquainted with stories from the broader context of Africa.  They, in my opinion, also enjoyed the tasks in which they had to express themselves through arts – like drawing the trees, writing songs, telling their own African folktales.

In the next chapter, we will focus on how my co-researchers experience their bereavement and possible psycho-spiritual issues related to their bereavement.

# CHAPTER 4
# IN A PLACE OF HUNGER –
# WHEN A CHILD LOSES A PARENT

## 4.1     INTRODUCTION

*It was not long before Magoda came to another village.  Here the people were singing a sad song of hunger. Drought had left them with little food. Magoda believed that his horns could help bring some laughter back to this cheerless place - if it still worked.  As he greeted the villagers, they replied:  "If it is food and lodgings that you want, young man, there is nothing in this place of hunger".*

*Yet, one of the villagers invited Magoda to his home to shelter for the night. Later, Magoda took out his horns and hit one, saying, "Give me food!"  Just as before, the bounty gushed forth from the horn. The people of the house were amazed and began to eat their fill at once. When they saw that the supply seemed to be endless, they invited their friends and neighbours into their home, and all had a fine meal. When they were done, Magoda struck the other horn and the food that was left disappeared.*

*The boy had such an exhausting day and was soon fast asleep, but his host saw him command food to appear by striking the horns, so he knew it possessed great magic. When he knew Magoda was fast asleep, he crept out of the hut to the rubbish pile and found a pair of ox horns. He then returned to the hut and silently stole the magic horns from Magoda's side, replacing them with the worthless ones. Magoda woke up none the wiser.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:109)*

Next, Magoda our destitute orphan friend came to a place of hunger – a village ravished by the onslaught of a drought. These villagers were feeling on a physical level like Magoda did on an emotional level before he felt compelled to run away from his own village. The reason for the villagers' feelings of desolation was the terrible drought they were experiencing. On the other hand, Magoda was feeling like he did, because he was an orphan having lost both his parents; forced to seek happiness away from his own village as a result of exploitation by his fellow villagers. Furthermore, he was still traumatised after recently also losing his only possession and friend – the ox his father left him – in a violent bull fight.

Chapter 4 looks at the losses my co-researchers have experienced, after also losing their parent(s) or caregiver to death and becoming, like Magoda, orphans. Going through difficult times in one's life – like the ongoing drought, the villagers were experiencing, losing one's parents like Magoda and my co-researchers did, has an effect – not only on a material and emotional level, but also on one's relationships with others and with God. This chapter aims at addressing how my co-researchers experienced the effect of losing their parent(s) / caregiver on a material level as well as in their relationships with others and God and on an emotional level.

According to the PFPT's fifth movement, we need to reflect on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation – the situation of losing their parent(s) / caregiver to death, some deaths even caused by HIV and Aids. For me, this cannot be done without incorporating other aspects in their lives that have influenced my co-researchers' bereavement, as these are interconnected, hence the research's interest in their psycho-spiritual bereavement needs and not only the spiritual aspects to their bereavement. We begin our discussion by looking at death itself and the impact it has on those left behind.

## 4.2 WHEN HUNGER STRIKES: LOSING A PARENT

Nobody mourns an unnoticed death

- African Proverb -

Language as such is rich in euphemistic expressions to mock death. Expressions such as 'to give up the ghost', 'to kick the bucket' and 'to exchange the temporary with eternity' are used on a daily basis in colloquial language. Death as subject matter is seen in many cultures as a taboo discussion (Webb 1993:3), since death is seen in most cultures as "… distasteful to man and will probably always be." (Kübler-Ross 1970:2). Euphemisms like these can be seen as mechanisms of humans to try and understand the unknown and subsequently be able to handle it. Probably it represents a universal human need to negate the ever-present reality of death to something that the power greedy humans have control over. However, problems arise when death becomes a personal matter – when someone near and dear to you is snatched away by the claws of death. What to do now with something that is encompassed in the expression '… *ignorance is bliss* …'?

This avoidance of death is now being challenged to a duel by the grieving process that follows on the loss of a loved one. One cannot stand engulfed in the grieving process and still turn a blind eye to the hard reality of death. The broader community is also at the same time being confronted with the inevitable, since death is "…a community experience" (Bowman 1998:120).

When death occurs within the context of the family and a husband and father or a wife and mother dies the children are usually excluded from this process and marginalised. In relation to this, Kübler-Ross (1970:157) says that the children are "… the forgotten ones".

Children become the 'silent victims' of these tragic circumstances, not because people do not care, the opposite is most often true, but rather because few people feel at ease talking to children about death (Kübler-Ross 1970:157). Adults may further entertain the notion that children do not really have an understanding of death, and that they subsequently have no need to grieve (Holland 2001:50). Dane (1994:23): "(t)here is a widespread belief that children are not concerned with death." Killian and Perrot (1994:10) also state that people believe that children should be protected from death itself. Perhaps this belief that children should be protected from the experience of death sustains the belief that death does not trouble children. Views like these remind strongly of the discourse that children should be seen and not heard. Yet, children often respond to the loss of a parent with a heightened sense of vulnerability, "… often marked by fears of recurrent tragedy." (Siegel & Freund 1994:43). Dane (1994:16) states that children have a "… struggle of living with fear" in reaction to the loss of a parent. Children are dependent on their parents for providing in their needs, both physical and psychological (Siegel & Freund 1994:44). When the ultimate loss, the loss of a parent (Dane 1994:13) occurs, children – like my ten co-researchers – often grieve for more than the loss of their parent(s) / caregivers. Klein (1998:15) agrees saying that "(e)ven though people tend to think in terms of death as a loss, death is not the *only* loss we can experience". They also grieve for losses such as loss of home, social networks, routines, surroundings and possessions (Dane 1994:13).

Killian and Perrot (1994) therefore propose that some background information on children's understanding on illness and death is needed in order to "… understand the child's concerns and to help them to deal with their emotions." (Killian & Perrot 1994:10). Jean Piaget formulated a theory of child development from infancy to adulthood. In accordance with this theory, Killian and Perrot (1994:10) state that the child's reaction to and understanding of these issues will depend on which of these developmental stages the child is undergoing.

My co-researchers are all in the adolescent stage of development. Louw (1996:393) states that adolescence begins between the ages of eleven and thirteen – at the onset of puberty – and lasts until the ages of seventeen and twenty-one years of age. Although the adolescent generally finds this a difficult developmental stage (Louw 1996:363), there is not much difference between the way that adolescents and adults experience death (Kübler-Ross 1970:158). Holland (2001:50) agrees with this point, stating "… by the age of 12 years, they will probably have an understanding of death close to that of an adult". However, having the ability to understand on a cognitive level that your parent(s) died and why they died does not ensure that these adolescents are free from the effects that their parent(s)' death might have on them in the long run. Bereavement is experienced on a psychological and also on a spiritual level – especially for religiously inclined adolescents like my co-researchers. Zayas and Ramos (1994:59) mention in regard to adolescents, like some of my co-researchers who lost their parents to HIV and Aids, that there is "(p)erhaps no group of children in modern times (that) has been battered by the combination of social and familial decay and a devastating illness, coupled with the normal storms of adolescence.". The writers conclude that "(t)his group of youngsters may be the most damaged survivors of the Aids pandemic." (Zayas & Ramos 1994:59). Crewe (2001:12) also comments in referring specifically to HIV and Aids orphans that children who have lost one or both of their parents to HIV and Aids increasingly have less and less, until eventually "… they're destitute in every sense: emotionally, economically and in terms of community."

In light of the above, the rest of this chapter will focus on the multiple losses these adolescents, who were my co-researchers on this research journey, have experienced. The following discourses regarding loss were identified from the stories my co-researchers told about their bereavement – discourses regarding their material and physical needs, discourses regarding relationships with others and with God, and discourses regarding their emotional needs.

I therefore use the acronym 'MORE' to refer to these discourses as it were socially constructed, described and interpreted by my co-researchers themselves.

M = Material needs / issues

O = Others

R = Religion and God

E = Emotional needs / issues


**Reflection-in-Progress:  My own experiences of death**


Unlike most of my co-researchers, I am lucky enough to still have both my parents. Yet, death is no strange phenomenon to me.  I grew up on a smallholding with lots of animals.  My parents occasionally slaughtered sheep, cattle and chickens for our own consumption.   My paternal grandparents owned a farm in Thabazimbi, Limpopo and would also send us meat and biltong from the cattle they kept and from the game they hunted on their farm.  Thus, growing up, I had no illusions on where meat really came from.  Although I would eat the meat and biltong my grandparents sent us, I preferred not to be present at the slaughtering or to eat the meat from the animals my father slaughtered, as I 'knew' them.  Some of the animals on the smallholding, I raised by hand as a child.  I would also nurse and care for sickly chicks, birds, lambs, rabbits, kittens and even mice.  Some would make it, and some wouldn't.  To this day, I find it very distressing when I attempt to keep a sick or injured animal alive and well and despite all my efforts, it still dies.

When talking about death – be that of an animal, people I knew or death in general – I would usually remark that I am comfortable with my own uneasiness about death [*gemaklik met my eie ongemaklikheid oor die dood*].  Furthermore, I also believe that one's first experience of death – be that of a beloved pet animal, a family member or – as in the case with most of my co-researchers – a parent, impacts on one's further experiences of death and the grieving process that follows the death and loss.

My first experience of the death of a family member is as far as I can remember the death of my paternal great-grandmother when I was ten years of age. Her death did not really affect me, because I did not really know her, as she was already very old and frail then, and when I did see her at my grandparents' home, she was always quiet and did not really engage with me and my brother. I am from a large maternal family especially, and since then I have lost many family members – aunts, uncles as well as my three remaining grandparents (my maternal grandfather past away from cancer while my mother was an adolescent). I also lost friends to death – in standard 9 (grade 11) one of my school friend's committed suicide by shooting herself. In my first year at university another school friend, who was also in one of my university classes, was involved in and burnt to death in a motor vehicle accident while on her way with some university friends of hers, to a music festival *Oppikoppi* in Northam, Limpopo. The year after that, our neighbours' son who was close to my own age, was also killed in a motor vehicle accident. As an adolescent and young adult, I would say that the death of my friends had a great impact on me as a person, as they were my age and it made me realise that we are all – no matter our ages – susceptible to death, at any given time.

The death of Nadia's – my best friend – father to cancer when we were still at primary school was probably the first death (excluding pet animals) that I experienced. As a young child of around eight years of age, I can remember feeling very confused and unable to help my friend and her older sister and brother in their grieving process. I did not know what to say or do to make things better for her. From the sidelines, I saw what she – like my co-researchers – went through after the death of her beloved father and there was nothing I could do for her, or so it felt at the time. At the same time another school friend of ours' father also died. He and Nadia have experienced something the rest of us have not – the loss of a parent. This made me realise that one's parents might not always be there to love and protect you, and this scared me.

Years later, in 2007, after her sister's 13 year old son, Brett, was killed in a freak accident when someone hit him from behind while he was bicycling home after school, we spoke about not only Brett's untimely death, but also about her own father's death years earlier.  I mentioned how difficult I experienced her father's death and she remembered that I came up to her on the school grounds when she was back at school (we weren't in the same class that year) and told her that I was sorry about her father's death and that she can – from then on – share my father with me [*jy kan my pa met my deel*].  This meant a lot to her and it also explained to me why she was so fond of my own father.  She literally took to heart what I as a small child shared with her.

Therefore, I believe that no matter how difficult one finds it to approach a bereft person, if your intentions are good they will benefit from the experience and even just your presence.

## 4.3  HUNGRY FOR 'MORE': DISCOURSES REGARDING THE BEREAVEMENT NEEDS OF MY CO-RESEARCHERS

### 4.3.1  Hungry for '<u>MORE</u>': Meeting material needs

> After my Matric year I had plans to study at the College of my dreams (CTT) and I could not study there because of financial issues, that was my biggest storm because as much as I wanted to go there I could not because my aunt whom I am currently staying with could not afford it
>
> - **Annie**

Education – like some necessities like food, shelter, and clothing – is still a luxury for most people living in Africa.  South Africa is no exception.

For children like Annie who lost her mother and who is now dependant on their extended family – in Annie's case, her aunt – for their survival and well-being, it becomes close to impossible to fulfil an ambitious dream to further their studies. Important now, is to put food on the table and a roof over their heads. Anything else becomes luxuries, luxuries caregivers like Annie's aunt, cannot afford even if they wanted to.

Dee also told the story, during one of the second TOL camp sessions, about how her mother who passed away left her a house to inherit, but her aunt and other family members in essence bullied her out of it. After her mother's death, her relationship with her aunt changed dramatically to the point that she was no longer welcome under her aunt's roof and had to seek shelter in *Precious Pearls*, one of the Houses of Safety under the guidance of PEN. However, when there is trouble with the deed of the house, maintenance needs or trouble with the tenants they call her in an effort to get her to fix the problems. In tears, she told the group that she did not want the house anymore, that the rest of the family, who did not want her after her mother's death, can take it if they want to. They already did anyway, and that they should leave her alone and not bother her – a mere child as she referred to herself – with the problems regarding it.

After her father's death, Zee was also not welcome in the house she shared with her beloved father, the house that she called home. Her stepmother – reminding of Cinderella's stepmother – made her feel unwelcome and as a result, friends of her father initially took her in after his death. Not staying in the house where she stayed with her father and stepmother anymore, meant that she missed having contact with her little brother as well. This impacted greatly on her emotionally as she wrote about him in her workbook, as well as referred to him in group discussions. She later also moved into *Precious Pearls* along with Dee after the family friends who initially took her in had trouble in financially supporting her and paying her school fees.

Dimakatso, whose grandmother and aunt now take care of her after losing her mother, showed a great need to also contribute to the household in any way that she could. She clearly understood the difficulty her caregivers experienced in their attempts to care for her and meeting her physical needs. After both camps, she asked me if she could take some of the items left over from the camps – like long-life milk and cookies – back home with her as her grandmother would appreciate it.

Although not mentioned here due to lack of space, all ten my co-researchers have stories to tell of how some of their material, financial and physical needs went unmet after losing their parent(s) / caregivers. This is not uncommon for children left orphaned. Referring specifically to HIV and Aids orphans, the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) states that:

> The loss of a parent to AIDS can have serious consequences for a child's access to basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, health and education. Orphans are more likely than non-orphans to live in large, female-headed households where more people are dependent on fewer income earners. This lack of income puts extra pressure on AIDS orphans to contribute financially to the household, in some cases driving them to the streets to work, beg or seek food.

Regarding basic education, the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) also mentions that:

> Children orphaned by AIDS may miss out on school enrolment, have their schooling interrupted or perform poorly in school as a result of their situation. Expenses such as school fees and school uniforms present major barriers, since many orphans' caregivers cannot afford these costs. Extended families sometimes see school fees as a major factor in deciding not to take on additional children orphaned by AIDS.

Also referring to the education needs of these orphans, the UNAIDS website (http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/default.asp) states that children in:

> … extended families or in foster care are frequently subject to discrimination and are less likely to receive health, education and other needed services. The situation is yet more desperate for those living in child-headed households or on their own on the streets. The vulnerability of these children represents part of a vicious cycle: their circumstances put them at high risk for exploitation and abuse, and therefore exposure themselves to HIV, and lack of access to health care, education and social support perpetuates the conditions of poverty.

As was mentioned earlier, Zee moved to *Precious Pearls* after the family friends that were caring for her after her father's death were no longer able to support her financially and with regards to her school fees. Yet, luckily for my co-researchers, all ten of them had the opportunity to progress to Matric (grade 12). Moses, Palesa and Annie all successfully completed their schooling. Victor and Wiseman had to enrol for supplementary exams after they failed some subjects in their Matric year (2009) and Zee is currently finishing her schooling at college while the rest – Dee, Dimakatso, and the twins – Shaun and Michael are currently preparing to write their final grade 12 exams this year (2010). Dee, Zee, and all five of the boys were put through school with the help of government grants that PEN receives for the children in their care and residing in one of their Houses of Safety.

Suffering and surviving on the little they can afford have taught my co-researchers to appreciate that which they do have, and even to see the suffering in the lives of other people around them as well.

Knowing from first hand experience how difficult it can be to be forced to live without some necessities has pre-empted some of them to reach out and help others:

> I remember giving my last R10-00 to a blind person, my fruits when I go to school on a Friday. I helped a blind person to write her exams and I was late for school - **Michael**

Material things like food, shelter and clothing are important for one's survival. The ability to afford good health-care is important for one's overall well-being. Having access to funds to further one's education, will ensure a good quality education that in turn will help one to further one's career, which in a country like South Africa, where unemployment rates are exorbitant, is very important. Access to services also helps in furthering one's dream for one's own and others' lives. Unfortunately, sad as it is, not everybody has access to these services and is doomed to poverty. Women and children, especially vulnerable children and orphans, are often bearing the brunt of this poverty

> I want to be a lawyer. I wish to have a big house, drive an expensive car and I also want to be a hip hop star. Have a family build a home for those who don't have - **Michael**

Orphans – like my ten co-researchers – also have dreams of material things like Michael's dream of owning a fancy house and an expensive car and becoming a lawyer. And also having the ability and the money to fulfil, not only their own and in their family's needs, but also to assist and help others who are not as fortunate as they have become. However, for most orphans and vulnerable children growing up in poverty, this mostly just stay dreams – as if unreachable and far away.

### 4.3.2  Hungry for 'M<u>O</u>RE': The need to be loved by others

One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody
- Mother Theresa -

We as humans are social beings, we all need the company of other people.  We all want to feel loved, cared for, and cherished by other people.  Mucherera (2009:80) says that "(t)o have life is to have one's story unfold in the midst of community".  In essence, we want to be somebody to someone.  Again, in reference to HIV and Aids orphans, the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) refers to the impact these orphans have on family systems and the society at large.  They state that:

> In African countries that have already suffered long, severe epidemics, AIDS is generating orphans so quickly that family structures can no longer cope. Traditional safety nets are unravelling as increasing numbers of adults die from HIV-related illnesses. Families and communities can barely fend for themselves, let alone take care of orphans. Typically, half of all people with HIV become infected before they are aged 25, developing AIDS and dying by the time they are 35, leaving behind a generation of children to be raised by their grandparents, other adult relatives or left on their own in child-headed households.

> Traditional systems of taking care of children who lose their parents, for whatever reason, have been in place throughout Sub-Saharan Africa for generations. But HIV and AIDS are eroding such practices by creating larger numbers of orphans than have ever been known before. The demand for care and support is simply overwhelming in many areas.

HIV reduces the caring capacity of families and communities by deepening poverty, through medical and funeral costs as well as the loss of labour.

As can be seen from the statement above, the caring capacity of especially families are under great strain in light of the great number of orphans – HIV and Aids or otherwise. Three of my co-researchers – Annie, Dimakatso and Palesa – are lucky enough to still be taken care of by family members after losing their mothers and becoming what the literature terms 'single orphans'. Annie is taken care of by her aunt, Dimakatso by her aunt as well as her grandmother, while Palesa is fortunate enough to still have her father to take care of her. For them, these caregivers are significant people in their lives, and as such mean a lot to them as can be seen from their statements about who they view as important people in their lives:

> The person who is most important to me at this point in time is my aunt because throughout my family she is the one person would take me in when I had nobody else to take me so she has been great towards me - **Annie**

> I grew up with my grandmother. She taught me a lot of things, she told me never to give up in life. She also taught me how to talk, read and love people. PEN people have taught me to say please and thank you – **Dimakatso**

> Okay. My father is a good person, he likes me to do good things always and he is giving me love, comfort and he is supportive but he does not like to do bad things - **Palesa**

The two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans – Dee and Zee – are resident in and under the care of one of the Houses of Safety of the NGO PEN, *Precious Pearls.* Although they both still have living family members – Dee has a maternal aunt, and Zee has her stepmother and extended maternal family members – the relationships between Dee and her aunt, and between Zee and her stepmother are strained after they respectively lost their mother and father due to HIV and Aids infection. Zee's extended maternal family are Mozambican nationals, and as such unable to care for her, although she did recently visit them during the extended South African school holidays during the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Therefore, they are currently both finding themselves within the welfare system and institutionalised as such.

The rest of my co-researchers – all the boys – also at one stage or another, found themselves living in PEN's other House of Safety, *Precious Pearls II.* The twins – Michael and Shaun – are currently still residing there, as they are 'double orphans' after losing both their parents, while Moses has moved out after an unfortunate incident during sea camp, and Victor and Wiseman have moved out to move in with Wiseman's sister and her family who are staying in Tembisa, Kempton Park. Michael and Shaun however do have extended family – an uncle with whom they do have contact, but who is unable to care for them. Moses initially moved into *Precious Pearls II* after his brother he was staying with threw him out after the fighting between them became too bad. Wiseman and Victor also ended up in the welfare system, while still having living relatives, but who were also – at that stage – unable to care for them.

From my co-researchers' own situations, it is evident that the extended family, traditionally seen as the natural support system during crises like losing one's parents and becoming orphans, especially in the African context, are under severe pressure to cope with the demands placed on it by taking in more children. That is when organisations like the NGO PEN steps in to help.

Dee acknowledged already during the first TOL camp that she was an HIV and Aids orphan. She is a single orphan, as her father's whereabouts are unknown.

> I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth. My mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS. We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out- **Dee**

Mucherera (2009:80) states that: "(t)he sense that one belongs has always been the key to African survival". From Dee's statement above, it becomes clear that Dee's social relationships with her family and especially her beloved aunt changed drastically after her mother's death. In relation to this experience of Dee, Dane (1994:17) states that: "(d)eath from Aids, … profoundly alters survivor's social relationships as a consequence of real or imagined stigma". In referring to HIV and Aids deaths Crewe (2001:12) contends in this regards that "(a)lthough the whole family suffers, it is clear that children suffer most acutely." This is because they are faced with more than one trauma all of a sudden - that of the "… death of their parents, and of an uncertain future" (Crewe 2001:12). Siegel and Freund (1994:43) concur with this statement by saying that "(the) loss of a parent during childhood is perhaps the most devastating trauma a child can experience." This trauma leads to a total disruption of the unity of family life (Siegel & Freund 1994:43) and this uncertainty is what scares children. According to Dane (1994:20) it is "(l)iving in the aftermath of death from Aids is often more painful for children and adolescents than the death itself" (Dane 1994:20). Both Dee and Zee, the two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans in the group, left their families after the deaths of respectively their mother and father, and came under the care of the NGO PEN.

The following poem by Dee expresses some of the feelings people in different contexts are experiencing and how we all have the need to be understood by other people.  Dee read the poem at one of PEN's celebration shows.  The poem is reprinted with permission and in the same font sizes as it was originally written in.

# THE SHOE SIZE

**As the birds fly and the bet begins**

**And the door closes so we can rest, So no-one can see what we hide**

**But we turn on the lights and always close the curtains**

**But what about the shoes? What about them?**

**There is a shoe for everyone, but not a size for everyone**

**Look at the person next to you; go on look at them**

**Do you think you have the same shoe size?**

**Some of you have the same size and some of you don't; It is clear to see**

**You will never really know until you try them on. So let's try them on**

Put yourself in his shoes

He cries out: "Why, why my mother. . . " in confusion

". . . has to cry? Why that man (how for some reason I cannot stand to call him my father) is clearly not seeing how he is hurting my mother!"

She says: "It's not his fault, your father wanted a better life with another woman"

She lies to me! He cries! Why my brother smiles no more, does he not like me anymore, or maybe he lost his memory, but no that couldn't be. And when I ask why they say I would not understand 'it's grown-up stuff'

*I am a size 2 and I am your neighbor*

Put yourself in her shoes
I dream of higher things than what my grandmother had, I see myself in every corner of the world, painting Paris red, showing New York a star. Those were the days, now I am full of hatred and rage. I think the worst of the person who says he loves me the most.
But is this love?
I feel the wounds that hurt me inside more than on the outside!
I hate sunglasses, I feel they make me look so cheap but I wear them. I don't want to show the world who cheap my husband really thinks I am.
Not by my broken legs and arms but by my face.
Where have I gone to?
*I am a size 5 and I am your boss.*

Put yourself in her shoes

She walks the route, says the same thing, wears the same clothes, everyday! She is normal nothing good nor bad, she comes to work and does her job during the day.

She gets home, changes her clothes, puts on some make-up and left the house again, every night.

She stands at the street far from the robot, waiting for someone to pick her up. She sells herself and goes back to a crying baby with a R50 note! And it starts all over again tomorrow!

She is a size 6 and she's your colleague!

**Put yourself in my shoes**

**If anybody knows order it has to be me! I thought of everything, the worst that could happen, ever happen "You know"**

**But WOW, I was astonished when I found out my home is dying! I have never been so ambivalent about anything before. I lost total control. Conviction was upon me, the population of China seemed to be perched over my head. I found out that HIV has moved into my home, the bank has robbed my home and regulation has left my home under the roof of unemployment! And my home is me and you, my family, my nation!**

**And I am a size 7 and you just met me!**

Why can't we all be in love, happy, have full of joy, no hidden secrets, no lies and definitely no surprises! How's stopping, What's stopping us, nothing because Jesus will give us His shoes and He will take ours!

Because He is sizeless, never changing!

Put yourself in His shoes!

- Dee

In this touching poem, Dee pleads with her readers to have compassion for other people, even the prostitute on the street corner, as one does not know her life story – of maybe doing what she does for a living, to be able to care for her baby at home. In the fifth stanza of the poem, Dee reveals the impact that HIV and Aids has had on her own life story –

I found out that HIV has moved into my house - **Dee**

She beautifully externalises the HI-virus as an unwelcome squatter that moves into her home – into her place of comfort without permission. This virus not only invaded her mother's body, but also her family and even the lives of the people of the nation –

And my home is me and you, my family, my nation! - **Dee**

Even while this is the sad reality not only in her own life, but also in the lives of other South Africans, stanza 6 brings hope by referring to Jesus as being sizeless and able to exchange our shoes – our troubles for His great love –

Jesus will give us His shoes and He will take ours! - **Dee**

This poem therefore brings us to our discussion on the spiritual and religious needs of my ten co-researchers after the death of their parent(s) or caregivers.

### 4.3.3 Hungry for 'MORE': Addressing spiritual and religious needs

*For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.*
*- Matt 18:20 (NIV) -*

Mucherera (2009:76) says "… the story of humanity begins, is lived out, and ends with God".  Religion is very important for most people, especially for African people.  He goes on to say that Africans believe that we as humans were created to be in relationships with one another as well as with God.  According to him, this makes hope possible from two sides – primarily from God, but also from other humans we have formed relationships with (Mucherera 2009:76).

In light of this statement, we look at some statements made by my co-researchers about the role God has played in their lives thus far, especially after the death of their parent(s) or caregiver:

> God really needed to be BIG at that moment.  He always took me back to the word, and if it was not for Him taking me I would have died a long time ago.  Because he gave me answers when I was filled with the devil's lies. And the answer was HIM, I live for HIM, I serve him, and that brought me peace and comfort, to know what kind of a God I am serving and he promised me eternal life filled with peace.  So I know that the danger is not there forever, and He provide that to me – **Dee**

> God did help me a lot in terms of healing my wounds by forgetting the past and to move forward or behaved to experience new life with out my loved ones who passed away.  I thank him so much and I love him My Lord Jesus Christ nothing is impossible with him – **Palesa**

God has helped me in so many ways like making me strong everyday. And that means a lot to me because it shows that he is always be for me no matter what happens. He makes me brave, and to continue with life, and shows me every good thing that I shouldn't be worried about like a pressure, friends and schools – **Zee**

I think everything bad that I've experienced in my life, God help me not to act negatively as I probably think in those kind of events most of the time - **Victor**

God protected, and brought Dee back to His Word; He helped Palesa to heal the wounds of losing her mother; and helped Zee be strong and brave to withstand peer pressure. He also helped Victor not to think and feel negative towards life, but to trust in Him. He even assisted Dimakatso and Moses in more mundane daily struggles, like writing exams and having money to attend the Matric dance:

When I was writing my geography test. I used to cheat like nobody's business, but when I wrote my second geography test I pray to God and God gave me strength that is when I realised that God is a living God – **Dimakatso**

God played a really important part in my life especially before the Matric dance because I didn't have money to pay. But by praying all that changed, Magic moments was able to lend as suits and somehow my brother got the money for me to pay. Everything went accordingly! – **Moses**

## HOW COULD YOU? (Poem by Dee)

I wonder, I reason
You are so wonderful
How do You do it?
How can You do it?
You are great and for that we thank you

You nurtured us, You know us
You see us though You have no eyes
We see You but never notice
We see your beauty
never feel your presence
but known of You in this place

How can You?
How can You do no wrong
Yet perish for my being?

We take care of each other
In my darkest time
And how can You take care of me when I have deserted You?
I ask of You please to tell me

How can You love us so much and we doubt You yet again?
How can You hold us and our bodies and call it a temple when it's being used
to promote the devil to a higher position?

How can You call us your children when we screw and deny your word?
How can You return and bless us when we come back to You?
How can You forgive, then save us when we have sinned enough?

Please speak; the One who calls Himself:
The I Am, All Powerful God, The Beginning and The End
Why do You do the things You do?
But say, tell me mostly
How can You die for me?
How could You?

I chose to include this poem written by Dee in this section about the religious and spiritual needs of my co-researchers, as it tells of Dee's ability to converse with God and even question Him regarding His motives for doing certain things.

In the beautiful poem entitled "How could You?" written by Dee and reproduced with her permission, the writer tries to engage God in a conversation. At first glance, it seems like the writer tries to attack the addressed 'You', who later turns out to be God Himself, by posing the defensive style question: "How could You?". The poem tells of all the addressee's good qualities – he is wonderful, his greatness, his nurturing nature and the ability to create beautiful things:

> We see your beauty / never feel your presence - **Dee**

The writer then poses the question central to this poem:

> How can You do no wrong / Yet perish for my being? - **Dee**

It turns out that the writer questions Jesus' ability and willingness to sacrifice His own life in order for her to be saved from her sins. This He does, even though we at times desert Him and doubt Him:

> And how can You take care of me when I have deserted You? - **Dee**

> How can You love us so much and we doubt You yet again? - **Dee**

The statements above by some of my co-researchers as well as this beautiful poem by Dee, give us some insight into how my co-researchers perceive God and the role He has played in their lives, especially after losing their loved ones.

### 4.3.4  Hungry for 'MORE': Towards emotional empowerment

In the life of any individual, family, community or society, memory is of fundamental importance.
It is the fabric of identity.
- (Nelson Mandela 2005:009 Foreword) -

To remember people we have lost, lies at the basis of our identity.  It informs who we are and who we are to become.  These people have taught us certain life lessons, and their absence leaves emotional scars on our souls.  The emotional impact of the death of their parent(s) on HIV and Aids orphans and vulnerable children is described on the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) as follows:

> Children whose parents are living with HIV often experience many negative changes in their lives and can start to suffer neglect, including emotional neglect, long before they are orphaned. Eventually, they suffer the death of their parent(s) and the emotional trauma that results. They may then have to adjust to a new situation, with little or no support, and may suffer exploitation and abuse…
>
> … Anxiety, depression and anger were more found to be common among AIDS orphans than other children. 12% of AIDS orphans affirmed that they wished they were dead, compared to 3% of other children interviewed.  These psychological problems can become more severe if a child is forced to separate from their siblings upon becoming orphaned.

Dee suffered emotional neglect from her mother, because as she states, she did not really know her mother when she passed away.  After her mother's death her beloved aunt also neglected her emotionally when she did not want to care for Dee any longer, resulting in Dee moving to PEN's House of Safety.

Dee, like Zee, had to adjust to a new situation after their parents' death. Dee moved to the House of Safety, and Zee stayed with some family friends for a while, before eventually also moving to the House of Safety. Dee expresses her anger towards her mother and her aunt, and also acknowledges feelings of depression, while Zee expresses anger towards her stepmother for allegedly infecting Zee's father with the HI-virus. Zee also became separated from her baby brother after moving out of the house following her father's death. This separation causes her much emotional pain. Due to limited space, I have not included any direct references to the above statements. Dee and Zee's complete stories are however included in the chapter on interdisciplinary collaboration, chapter 5, should the reader be interested in reading these references. The UNAIDS website (http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/ChildAndOrphans/default.asp) concurs that: "(a)fter illness and death, the harshest impact on children is the death of one or more parents, and the resulting loss of affection, support and protection". Dimakatso stated it beautifully when she said:

> You know when a child loses a mother she thinks everything is gone -
> **Dimakatso**

Palesa adds that her mother was "my everything". Not only did my co-researchers lose out on the affection of their deceased parents, they also lost their support and the stability they provided. These children have certain emotional needs that have to be met in order for them to be able to function optimally. The Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) states that "(h)aving a parent become sick and die is clearly a major trauma for any child, and may affect them for the rest of their life (sic)". Schoeman, Verster and Kritzinger (2002:467) comment about a statement such as the one above, that there is a need for more personal counselling that would address the fears and needs of these HIV and Aids orphans. They add that such a counselling method should also take into account the African context within with children like my co-researchers find themselves (Schoeman et al., 2002:467).

**Reflection-in-Progress: What if God was one of us?**

As chapter 4 focused on the fifth movement of PFPT, namely a reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on Gods presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation, I thought about not only how my co-researchers reacted to God and perceived Him, but also on my own views about God and religion. What came to mind was the song "What if God was one of us?", (http://www.lyrics007.com) originally sung by Joan Osborne but probably made popular by Alanis Morissette's version thereof. It also featured as the theme song for the television programme "Joan of Arcadia", where the main character is confronted by God in different human forms each time, in order to address some social and moral wrongs in society. The song poses the question: What kind of person would God be if He had to live with us on earth? The song starts out:

> If God had a name what would it be?
> And would you call it to his face?
> If you were faced with him
> In all his glory
> What would you ask if you had just one question?

I wonder what I would ask God if I could ask Him that one question. Would it be a question about something that is wrong in the world, would I ask about poverty, children dying of hunger or even why children need to lose their parents to HIV and Aids? On the other hand, would I ask something more mundane like what His favourite colour is, or what kind of ice cream He likes? I understand that some Christians would see such questioning of God as bordering on blasphemy, but for me a relationship with God entails a two way exchange where I can, like Dee did in her poem "How could You?", question some of God's actions. I might not always get an answer or get the answer I hoped for, but I can certainly try to elicit a response from Him.

Although embedded in the church and organised religion, I see a relationship with God as very personal. If I were to attribute certain human characteristics to God, I would dare to say He has a very good sense of humour and would jokingly add that He likes to take it out on me. As an example, I always tell the story of how in 2006 two friends of mine went on separate overseas trips at about the same time. I was frustrated that they could afford it and I couldn't and wondered why I never got opportunities like that. Then all of a sudden, the opportunity arose for me to go on a trip outside South African borders. Whereto you might ask – Nigeria of all places! To attend the AAPSC Congress I spoke about in chapter 1. My friends got to visit first world countries and I was sent up in deep dark scary Africa. Now that definitely takes a good sense of humour if you ask me! ☺ And I enjoyed it thoroughly beyond all expectations!

Regarding how my co-researchers perceive God, I will limit my reflections to some comments in relation to the two self acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans due to concerns for space. Neither girl has a father figure in her life at present. Although Zee was very close to her father and by the sound of it he was the epiphany of a good and loving father, his death took that away from her. Dee's father never featured in her life, although uncle Matebise fulfilled that role to some extent at one stage. Yet, both girls experienced God in a fatherly manner – loving and caring, although at times presenting them with challenges – 'storms' – to overcome in order to become stronger. Nevertheless, by trusting in Him they knew they would be able to overcome any 'storms' that come their way.

This view of God can, in my opinion, be utilised to help them relate to other people in their lives, since trust issues were mentioned by quite a few of the interdisciplinary team members (see chapter 5) as a concern for both girls. Not only relating to other people but also more specifically to males and potential boyfriends and husbands, as it is a great concern that Zee's boyfriend at the time of the second TOL camp had a history of drinking excessively.

## 4.4   THE WAY FORWARD: THE PALAVER MODEL

In terms of what the future holds for Aids orphans, and the way forward in dealing with this crisis, the Avert website (http://www.avert.org/aids-orphans.htm) states:

> The way forward is threefold: firstly new HIV infections must be prevented so that children do not lose their parents; secondly access to antiretroviral treatment needs to be stepped up; and finally care must be provided for those children who are already orphaned. The rest of this page is devoted to issues around the care of AIDS orphans in Africa, but it is also important that HIV prevention is not forgotten. The situation of AIDS orphans is ultimately generated by adult deaths; until this problem is addressed the orphan crisis will continue.

It is clear that HIV and Aids will keep on robbing babies, young children and their adolescent brothers and sisters of their parents, if the surge of HIV infection cannot be stopped or at least slowed down to a great extent.  These children and youths will need our help to not only survive, but to write the rest of their life stories with enthusiasm and hope.

Mucherera (2009:90) brings narrative counselling theory and the art and way of African storytelling in connection with each other, by explaining it as follows:

> Narrative counselling theory proposes that we live the story of our lives, and the story that we live is socially constructed.  The stories that we live out are based out of the communities in which we find ourselves embedded.  It was natural in traditional Africa that the elders would sit around a fire in the evenings and verbally pass on family, community, and clan stories.  Individuals also shaped the stories of pain, hope, and joy in the same setting.

This was the palaver, where people were given the opportunity to retell personal, family, and even religious stories that was active in the community (Mucherera 2009:90).

He expresses his conviction that the church would be the ideal institution to provide the function of the palaver system to youths infected by the HIV and Aids phenomenon (Mucherera 2009:91). According to him, the church is in the position to recreate the palaver synonymous to African storytelling for these children where they can gather and talk about their personal struggles (Mucherera 2009:91). Here they can come together to hear others' personal stories, biblical stories, as well as folk tales and community stories that might inspire hope (Mucherera 2009:91). He furthermore states that in hearing about other people's stories and sharing one's own, and experiencing compassion towards and also from them, helps your own burden, though not fully lifted, to become a bit lighter (Mucherera 2009:91).

As the church as an institution is also cross-generational by nature, like the palaver system was, the older generation is in a good position to mentor the younger generation. This was traditionally done by elders, aunts, uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers who mentored the youth regarding emotional, spiritual, and mental development. In doing so, the younger generation will find the support they need, and the older generation will also benefit from this mentoring relationship as they will find meaning and something to look forward to (Mucherera 2009:91). In order for this kind of mentoring to be successful, Mucherera (2009:92) proposes that it must be holistic in nature making sure the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the children are addressed (Mucherera 2009:92). Even in an urban church setting this church palaver system can be incorporated with success in my opinion, as it will help to enhance the 'sense of community' between believers of different generations. I am further of the opinion that our own TOL camps to a great extent represented the idea of the palaver system as proposed by Mucherera (2009) in focussing on psychological, social as well as on their spiritual needs.

## 4.5 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 started out by looking at the loss of a parent or caregiver through death. We looked at how children – especially adolescents like my co-researchers – experience this loss and death itself. I also reflected on some losses I, as researcher, have experienced and how I view death.

We then turned our attention to discourses related to the bereavement needs of my co-researchers. By making use of the acronym MORE, I paid attention to the material needs, the need for significant others, religious and spiritual needs as well as emotional needs my co-researchers have experienced since the death of their parent(s) or caregivers. This was done in order to focus on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of my co-researchers this thesis aimed to address.

Lastly, a model suggested by Mucherera (2009), the palaver, is introduced as a way in which to address these psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of my co-researchers. This model based on the art of African storytelling, connects very well to the narrative approach and as such overlaps significantly with what the two TOL camps aimed to achieve. This model, in my opinion, if implemented in even an urban church setting, much like the activities of PEN are, could be beneficial. It could help to enhance a certain 'sense of community' within the church community. This 'sense of community' receives some more attention in chapter 6.

Chapter 5 that follows will focus on the interdisciplinary conversation between theology, psychology, social work, anthropology, information science as well as life coaching. This will be done by the use of the life stories as compiled during the two TOL camps of the two self acknowledged Aids orphans – Dee and Zee. These interdisciplinary conversations will focus on the concerns of these two girls as represented in there stories.

# CHAPTER 5

## TWO HEADS (OR EVEN MORE) ARE BETTER THAN ONE – AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INDABA

## 5.1    INTRODUCTION

*The next morning, Magoda bade farewell to the villagers and set off on his travels again. He wanted to get as far away as possible from the kraal he had grown up in.  By midday, he was hungry so he struck a horn and said: "Give me food", but nothing happened! "I must have struck the left horn instead of the right one," he said to himself, and struck the other horn. Again, nothing happened. So, he studied the horns, and saw that they were smaller than the horns from his father's ox. He knew he would have to find the thief.  He went back and waited outside the village until dusk, then quietly made his way to the hut where he had slept. As he crept up, he almost laughed aloud, at hearing the impatient householder shouting: "Give me food! Give me food I say!" Magoda remembered that the ox told him that the horns would only work for him. So, he waited, and not long after he heard the horns being thrown against the wall of the hut. The man stamped out, and Magoda slipped in, found the magic horns, and ran away swiftly.  That night Magoda had another feast and slept in the branches of a tree to be safe from wild beasts.*

*At the first village he came to the next day, he walked boldly in and asked the headman, an ugly person, shelter for the night. "Go away! We do not take in beggars here! It is difficult to feed our own without providing for worthless ones such as you!" he shouted.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:110)*

The headman in the first village Magoda came across the next day thought that Magoda, because of his old and tattered clothing, was a beggar of sorts. Immediately he made negative assumptions about Magoda as a person, and even called him 'worthless'; without any attempt to get to know him. Here Magoda is like the proverbial book which one should not judge by its cover. As we will see in the next part of the story (chapter 6), the headman of the next village does not agree with the first headman's view of Magoda. Yes, he did use the horns to dress better, but the second headman looked beyond even that, and got to know the real Magoda – the caring, unselfish Magoda who himself did not look down on other people. We also get a glimpse of how the headman's daughter sees Magoda. Okay, not to run ahead with the story – but what I attempted by my telling, was to show that different people might have different views (perspectives) about (on) the same person (issues).

This part of Magoda's story is a fit introduction to chapter 5, since chapter 5 focuses on movement 6 of the 7 movements of PFPT, namely a description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation.

Professor Robin Crewe of the Centre for the Study of Aids, University of Pretoria is of the opinion that the "… deliberate mixing up of the disciplines…"[1] and contact with other disciplines other than one's own is necessary if we want to progress in making a positive difference in the HIV and Aids research field. She went on to say that social determinants of HIV and Aids have an influence even in the medical field of research, and therefore there is a need for social scientists such as practical theologians to become involved in research of this kind.

Chapter 5 is therefore an attempt to involve other social science disciplines in making sense of the life stories of the two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans who were co-researchers on this research journey.

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[1] Stated during the opening address entitled "Setting the scene" at the Centre for the Study of Aids, University of Pretoria's HIV/AIDS Indaba on 26 February 2009.

## 5.2    LETTER OF INVITE AND SELECTED STORIES

### 5.2.1  Inviting interdisciplinary team members

Dear ……

Would you please be so kind as to read the attached stories of two adolescent girls who acted as co-researchers in my research project for my PhD and then answer the questions below?   Each story consists of two parts (Part 1 & 2) – compiled at two separate camps over a time span of 16 months.   Please also note the girls' similar sounding names in order not to mistake the one for the other.

Please answer the following questions **separately** for each story:

1.       When reading the story of **Dee** (Parts 1& 2) or **Zee** (Parts 1& 2), what do you think would her concerns be?

2.       How would you formulate your discipline's unique perspective on these concerns and why is it important that this perspective be heard at the interdisciplinary table?

3.       Why do you think your perspective will be understood and appreciated by researchers from other disciplines?

In a separate paragraph, please also introduce yourself and state your occupation and or place of employment as well as your involvement within the field(s) of HIV and Aids, bereavement, counselling, adolescence or any other related field(s) of interest.

Thank you very much for your willingness to help me with my research!

Kind Regards

Amanda Richter

The letter above was formulated according to the interdisciplinary questions of Müller (2009a:227). This letter and transcripts of the stories of Dee and Zee were send via email to possible interdisciplinary team members whom I have identified in theology as well as other related disciplines. It serves as an invitation to them to take part in an interdisciplinary conversation regarding the stories of the two self-confessed HIV and Aids orphans in the TOL group. Most responded positively to my request.

Unfortunately, the following persons respectfully had to decline my invitation. Drs Jill Freedman and David Denborough of the Dulwich Centre, Australia due to workload and work related travels abroad at the time of my request. I specifically contacted Dr Freedman, as I have come to know her through my involvement in getting them to South Africa to present a narrative workshop at the University of Pretoria in 2008, which I also attended. Dr Denborough is the co-author of the article on the *TOL* metaphor. He gave me the updated email address of Ncazelo Ncube who was also involved with it. She is now the proud mother of a new baby and also had to decline my request.

Professor Antoinette Lombard of the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria whom I have met through the SMALL SURVOVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project, unfortunately also declined due to current workload, but put me in contact with Corlie van der Berg – a lecturer in the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria.

Represented disciplines and fields of interest which came to the table were – psychology, social work, anthropology, information studies, music (see contribution in chapter 3) and a life coach. I asked my interdisciplinary team members to introduce themselves before I reflected on the reasons why I decided to invite them to the interdisciplinary table. I wanted to include it in this chapter, but moved it to an addendum at the end of the research report, in an attempt to de-clutter this extensive chapter.

## 5.2.2   A story told: Dee's story

Well, I was the only child, no dad, (my) mother was Rebecca, so I was raised by many family members – Miona (grandma), John (grandpa), Rebecca (closest aunt), 2 other aunts and 2 uncles, Matebise (uncle who was like a father), best cousin ever (Basetsana)… and so on.

I never really liked my mom, but loved her, because we never knew each other.  Rebecca my aunt, I loved her so much.  She was the closest thing to me, like a mother, but she's crazy and I have (an) anger problem - emotional with her, she was my centre.  My uncle, love him like a father.  My grandma, (I) love her to bits, (but) want nothing to do with her because she broke my trust.

My aunt, she taught me to be independent, stand up, was my role model, taught me about life, how to do things and how not to do it, how to treat others, taught me that family is very important and that one thing she kept reminding me of.  Then my friend, Zee, she became my comfort since there was no one close to me after me and my aunt separated.

I live at (the FBO's House of Safety), I just moved there in August (2008).  I live with 7 other girls, two woman who take care of us.  And, yes it's the closest thing I feel to home, since I never had a home, just a house or a room.  With everyone I lived with, it was never welcoming since I started moving.

Well I am used to waking up early, take a bath but first we all talk in our rooms, then eat breakfast while watching TV, do the dishes, do the laundry, clean my room, tidy up, iron.  Then we walk around during the day then at about 18h00 I do my homework till 23h00 or just read or study.  Hate having fun a lot (like everyday) no!

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On a school day after school I attend (the FBO's) meetings, extra school (arts), everyday at home about past six everyday.

My favourite thing is poetry, because I can express myself when I have nobody to talk to. And because I teach someone something through the things I feel.

I am good at poetry, and public speaking including debating. (My friends would describe me as a person who (l)ove(s) God with everything I have, very strong and brave, but very much strict. Talk too much, very loving and sweet, soft voice and no patience at all and they sometimes say I don't socialise because I am always busy or studying.

(My strengths as a person would be that I am) (v)ery disciplined, talk my mind, use time wisely and do everything I want on my own, trust no one. I became (like) this as I was growing and realised it when I found Jesus. And my teachers saw this in every school I (went) to, but friends thought otherwise.

(A story about one of my strengths would be - ) While in doing things on my own, independent, because every time I would ask something from my mother she'll say yes, but never do it, so I stop asking and made ends meet.

I want to be a poet, writer, author, filmmaker, storyteller (one day), I want people to know about God and his love. It doesn't really have a story, but I just felt it, everyone in my family disagreed with my dreams.

I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth.

(People I lost were) (n)ot really that important or it's just because I never saw the importance of them being in my life, but she (my mother) was important because she was my mother - which does not mean much. She is special because she was kind to other people - but me - and very loving.

Favourite memory (of my mother) was when we used to live together in Jo'burg and I used to sing to her every night.  And when we used to sleep, we would hug the whole night.  Yes, (I think she would like me to remember her this way) because we never had many moments together without fighting.

Well, I don't usually like thinking about her and I use nothing that remind myself of her.  And her death, I never thought it would be so much pain, separation of the family, which was already broken and bring lies and hidden family secrets to be revealed, so much hurts and anger, with disappointment.

(I have) (n)othing (special that someone gave me), I can't treasure objects, but feelings, because things I lose, or it gets broken or I grow tired of it.  But I bought myself something special – a journal and that is how I started writing.

The support from my church, and the caring of (the FBO) (is special to me), but the best was my friends who took me to church and I found meaning to life.  (I don't know what I did, but I just had wonderful people around me – 20).  (They helped me with this) (b)ecause I was in need of spiritual food.  (I think they appreciated me) being myself (that's what led them to help me).  (I think I contributed to their lives as well by), showing them the same love back.

(Everyone in my mother's family) taught me something and by that they made me wiser and stronger.  They don't take care of me anymore.  They used to tell me right from wrong, and tell me that they care and will always be there.

When my mother was still alive and in trouble, they used to take me in and look after me.  But now they all don't want me and have deserted me because of lies, (and of being) jealous of me.  (They wanted me) (t)o be rich at first.  Now they wanted to see if I would have a baby or Aids or bad things happening to me.  Just to see me fall, to prove they were right.  (Memories of them don't support me as) we never really had moments of gold and learning channels.

Well, Aids took away my mother, separated my family and left questions like if I was next.  And my aunt is another big danger, she has spoilt my name, left me without a home, she hurt my spirit, my heart and trust for anyone in my life.  She has left me with not good, but very abused memories.  She ruined hopes of goodness.  She really affected my tree.

The devil used storm(s) through the closest people in my life, my family, so the storms always comes back dressed differently.  God, really needed to be BIG at that moment.  He always took me back to the Word, and if it was not for him taking me back, I would have died a long time ago.  Because He gave me answers when I was filled with the devil's lies.  And the answer was Him, and that brought me peace and comfort, to know what kind I am serving and He promised me eternal life filled with peace.  So I know that the danger is not there forever, and He provided that to me.

(Storms) have to be there, it is a test from God, a challenge.  He is making us grow.  In 2 Cor 4:7-14 it talks about the treasure in a clay jar, and we are the clay jar and He moulds us to perfection.  And the storms are there to help the work of God.

Truly, (when problems come into my life) there is only one thing, person, place, I run to the Word of God, thank(?) and seek from Jesus and resting in church.  If I don't go to Him, I'll be giving myself to the devil, sin – just to feel better.  And the storm will never (be) overcome.

(During storms I) (r)ead the Bible, worship Him (cry to Him) everyday. Be busy, get occupied, hide most of the time from the storm from hurting me.  Seek answers to reason with the devil in a bad way.  Used to sometimes tell myself that this is my storm.

I am a fighter and very strong because I know my hopes and dreams were given to me by the Lord, and know that nothing will go wrong with my future.  I hold on to God, hope that He will hold my head up.

Yes (I do sometimes have times when I do not experience storms), but just a few months, because the devil used the storm through the closest people in my life, my family, so the storms always comes back dressed differently.

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(When the storms have passed), I keep on keeping on.  I continue to thank, ask, seek the Lord at all time.  And I find the joy with victory of overcoming the storm.

My church, my pastor prayed for me, advised me, the church looked after me, they fought the spirit with me, they reminded me of how God is.  Then (the FBO) they're not only were comforters, they made me feel special and loved, showed the colours of God.

I support Zee (during her storms), by being there, praying, listening, comforting, encouraging her not to give up, tells her God's plans for her life and mostly show her love.

> *(Part 2)*
>
> *(Story compiled during 2nd TOL camp February 2010)*

(What I remember from our first camp was) (t)he time when we talked about our loved ones, (and) I realised that I am not comfortable talking about my mom. And I learned that I am far from heal(ed).

(Reminder of who I am) - I am Dee, I live in a Home of Safety, (my) mother passed away while living with aunt. (I am) a very independent person, loud and confident, but (I) can't handle pain. (I) love poetry and writing and (is in) grade 12 in 2010, turning 18 years this year.

Zee (friend) is very important to me. She is my closest friend, we met in grade 9 (2007), she knows me better than anyone. She started in (the FBO) then introduced me. And in 2009 we ended (up) living together in (the FBO's) House of Safety because our parents passed away in the same year. Mostly God, because he wakes me up. He said he got good plans for us. I want to see them.

I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough.

My tree used to be dull but 'looked' fine. I had two dying leaves; my mother and my depressed aunt. Now there are chunks on the log to show the emotional strain because I cry when I think about my family and the chunks show that I have grown. I told myself that "I (am) going to be the woman I was meant to be". My fruit are more people around me encouraging me to live my dream despite of what might happen.

After the camp, I found out that one of the women I hold dear is HIV (positive) and I thought that I should become closer with her before she goes. Then I couldn't because the day she is gone I would have to deal with the pain. But I then remembered that I don't want the same thing to happen to my mom happen to her. So I gave her lots of love despite it, but the thought after HIV/AIDS is the storm that can't leave.

When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide. At that moment I was angry with God and told Him to take me away because I can't kill myself. I joined a wonderful church a year before my mom's death. And the church and (the FBO) gave me support and that (was) only truly a miracle from God. He took me away.

 (Lol). *(Acronym for 'Laugh out loud')* Anyway my church came from Pretoria to Randfontein for my mom's funeral, showing great support (coming to my house, counselling spiritually that God is watching over me). And (the FBO) offered me a place to stay, a good school and (a) support group since my aunt was going to take me to my grandma's house.

I moved (to the House of Safety) a couple of months before our first camp.  Yes I like it because there are people that want to help (school and future) and No, because I don't know where I (am) going when I leave the house, unlike if I was living with a family member.

(Different aspects to my personality would be -)

Only child meaning very independent.

Writer = only place I feel safe.

Leader (in) church = people must feel the same joy I find in Jesus.


(Sometimes I would act differently than usual, like for instance -)

Because of the bad relationship between me and the house mother I would pretend to be happy at the dinner table to spite her. When all I want(ed) to do is cry.


(Where I want my tree to be one day, my hopes and dreams for myself -)

I (am) going to have to give up many things if I want to get to a time (place) where I am fulfilled. I wish to write for a living, not a living house but (a) living spirit. Write for the love as Jesus died (pain) because he loved us.


(I lost) (m)y mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS. We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out. (Coping without them is) (n)ot easy. I miss my aunt, we used to be best friends until my mom became sick and she could not handle taking care of me alone so she broke down and I lived in an abusive environment where myself got lost.


If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don't talk to my family and I lost an aunt forever.

She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts.


(The impact of the first camp on my life -)

I started talking to my aunt, I forgave her because we were both feeling pain. And because I forgave her and opened the door for her and even if it is tough. There was a time when she was crying and confided in me like we used to. So I try not to lay judgement on her, and she can move on with her life knowing that she is not the one to blame for my problems. That they are just storms that will pass.

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The greatest storm (that I faced, since our first camp, of that time) was trying to understand and forgive my abusive aunt. Since she was the only, closest (distance) family I had at that time. But even if the past remain we still try communicating.

And what happened to my mom I am now scared that it might happen to someone close to me, so I don't have/try not to have people close to me but I am trying to overcome it. So everything is just trying to settle down and my (tree) have changed it looks (different) but (is) still pretty much the same.

It has been two years since my last tree, and my ground has become more solid.

The Bible and the promises that I know are waiting for me made/was watered to my tree making my trust and faith in God not (to) be removed by anything.

Dealing with family issues made my trunk grow wider than it should might now I can stand the storms with wisdom and experience.  My leaves had not fallen since (the) last (camp) and my fruit have multiplied.

## MY OWN TREE SONG:

### TIME STOPPING

Carrying all these bags, and

 walking on bugs.

Inside not looking that heavy

Feeling not so lightly.

When did I pick it up?

**Chorus**

**Picking up feels undecided, takes time.**

**Shopping feels so natural**

**The thinking takes time to shop**

**Takes time shopping.**

Ask for help to bring it up

Get company to walk up

Spilling to go further

Now it's time to put it down

Thinking takes time.


**Chorus**


Ask again but no one there.

Looked around and there

Find no one

till Jesus put it down

Finally stopped.


### MY OWN AFRICAN FOLKTALE ABOUT STORMS AND RAINBOWS:

Mmosteso ('questioner') was known in the village to help people where he could.


One day Mmosteso was trying to pick up a huge rock but he was alone. He looked around, he found nothing, he looked for (someone), but (saw) no one. There (he) was alone and no one to help (him).


Then it started to rain, there were no way of running with out the rock moving.


As he was pushing and pushing, the rock started moving. When the rock was moved, the rain stopped. Mmosteso looked around to find the person who helped him, and he saw a tiny little ant still push(ing) the big rock. Mmosteso thank the ant because if it was not for the strength of the ant (who helped) him the rock would not have been moved.

*TURNING A NEW LEAF:*

(African languages are very descriptive when it comes to name giving.   For instance the name Themba means 'hope'.  If you could choose a new African name for yourself, what would it be?   What is the meaning thereof and why did you choose that name for yourself?)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name | : | Siphamandle |
| Language | : | Xhosa |
| Meaning | : | Give us strength |
| Reason | : | God gives me strength and I want him to use me, |
| | | all of me to serve him by giving strength to others. |

## 5.2.3  A story told: Zee's story

> **ZEE'S STORY (PART 1)**  *(Story compiled during 1ˢᵗ TOL camp October 2008)*
>
> *16 y/o female (in Oct 2008), double orphan.*
>
> *Mother committed suicide in 1996.*
>
> *Father died of Aids in February 2008.*
>
> *Living with unrelated friends of her father, to whom she refers to as 'aunt and uncle'.*
>
> *(Moved to a Faith-based Organisation's (FBO) House of Safety in the inner city of Pretoria late 2009.)*

I am Zee Whitney M, I was born in Queenstown, Port Elizabeth. I grew up most of my time in Johannesburg.  I lived with my father for 14 years, he was a mother also to me. I wouldn't say I know all of my family, because I never got the chance to know them all.  From my father's side I know a few of them (my family members). I think they are lovely people, very cultural they are into much of the culture, which is a good thing. I won't say I know much from my mother's side, because she died before I even knew all my aunts and uncles.

My father (is the most important person in my life), he has taught me to think wisely and to be strong (brave), he showed (me) reality. Also my friend Dee, she is one special friend that means she is different from all my friends, she (is) my sister in a way.  Pal groups *(a FBO activity)* is also one of the important things in my life, it guides me through life because God is the guardian in my life.

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At the moment (my favourite things are) my CDs because when ever I feel sad or down or even angry, once I put on music my mood just changes to happy and I start expressing movement in my body.

I stay with my auntie and uncle, basically I would say I was adopted by them. And I have all a(n) older sister, but she only comes to stay with us on weekends, because she is working on other days.

In (the) morning all I do is prepare for school and eat breakfast and bounce. Then on weekends I have responsibilities that have attend (to) - cleaning the house, washing the dishes and do my homework.

I do my homework at home or at the library. What I do for fun is watching TV a lot, dancing which is the best. And most of all (I) like the dictionary because I am addicted to learning new words. If I am not doing all of that I (am) just lazing out.

I am good at dancing and I also liked listening to people and getting to know them. Like meeting new people. And I enjoy making people laugh all the time.

Well, (my friends) would describe (me) as a person with a strong character fun, lively and sweet. They also find my zest very down to earth, very shy sometimes and stubborn.

I am a very loving person so strong, that when people see what I really am they get so shocked. Because (they) didn't expect such a strong character of me. Because people judge me before they even know me.

I have so (much) love for my little brother, but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly.

 (One day) I want to be an architect, if it's possible. I would also want to be famous.

I have lost my father because he was sick. And I also lost my mother by the age of three years, my dad also passed away early this year it was traumatising. (These people were important to me) (b)ecause I love and care about them and knew them.

(My favourite memory of my dad is) (m)usic. We used to laugh together and watch wrestling together. My father used to love music. I also love music as much as he did.

(My dad) was a strong person in and out and that made me strong too. My father gave me everything like music and it gave me the (?), he was a very kind soft person. (?)

(I got my dad's) (s)mile. (He had a) beautiful smile. (I) also smile to other people like you (he) did. (He smiled) (t)o show me that he was happy but sad inside, but I believed that smile. Yes, (I think he gave me the smile) because (even if) I am going through a hard time but I always smile that's what keeps me going. I was the most adorable person in their lives, special full of surprises, loving, caring and most of all amazing.

My auntie and uncle do take care of me and give me what I need and important things like: paying my school fees, caring for me and showing me laugh. And that's why they are a big part of my life and decisions that I make. They provide me with shelter, clothing and loving.

The memories (of my dad) are sometimes sad and some are happy but some of them actually guide me through life in a very, very good way. They (the people who died) had dreams like me, to study (to) become something in life. And also think positive about life (for) example my cousin would stop worrying about small things and be happy.

God has helped me in so many things like making me strong everyday. And that means a lot to me because it shows that he is always there for me no matter what happens he makes a brave, and to continue with life, and show me every good thing that I shouldn't be worried about like pressure, friends and school.

Yes (I think storms are part of our lives) a lot of the time, because storms are trouble once they come it's like a big boom that has just take(n) you which (is) trouble.

It's difficult to deal with problem(s) but I always find a(n) easy way out of it, by talking about (it) to friends or family members who wants to listen .   And it also sometimes depends on what kind of problem it is.  I always cry when I have problem(s).  I think that heals me and I always pray to God to help me overcome the problem.

My faith keeps on making me hold on(to my dreams). I have so much faith in myself and I'm proud of myself. And I always make sure I never forget who I am and where I came from.

Yes (I sometimes have times when I do not experience storms), because there are sometimes very painful but sometimes I know it's God's plan for me to have all these storms. Every time I have storms in my life and they make me strong(er) every time they come.  (When a storm has passed) I feel relieved and free.

My friends and I also support myself (during these storms) by being strong.  And (it) also helps to be strong.  God supports (me) because (He) knows all the problems I go through and I always tell (Him) my problems.  Because He is the only one who understands what I am going (through).  I also help myself by crying alone and talking out all my problems.

**ZEE'S STORY (PART 2)** *(Story compiled during 2nd TOL camp February 2010)*

(What) I remember (from our first camp is) that we had to grow our own fruits, be influences into other people's lives (good influences).

(Reminder of who I am -)  I am Zee the crazy, smart and beautiful young lady. I come from PE and I am half Mozambican and half Xhosa. Getting to know new people is one of the things I enjoy doing and being around people.

My dad used to be one of the important people in my life, but at the moment I would say my aunt and uncle are important in my life. Because they (have) taken care of me at the time when I needed support, they loved me like their own child, which meant a lot to me. Mummy Angela *(previous house mother)* was actually also one of the most important people in (my) life. My dad wanted me to be successful in everything I do from education to getting a job one day. My aunt and uncle believe in me so much that they motivate (me) to become a chef one day. Mummy Angela made me realise that cooking, being a chef was my dream.

When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed, because I kept on asking myself why couldn't he tell me. The most thing that even hurt me the most is knowing that my step mom passed the HIV to him, the first thing that came to my mind is why my dad? Couldn't she choose someone else to pass the virus to, why did she have to lie to my dad?

If it wasn't for her giving my dad this virus I would be laughing and smiling with my dad at the moment.

I was faced with a situation where I had nowhere to go 'cause my aunt and uncle couldn't take care of me, that's why I moved to (the FBO's) House of Safety. I wouldn't say (the House of Safety) is the best place ever but I had no other choice. (It) was the only place that could provide me with shelter so why would I refuse such opportunities.

God help me because he kept reminding me that it is still by my side no matter what kind of storms I was facing. It was difficult believing that God was (still) by my side because of so many challenges that I was facing.

(The FBO) only help me with the moving to the House of Safety and education, but that didn't mean I was happy as a person because I was dying emotionally. I live in a (FBO) House of Safety and living there didn't change my life at all, because without my dad I don't think my life will change.

My personality changes, people think they know (me) at one point but they (are) wrong. I am a person that can really influence someone in a good and bad way. I take the side of my personality to advantage sometimes.

My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I am) there for him.

(Where I want my tree to be one day, my hopes and dreams for myself -)

I want to get married to Kgosi one day (boyfriend). Open my own restaurant, become the best chef in the **WORLD**, changes people's lives in a good way. I would also love to have kids one day. ☺

Special person in my life (that I have lost) is my dad, he will always be in my heart and always special to me. **LOVE YOU DADDY (*drew a heart*)**

Wow I miss laughing, making jokes with him and spending time (with) him. My dad was like a mom to me he did **EVERYTHING** for me, we went shopping together, and shared memories together.  The wise words my father used to tell me I still take those words into my mind and practice them.  He once told me never did give up.  In everything that I do I never give up.

(The impact of the first camp on my life -) It made me open up a little bit, expressing my feelings and thoughts to my friend Dee. When something bothered me I could tell Dee about (it) unlike before I keep quiet about everything.

My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. And after the camp I learned to deal with the situation but I wouldn't say that accepting my dad is gone is okay. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty.

God was with me when I faced storms, even though sometimes I felt that he was not around me but I learnt that the Lord is always by my side. When facing storms sometimes I get irritated because I feel what's the use of us living if we gonna have so many storms in life.

When you lose someone you love it doesn't mean it's the end of the world, life moves on. I can't move on because (I) still haven't gotten over my dad and that's why I can't picture my future without my dad.  I need my dad at this moment of my life because I am growing and I need his wise words to encourage me.

## MY OWN AFRICAN FOLKTALE ABOUT STORMS AND RAINBOWS:

Our lives is like a long road that we are trying to reach at the end of the road.  But as we (are) walking or driving along these roads there's potholes and bumpy rides. That's how I see life - bumpy drives. Some things happen for a reason and we don't know why these things happen.

## TURNING A NEW LEAF:

(African languages are very descriptive when it comes to name giving.   For instance the name Themba means 'hope'.  If you could choose a new African name for yourself, what would it be? What is the meaning thereof and why did you choose that name for yourself?)

Name            :        Palesa

Language        :        Tshwana

Meaning         :        Pearl / Flower

Reason          :        I feel that I am a very special person, beautiful and important.

                         "Pearl" describes the adorable side of me, I feel like a pearl

                         sometimes. I even treat myself like a pearl.

## 5.3    IN CONVERSATION WITH THEOLOGY ITSELF

### 5.3.1    Dee's concerns

| ANDRE DE LA PORTE | SIMON MAILULA | ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD |
|---|---|---|
| **Rejection** | | When I read her story, I sensed that she had experienced a lot of **rejection** in her life.  No father… |
| **Need for love, acceptance and security** | The plight of these stories is one of the greatest challenges facing therapists, researchers and missionaries today.  From their stories, I will say; they are more deeply affected by the **loss of parents**, or loved ones. | ... **no home**, moving from home to home and never experiencing the place where she stayed as her home. |
| **Struggling with anger** | | |
| **The challenge of forgiveness** | | … broken **trust** from her grandmother… She trusts no one.  People kept on telling lies, even when her mother became sick and died. (Probably they were trying to protect her from the reason why her mother had died – but which still means they didn't trust her enough to share the truth with her.) |
| | | Her aunt **abused** her. |
| **Finding an identity and purpose** | They face many **unique and tragic circumstances** that greatly impact each one of them. | |
| **Deciding on and living with a healthy set of values** | | |
| **Learning to live in healthy relationships** | | … bad r**elationship** with her mother… |

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**Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a theological perspective**

It is important to note that Simon Mailula did not formulate the girls' concerns individually. Comments of his that related to specific discourses, I have nonetheless included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording is the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from theology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Rejection by mother and family
- Relationship issues
- Anger issues
- Lack of trust and abuse by aunt
- Bereavement issues
- Need for love and acceptance
- Need for security
- Identity and purpose in life

Mailula acknowledges the tragic circumstances that Dee has experienced in her life so far. These events affected greatly on not only her life, but also on her as a person; her identity. De la Porte states that she, like Zee, is now faced with challenges in life they need to address. They need to decide on healthy positive values which to live by, and they are both faced with the challenge of forgiveness. Dee needs to address the issues she has with her deceased mother, her family and her aunt who rejected and even abused her. It order to be able to do this effectively she needs to address her own anger, before she will be ready or able to forgive them what they have done to her.

## 5.3.2 Zee's concerns

| ANDRE DE LA PORTE | SIMON MAILULA | ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD |
|---|---|---|
| **Family** | | Unfortunately she lost her mother at a young age and therefore she **never had the opportunity to build relationships with the extended family** on her mother's side. |
| **Identity** | | |
| **Purpose in life** | | |
| **Dealing with loss and bereavement** | The plight of these stories is one of the greatest challenges facing therapists, researchers and missionaries today. From their stories, I will say; they are more deeply affected by the **loss of parents**, or loved ones. They face many **unique and tragic circumstances** that greatly impact each one of them. | Unfortunately she **lost her mother** at a young age. But she also experienced great disappointment in her life when she found that her **dad had died because of AIDS** but that **he never told her** that he was sick. Although her aunt and uncle had taken good care of her, she had to **move to the House of Safety** when they were unable to support her any longer. |
| | | She is also disappointed in her **stepmother** whom she blames for **passing the virus to her dad**. |
| | | Zee also experienced some **disappointment with God** and struggled to believe that He was still on her side. |

**General comments regarding Zee's story and her concerns**

| ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD | It is clear from Zee's story that she has a much more **positive outlook on life**. She **loves her extended family members** and **her father was the most important person in her life**. Reading her story, I was struck at the **remarkable person** she seems to be, even to the point of having a dream to become an architect one day. |
|---|---|

### Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a theological perspective

Since Simon Mailula did not formulate the girls' concerns individually, his comments are included as a whole in both stories.

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from theology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Relationship with maternal family
- Identity and purpose in life
- Loss and bereavement
- Role of HIV and Aids in her life
- Anger issues with stepmother
- Issues with God

Zee's more positive outlook on life, and her love for her family, especially her extended family, was noted by van Wyngaard. Also her love and admiration for her deceased father was mentioned. He also mentions her relationship with her maternal family as a concern. With the limited information to his disposal, I can understand him mentioning this as a concern, as it does indeed seem like a concern of hers in her first TOL workbook. Yet, I am aware of the fact that she visited her maternal family in Angola when the Soccer World Cup took place in South Africa middle of 2010.

### 5.3.3 Importance of theology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

| | |
|---|---|
| **ANDRE DE LA PORTE** | A **pastoral narrative perspective** in the story will help (them) to **tell and come to terms with (their) life-stor(ies)**, **identify the challenges (they) have to face** and **develop alternative hopeful stories** for the future. A **spiritual perspective** on (their) challenges and identity is needed as it will **ground (them) in values and truths for (them) and (their) life stor(ies)**. Situating (them) as the **"expert" on (their) own stor(ies)** will be important to counter labelling and diagnosing and creating a collaborative approach which will empower them. We give **meaning to our lives through the life-stories** we tell and interpret. When leaving this earth we can leave nothing behind but our life-stories and memories. In times of **HIV/AIDS**, many children are **left without memories** about their parents and **information about their roots and background**. **Memory work** is about **remembering and telling yesterday's life stories** in a way that **makes life meaningful today** and **offers hope and direction for the future . It is all about packing yesterday, living today and constructing tomorrow.** For those in the helping professions this work will also facilitate a process of **preserving the life stories of the people** we work with and the **lessons learned from our *patient/client-teachers***. <br><br> The **faith community** will be a powerful resource in her life journey. |
| **SIMON MAILULA** | **Training and information**, including **listening to their stories** is of importance. A **need to train pastors**, bishops, priests, **community leaders and youth** including other spiritual (**Traditional healers**) is to develop, facilitate and evaluate appropriate **ethical and value-based responses to HIV/AIDS** and to facilitate an **ethical community development programme** in which a **Christian response to HIV/AIDS** is addressed. |
| **ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD** (comments on next page) | |

| ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD | Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care trains its caregivers to handle the type of situation which Dee experienced in a number of ways. The caregivers are taught to be very **sensitive** about the situation within a homestead, **not to give quick answers**, but to **listen first** in order to hear what is going on within the homestead. **Confidentiality** is a big issue with the caregivers; therefore they will never discuss sensitive issues without first getting permission to do so. But at the same time they are **trained not to stigmatise people**. If they had reached the homestead in time, while the mother was still alive and Dee was still living with her mother, they would have started counselling the mother. If the mother was not sure about her HIV status, they would have tried to convince her to be tested by explaining the advantages of knowing your HIV status. Once they had found that she is HIV-positive, they would have encouraged her to go to a hospital to determine her CD4 count so that she could start ART as soon as possible. After starting treatment, they would have gone to **visit her regularly** to ensure that she was taking her medication as prescribed and to ensure furthermore that the side-effects of the medication was minimised. At the same time they would have **encouraged her to speak openly about her HIV status**. If she did not feel at ease to have this conversation with her daughter, the caregiver would have either told the daughter herself (after obtaining permission from the mother to do so) or she would have **facilitated a conversation between the mother and daughter** where the mother would tell the daughter herself what had happened. Because the caregivers are trained not to stigmatise nor to condemn, it is likely that Dee might have found someone she could trust in the person of the caregiver. If it seemed that the situation in the home was so bad that it was impossible to reconcile the family members and Dee, then they would also have started making enquiries on a **place of safety** where she could stay. It is highly likely that the caregiver might have offered her own home as such a place of safety. |
|---|---|

**Reflection-in-Progress: A theological perspective on the girls' stories**

From the comments received from the theologians who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, theology and the faith community's unique contribution in similar situations (van Wyngaard referred specifically to **Dee**'s situation as an example) can be to:

- Acknowledge that a Christian response to HIV and Aids is much needed
- Utilise the faith community as an invaluable resource in the fight against HIV and Aids
- Train and supply the community at large with information about HIV and Aids
- Train community members to assist in this crisis
- Develop ethical and value-based responses to HIV and Aids

In helping, members of the faith community need to:

- Be sensitive to the specific situation
- Adhere to the upholding of confidentiality and not to stigmatise people involved
- Keep abreast of the situation by regular visits
- Not give quick answers
- Encourage people to speak openly about their status
- Facilitate conversations between parties involved (For instance Dee and her mother)
- Help with placements in Houses of Safety if needed

A spiritual perspective helps people to ground their values and their truths, and a theological perspective like a pastoral narrative perspective focuses on people's life stories as it is remembered, experienced and dreamt. From this perspective, it is important to listen to and work with the stories people tell. Working with bereavement, memory work can also be helpful according to De la Porte.

### 5.3.4  Theology in conversation with other disciplines

| ANDRE DE LA PORTE | Working from a **pastoral narrative** and **contextual approach** is **inclusive** and **non-judgemental** and focuses in the **unique contribution that each discipline can make** to the understanding, unfolding and changing of a life story.  It is **not bound by theological and spiritual "absolutes"** and **not** locked into rigid conceptual frameworks and **"recipes" for change**. |
|---|---|
| ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD | The HIV/AIDS problem in southern Africa is totally different from the problems encountered in the USA and Europe. In that respect former Pres. Thabo Mbeki was correct to say that **we cannot duplicate the solutions for the problem found in Western countries in South Africa.** The ratio of those infected and affected in southern Africa are of a proportion that few people in Western countries can comprehend. In both Dee and Zee's case, they were fortunate to find housing in a place of safety. But for the vast majority of children and youth in Africa, this is not an option. Thousands upon thousands of these homes would be needed to accommodate every single individual in need of care. The concept of **home-based caring** makes so much sense within these circumstances, as the **caregivers concentrate on trying to resolve the problems within the homestead and with the use of the extended family**, rather than taking the child out of the familiar circumstances within which they grew up. Many of the **caregivers have received specialised training in counselling traumatised children** which means that they are equipped to work with children and youth going through pain because of their family members dying because of AIDS-related infections. Because many of the caregivers are themselves HIV-positive and because they are also members of the community within which they work, they have much more **empathy** with their clients than a qualified doctor, nurse or social worker would have. Obviously clients are **regularly referred to other professional disciplines** such as trained **medical people**, including physiotherapists and occupational therapists. |

| ARNAU VAN WYNGAARD (continue) | But the aim remains to have people **remain within their communities** and **to keep families together** as far as humanly possible. By visiting the client and the family regularly, an opportunity is given to the family members to speak openly about problems they experience and to try and resolve the problems, not only by giving advice, but also by asking the older members of the community of the extended family members to participate in the process. |
|---|---|

## Reflection-in-Progress: Theology at the interdisciplinary table

Theology brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:
- Taking a non-judgemental stance
- Showing empathy
- Working inclusively with and openness and willingness to help
- Acknowledges the unique contribution that each discipline can make
- Also acknowledges the fact that solutions that seem to work in other parts of the world cannot just be duplicated to the context of South Africa
- Home Based Care is seen as a workable alternative to large scale institutionalising of orphans and vulnerable children

I thought it good to also include conversations with other theologians working directly in the field of HIV and Aids. This I have done in an attempt to gain a better perspective of how this phenomenon and the impact it has on these teenagers affected by it, are viewed by other disciplines as well as other persons from my own broad discipline who have a more hands-on experience of working in this field than I do.

## 5.4 IN CONVERSATION WITH PSYCHOLOGY

### 5.4.1 Dee's concerns

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Trust issues for future relationships** – *"My grandma, (I) love her to bits, (but) want nothing to do with her because she broke my trust". "My strengths as a person would be that I am) (v)ery disciplined, talk my mind, use time wisely and do everything I want on my own, trust no one". "While in doing things on my own, independent, because every time I would ask something from my mother she'll say yes, but never do it, so I stop asking and made ends meet". "I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth".* | A lot of people have disappointed her in the past. This can cause **trust issues** for her in future relationships.<br><br>Her mother dying of Aids without telling her also contributes to her **trust issues** and she might fear in future that people will lie to her about important things that will affect her life. | |
| **Pseudo-maturity** – *"Hate having fun a lot (like everyday) no!" "I don't socialise because I am always busy or studying".* | | |
| **Lack of boundaries** | | |
| **Lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem** | | |

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Unstable family setup with confusing boundaries** – *"Well, I was the only child, no dad, (my) mother was Rebecca, so I was raised by many family members – Miona (grandma), John (grandpa), Rebecca (closest aunt), 2 other aunts and 2 uncles, Matebise (uncle who was like a father), best cousin ever (Basetsana)… and so on.* | | |
| **Lack of structure and support in the past** – *"And, yes it's the closest thing I feel to home, since I never had a home, just a house or a room. With everyone I lived with, it was never welcoming since I started moving".* | | |
| **Working through grief effectively** - *"Well, I don't usually like thinking about her and I use nothing that remind myself of her. And her death, I never thought it would be so much pain, separation of the family, which was already broken and bring lies and hidden family secrets to be revealed, so much hurts and anger, with disappointment".* | The fact that she doesn't want to think about her mother or to be reminded of her is an indication that she has not yet worked through the **loss of her mother** and without working through the loss she will not be able to move on. | |
| **Lack of coping skills to deal with difficult situations** | | |
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| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Building of secure, strong relationships in the future as she does not have a good solid foundation to work from** – *"I lost my mother. She died of Aids but the sad thing is that she died with lies from everyone around. We were never close, so when she died, I was stuck between (if) I was wrong or why she died without telling me the truth. (People I lost were) (n)ot really that important or it's just because I never saw the importance of them being in my life, but she (my mother) was important because she was my mother - which does not mean much. She is special because she was kind to other people - but me - and very loving".* | Conflict is a big issue/problem for her. According to Dee she and her mother fought a lot. This might have an impact on other loving **relationships** that she might have as it can cause her to believe that you only fight with people with whom you have a loving relationship. | |
| **Need for acceptance and love might cause Dee to get involved in undesirable relationships and situations** – *"Favourite memory (of my mother) was when we used to live together in Jo'burg and I used to sing to her every night. And when we used to sleep, we would hug the whole night. Yes, (I think she would like me to remember her this way.* | | |
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| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
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| **Rejection from loved ones** – *"(Everyone in my mother's family) taught me something and by that they made me wiser and stronger. They don't take care of me anymore. They used to tell me right from wrong, and tell me that they care and will always be there".* *"When my mother was still alive and in trouble, they used to take me in and look after me. But now they all don't want me and have deserted me because of lies, (and of being) jealous of me. (They wanted me) (t)o be rich at first. Now they wanted to see if I would have a baby or Aids or bad things happening to me. Just to see me fall, to prove they were right. (Memories of them don't support me as) we never really had moments of gold and learning channels".* | She has a lot of family conflicts and problems. Most of them have not been resolved and she feels that she is in the centre of the problems. This leads to a lot of feelings of **rejection**. | **The longing for a family and regret on losing her family -** *"If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don't talk to my family".* |
| **Inability to deal with difficult situations and/or uncomfortable feelings** – *"Because of the bad relationship between me and the house mother I would pretend to be happy at the dinner table to spite her. When all I want(ed) to do is cry".* | | |
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| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Anger and resentment issues toward her family, especially her mother** – *"Well, Aids took away my mother, separated my family and left questions like if I was next. And my aunt is another big danger, she has spoilt my name, left me without a home, she hurt my spirit, my heart and trust for anyone in my life. She has left me with not good, but very abused memories. She ruined hopes of goodness. She really affected my tree". "I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough".* | Her mother's death brought on a lot of **painful situations**- these should also be addressed. | |
| | The **abuse of one of her aunts** should be discussed and worked through. | |
| | **One of the positive aspects in her life is her religion**. This should be encouraged and reinforced during therapy. | |
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| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Family psychiatric history and awareness of possible depression/suicidal behaviour** – *"(I) can't handle pain". "I had two dying leaves; my mother and my depressed aunt. Now there are chunks on the log to show the emotional strain because I cry when I think about my family and the chunks show that I have grown. I told myself that 'I (am) going to be the woman I was meant to be". "When my mom passed away I was left to confront and be with my negative family. And during that time I wanted to commit suicide". "If she (my mother) was still alive I would still be in my family, I would still be depressed. Now she (is) died, I don't talk to my family  and I lost an aunt forever . She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts".* | The fact that she wanted to commit **suicide** is alarming and should be addressed. | |
| | | |

| Regrets of not having a good relationship with her mother *(Query attachment issues)* – *"(I lost) (m)y mother, she was sick of HIV/AIDS.*<br><br>*We never had a proper conversation but yeah I guess it's too late now, and my aunt because of the stress we became strangers to each other and I moved out".* | She has ambivalent feelings towards her mother – this should be explored in therapy and discussed with her. | **The need / regret for a closer relationship with her mom who died:**<br><br>*"I never really liked my mom, but loved her, because we never knew each other"*; *"I realised that I am not comfortable talking about my mom. And I learned that I am far from heal(ed)"*; *"I had two dying leaves...my mother".* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | The **abuse of one of her aunts** should be discussed and worked through. | **Concerned about her aunt / Self blame** *"Rebecca my aunt, I loved her so much. She was the closest thing to me, like a mother, but she's crazy and I have (an) anger problem"*; *"I had two dying leaves...depressed aunt; "I lost an aunt forever . She left the house for me but I don't want it. I don't know if it counts".* |

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
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| | Her **future plans** should also be discussed and possible opportunities should be explored. | **Uncertainty on her future / a sense of blaming her mother**<br><br>*I can't say my mother's death guided me, because her death made the family situation (fighting and separation) worse. My mom wanted to see me living uncomfortable if I might say (so), and not living my dream. She believed that dreams (mine) were not enough*; I" *don't know where I (am) going when I leave the house, unlike if I was living with a family member".* |
| | | **Fear of becoming too close to someone and losing that person**<br><br>*"... thought that I should become closer with her before she goes. Then I couldn't because the day she is gone I would have to deal with the pain"; "And what happened to my mom I am now scared that it might happen to someone close to me, so I don't have/try not to have people close to me but I am trying to overcome it".* |

**Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a psychological perspective**

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from psychology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Trust issues
- Rejection from loved ones
- Abuse by her aunt and self blaming for situation
- Anger and resentment towards family
- Longing for a family
- Regret of not having good relationship with mother
- Pseudo-maturity: Doesn't involve herself with typical teenager interests
- Lack of boundaries: Unstable family setup
- Lack of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Lack of structure and support in the past
- Need to work through grief effectively
- Lack of coping skills to deal with difficult situations, inability to deal with difficult situations and uncomfortable feelings
- Need to build strong and secure relationships in the future
- Need for acceptance and love may cause Dee to become involved in undesirable relationships and situations
- Possible depression
- Suicide ideation and expression should be addressed
- Uncertainty about future
- Fear of becoming too close to someone and then losing that person

In my opinion, what is referred to as the pseudo-maturity of Dee, rather reflects her responsible nature as a person, who is self-reflecting and knows of the dangers of becoming involved in undesirable situations. As was mentioned, her religion plays a positive role in coping with life and its issues.

## 5.4.2 Zee's concerns

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| **Loss of both parental figures** – *"Mother committed suicide in 1996. **Father died of Aids** in February 2008".* (Loss of stability and (query) parentified nature). | The **loss of her father** is of great concern as she idealized him. | **The fact that her father died and is not with her anymore.**<br><br>**Loosing her parent figure of security and stability in her life***: "was also a mother to me, "the most important person in my life", "taught me to be strong"; "I need my dad at this moment of my life because I am growing and I need his wise words to encourage me"* |
| | The fact that **they lied to her** about the fact that her **father died of Aids** and not cancer is causing trust issues with her. | **Many questions with regards to her father's death***: "When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed"; "because I kept on asking myself why couldn't he tell me"; "hurt me the most is knowing that my step mom passed the HIV to him"* |
| | | **Acceptance of her dad's death***: "My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. After the camp I learned to deal with the situation but I wouldn't say that accepting my dad is gone is okay. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty"* |

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
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| Psychiatric family history – *"**Mother committed suicide in 1996**"* | **Zee not having a mother** for the most part of her life is a concern. It is good for a girl (if possible) to have a mother figure. | **The fact that she lost her mother** *"And I also lost my mother by the age of three years, my dad also passed away early this year it was traumatising"* |
| | The fact that she **likes music**, might be one way in which she tries to hold on to him and her memories of him. | |
| Possible development of **trust issues** in other relationships – *"When I found out that my father died from HIV and not cancer I was so disappointed, because I kept on asking myself why couldn't he tell me. "Couldn't she choose someone else to pass the virus to, why did she have to lie to my dad?"* | She resents her step mom for giving her father HIV. She might have underlying **feelings of being robbed** of her dad by her step mom who gave her dad the HIV. He was taken from her life prematurely and now he cannot share her life with her as she would have wanted him to. If her dad didn't die she would not have ended up in a safe house. This can also lead to trust issues and issues of loss. | |
| Dealing with the **grieving process** effectively – *"My storm before was not accepting that my dad was gone because he was the most important person in my life. I still feel angry, sad and lonely knowing that my dad is gone without him my life feels empty".* | Until she has worked through the loss of her father in **bereavement counselling** she will not be able to move on in life. She feels empty without her dad. This should be addressed in therapy. | |

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
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| | Her **faith is important** to her and this should be encouraged and highlighted as an important and stable aspect in her life. | |
| **Inability to be part of her brother's life** – *"but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly"*. | | **Not being able to support and care for her little brother in the way she wishes to:** *"but knowing that I won't be able to see every day of my life hurts me badly"*. |
| Regular follow-up sessions to eliminate **depression** – *"I was dying emotionally. I live in a (FBO) House of Safety and living there didn't change my life at all, because without my dad I don't think my life will change"*. | | |
| Adoption of **manipulative strategies** to survive – *"My personality changes... I am a person that can really influence someone in a good and bad way. I take the side of my personality to advantage sometimes"*. | | |
| | | |

| ILZE BARNARD | ILZE JANSEN | TILDA LOOTS |
|---|---|---|
| Subjected to **negative influences of others** and Zee's **need to belong** and feel wanted might lead to "toxic" relationships – *"My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I) there for him".* | | **Knowing that her boyfriend is on the wrong road**<br><br>*"My boyfriend likes drinking and partying. I wasn't really happy about his behaviour because he was always influenced by his friends. I once told him he's going to have to choose between taking the right route to life or the good route to life. And he is on the process of quitting drinking, but it is not easy for him, but (I) there for him"* |

## Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a psychological perspective

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the participants from psychology mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Death of beloved father
- Issues surrounding his death
    - loss of stability and security
    - questions regarding his death from HIV and Aids
    - acceptance of his death
    - trying to hold onto him through sharing of the love of music
- Death of her mother through suicide
- Trust issues
    - being lied to about the true cause of her father's death
    - blaming stepmother for his disease and death

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- Need for bereavement counselling to work through loss of father
- Importance of faith: Importance and stable aspect in life
- Inability to be part of little brother's life
- Possible depression: Follow-up sessions is suggested
- Use of manipulative strategies in her life
- Need to belong
- Negative influence of other people (like boyfriend) in her life

As with Dee, faith plays an important role in Zee's life. She shares the issues of trust and anger with Dee, as they both feel betrayed and rejected in a sense by their families. Zee is angry about the fact that her father withheld his HIV status from her and that she believes her stepmother is responsible for infecting him. After his death, Zee became separated from her little brother and the double loss impacts greatly on her life. Not surprisingly, they both feel the need to belong and to be loved.

Both girls are experiencing difficulty with their multiple losses, and it seems like they haven't worked through their bereavement issues in an efficient way. Therefore, possible depression is mentioned as a concern for both girls.

In contrast to the story of Dee, Zee seems to involve herself much more with typical teenager issues, such as having a boyfriend, yet she also finds it more difficult not to be influenced in a negative way by people surrounding her, like her boyfriend. She admits to the fact that she sometimes reverts to using manipulative strategies to get what she wants in life. By doing that she is possibly trying to exert some kind of control over her own life and that of other people, in an attempt to cope with the situations she is faced with and to hide what she is feeling.

### 5.4.3 Importance of psychology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

| ILZE BARNARD | Clinical psychology includes the scientific study and application of <u>psychology</u> for the purpose of **understanding, preventing, and relieving psychologically-based distress** or <u>dysfunction</u> and to promote subjective <u>well-being</u> and personal development (<u>Plante, Thomas</u>. (2005). *Contemporary Clinical Psychology.* New York : Wiley.) In the case of Zee and Dee, the history enables the practitioner to understand the presentation of symptoms as well as give the ability to assist and intervene to establish psychological well-being. From a positive psychology approach, both individuals, despite the concerns noted, can be assisted by focusing and **reinforcing** their **strengths**. Both individuals indicated **resilience** as part of their strength inventory as well as other valuable personality characteristics.<br>According to Seligman (Seligman, Martin E. P. (1991). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life.* New York: Knopf) "Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. This field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to **enhance** their **experiences of love, work, and play**". |
|---|---|
| ILZE JANSEN | My discipline's unique perspective is to make sure that a person is **coping** well in his/her life. That the person is **well balanced** and **can function effectively** in most areas of their lives.<br>It is important that the above mentioned issues be discussed as it is causing and will cause problems now and in future in Dee's personal, social and work life if she does not address these problems effectively. My discipline's unique perspective on Dee's life is that in order for her to become a fully functioning human being she will have to work through the above mentioned concerns in her life. If the concerns that where discussed in question 1 is not sorted out they will follow Dee throughout her life and it will catch up with her and have a |

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| **ILZE JANSEN**<br>(continue) | negative impact in her life especially if someone else that is close to her also dies.  If Zee's overall well-being is important for the different disciplines it will be vital that the above mentioned concerns be discussed and worked through with Zee.   If these concerns of Zee are addressed the other disciplines will find that it makes their work with her and her concerns easier and more focused. Zee will also understand her feelings and behaviour in certain situations much better; so will the researchers from the other disciplines. |
| **TILDA LOOTS** | I think it is **difficult to formulate only one unique perspective**, as my discipline does not only have one unique approach. For me, I would view each case study within an **eco-systemic perspective** and consider the **influence of the different sub-systems** on each other. I would **also identify and mobilise potential assets** within each individual and sub-system in order to overcome some of these concerns. |

## Reflection-in-Progress: A psychology perspective on the girls' stories

From the comments received from the psychologists who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, psychology's unique contribution in similar situations (Jansen referred individually to the girls' situations), although difficult to formulate only one unique perspective can be to:

- Relieve psychological distress like depression
- Ensure the person is coping in life
- Enhance overall well-being
- Effectively address current issues to help future coping in same and similar situations
- Promote personal development
- Help them to understand feelings and behaviour in certain situations

Methods that can be used:

- Positive psychology

- o Reinforcing the strengths as individuals
- o Enhancing their experiences of love, work, and play – thus enhancing balance in their lives
- Eco-systemic perspective
  - o Consider the effects of different subsystems on each other
  - o Identify and mobilise potential assets with in each individual and subsystem in an attempt to overcome their concerns

From the above comments, it seems like psychology from all three sub-disciplines can play a substantial role in addressing the specific concerns of each girl as it is currently manifesting in their lives.

Looking from an eco-systemic perspective, and looking at the role of subsystems in this perspective, helps one to understand the role that significant other people can play in the lives of these girls. It reminds of what is referred to in the narrative approach as an 'audience' to one's life story, in that you are not alone, but form part of a greater community. That community can consist of family, friends, religious affiliations like PEN and the church and people from the faith community.

Positive psychology also relates very well with the narrative approach, with its emphasis on the individual's strengths and positive aspects in their lives. It looks at how this can be utilised to help the specific individual cope with the situations and issues in their lives. In effect, it is thus aiming to find a so-called sparkling moment or unique outcome for that specific individual. This can be done by working together with the individual and utilising their strengths as a person to address issues that need current attention. By doing this, coping skills for similar situations in the future can be developed by the specific individual and thereby not only help the individual to focus on their current situation, but also create hope for the future.

### 5.4.4 Psychology in conversation with other disciplines

| ILZE BARNARD | It is important to **move away from focusing only on diagnosing disorders** in clinical psychology and **offering a more hope-filled and solution focused option** to patients who are already discouraged by their debilitating symptoms and histories. It is widely known among researchers and practitioners that the DSM focuses on "what is wrong" with an individual rather than focusing on what an individual possesses that makes "things right / better". Positive psychology focuses more on **optimum functioning** and **personal happiness** and **well-being** in the midst of other "negative" symptoms, **without denying the importance of these symptoms**. |
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| ILZE JANSEN | My discipline's input can help other disciplines **understand Dee's current situation better** and help them to identify issues and problems that they might not have seen without the highlighted concerns. |
| | My discipline's perspective can assist in helping other disciplines to help Dee more effectively and **address her issues more holistically** and more effectively. Her problems are not only personal concerns but also social concerns. The different disciplines will thus, by following a holistic problem solving method, help Dee to overcome most of her concerns and help her to get a more balanced outlook on life. The psychological perspective is not that difficult to understand and it can make the work of the other researchers much easier as we address most of Zee's current problems. The psychological perspective can also help the other disciplines in future to identify why Zee is presenting a specific concern and they will then be able to address it accordingly. |
| | The psychological perspective on Zee's concerns **gives a better understanding of Zee's overall concerns and problems**. |
| TILDA LOOTS | It is important to view individuals within the different sub-systems in which they are functioning, as a **person is constantly influenced by different sub-systems**. |

| TILDA LOOTS (continue) | It is also important to **work with what is present** and what is **available** in order to overcome difficulties and barriers experienced. Assets and resources within individuals and each sub-system can be utilised to address identified difficulties. |
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## Reflection-in-Progress: Psychology at the interdisciplinary table

Psychology brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- From positive psychology the acknowledgement that we need to move away from just diagnosing people and their problems
- In order to offer a more hopeful or solution focused option
- Emphasises the need to focus on optimum functioning
- As well as the need for personal happiness and well-being
- Without denying the importance of life issues (so-called symptoms)
- Help in understanding the girls' issues better from different perspectives
- Helping address the issues more holistically
- This relates to not only personal concerns but also social concerns
- It helps to gain a better understanding of their overall concerns and problems
- Look at how people are constantly influenced by different subsystems
- To work with what is present and available in order to overcome difficulties in life

In light of the above, the discipline of psychology is very helpful in addressing the needs and concerns of these girls. In order to be able to look at not only their spiritual bereavement needs, but also how their bereavement needs relate to their overall psychological functioning. As well as how their unique personal attributes and strengths can be utilised to help them in overcoming their bereavement needs as well as other social and interpersonal concerns that are currently manifesting in their lives.

## 5.5 IN CONVERSATION WITH SOCIAL WORK

### 5.5.1 Dee's concerns

| SUZANNE JACOBS | JERRY STREETS | CORLIE VAN DER BERG |
|---|---|---|
| **Trust** is one major concern. Dee's inability to trust others because of the lies that were told about her mother's death. She felt betrayed and hurt and now developed a defence mechanism where she does not allow herself to trust others or form relationships with other individuals, to avoid the possibility to go through the same pain again. | | She feels that she cannot trust her grandmother because the grandmother **broke her trust**. Why did her mother not tell her the **truth** about her illness before she died? Was Dee not worth it? |
| It also seems as if Dee is also continuously battling with herself and her statements are contradictory – **mother** was important to her, but it does not seem as if they shared a positive **relationship**. | | She has concerns about her **relationship with her mother** and what it meant to them both but also what it means for her life now. |
| Her **relationship with her relatives** – the rejection that she experienced. | (A)nd a **sense of betrayal** particularly as manifested by depression. | Why did her mother's **family desert her** after they told her they will take care of her always?<br>Her **Aunt hurt and disappointed her** and Dee sees this aunt and her action as a danger to her life somehow. |
| (A)nd the impact this (relationship with relatives) might have on her **identity** and **self-esteem.** | | |
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| SUZANNE JACOBS | JERRY STREETS | CORLIE VAN DER BERG |
|---|---|---|
| Unanswered questions about **HIV** and Dee's knowledge and perception about HIV that caused **death and separation.** | As young women, how can they be further strengthened to remain in control of their "bodies" and not become a **victim of sexual abuse** and or **unprotected sexual activity**? | She is concerned that she may also die like her mother, perhaps also from **Aids**. |
| | | Dee is of the opinion that she has a **problem with anger**. |
| | | It seems that she is **afraid** to have "too much fun" and **enjoyment.** |
| | In spite of the hardships they face, they express **dreams and hopes** consistent with their age group. | Would she be able to **realize her dreams** if no one in her family believe in her? |
| | | Concerned about **storms coming back** … Her family and their actions and words are part of these storms and concerns. |
| | | (A)nd that she might **"give herself to the devil"** and **sin** just to feel better and then she will never be able to overcome the storm. |
| | | **Forgiving her aunt.** |
| | I wondered about how they will get help to deal with the long range **impact of their losses?** Regarding the stories: they are powerful descriptions of **loss,** confusion, resilience and hope. | |

**General comments regarding Dee's story and her concerns**

| JERRY STREETS | Regarding the stories: they are **powerful descriptions of loss, confusion, resilience and hope**. I assume that the reference to a "tree" is regarding an exercise they did to imagine their lives. Also, how can their combined sense of loss and hope be more weighted with hope and aspiration given what I understand as their lack of family, educational and job training support and the economic situation there? What is strongly expressed by them is their **sense of resilience and aspirations**, no doubt increased by the **support they receive from the church, housing and social support programs** of which they are a part. |
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## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from a social work perspective

It is important to note that Jerry Streets did not formulate the girls' concerns as such, or individually, but rather focused on how these discourses can be viewed in a more positive way. Comments of his that related to specific discourses, I have nonetheless included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording is the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the social work participants mentioned the following concerns of / for **Dee**:

- Lack of trust and truthfulness
- Relationship with mother
- Relationship with and desertion by relatives
- Identity and self-esteem
- Interplay between HIV and Aids and sex
- Problem with anger
- Cautiousness to enjoy life
- Realisation of dreams
- Possible return of difficulties (storms) in life

- Ever present temptation to sin
- Ability to forgive
- Impact of losses experienced

The general comments made by Jerry Streets applicable to both stories, refer in the first instance to the loss these girls have experienced – for Dee this loss is compounded by the death of her mother. With her mother's death – a mother whom she barely knew – she not only lost her mother, but also the opportunity to establish a better relationship with her. Her close family members, most notably her aunt, lied to and ultimately rejected her, which led to feelings of anger, hurt and confusion.

Streets mentions the positive role played by the church, housing and other support systems. For Dee the people involved with these systems become her new family. One that now takes care of her material, emotional, social and spiritual needs – as would happen in another family. Zee becomes her 'sister' in that they not only live together and interact on more than one social level, but possibly also because they share similar life experiences.

What stands out for Streets is the sense of resilience and hope these girls exude notwithstanding their traumatic life experiences thus far. For Dee her faith in God and the support of her church sustain this resilience and hope in her life, and it also forms a foundation for the aspirations she has for herself. The relationship with Zee – their so-called sisterhood – also sustains her in life. In Zee, she found someone who understands her and her situation, without putting pressure on her to be someone she is not – with Zee she can just be. As she puts it –

> Then my friend, Zee, she became my comfort since there was no one close to me after me and my aunt separated - **Dee**

## 5.5.2 Zee's concerns

| SUZANNE JACOBS | JERRY STREETS | CORLIE VAN DER BERG |
|---|---|---|
| Zee has much better coping skills and seems more resilient than Dee. She did find ways to deal with the pain of the death of her parents, but there are still **unresolved issues / concerns** that will limit her in some way or another. | | |
| These concerns are her **feelings of anger towards her step mom** for passing the HIV virus onto her father. | | She also felt that it was **unfair of her stepmother to have passed it on to him.** |
| Zee's **ignorance and knowledge about HIV** must be addressed. That will also address her feelings towards her stepmother. | As young women, how can they be furthered strengthened to remain in control of their "bodies" and not become a **victim of sexual abuse** and or **unprotected sexual activity?** | It is difficult for Zee to come to terms with the fact that her **father died from HIV Aids** and could not tell her that. |
| **The community must also be educated about HIV** to eliminate the stigma that surrounds it and confront it, instead of disguising it – cancer | | |
| It also seems as if she still finds it **difficult to cope without her father**, despite her good coping skills that were described in the beginning. | | **She still misses her dad** very much – she feels she needs him in her life, especially now – to guide and encourage her. |
| | | Her **dad** has been a **good influence** in her life. Now that he is not there will she be able to change her life? |

| SUZANNE JACOBS | JERRY STREETS | CORLIE VAN DER BERG |
|---|---|---|
| It is almost as if she is **wearing a mask** to show the world that she is doing fine, but this is not necessarily the reality. | | |
| The reality of uncontrollable events that have such a major impact on her life and **emotional well-being** is also a concern that must be dealt with appropriately. Her pain must be acknowledged in a proper manner. | I wondered about how they will get help to deal with the long range **impact of their losses** and sense of betrayal particularly as manifested by depression. | |
| | | She does not have daily **contact with her younger brother**. This seems to be a painful experience to her. She seems concerned that she does not see him enough. |
| | | Her **boyfriend** is very important to her but she is concerned about the boyfriend's drinking and partying. She wants him to make the right choices in life. |
| | It seems that **support** from **religious people and organizations such as the church** is important to them and is a source of strength for them. | She is concerned about the **storms in life** and asks the question "What's the use of us living if we are going to have so many storms in life?" |

**General comments regarding Zee's story and her concerns**

| JERRY STREETS | Regarding the stories: they are **powerful descriptions of loss, confusion, resilience and hope**. I assume that the reference to a "tree" is regarding an exercise they did to imagine their lives. Also, how can their combined sense of loss and hope be more weighted with hope and aspiration given what I understand as their lack of family, educational and job training support and the economic situation there? What is strongly expressed by them is their **sense of resilience and aspirations**, no doubt increased by the **support they receive from the church, housing and social support programs** of which they are a part. |
|---|---|
| CORLIE VAN DER BERG | Overall it seems as if Zee knows that she will be **able to survive** and **even thrive in life** but that she is concerned that **without her father's guidance and support she will perhaps not make the right choices** and have the **courage and perseverance to carry on.** She is **aware of the support systems in her life** such as her aunt, uncle and boyfriend as well as her faith in God, but she is still **not completely sure that she will be able to survive and realize her dreams, goals and hopes in her life.** |

**Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from a social work perspective**

As Jerry Streets formulated the girls' concerns as a whole and not for each individual girl, comments of his relating to specific discourses, were included with regards to both stories. Therefore, the wording remains the same for both stories.

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, one or more of the social work participants mentioned the following concerns of / for **Zee**:

- Unresolved issues in life
- Feelings of anger towards stepmother
- Interplay between HIV and Aids and sex

- The role of education about HIV and Aids for the community as well
- Longing for her deceased father
- Lack of positive parental influence
- Hiding the real emotions
- Emotional well-being
- Lack of regular contact with younger brother
- Relationship with responsible boyfriend
- Concerns about storms in life

Jerry Streets mentioned the loss both girls experienced in their short lives. Zee lost her father and with that her great friendship with a man she held in high regard. He was her role model; her positive influence in life. After his death she moved in with friends of his, who took care of her as their own. In doing so, she lost the opportunity to play an active role in her younger brother's life. By the time of the second camp she also – like Dee – made the move to the House of Safety, as it became increasingly more difficult for the friends to take care of her. She also exudes a sense of resilience and hope in her life.

Corlie van der Berg also notices Zee's resilience – her ability not only to survive, but to thrive in life – but cautions that Zee might feel that she still needs guidance like the guidance her father provided for her when he was still alive. Without enough positive influences in Zee's life, van der Berg fears she might be tempted to make the wrong choices in life, and although she shows great resilience, without guidance she might not have the courage and perseverance to carry on with her life in a positive way.

Like Streets, van der Berg mentions the fact that Zee is fully aware of the support systems in her life – notably her faith in God, but cautions that Zee might feel unsure about what her future holds – if she will indeed be able to live up to the hopes and dreams she – but also her dad – has for herself.

### 5.5.3 Importance of social work at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

**Dee's story and social work**

| SUZANNE JACOBS | It is important from social work's perspective that an **individual's own potential and own strengths be developed** and be utilized to overcome a specific problem or concern that is hindering the individual to function 'normally'. In other words a **strengths perspective** will be followed to address Dee's concerns. In Dee's case, it will probably be best to approach her concerns through **individual case work method** and through a **therapeutic process** help her to be able to trust again. The **trust relationship between Dee and the worker** will also be very important since trust is an issue for her. In other words, her **fear of trusting others will be addressed** through social work, as well as her **relationship struggles with her relatives** that are definitely having an **impact on her identity formation and her perception of herself.** |
|---|---|
| CORLIE VAN DER BERG | Because Social Work focuses on the **individual in relation and interaction with other systems** the perspective of social Work regarding Dee's concerns would be that her **relationship with her family** needs some attention. |
| | Because Dee has formally been placed in a place of safety the social worker involved is obligated to work with Dee's family of origin. A professional person needs to become involved with Dee's family specifically to begin making them aware of the effects of their behaviour on Dee. The social worker or psychologist involved with Dee on a personal level would also need to guide the Place of Safety to whether or not it is in Dee's best interest to have contact with her family or under which circumstances she may have contact with them. It is also important that Dee receives **individual therapy to work through the trauma of her mother's death**, as well as her **aunt and family's abandonment**. |

| CORLIE VAN DER BERG (continue) | For Social Work it is necessary to do some **future planning** for Dee with regard to her schooling, career planning and complete psychosocial functioning. The social worker will try to determine whether Dee has enough **support systems** for example her **friends**, **place of safety staff** and especially the **church** where she is integrated. This view of Social Work on the **individual within a larger system** and ultimately as seen from a **social developmental paradigm** is very important at the multidisciplinary table because the social worker is able to connect all the different disciplines and role players in the child's life to ensure that she will function at an optimal level. |
| --- | --- |

## Reflection-in-Progress: A social work perspective on Dee's story

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, individual therapy for **Dee** should address:

- Trauma of her mother's death
- Trust issues
- Relationship struggles with relatives (abandonment issues)
- Impact of these relationships on:
    - her identity formation
    - perception of herself
- Nature of Dee's support systems:
    - friends
    - Place of Safety staff
    - Church
- Future planning:
    - schooling
    - career
    - psychosocial functioning

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Social work's unique perspective on working with **Dee** encompasses:

- A social developmental paradigm
- A strengths perspective: Dee's own potential and strengths to be developed
- A person that is seen as an individual within a larger system
- Individual case study work

## Zee's story and social work

| SUZANNE JACOBS | Zee's social functioning and her interaction with others can be utilized to identify her **strengths** as a means to address her **fear of being alone** (her father not being in her life anymore). |
|---|---|
| CORLIE VAN DER BERG | For the Social Worker it would be important that Zee is firstly placed in an alternative care setting which will provide an environment for her optimal functioning and development. In Zee's case it seems as if the "aunt and uncle" can provide this kind of environment for her. It will also be important to make sure that Zee receives **counselling** in future – **individual** or in a **group** context to support her **when she starts doubting herself**, to talk about her **relationship with her boyfriend** and the **loss of her father**. The Social Worker would also like to know how Zee is **faring in school** and what **support she will be able to have from teachers and friends**. If it is possible the Social Worker would like to **establish some links with Zee's family of origin** especially from her father's side because she loved him so much. Attention would also be given to **regular contact with her brother**, if at all possible. The input of the Social Worker at the interdisciplinary table is important because Social Work does not look at Zee (or a child) in isolation but at her **total functioning in relation to all the different people in her life and the different systems** which are part of her life. Social work realizes that every person is part of a broader **interconnected system** and focuses both on the **individual and the broader context** of his or her life. |

**Reflection-in-Progress: A social work perspective on Zee's story**

From the comments received from the social work participants in the interdisciplinary conversation, therapy (group or individual) for **Zee** should address:

- Loss of her father
- Tendency to doubt herself
- Relationship with boyfriend
- Nature of Zee's support systems:
    - friends
    - teachers at school
- School performance

Other issues that should receive attention:

- The possible establishment of links with Zee's family of origin, especially paternal
- Attempts to try and ensure regular contact with Zee's younger brother

Social work's unique perspective on working with **Zee** encompasses:

- A strengths perspective: Zee's fear of being alone needs to be addressed
- That an individual forms part of an interconnected system. Focus on individual as well as broader context
- Total functioning in relation to different people's and systems in life

Corlie van der Berg refers to the need for Zee to be placed in an alternative care setting, such as living with the friends of her father – whom she refers to as 'aunt and uncle'. Since the first TOL camp Zee has; however, moved to the same House of Safety that Dee stays in, due to the difficulties these friends experienced in caring for her. She is therefore in a legitimate alternative care setting which by all probability do receive a grant from the government to provide housing for her.

### 5.5.4 Social work in conversation with other disciplines

| | |
|---|---|
| **SUZANNE JACOBS** | Social work, as mentioned before, **looks holistically at the person** and **looks at all possible contexts** that individuals find themselves in. Individuals are **assisted to adapt to their environments** and most importantly **to rely on their own strengths to cope** with specific demanding situations and events in their lives. |
| **CORLIE VAN DER BERG** | I am of the opinion that ultimately all the disciplines have **the child's best interest at heart**. According to the new Children's Act (Act 35 of 2005) any child that has been entered under the Children's Act must be evaluated and placed according to what is in the best interest of the child. **A multidisciplinary team focuses on the child and his best interest.** The **social worker connects all role players to achieve this purpose** and his role in this process will be understood by other team members. Researchers from **other disciplines focus on different aspects of human functioning** than Social Work does. If the perspectives of different disciplines are being put together a **multi facetted perspective of the child and the context of her life** can be obtained. This will be to the child's benefit because careful **consideration will be given to which interventions may be appropriate** to enable the **child's optimal functioning** within her specific environment. **Social work** in South Africa has a **developmental focus** and aims to bring all the role players in contact with one another to ensure optimal development of the entire society. **Social development implies development of communities** by means of **economical, social and physical development**. |
| | (The girls') **future development** not only relies on **support and individual therapy** that they might need but also on the **ability of the country they reside in to provide ample opportunities for them** to finish their schooling, obtain a qualification after school and to be employed. |
| | As children they also still need the **support of the state** to provide a **grant for an alternative care placement** for them. |

| CORLIE VAN DER BERG (continue) | Social work will be able to focus on (the girls') **current situation** but simultaneously also keep the **broader context** of their lives and future in mind. This perspective will enable the multidisciplinary team to make informed decisions regarding their interventions in (the girls') lives. |
|---|---|

## Reflection-in-Progress: Social work at the interdisciplinary table

Social work brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:

- A holistic view of the person
- Taking into account all the possible contexts
- Individuals are assisted to adapt to their environments
- Assisted to rely on their own strengths as a person to be able to cope
- The social worker connects all the interdisciplinary team members
- Keeping the focus on the child and his / her best interest
- Acknowledges that other disciplines focus on different aspects of human functioning
- In working together, a multi-facetted perspective of the child and his / her context is obtained
- This multi-facetted perspective takes into account interventions that may be appropriate for the child's optimal functioning
- Social work sees social development, that is the development of communities at large, as important
- Sees support and therapy where needed as important for future well-being
- The State has a responsibility
- Current situations need to be situated within the broader context

## 5.6 OTHER DISCIPLINES SEATED AT THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TABLE

### 5.6.1 Anthropology – Mieke de Gelder

#### 5.6.1.1 Dee's concerns

> Dee's story seems to me to speak of **great uncertainty**; at times she also seems to **contradict** herself. She clearly had a **difficult relationship with her mother**; initially in her life it sounds like she depended more on her aunt (Rebecca) and other family members than on her own mother. Sadly, when her mother became ill, the **relationship** she had with the one person she was especially close to—her **aunt Rebecca**—also became increasingly strained. The **concerns** she expresses sometimes explicitly, sometimes subtly in the story **have to do with these difficult relationships** and how to deal with them following her mother's passing. Her mother was a person she "didn't like" when she was still alive—but of course the pervasive ideology is that mothers and daughters ought to have a close relationship—so now, in the wake of her mother's death, she is **struggling to "reframe" that relationship.** How to remember her mother? She switches uncomfortably, contradictorily between "harsh" and "loving" remembering. At the same time, the good connection she once had with her aunt and which grew strained also remains important: why did this happen (was her mother maybe responsible—her mother's illness and death—leaving the aunt with the **burden of caring for her niece**)? And how might it be changed? Is it possible that the **aunt's anger** at the mother's death became targeted at Dee? Is that how Dee sees it?

**Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from an anthropological perspective**

Mieke de Gelder mentioned the following discourses as concerns of / for **Dee** from an anthropological perspective:

- Feelings of ambivalence and uncertainty about relationships in her life
- Difficult relationship with her mother
- Struggling to redefine (reframe) the nature of relationship with late mother
- Strained relationship with her aunt Rebecca
- Reasons for aunt's anger

Interesting, De Gelder pick up on the confusion Dee is experiencing about the two most important relationships in her life thus far – that with her mother (how to remember her?) and with her aunt (did she maybe feel misused by Dee's mother?)

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### 5.6.1.2 Zee's concerns

Zee's story is **significantly different from Dee's**, not least because Zee several times conveys the **positive relationship she had with her father**. In this sense (and also because she was for a time "adopted" by her father's friends, who took good care of her), what this story demonstrates/implies is the **importance of kinship bonds** (whether "real" or fictive) in situations of untimely death. In such situations, **strong and affective family ties** help orphans both in terms of the **people to who they might turn** following the death of a parent or parents, and in relation to the process of **remembering the parent(s)**. **Arguably, it is/becomes "easier" to process a death when one's relationship with the deceased (parent) was (more or less) good rather than conflicted in life.** (Perhaps related, Zee also is less specific about the "storms" in her life than is Dee.) So in this vein – it's **not as clear to me what Zee's concerns are or may be** (as opposed to Dee's). On **one level Zee seems to be quite engaged in normal or average teenage concerns**, such as having a **boyfriend** and maybe getting married to him one day and wanting to become an architect. It could of course also be that **in her narrations she kept her real concerns more hidden** than did Dee.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from an anthropological perspective

Mieke de Gelder does not identify specific concerns for Zee as she did with Dee. She rather frames Zee's story from a more positive perspective, stating the following aspects as having a positive influence in her life:

- The positive relationship she experienced with her father
- The importance of kinship bonds in her life –
  - her father
  - the friends of her father who took care of her after his death
- Positive relationships gives orphans such as Zee –
  - someone to turn to for support after their parent(s) death
  - people with whom she can talk about her father and help her to remember him
- The good relationship with her late father, eases the bereavement process for her
- She engages herself in normal adolescent interests like having a boyfriend

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De Gelder however cautions that the fact that Zee's concerns were apparently not as clear as was Dee's concerns, does not mean that she does not have any concerns to begin with. She speculates that Zee might not have been as open and forthcoming in her narrations about her real concerns, as was Dee, but that she might have hid them better than did Dee.

I tend to agree to a certain extent with this last statement of de Gelder. Zee wasn't as forthcoming during the first TOL camp as Dee was. She kept to herself more during the first camp than during the second camp, and only revealed during the second TOL camp the true cause of her father's death. I believe she needed to learn to trust us first before bluntly blurting out her story. Also I believe the fact that Dee was open and honest about her mother's death helped her to talk about it.

### 5.6.1.3 Importance of anthropology at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

Hmm… This is not a question that is easily or straightforwardly answered. My discipline is **socio-cultural** (and to a lesser extent medical) **anthropology**; our field methods are quite in-depth, and commonly **require living with the people one is working with** (as far as possible). In brief, possibly an anthropological approach to Dee's (and also Zee's) concerns would situate them in relation to what we can broadly call the **historical developments of colonial capitalism and apartheid in S.A.**, which in myriad complex ways engendered the general, violent "breakdown" of black or African polities, communities and kinship systems. The effects of these processes continue to be everywhere present, visible, and indeed "productive"… also in and through **HIV/AIDS** (see e.g. Didier Fassin's "When Bodies Remember" [2007]—and there are many more publications on this…). So, if/since the concerns Dee and Zee express highlight the matter of fraught and broken kin relations (Zee's less so, though she does mention her **mother's suicide** and also blames her **stepmother for infecting her father** [and thus for being responsible for his death]), in a sense "beyond" analyzing this in terms of HIV/AIDS, an anthropological approach would further tie it to the historical and contemporary events that have shaped S.A.—within which (the experience of) HIV/AIDS is also situated and needs to be understood.

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**Reflection-in-Progress: An anthropological perspective on the girls' stories**

According to de Gelder, anthropology's unique perspective on working with the girls encompasses situating their life stories in the following contexts:

- Historical events in South Africa like colonialism's and apartheid's pervasive influence on society, still to this day
- Contemporary issues like the prevalence of HIV and Aids

Anthropology works from a socio-cultural approach whereby culture and the influence it has on the broader society over time is taken into account. In light of this, de Gelder views issues such as colonialism and apartheid – which within the South African context has a certain distinctiveness to it – as still impacting on the girls' stories, even though they were primarily brought up in post-apartheid South Africa.

### 5.6.1.4 Anthropology in conversation with other disciplines

**I am not sure if it would be**. This might depend on the discipline (i.e. **social historians** and **anthropologists** sometimes share **methodological and theoretical approaches**, but **interdisciplinary collaboration appears to be on the rise** more generally) but also on individual researchers and scholars.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Anthropology at the interdisciplinary table**

De Gelder voices her concern that anthropology might not be understood and appreciated by other disciplines during interdisciplinary collaborations, yet acknowledges that interdisciplinary collaborations seem to be on the rise. This might be strengthened by the fact that anthropologists and social historians sometimes use similar methodological and theoretical approaches.

## 5.6.2 Information science – Jacques du Plessis

### 5.6.2.1 Dee's concerns

Her concerns **relate to family**. The **broken relationships with an aunt**, a **grandmother**, and her **mother** with whom she **never bonded** adequately. Now, living in a world where she finds it **difficult to trust** is a harsh reality.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from the perspective of information science

From the comments received from Jacques du Plessis who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, the following concerns were mentioned regarding / for **Dee**:

- Concerns relating to her family
- Broken relationships with –
    - aunt
    - grandmother
    - mother
- Inadequate bonding with mother figure
- Difficulty to trust

Du Plessis also voices concern over Dee's difficult relationships with significant people in her life, which influences her life as she is currently experiencing it. Not surprisingly, she is therefore experiencing difficulty in trusting and allowing people into her life and personal space.

### 5.6.2.2 Zee's concerns

> She had such a **deep admiration for her dad**. The fact that she was **not given the truth**, did hurt her a lot. I do not feel overly concerned about her, since she seems to exude such inner self confidence. Wonderful to see that. Her concerns are about **support** and **getting Kgosi straightened out** so that he would be worthy of her as a life partner.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from the perspective of information science

From the comments received from Jacques du Plessis who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation, the following concerns were mentioned regarding / for **Zee**:

- Difficulty to trust, as people have lied to her about the true cause of her father's death, whom she greatly admired
- Feelings of being hurt by significant other people
- Concerns about support – emotional, psychological, spiritual and material needs
- Concern about current boyfriend and his lifestyle

For Zee, her loss was great.  Not only did she lose the man she admired the most in life, her dad, but in the process she was also lied too and denied access to the truth.  The truth in this case being the true cause of her father's death, caused by infection with the HIV virus, which she believes was transmitted to her father by her stepmother.

She misses the support given to her by her father, not only the material security that he provided for her, but especially the emotional support and guidance he gave her.  Du Plessis mentions the fact that she wishes her boyfriend would change his lifestyle.  As mentioned earlier, she is no longer in a relationship with this boyfriend, which should indicate that in one aspect of her life she has made progress since the interdisciplinary conversations took place.

### 5.6.2.3 Importance of information science at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

**Dee's story and information science**

From the perspective of information ethics, **she was not given the truth**. It was not shared and dealt with. The **right of affected parties to know the truth is essential to coping, understanding, and surviving the trauma.** She mentions specifically the **lack of info** and the **lies** and how that might never be out there for her.

**Zee's story and information science**

**The right to know**: (info ethics) Taking a look at the **difficulty of being forthright about the truth** is a problem for her initially with DEE, and it is also a problem for her father and family in telling her the truth. She **blames her step mom for introducing the virus to her dad**. She **might be misinformed.** Maybe her dad introduced the virus to her step mom. **Knowing the truth is key to healing, and coping.**

**Reflection-in-Progress: Information science perspective on the girls' stories**

From Jacques du Plessis' comments, information science's unique perspective on working with the girls' stories encompasses:

- All affected parties have the right to the truth
- Information ethics
- Knowing the truth is essential for being able to cope and overcome the trauma of losing her father
- The lack of information and the lies accompanying that plays a significant role in the girls' coping and well-being
- The possibility that Zee might be misinformed with regards to how her father got infected with HIV and Aids

### 5.6.2.4 Information science in conversation with other disciplines

**Dee's story and information science**

Information is often not seen as part of psycho-social care, yet it is a **mesh of support** that upholds the quest **to come to terms and understand oneself**. The things of the heart have to be built on **trust**. It is **truthful access to information** that allows that to happen.

**Zee's story and information science**

Based on the report of Zee, her life is unsettled because of the **lack of truth**. It is not so much the reality of hardship that she has to face that gets her down, but it is a deep disappointment that she was not given the truth. In my perspective, it is the splinter in the wound. You get that known, then we know it is there and we are willing to accept the pain to remove it, and only then can the **meaningful healing** happen.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Information science at the interdisciplinary table**

Information science brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:
- Importance of the truthful access to knowledge
- Forms part of the wider support system that contributes to coming to terms with oneself and your own situation and beginning to understand oneself
- Reminder that meaningful healing can only occur when you have access to much needed information that impacts on your life

As Du Plessis clearly states, information science isn't seen as related to the psycho-social care of people in the same sense that psychology or social care will play a role. Nonetheless, it does emphasise the importance of so-called information ethics, wherein people involved should be granted the right to knowledge on the 'truth'. When people have access to this kind of knowledge, this too can help in the healing process – in this case the effective coping with their parental bereavement.

### 5.6.3 Life coaching – François Wessels

### *5.6.3.1 Dee's concerns (part 1)*

It is difficult to answer these questions as the **context is unknown** and I can only infer what questions have been asked to her. If I were to don the hat of a life coach, I would suspect that Dee's **concerns would be with her future**:

   a. How well does her life narrative equip her for the future which she mentioned in passing (storyteller, poet, author, film maker)?
   b. What hope does she have for a good future?
   c. According to this narrative, she seems to be living very much in the present and past, but no timeline to the future is mentioned.
   d. This also affects narratives of ambition, wishes and dreams.

Another concern may be **connectedness**:

   e. She has been **"abandoned" to her own fate by her relatives**. How does this **affect trust, relational security and social identity**?

Dee's **material security** may also be a grave concern to her.

Another concern may be with knowledge and skills equipping her for a **life beyond the FBO**.

### *Dee's concerns (part 2)*

The concerns still may be **isolation from significant others**. Her **connectedness to the life narratives of others and specifically significant others has been severed**. Her **sense of belonging** and how that **impacts on her identity** story may be affected by this.

Another discourse which has been present in the first part of Dee's story as well, was **emotional wellbeing:**

   a. She quite often mentions **anger**.
   b. Her **social relationships** (with the exception of her relationships with Zee and the church) seem to be **dominated by conflict**. This may be a serious concern to her.
   c. (Ontological) **safety and a future beyond the FBO** are still discourses appearing in her life narrative from time to time.
   d. This is closely connected to her story of **being able to live her dreams**. At least she is mentioning dreams this time round.

**Spirituality as a meaning making discourse** may be a concern here as well.

**General comments regarding Dee's story and her concerns**

Since the previous account of her life story, **another time dimension has been added** to Dee's story. There seems to be **more mention of a future**.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Dee's concerns from the perspective of a life coach**

From the comments received from François Wessels, the following concerns of / for **Dee** were identified:

- Isolation from significant others
- Severed ties with significant others
- Sense of belonging has been affected
- Identity is impacted
- Emotional well-being
  - anger issues
  - social relationships are dominated by conflict
- Safety and future beyond the FBO
- Ability to be able to live her dreams
- Spirituality as a meaning making discourse

Wessels notice the evolvement in Dee's story since the first TOL camp, in that she is now more able to verbalise her hopes and dreams for her own future. Since the first TOL camp (October 2008) was held shortly after her mother's death (August 2008), the first camp was arguably more emotional than the second TOL camp that was held in February 2010. She has probably learned to deal with her bereavement issues more effectively in the meantime and this makes it possible for her to be able to foresee some kind of future for herself.

### *5.6.3.2 Zee's concerns*

I think that Zee's concerns would be:

   a) *Material:* where would she obtain the **means to set up a restaurant** one day?
   b) *Recurring narratives of misfortune:* her **parents both died** and the relationship in which she finds herself, seems to be problematic as well. Her **boyfriend** has a **drinking problem**.
   c) *Spiritual:* her God narrative seems to suggest that **storms are part of God's plans for us**. Her ontological **perspectives of need and suffering may be detrimental** to her agentic life narrative.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Zee's concerns from the perspective of a life coach**

From the comments received from François Wessels, the following concerns of / for **Zee** were identified:

- Having the means to one day fulfil her dream of opening a restaurant
- The loss of both parents
- Drinking problem of her boyfriend
- God's role in her suffering and the storms present in her

Zee not only lost her father due to HIV and Aids infection, but as a small child also lost her mother due to suicide. This double loss sets the scene for misfortune in her life. Arguably, these storms in her life of losing both parents gave rise to the idea that God was behind the suffering she has experienced in life. Wessels is also concerned like some other interdisciplinary team members about her relationship with her boyfriend, who has a drinking problem. Shortly after the second TOL camp in February 2010 however, Zee broke up with said boyfriend and has since moved on.

### 5.6.3.3 Importance of life coaching at interdisciplinary table and unique perspective

> As a life coach, a **prospective perspective** is adopted. The involvement with the client centres around a **meaningful life**, the wish to have a **life of fulfilment** rather than a therapeutic perspective focused on healing. The perspective may therefore be concerned more with **how the present "strengthens" the future** and **not repairing a broken present life**.
>
> This perspective **complements therapeutic perspectives** in taking the conversation beyond the repair of the life narrative to the "launching" narrative, which is concerned with **empowering the client to launch a new life story.**
>
> An important discourse in life coaching is **social intelligence** or **social skills**. This discourse **deals with relationships** and therefore a position of agency in **relationship development and maintenance** is very important.
>
> Another important discourse is **a life that matters**; **existential meaningfulness** is key to our life stories, our identity stories and our connectedness stories.
> a) *Material:* discourses of material needs are positioned within larger life narratives, and these discourses need to be deconstructed to determine the effect on existential meaning and ontological security.
>
> b) *Recurring narratives of misfortune:* the voices supporting an understanding of recurring misfortune should be externalised and the effects mapped as far as life meaning is concerned.
>
> c) *Spiritual:* Spirituality is an integral discourse in the existential meaning narrative. As such, developing a sensitivity to spirituality can form part of a meaning making process in personal life narratives.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Life coaching perspective on the girls' stories**

From François Wessels' comments, life coaching's unique perspective on working with the girls' stories encompasses:

- Working from a prospective perspective, focusing on attaining a meaningful and fulfilling life

- Existential meaningfulness – 'a life that matters'

- It is not about fixing what is wrong presently, but rather about using that which is good in the present to secure and enhance a fulfilling future story

- Empowerment of the client and her life story so that it becomes a meaningful unit

- The importance of social skills is emphasised

- As well as how to develop and maintain relationships

### 5.6.3.4 Life coaching in conversation with other disciplines

As a life coach, a **prospective perspective** is adopted. The involvement with the client centres round a **meaningful life**, the wish to have **a life of fulfilment –** rather than a therapeutic perspective focused on healing. The perspective may therefore be concerned more with **how the present "strengthens" the future** and not repairing a broken present life.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Life coaching at the interdisciplinary table**

Life coaching brings the following to the interdisciplinary table:
- A prospective perspective
- Attempts of attaining a meaningful life of fulfilment
- Focus on how the present supports and strengthens the future

From the above, it is clear that life coaching overlaps significantly with what is termed in clinical psychology as 'positive psychology', whereby the focus falls on empowering the client today for a better tomorrow.

## 5.7 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 was an interesting mix of different disciplines' perspectives on the two stories of Dee and Zee, two of my co-researchers during this research process. Through the use of transversal rationality and the involvement of different disciplines and individuals' perspectives, the concerns of these two girls were successfully highlighted and emphasised and in the process valuable information regarding the stories were put on the table for possible further discussion and investigation.

The value and great possibilities regarding interdisciplinary conversation for similar research projects became evident and even necessary in the future.

In chapter 6 we will focus on possible alternative interpretations of the research process, which constitutes the seventh movement of PFPT and its relation to research.

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# CHAPTER 6
# 2010 AND BEYOND –
# MOVING FORWARD IN THE SPIRIT OF *UBUNTU*

## 6.1    INTRODUCTION

*Magoda agreed that he did look unkempt in his ragged clothes, so he left the village and went to a nearby river. He wondered if the horns would provide him with gifts other than food, so he struck the one horn, and asked: "Give me rich clothes, Oh Horn!"*

*To his great surprise, he saw finely woven cloth and ornaments appear from the horns. He put on these fine garments, and, when he had done so, he looked like a wealthy young man. He decided to return to the village.*

*This time, he received a welcome reception. Children stopped and stared. Young men went out of their way to ask what they can do for him. Maidens working at their homes smiled as he walked past. One young girl was exceptionally beautiful, so Magoda sought out her parents and they gladly offered him room in their home.*

*Time went past and Magoda produced food and wealth for all in the village. He was greatly respected by the people, and, when he asked the father of the household, the man readily agreed to Magoda's marriage to his beautiful daughter. The young couple were able to provide themselves with all the things they needed for a joyful home.  Oxen for the kraal, servants work the fields, and children blessed the home.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:110-111)*

Finally, our friend Magoda found the happiness and love he deserved after all the hardships he had to endure in his short life. Indeed an inspiring story to us all. Wanting to know more about Magoda who journeyed with us through this research process, also knowing that most African names have some deeper meaning related to them, I contacted a lecturer at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in the Department of African Languages, Professor N Saule who specialises in isiXhosa. He kindly assisted me via numerous emails with my enquiries.

Professor Saule remembers the isiXhosa folktale of Magoda and the magic horns as it was told to him by his grandmother some 50 years ago, albeit a slightly different version. When faced with adversaries the boy would sing a song calling out the name of the ox to summon some spirits to help the ox defeat the enemy. In the version he can remember, the boy did not have a name, but the ox did, which was also the title of the folktale. Unfortunately, he was unable to recall the name of the ox. Referring to the name 'Magoda' as it was given to the boy in this particular version of the story, Professor indicated that it comes from the old Nguni word '*igoda*' which refers to a particular rope made of a plant called *igoda* similar to cisal. Rope made from the *igoda* plant is very strong and long-lasting; he concludes that 'Magoda' would certainly be a reference to the strength and popularity of the rope, a symbolic reference so to speak. It could therefore symbolise Magoda's inner-strength and at the end of the folktale, his popularity with the rest of the villagers due to his caring and sharing nature. Pressed to give me an isiXhosa translation of 'The magic horns' title, he suggested '*Inkabi eneempondo ezingumlingo*' meaning 'An ox with magic horns', focusing on the ox as the main character in the folktale.

He (Saule 2010:Personal communication) went on to say that "(t)he performances of the horns were not 'magic' as we know it, but a manifestation of the good spirits which the ox represented. When the boy was hungry he would sing a song of entreaty to the horns, not smack them, and out would come what he needed".

This folktale and the alternative interpretations thereof, form a good backdrop to movement 7, the last movement within PFPT, which focuses on the development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community in research.

This chapter is therefore focused on looking at what we gained in knowledge from our research and the first six movements of PFPT as well as how this knowledge can maybe also benefit communities and individuals other than those who formed part of the TOL camps.

## 6.2    AN ISIZULU RIDDLE EXPLAINED: THE DISCOURSE OF *UBUNTU*

### 6.2.1   What is understood by the concept of *Ubuntu?*

I started my presentation entitled: "*Ubuntu – Becoming through stories: A narrative pastoral care approach to helping Africa's HIV and Aids orphans*"[1] at the 6th conference of the AAPSC (African Association for Pastoral Studies and Counselling) in Stellenbosch, South Africa in September 2009 with the following isiZulu riddle:

> *Zulu riddle:*
>
> *Guess you: A pumpkin plant; it is single, and has many branches; it may be hundreds; it bears many thousand pumpkins on its branches; if you follow the branches, you will find a pumpkin everywhere. You cannot count the pumpkins of one branch; you can never die of famine; you can go plucking and eating; and you will not carry food for your journey through being afraid that you will find no food where you are going.*

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[1] The AAPSC presentation and paper formed an earlier draft for the complete chapter 6 as presented here.

*No; you can eat and leave, knowing that by following the branches you will continually find another pumpkin in front; and so it comes to pass. Its branches spread out over the whole country, but the plant is one, from which springs many branches. And each man pursues his own branch, and all will pluck pumpkins from the branches.*

<div align="right">

*(Courlander 1975:472)*

</div>

Are you as reader able to make sense of this riddle? What do you think it means? I also asked the delegates at the Congress to guess the meaning of the riddle. Two delegates, both native Zulus were to some extend able to explain the meaning thereof. Professor Maake Masango also from the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, even gave an explanation better than the textbook version itself. He referred to the African concept of *Ubuntu* in his explanation and said that it meant that Africans take care of their fellow man in need and that we are all, like the pumpkins, linked to other persons around us.

Courlander (1975:472) explains the riddle as follows:

*The explanation:*

*A village and the paths which pass from it are the branches, which bear fruit; for there is no path without a village; all paths quit homesteads, and go to homesteads. There is no path which does not lead to a homestead. The pumpkins are villages from which the paths go out.*

At a later stage, I also gave this isiZulu riddle to the TOL adolescents and asked them to try and decipher it and consequently to explain to me what they thought *Ubuntu* meant and how it can impact on the lives of young people such as themselves. We'll come back to their descriptions thereof (see section 6.3).

But for now, we need to look more closely at the discourse of *Ubuntu*. Broodryk favours the explanation of Dr Oscar Dhlomo and Mr Walter Sisulu who refer to *Ubuntu* in terms of the so-called cow phenomenon. They say that "… if you have two cows and the milk of the first cow is sufficient for your own consumption, *Ubuntu* expects you to donate the milk of the second cow to your underprivileged brothers and sisters. You do not sell it: you just give it" (Broodryk 2002:vii).

When asked, most ordinary South Africans might have heard about this concept, yet might experience some difficulty in explaining what they understand it to be. Broodryk (2002:9,10) agrees that "(t)o define *Ubuntu* is also not an easy task due to the dilemma of different perceptions. Humanness is a concept, for instance, which is viewed differently by different cultures". Difficult as it might be to construct an understanding of the concept, Broodryk (2002:3) however aims at tackling this bull by its (magic) horns. He tries to describe it as: "…*Ubuntu-Botho*, the indigenous worldview of intense humanness", which is observable "… not only in the cultural traditions of the people of South Africa, but also in the cultures of the people all over Africa". (Broodryk 2002:3).

Theimann and April (2007:30) link the movement for an African Renaissance and a call for a return to African values and indigenous knowledge systems to *Ubuntu*. They (Theimann & April 2007:30) state that literally translated, *Ubuntu* means 'I am who I am through others' which is in contrast to the Western tenet *cogito ergo sum* (Descartes' idea of "I think, therefore I am") and go on to say that the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is based on a certain sense of community" (Theimann and April 2007:30). Sarason (1974) coined the concept of 'psychological sense of community' which Theimann and April (2007:30) refer to (Orford 1992:9,257). Schutte (2001:27) agrees with this 'sense of community' as he states that "(e)ach individual member of the community sees the community as *themselves*, as the one with being in character and identity. Each individual sees every other individual member as *another self.*

Both Clarke and Schutte are in agreement that *Ubuntu* reflects the African idea that people only exist in relation to other people – to community members. Clarke (2007:291) says that "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" mean(s) 'a person depends on persons to be a person'" and Schutte (2001:23) adds "(t)his is why, in all African languages, there is the local variant of the Zulu saying *umuntu nguamuntu ngabantu* – a person is a person through persons. As African philosophers are fond of saying, 'I am because we are'". Broodryk (2002:13,14) follows in their footsteps when he defines *Ubuntu* "… as a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family".

Meylahn (2010:5) goes further when he aims at connecting the thoughts of Ramose (1999) on *Ubuntu* with that of Heidegger (1971) by saying:

> It is clear from the above that my being (my *Dasein*) can only be, is only possible, because all these other things are woven together into the tapestry of my world, the tapestry of the dimension of my *Dasein*, namely the realm of my *Dasein*, the *context*, and thus *Dasein* is always a *mit-sein* – a being with others.

As can be seen from the discussion above, my own being as a person (my *Dasein*) is therefore interlinked with the *Dasein* of the other people around me – those people who together with me form a community. This being with others (*mit-sein)*, if experienced positively, motivates a certain 'sense of community', that wills the desire to help others into being. Whereby we are willing to share our excess 'milk' with those in need, because we want to, and not because we feel we are compelled or pressured into doing it, knowing that should we one day need help ourselves the principle of *Ubuntu* ensures that we will then also receive the help needed from others.

### 6.2.2 Key values of *Ubuntu*

Broodryk (2002:x) is very optimistic about the potential of *Ubuntu* to influence not only South African, Africa as a continent, but also global society as such. He says that because "… *Ubuntu* encompasses what and how you think, talk, speak, act, value and arrive at the destinies of life. *Ubuntu* is about the African art of being a true you …", whereby if everyone were to become their true (positive!) selves, the world would be a couple of steps closer to becoming "… a more human, caring and sharing open society" (Broodryk 2002:x).

Key values of *Ubuntu* are summarised as follows by Theimann and April (2007:30):
- Sharing
- Deference to rank
- Sanctity of commitment
- Regard for compromise and consensus
- The concept of openness

Van der Colff (2007:46) sees the following values as tenets of value sharing within *Ubuntu*:
- Interconnectedness
- Continuous integrated development
- Respect and dignity
- Collectivism
- Solidarity

Clarke (2007:291) also reflects on the values of *Ubuntu*, namely:
- Regaining dignity
- Developing respect
- Solidarity

- Sharing
- Compassion
- Moving beyond survival

Developing respect and compassion for others, sharing what you have with them and thereby helping them to regain their dignity and for both parties involved to move beyond mere survival, is according to Broodryk (2002:42) "… what humanism is all about: you are enlarged and enriched when you go out of yourself". Schutte (2001:30) agrees and says "… the morality of *Ubuntu* is intrinsically related to your happiness and fulfilment".

Holdstock (2000:202) links the concept of *Ubuntu* to the following aspects of Rogers' person-centred approach in order to establish sound human relationships:
- Empathy
- Positive regard
- Congruence

For Holdstock (2000:202) these three elements embody "… the way the concept of *ubuntu* comes to live in Africa".

Broodryk (2002:19) ultimately gives the most comprehensive description of which values can be seen as associated with *Ubuntu*:

| Core values: | Associated values: |
| --- | --- |
| Humanness | Warmth, tolerance, understanding, peace, humanity |
| Caring | Empathy, sympathy, helpfulness, charitable, friendliness |
| Sharing | Giving (unconditionally), redistribution, open handedness |
| Respect | Commitment, dignity, obedience, order, normative |
| Compassion | Love, cohesion, informality, forgiving, spontaneity |

In light of the above, Schutte (2001:30) takes the idea of becoming the true you as postulated by Broodryk (2002:x) and relates it to the ethical vision of *Ubuntu* as he sees it. He says that "... the moral life is seen as a process of personal growth. And just as participation in community with others is the essential means to personal growth, so participation in community with others is the motive and fulfilment of the process" (Schutte 2001:30).

So, in order for one to experience personal growth as an individual and to optimise your own well-being, one first needs to acknowledge that one's own holistic well-being is interdependent on the well-being of other members of one's community. And then to ensure everybody's collective as well as individual well-being, morality and value sharing of such values as discussed above, need to be in place and actively engaged in.

### 6.2.3 *Ubuntu* in a contemporary South Africa

He who thinks himself too small to make a difference,
should lock himself into a room with a mosquito
- African Proverb -

Broodryk (2002:ix,x) states that in contemporary South Africa, *Ubuntu* is:
- the value base of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- part of the vision and mission of the transformation of the new public service
- a principle upon which all future welfare policies will be based
- the business philosophy of various companies in the private sector
- taught in all schools in the Gauteng province under the subject Guidancepart (sic) of the curricula of various courses at many tertiary institutions

- a basis upon which the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation was held
- the basis of several national youth development programmes and strategies
- regarded as the appropriate African approach regarding life skills
- the philosophical framework of the national Moral Regeneration Movement of the Republic of South Africa

The *White Paper on Welfare*, South African Government Gazette 2 February 1996, No. 16943, page 18, paragraph 18 describes the spirit of *Ubuntu* as follows:

> The principle of appearing for each other's well-being will be promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.

On paper – white or whatever colour it might be – the above statements might seem good and well intentioned: A call to responsibility for us all as South Africans, to do what we can to ensure an involved and caring society. For a short while in 2010, this spirit of *Ubuntu* rose up and had the citizens of South Africa united as one big family during the Soccer World Cup that was hosted here. Few people thought it possible, yet a feeling of elation was tangible in the air, even after the local soccer team Bafana Bafana was eliminated. Such a feeling of togetherness was possibly last felt during the 1995 Rugby World Cup – which maybe does go to show that sport has the ability to unite people – of all languages, cultures, races and religious orientations.

However, for most South Africans *Ubuntu* on a day-to-day basis seems to be just that – intentions, words on paper, and nothing more. Try telling a starving inner city HIV and Aids orphan left to his / her own devices, that the ignorant neighbours care about him / her, even though he / she is barely able to survive; or to a woman being raped whose screams are heard by neighbours, but ignored because they fear the consequences of getting involved. Especially in urban areas it seems this disinterest and un-involvement is becoming more commonplace than before. Even young children are becoming aware of the lack of respect for human life and the loss of the spirit of *Ubuntu*. Broodryk (2002:1153) quotes a beautiful poem by two of his class 7 pupils at the Ubuntu Centre outside Pretoria:

UBUNTU IS CRYING FOR HELP

I am a word which has been

on earth for many

years

I need you,

mankind,

to help me,

I cry day and night

But I don't find my answer

The only way you can help me

Is by carrying me

In your hearts, your souls.

Please let me stick to you forever

And forever shall

I remain

In your hearts.

A poem like this inspires one not to try reinventing *Ubuntu*, as it still exists and clings to life in the few individuals who still show compassion and caring towards their fellow man. For me the facilitators at NGOs like PEN, who really take to heart what they are doing, are such diamonds. This poem seeks to find this caring attitude in all of us, to create a context wherein *Ubuntu* can thrive. The TOL camps, in my opinion, created such a context for the adolescents to care – not only about each other, but also about Juanita and myself.

## 6.3 THE CHILDREN OF AFRICA ANSWERING TO THE ECHOES OF LIFE

### 6.3.1 African storytelling and *Ubuntu*

In chapter 3, some of the focus fell on African storytelling as a tradition of interpretation (3.5). In this section we also acknowledge that the African conception of life includes both the physical and the spiritual and that it applies to everything (Schutte 2001:22), including the art of storytelling. *Ubuntu* and its life lessons were transferred in folktales from generations to generations (Broodryk 2002:2) like *'The magic horns'* as well as in riddles like the isiZulu riddle above. In these folktales there are more often than not a specific lesson in life to be learned (Broodryk 2002:81).

The lesson of adhering to the values of *Ubuntu* itself is beautifully illustrated in the following folktale as related by Broodryk (2002:15,16)

*THE ECHO OF LIFE*

*A sage (African wise man) invited his youngest son to climb with him the highest peak of a mountain being. Apart from physical healthy exercise, his intention was to teach his son of arriving at a very basic lesson of life. This lesson was about the meaning of life (sense of life).*

Once they reached the top of the mountain, the son, overwhelmed by the beauty of the scenery he saw and the golden silence he experienced, exclaimed: "Baba (Dad), this view is fantastic!!!!!"

Immediately his voice and the same words he used were returned in the same volume, and they even sounded louder, by the mountain itself (so the son thought): "Baba, this view is fantastic!!!!!!!"  The son was amazed and shouted excitedly these words again and again, and the words were returned to him twice as loud every time again and again.

Eventually he asked his wise father to explain to him what was happening.  His father told him that it was an echo.

Whatever you scream, shout or say loudly, the mountain would echo back in its voice precisely what you said, only twice as loud.

"But, he said, this is also a lesson of life.  Whatever you do to fellow human beings and life, your deeds will one day come back to you in duplicate twice as hard just like this echo.

Almost identical with this experience, but know it will come back to you in some way.  Be therefore very careful about how you treat human beings, life and the ones you love, because in reaction they will always treat you in the very same way.

Always be nice, friendly, caring, peaceful, respectful and compassionate, and in return you can be ensured of a harmonious and joyous walk throughout the wonderful mountains and valleys of life".

Mountains are exciting because they exist as obstacles that must be conquered.  The world consists of valleys as well, and if one cannot conquer a mountain one should leave it because one must leave what you cannot conquer.  Rather enjoy the valleys then.  Life is too short and precious for a human being to waste time to conquer the unconquerable.

### 6.3.2 TOL adolescents' understanding of *Ubuntu*

As mentioned earlier, I used the isiZulu riddle above (pp293, 294) to elicit responses from my co-researchers during our last meeting. This formed part of the feedback looping process of our research as by then I have already identified *Ubuntu* as a possible discourse as it manifested itself clearly during our TOL camps.

Below are some of the adolescents' responses. (Unfortunately not everybody responded to this exercise due to time constraints during our last session):

> Ubuntu – it is African humanity that shows and tells us that you are a human being or the person you are because of someone else, so you should also do something to help others and show the true meaning of Ubuntu.
>
> With kids and children – When I think of Ubuntu, I think of love, peace, joy and happiness, so Ubuntu for children means that every elderly (person and) parents should treat every kid or teen as the own - **Annie**

For Annie, *Ubuntu* seems to refer not only to the fact that you are only someone because of someone else, but also that one needs to show love and caring towards other people by helping them, and for adults to commiserate themselves over the plight of children.

> I think Ubuntu means an African humanity - **Dimakatso**
>
> We can help children by being with them every difficulty that they are facing. We can be with them when they need us - **Dimakatso**

Dimakatso also states that children should be assisted if they are in need of help. She however distances herself from being a child herself needing help, by referring to the fact that 'we can help'. She raises the issue that not only material help is important to assist children in need, but something as seemingly simple as physical presence when children need help, also seems to be important to her when she says that: '(w)e can be with them (children) when they need us'.

> Well, the story kind of illustrates Ubuntu as very good thing indeed. You get to develop new good reliable skills or methods that could actually help the entire nation in a way. You get to work is hand in hand with each other, and in that way you define the true meaning of Ubuntu - **Victor**

Victor acknowledges the positive aspect of *Ubuntu* and says that by adhering to the principles of *Ubuntu*, one can develop skills and methods that can be applied to not only help children, but also the nation at large. Working together, this can be achieved and the true meaning of *Ubuntu* can be experienced by all.

> What Ubuntu means is that people working hand in hand to help people who are in need of help and I think we can use this to help the little ones who are in need of help in (with) life's challenges - **Wiseman**

Wiseman agrees with Victor that working together can alleviate the suffering of people in need, especially little children as he also – like Dimakatso – refers to him being on the helping side, and not on the receiving side of *Ubuntu*. This might be because Dimakatso and Wiseman see children in need – like so many other people for that matter – as the very young and vulnerable ones in society and in the process, the needs of older children, like adolescents, are overlooked.

## 6.4　MOVING BEYOND BEING THE 'FORGOTTEN ONES' TOWARDS BEING FORTUNATE: THE ETHICS OF *UBUNTU* APPLIED

*When the roots of a tree begin to decay, it spreads death to the branches*

*- African Proverb -*

Imagine if you will – a sickly, crippled old woman with festering sores all over her body, begging and dependant on others for survival, heading towards a slow and painful death. This is how Mama Africa is sometimes portrayed as – as a dark continent riddled with problems, especially by the West. Such a perspective is compounded by the ongoing, almost chronic challenges she faces – war, famine, natural disasters and the ever encroaching HIV and Aids pandemic.

Quite understandably, Mama Africa's children are the hardest hit by the HIV and Aids pandemic.  It is estimated that there will be around two million orphans in South Africa by the year 2010 (Landman 2002:270).  This is largely due to the fact that "(a) generation of young adults is dying before its time, ..". (Overberg 1994:3), leaving behind a "… generation of children deprived of their childhood" (Barrett & Whiteside 2002:199).

Dane (1994:20) specifically refers to these generations of children when saying that "(l)iving in the aftermath of death from Aids is often more painful for children and adolescents than the death itself". Klein (1998:15) says that "(e)ven though people tend to think in terms of death as a loss, death is not the *only* loss we can experience".  Grief also occurs for losses such as the possible loss of home, social networks, routines, surroundings and possessions (Dane 1994:13).  Children are also – especially in traditional African cultures – mostly kept away from an ill or dying person, and excluded from the rituals surrounding the burial of the deceased, even if the deceased are their own parents (Maseko 2005).  Kübler-Ross (1970:157) adds to this by stating that when death pays a visit to families, the children are "… the forgotten ones".

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However, because Broodryk (2002:88) states that "(d)eath is a very serious and extremely traumatic experience in the *Ubuntu* society", this research challenges this very discourse of marginalising especially HIV and Aids orphans during these difficult and trying times of losing loved ones.

Van Dyk (2001:61) – rightly so – states that "Africa is not doing well in her battle against AIDS". Overberg (1994:1) adds to this by saying: "Aids is *our* disease, a disease of the human family". Africa south of the Sahara is also home to the youngest population in the world (Watson 2001:12) and herein lies the future of Mama Africa – her children.

There is another side to Mama Africa known to her people than just that of an old sickly woman unable to fend for herself. It is the picture of a vibrant, energetic young woman singing and dancing to the rhythm of the African drums, renowned for her oral traditions and storytelling. Stories uniquely African in nature told by the people of Africa for the people of Africa. She mothers and cares for her people, especially her greatest investment – her children, in a way only she can.

This is where the concept of *Ubuntu* comes in. In isiNguni (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2005:215) it is stated as *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Zulu), translating to something to the effect of – you are a person through people, you are what you are because of people. If you are a human (*Ubuntu*) then people will always respect and cherish you.

Bonn (2007:864) also identifies elements of *Ubuntu* as the following: compassion, tolerance, care, charity, understanding, empathy, equality, hospitality, honesty, trust, conformity, solidarity, mutual responsibility, taking care of everyone in one's community, respect, dignity and a concern for others' welfare.

By African standards, and in light of the discussions above, *Ubuntu* should be the safety net for children left orphaned and vulnerable by HIV and Aids. Yet, it is becoming more and more difficult for extended families to look after these children. Fortunately for these children, this is where NGOs (Non-Govermental Organisations) and Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) like PEN stepped up to meet the challenge.

For the boys, who all at one stage lived together in the same House of Safety under the guardianship of PEN, a 'certain sense of community', even a brotherhood of sorts was established between them. Currently, only the twins are still staying in this House of Safety, but their brotherhood with the rest of the boys was still very evident during the second TOL camp. Bonded by blood the twins, Michael and Shaun, form a subsystem within this brotherhood. While the bond between Victor and Wiseman is also very evident, even though they are not related by blood, they do indeed see each other as 'brothers' in life. As the oldest, Moses probably took responsibility to head up this brotherhood while he was also resident in the specific House of Safety. Even now, after most of them have moved out and on in life, the rest of the boys still look up to Moses as the leader of the little unique community. They truly care about each other and the rest of the younger children in the House of Safety, which for so long were not only their safe haven, but also home to all of them.

The two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans, Dee and Zee, also share this 'sense of community' with each other and to a certain extent with the rest of the girls. They are both also resident in the other House of Safety under the guardianship of the PEN and this probably helped to establish their sense of sisterhood. It became very evident during especially the graduation ceremony of the second TOL camp, that the adolescents also regarded these camps, the others, as well Juanita and I, as part of a new unique community that personified the true spirit of *Ubuntu* in everybody's involved lives.

## 6.5 A PASTORAL CARE APPROACH UNIQUE TO THE AFRICAN CONTEXT: UTILISING *UBUNTU* AND AFRICAN STORYTELLING

### 6.5.1 *Ubuntu* as personified in '*The magic horns*'

From the TOL camps and the implementation of the *TOL* metaphor during these camps, it became evident that our co-researchers were very open and receptive to not only this kind of metaphor, but also, and maybe more importantly so, to African storytelling as an alternative interpretation to their own life stories. Interacting with this receptiveness, I took the story of Magoda and the magic horns, and as part of the feedback looping process of the research, formulated some conversational as well as more specific questions for the adolescents to address. These questions and **Dee's** answers follow below to illustrate the possibilities for narrative pastoral counselling from such an approach.

*THE MAGIC HORNS.* **A Xhosa tale.**
**Some conversation questions pertaining to the story –** For group discussion:
- Why do you think the women of the village fed Magoda?
- Do you feel they exploited Magoda by expecting him to run errands in return for food?
- Was it the right thing for Magoda to run away from his village?
- Why was he so happy away from his village and the people there?
- Do you think Magoda's father knew about the food and the gifts that could come from the ox's horns?
- Why do you think the ox's horns would only work for Magoda after the ox was killed?
- Why do you think Magoda did not want his ox to fight the second time?
- Why did Magoda feel compelled to help the village where he stayed after his ox was killed?
- Why did Magoda's host take the horns after he saw what Magoda did with it and replaced it with horns from another ox?
- What emotions did Magoda experience when he realised the horns have been switched?
- How did it make Magoda feel when the headman in the next village looked down on him because of his ragged clothes and poverty stricken appearance?

• How did the magic horns help him to change his situation and feelings about himself?

• When Magoda settled down in the village, married and became a man of distinction and great wealth, why did he use the magic horns to help the other people in the village as well?

• Do you think his father would be proud of him for using the magic horns not only to help himself and his family but also the rest of the villagers?

We are not alone in this world.  We are dependant on other people for many things in our lives on a daily basis – like food, shelter, education but most importantly love and care.  Sometimes we are lucky enough to get all this from the people in our lives, but some people are not that fortunate.  Just as we are dependant on other people to provide in our material and emotional needs, so too are other people dependant on us.

1.      Have you ever felt like Magoda as he was feeling when we first meet him?  Why is that? Explain.

Yes, because I felt trapped when I was living with my aunt that I have no other way but to take the abuse.  Or else I'll be left without a school, food, shelter and family.

2.      Do you sometimes feel exploited and misused by the people who are taking care of you? Give reasons for your answer.

Most of the time no, because they do everything possible to ensure my well-being. And yes when I feel a bit depressed; I think that when I succeed they will expect me to pay them back.

3.      Have you ever felt like running away from home and your problems or hurting yourself in any way?  Give reasons for your answer.

Yes, all of the above.  I wanted to hurt myself when my mom passed away to decrease the pain.  And I did kind of run away from my family they increased my emotional pain.

4.      Do you sometimes feel you would be happier away from your life, as you now know it? What plans do you have to provide a better life for yourself?

Yes. I don't know since I have no resources that I can trust a 100% God just knows the plans and He will let me know as time goes on.

5.       What kind of 'magic horns' (emotional gift or knowledge about yourself – talents / skills) did someone you love give you that helps you on your journey through life at this stage?

Nothing that I can show, but I can say when everything was still normal my mom taught me discipline.

6.       Do you think that person knew this would help you in life when life becomes difficult?

I really don't know and can't say.

7.       Why is this gift and how you can use it unique to your story?

Well the gift was wisdom and obedience. And I guess that will help me make a path.

8.       Do you think you have a responsibility to use this gift – your 'magic horns' to help other people as well as Magoda did? Give reasons for your answer.

Yes, because it was only through interaction that I grew wiser so I must interact with others to bless them too.

9a.      If you answered 'yes' to question 8 – who are the people you think you should help with this gift – these 'magic horns' of yours?

Firstly myself to go to church and communicate with my Helper God.

Then my pastors, friends.

9b.      Why would you help those people and how will you help them?

By taking (them) to church with me.

10.      Would the person who gave you this gift want you to use it to help other people as well? Give reasons for your answer.

Well the person didn't think (I think) would know that they were giving me a gift.

### 6.5.2 An alternative African solution to counselling

It has been mentioned that *Ubuntu* can play a role in helping bereft adolescents cope with their psycho-spiritual bereavement needs, and how *Ubuntu*, if applied positively and without force, can help in facilitating a 'sense of community' in a research group setting and possibly also in a therapeutic group setting. Broodryk (2002:96) suggests with consideration of *Ubuntu*, an alternative African solution to counselling. Although, a thorough discussion of his philosophical African approach to counselling falls outside the scope of the current research, it is interesting to note how this approach compares with a narrative pastoral care approach.

| PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH | NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH |
|---|---|
| "*Ubuntu* counselling is **philosophical".** (2002:96) | Freedman and Combs (1996:xiii): "**problems are problems** ... problems never define the person's entire being". |
| "It is not in competition with other disciplines in counselling since its focus is on **helping seekers of clarification to understand themselves** and issues of life **better**. This clarification is reached after the meaning of their own situations has been analysed by themselves, and direction to the discovery of a life vision have been created. The aim of philosophical counselling is not the healing of a patient, but the self-explanation, clarification and self-invention of a visitor". (2002:96) | According to Morgan (2000:2) the narrative approach also seeks to **empower** the people coming for therapy in a sense that it allows the counselee to be part of the process of the therapeutic sessions. |

| PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH (continue) | NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH (continue) |
|---|---|
| "In philosophical counselling the individual is regarded as a **visitor** or customer and not a patient". (2002:96) | Müller et al (2002:3) state that in narrative research the focus falls on the stories that our co-researchers tell us about the action. Note that Müller uses the concept **'co-researcher'** when referring to **research participants**. |
| "It is therefore not only one isolated action or symptom expressed by the human being which qualifies for attention, but the **whole being in a holistic way**". (2002:96) | Freedman and Combs (1996:9) describe the narrative approach as: "… an approach which permits people seeking help to **use their thinking, knowledge, understanding, power and emotions in a way that best fits their scheme of life"**. |
| "… these counsellors appear to be masters in the **art of listening** attentively and tirelessly to pick up the essence of each word spoken, to observe every look, every gesture, every silence, in order to grasp their respective significance". (2002:116) | Freedman and Combs (1996:44) emphasise the importance of **deconstructive listening**: "… in the face of permanent discourses and dominant knowledge, **simply listening** to the story someone tells us, constitutes a revolutionary act". |
| "This leads to counter arguments and elaboration which reminds one of the Socratic arguments which were also based on **attentive listening** and **intense questioning** in order to find ethical and just solutions". (2002:116) | Freedman and Combs (1996) <br> <u>Tools of narrative therapy:</u> <br> * **Active-responsive listening** <br> * **Deconstructive listening** <br> * **Deconstructive questioning** <br> * Not-knowing position <br> * Externalisation |

| PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH (continue) | NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH (continue) |
|---|---|
| "Instead of categorising people into various psychological illnesses, which is anti-*Ubuntu* and inhuman, the philosophical counsellor should be empowered to **direct the visitor to discover his or her own solutions to his or her own problems …**" (2002:116, 117) | Narrative approach also seeks to empower the people coming for therapy in a sense that it **allows the counselee to be part of the process of the therapeutic sessions** (Morgan 2000:2). |
| "By creating a relaxed cosy and harmonious atmosphere of **trust** the (counsellor) **inspires his visitors to talk and review problems themselves** and finding solutions themselves". (2002:117) | Freedman and Combs (1996:21): "**be faithful to the story** as told by the research participants **giving voice to their lived experience".** |

From the tabled comparison above, it would certainly seem like Broodryk's (2002) suggested philosophical African approach to research might warrant some more in-dept investigation by narrative researchers and therapists who find themselves working in an African context.

This comparison supports in my view, my opinion as the researcher that the narrative approach to therapy and research can step up to a constructive dialogue with the African culture – which still to this day and to some extend, even in urban areas and communities, play an important role.

That which is good and constructive in the African culture – like the art of storytelling – needs to be cultivated, harvested and utilised in counselling. Africa needs to step up in addressing the needs of its people – especially the youth.

## 6.6    MORE STORIES TO EXPLORE: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As we are nearing the end of our research journey together, it is an apt time to look at suggestions for further research in this field of interest.  Avenues of research that fell beyond the scope and limitations of the present research, that would not only make for interesting research, but that could maybe also make a significant contribution within the research field; not only within the broad research field of HIV and Aids in South Africa, but also within the field of practical theology, as well as within the field of bereavement counselling.

However, before we look at some suggestions for further research, I would like to reflect on how I think I would have done this research differently, had I to do it over again.

### 6.6.1   Alternative roads to the research journey

Firstly, I think I would have changed my title to read – 'other bereft adolescents' instead of 'other vulnerable adolescents' referring to 'other vulnerable children'. Yet, on second thought I might not have changed it – as the description 'OVC' forms part and parcel of the worldwide HIV and Aids discourse, and would therefore make this research more accessible to researchers and students engaged in this kind of research.

Regarding the TOL camps and how it was presented – I think I would still have done the TOL camps with all the adolescents, the acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans (Dee and Zee) as well as the other bereft and vulnerable adolescents, as I believe this was a life enriching experience for all involved.  But maybe I just should have focussed the scope of the thesis only on the two acknowledged Aids orphans and how they coped psycho-spiritually with their parental bereavement.

If however, we did not have a follow-up camp as was initially planned, I would only had Dee's story to work with as Zee's orphan status only came out during the second TOL camp. And going onto the first TOL camp, we were only briefed by the PEN facilitators on Dee's orphan status, as they themselves were unsure if Zee's father had indeed died from HIV and Aids.

Furthermore, had I decided early on to only focus the scope of my research on the acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans in the group, I might have missed out on the relationship interplay between the adolescents themselves. The so-called 'brotherhood' and or 'sisterhood' of *Ubuntu* that became evident, evolved and that was strengthened during these camps between not only certain individuals, but also the group itself might have been overlooked. This 'sense of community' in the true spirit of *Ubuntu* feels like the sparkling moment, the a-ha moment of this whole research process.

Although not directly related to the stated psycho-spiritual needs of these adolescents, which formed the basis of this research, the social aspect of the human life does indeed form part of psychological issues people are confronted with – whether or not they feel part of a group or community socially or not. Do they experience a feeling of belonging, a sense of community? Or as Zee stated it in her TOL workbooks with specific reference to her and Dee's friendship –

> Also my friend Dee, she is one special friend that means she is different from all my friends, she (is) my sister in a way - **Zee**

> (The impact of the first camp on my life -) It made me open up a little bit, expressing my feelings and thoughts to my friend Dee. When something bothered me I could tell Dee about (it) unlike before I keep quiet about everything – **Zee**

Most of the adolescents also emphasised the role of spirituality – their faith, PEN, the church and the broader faith community – in their lives, as well as how this contributed to their feelings of belonging somewhere.

So by interacting in the group setting of the TOL camps, the adolescents not only acknowledged their psychological (social) needs, but also their spiritual needs by talking and interacting with each other about God. And so, something that seemingly looked like something new in the research process, the sense of community or feeling of *Ubuntu* if you will, actually forms an integral part of the research if you look at it in a holistic way.

### 6.6.2  Opening up more possibilities

Suggestions for further research should in my opinion not be limited to only research ideas which to undertake, but also suggestions of how to approach research and the research process in a different light as well.

- Maybe we should move out of our research comfort of sitting at our desks and thinking out research problems – move out into the field, make it a more hands-on approach. Involve co-researchers from the start. Tell them you want to research them and then they can help you formulate, define and refine the specific research questions.
- Practical theology should move away from the stigma of being the stepchild to theology and other disciplines within theology should also be consulted and integrated in any research concerning practical theology. Other disciplines within theology could also form part of the interdisciplinary conversation that forms an integral part of the PFPT approach to research. By looking firstly on a micro-level closer to home – theology – before moving on to a macro-level – social sciences and even the economic and business sciences as well as medical sciences.

- Practical theology maybe needs to move out further in the field – show the people on ground level, those that you want to involve in your research by becoming co-researchers, that you are serious about their welfare and well-being.

- Involve other disciplines from the start. Make an appointment with other lecturers or specialists in related fields and ask their input on your discipline related research question, before you formally formulate it.

During the interdisciplinary conversations Jerry Streets (2010:Personal communication) made the following suggestion for follow-up research in this regard: "To look at a theological and psychological and pastoral reflection on depression and resilience in female adolescents and young adulthood might be helpful to consider as you move forward with the project".

It certainly would be interesting and indeed needful to look at the following research areas in the field of HIV and Aids research:

- Depression under orphaned children – especially more verbally expressive adolescents especially from an integrated theologically reflective and psychological perspective

- Sources of resilience in orphaned adolescents who seem to function and cope successfully after the loss of a parent

- To look specifically at the above research suggestions from a gender perspective

- To look specifically at the above research suggestions from a developmental phase perspective

- Extend this research into young adulthood – and how this loss and bereavement and their coping with it affects them as young adults moving into the world. In a time when they are choosing and settling into a career and possibly choosing a life partner, as well.

## 6.7   CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 6

*Everyone thinks of changing the world,*
*But no one thinks of changing himself*
- Leo Tolstoy -

Reflecting on the whole research process, I thought again about my reasons for using the art of African storytelling as a metaphor for this research.  It all started – I think – during the Masters course, when I was introduced to the narrative approach to therapy and research.  My own love for stories and storytelling and special interest in the stories of Africa ignited this interest.  Through doing my literature studies – both for my Masters and for PhD – I was confronted time and time again by how Western methods to therapy and education in especially the field of HIV and Aids failed time and time again in Africa – even in more urbanised areas.  As was emphasised earlier in chapter 3 (section 3.5) by Courlander (1975:3) narratives have a certain power to them that exceeds all boundaries and speaks to most – if not all – of us.  Living in South Africa – being born and raised here, I also see myself as an African – albeit a white African with Afrikaner roots – but still a true African, who cares about the well-being of Africa and her children.

What I intended to do in this research, was not only to tell and reflect on certain African stories as it pertains to research and therapy, but also to open the door for Africans to tell their life stories.  Those Africans being the TOL adolescents and myself.  In light of this, I would like to end this chapter with the words from a well-known Afrikaans song as it also tells the story of the children of Africa [Kinders van Afrika], before bringing the research process to a close in chapter 7 with my final reflection on the process.

**Die kinders van Afrika**

(Woorde en Musiek: Lochner de Kock)

Die kinders van Afrika sit langs die vuur
Krap in die louwarm as
Verhale en mites vervlieg in die nag
Die toekoms is 'n storie uit pas

Die jare het hul in die stampblok gemaal
Met wette geskaaf en geskaal
Hul gisters het hul in die nanag verlaat
Verblind, afgesonder, gehaat

Maar die kinders van Afrika stook nou die vuur
Blaas op die rooiwarm as
Verhale en mites herrys uit die nag
Legendes word weer aangepas

En die jare val weg soos 'n ou droë blaar
Vergete, ontwapen, ontaar
Die dae herrys as die nanag breek
Soos 'n phoenix wat alles wil weet

En die kinders van Afrika loop deur die land
Met fakkels wat die duister laat vlug
Skadu's verhelder, verdwyn in die brand
En die duister maak plek vir die lig

En die nuwe dag breek met 'n vrugwater vloed
Helder en warm, vol bloed
Met geboorte van kennis word die duister verdryf
En met die stem van 'n kind wat uitroep

Kom kinders van Afrika, kom saam met ons
Kom laat ons die ligdag begroet
Vergeet van die duister se ketting en slot
Kom laat ons mekaar nou ontmoet
*n'Kosi Sikelel' iAfrika*

**The children of Africa**

(Music and Lyrics: Lochner de Kock)

The children of Africa sit beside the fire
Scratching in the lukewarm ash
Stories and myths take flight in the night
The future is a story not right

The years have grinded them in the pounding block
Chafed and scaled by laws
Their yesterdays have left them in the latter part of the
night Blinded, isolated, hated

But the children of Africa are now stoking the flames
Blowing on the red hot ash
Stories and myths resurrected out of the night
Legends adapted again

The years fall away like an old dry leaf
Forgotten, disarmed, unveined
The days break as night fall ends
Like a phoenix that wants to know it all

And the children of Africa walk through the country
With flares to ward off the darkness
Shadows brighten, vanish in the conflagration
And darkness makes room for the light

A new day dawns with the flood of new life
Bright and warm, full of blood
With the birth of knowledge darkness is driven out
And with the voice of a child that cries out

Come children of Africa, come with us
Let us salute the dawn
Forget about the locks and chains of darkness
Come let us now meet each other
*n'Kosi Sikelel' iAfrika*

**CHAPTER 7**

**EPILOGUE TO AN AFRICAN RESEARCH STORY –
ON BEING QUESTIONED BY OTHERS AND ONESELF**

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

*And so Magoda found true happiness, and he and his wife lived a long and contented life to a ripe old age - thanks to the magic horns of the ox his father had given him.*

*(Greaves 2004:111)*

The story of Magoda and the magic horns could have very well ended with the last paragraph of the story as related in Chapter 6, telling us – the readers – of the successful life Magoda was able to create for himself and his new family with the help of the magic horns. As a family, they had a good life and in the true spirit of *Ubuntu,* he helped the rest of the village to prosper as well, earning the respect and admiration of the other villagers. A proper ending to a beautiful folktale of a poor orphan boy growing into real manhood by relating to not only feelings of loss, sadness and loneliness, but also friendship and discovering one's own unique talents and gifts to be used to the benefit of all, I would say.

However, in almost a postscript to the story, the very last paragraph is added – which might even evoke further questions from the reader about the story, such as What constitutes 'true happiness' to each specific reader?

Similarly, after all is said and done in a research project of this magnitude, many questions still remains unanswered. The purpose of this last chapter is my attempt to address some – although definitely not all – of the questions that might be pertinent in the reader's mind after studying this research report, as well as those of other people and myself – people involved and affected by this research.

**7.2    ADDRESSING THE FEARS AND HOPES OF MY CO-RESEARCHERS**

For this research to be true to the nature of social-constructionism it was important to go back to the co-researchers and ask their input as to the research process. After the second TOL camp, I had one last meeting with most of the adolescents who attended the TOL camps.  Seven of the ten adolescents were able to meet with me at the Dutch Reformed Church Bronberg in Sunnyside, Pretoria on Friday 12 March 2010 in the afternoon for a couple of hours.  Only Moses, Palesa and Zee were unable to make it due to study and work related responsibilities.

During this last session I specifically asked those present about the possible fears they might have had and maybe even still have about our research together and the writing up thereof, as well as any hopes they might have for the research.  At a later stage, I also contacted Moses, Palesa and Zee by telephone and they kindly responded to my request via sms.

What follows below, is my attempt to address these fears and hopes as articulated by my co-researchers.  Again, their responses are given according to their own language use and style – to be true to their own voices as individuals.

**7.2.1  Slaying the Fear Dragon**

**7.2.1.1        A fear of the Unknown**

Annie and Palesa related fears regarding the fact that Juanita and I were strangers to them, which was possibly compounded by the fact that the PEN facilitators were unable to attend the first camp in its entirety with us, leaving the adolescents and I to each other's mercy during the two-hour drive to the campsite.  Juanita followed in her own vehicle in order for us to have transport if need be.  The following comments – I think – now explains the mostly quiet drive to the campsite:

At the beginning of the camp, I had many fears, because I did not even know Juanita, nor did I know Amanda. It was very scary and I thought they were taking us and going to abduct us and go sell us - **Annie**

The fears I had about the research was that I was afraid that what are (we) going to do with the white chicks and I was wondering that where are (they) taking us 'cause you (referring to Juanita and myself) never told us where we were going – **Palesa**
(25 April 2010 at 21:45:18 via sms)

In response to a reply sms from me joking about whether she – Palesa – is still afraid of us, the 'white chicks':

That was then but now since we actually met and known each other it was so amazing that you are a part of our lives and we love you guys for what you did in our lives am not scared of you anymore may GOD bless you – **Palesa**
(25 April 2010 at 22:06:03 via sms)

Zee took this fear of the great Unknown and personalised it to her own situation:

When I think of my future I fear because I don't know if I am gonna be successful one day. I know I have the ability to make my dreams come true, but where do I start. After the (brand new camp) I realized that the world out of school (is) different, challenging and that scares (me). "How is my life gonna be out of (the House of Safety)". That's the question I ask myself everyday – **Zee**
(1 May 2010 at 13:45:53 via sms)

### 7.2.1.2    People's perceptions based on the research

Wiseman expressed fear about how people might perceive this research on reading and interacting with it:

> I just hope that some people won't take this research in a bad way or offend them in some way, that's my fears about this research - **Wiseman**

Dee acknowledged her fear of 'this is as good as it gets' by personalising this fear Wiseman expressed in saying:

> That when other people read the research they will accept me to have succeeded.  And I am scared that my victory story stops here - **Dee**

### 7.2.1.3    Fearlessly unconcerned

Some of the adolescents also stated that they had no fears regarding the TOL camps, the research or what was to be done with the data collected after the camps were over:

> I do not have fears about the camp - **Dimakatso**

> I just don't mind if anything is done to (with) the research - **Shaun**

Michael went even further by acknowledging the fact that he was just glad to leave his ordinary day-to-day life behind to go on a camping trip:

> I did not really fear much, was just happy that I was going to the camp - **Michael**

Victor and Zee also brought up the issue of rapport and trust between Juanita and I as the researchers and themselves as the co-researchers by stating:

> Actually, I've got no fear about the research.  It is my pleasure to share my life stories with you guys, plus I trust you with every single (bit of) information that I shared with you as well – **Victor**

> I didn't have fears about the camp, 'cos I trusted you guys and I felt very comfortable around y'all - **Zee**
> (1 May 2010 at 14:14:26 via sms)

### 7.2.2  Hoping for a better tomorrow

### 7.2.2.1        Lead others to a better understanding

Annie touched on the hope that this research would help people reading it to gain a better understanding of their individual as well as collective experiences as seen through their own eyes:

> (A)nd actually give them a brief description of the things we go through in our everyday lives – **Annie**

### 7.2.2.2        Helping others and ourselves: On becoming 'overcomers'

Some adolescents indicated the wish that this research will also help other people unknown to them that might be experiencing the same crises as they have:

> I hope that this research will help other people – **Annie**
> I just hope it helps others like us - **Michael**

I just hope this change is somebody's life positively – **Shaun**

I hope this research will help the people or in the same situation as we are and give them strength and confidence so that they can take on life's challenges – **Wiseman**

Zee personalised her hopes by referring to her life long dream of becoming a chef – like her deceased father whom she loved dearly – and one day even owning her own restaurant:

My hopes are me being a chef one day and hopefully own a restaurant – **Zee**
(1 May 2010 at 13:45:53 via sms)

The hope that this research will also benefit Juanita and I was also expressed, and it warms my heart to realise how much these adolescents also care about us:

I just hope that it prospers and hope that both Juanita and Amanda will get their PhD's – **Dimakatso**

The wish that this process would help them all to heal emotionally from the experiences they faced in their brief lives thus far was also mentioned and brought to the table:

I also hope that this helps us emotionally - **Dimakatso**

The positive impact that this research has had on the adolescents' emotional lives already, has also been acknowledge by Palesa in stating her hopes regarding the research.

She also goes further by referring to them as 'overcomers' in their lives' stories. I like this word 'overcomers' Palesa uses it to refer to them. In the literature the concept 'victims' was used for a long time, yet this is such a negative concept, implying passive behaviour from the person affected and therefore most of the literature on people experiencing some kind of trauma recently started to refer to so-called 'survivors'.

The concept 'survivors' refers to 'living through' and surviving a negative ordeal of some kind, while the concept 'overcomers' might even go further than this by actively engaging them to overcome the trauma they experienced:

> Hopes was for you guys to help us to overcome our fears and challenges that we have been through when we lost our loved ones to be able to face the world in the different way to be overcomers. This research will help others as well. Aa hopefully. 'Cause it really help us a lot and we thank you – **Palesa**
> (25 April 2010 at 21:59:31 via sms)

### 7.2.2.3        God in us: Giving hope and inspiring others

Helping other people by giving them hope when reading the stories and seeing the hand of God in these stories, as well as inspiring people to go out and do something good in the world was another hope for the research that some of the adolescents expressed:

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(A)nd I know for sure that it will reach out and give hope to people that are in the same situation - **Annie**

That more than anything the research will see God in us than anything else that we have faced.  But, mostly that others may be inspired by Amanda and Juanita to take action and go out and do something - **Dee**

I hope that whoever reads this / get to know the research actually gets inspired in a way - **Victor**

### 7.2.3  Fighting the monster within

It is not always easy growing up and especially growing up without good solid role models such as loving parents.  Moses relates to the fear of not always being the best person you can be, but at the same time fighting back, to become the better person one can be:

Ama (short for Amanda) I fear that the more I grow up is the more I discover new things about myself and most of those things are scary.  My dream is to become the best I can so that I can – **Moses**
(28 April 2010 at 07:28:39 via sms)

I fear that as I get older my lemon tree also grows bigger and the bugs also grow older but believe that I have taken control of them especially with God's and you guys' help.  I dream that my present lemon tree could just turn into (an) orange tree but anyway there will always be another one because life is full of challenges – **Moses**
(4 May 2010 at 20:54:03 via sms)

It was an interesting experiment to ask my co-researchers rather bluntly about especially their fears as well as their hopes for our research. Their answers were in my opinion surprisingly honest, something I would ascribe to the positive rapport and trust that now exist between us.

Fear is instinctive to the human nature, and I would sincerely hope that the hopes my co-researchers expressed regarding not only our research, but also regarding their own personal lives and stories, would outweigh the mentioned fears and worries for them. That they would all be successful and prosper in their lives – how difficult and scary that might be at times – henceforth.

## 7.3    ADDRESSING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BY RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

It is not news that the media is continuously flooded by reports on HIV and Aids almost on a daily basis – research into the crisis, the statistics, the demographics, the treatment debacle and politically motivated involvement with this crisis usually make the headlines.

One might say that Joe Public is over-exposed to the HIV and Aids crisis and subsequent research on the topic. Many people – including Christians – on the street might even say that HIV and Aids does not affect us, at least not directly, so why the hype about it all the time? And what can I as an individual do to help curb a pandemic that is paralysing entire populations and even continents?

Maybe not surprisingly, in light of the above that I have been faced with similar questions by friends, family and even strangers while being involved with the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV AND AIDS project and while researching the topic for my PhD. I therefore thought it good to also include in this section three main questions – surprisingly enough voiced by fellow Christians – about HIV and Aids, my research and involvement in the field.

### 7.3.1 Why should traditionally Afrikaans Churches (Dutch Reformed Churches) and their training institutions become involved in this current 'hype' around HIV and Aids?

My short answer to this would be that HIV and Aids affects us all and that Churches and training institutions like the University, have a responsibility to become involved and add to the growing but still inadequate research data on this phenomenon.  This is because HIV and Aids and its related discourses can, in many ways, be compared to leprosy well known in the Bible.  Largely, it has the same impact on the people infected and affected by it.  The shame, the stigma associated with it and consequently mostly being shunned by not only the community at large, but also sometimes by one's own family and loved ones, make it – still to this day – a socially debilitating disease.

Speaking of disease – most people are at *dis-ease* with talking and thinking about it, because maybe at heart we believe – like children do – that if we ignore it long enough it will simply go away.  Which we all know is not true.

While doing my Masters in Practical Theology I initially experienced problems locating AIDS orphans willing to partake in my study.  Dr Wilhelm van Deventer, research associate of Prof Müller, informed me of children in the Brits area in the North-West province who lost both parents to HIV and Aids.  No, not black orphans as some of you reading this might expect, but white, Afrikaans-speaking children from a Dutch Reformed background.

I did however by then managed to make contact through my congregation with people working with (yes, black) AIDS orphans in rural KwaZulu-Natal, and did not take him up on his offer to introduce me to these white AIDS orphans.  This decision I regret to this day.  It would have been an eye-opening experience not only for me but also, I think, for ignorant Afrikaans Church members.

Nonetheless, although currently it would seem like black AIDS orphans are in the majority, it isn't – and should never from a Christian perspective be – a crisis divided by race, language and even Church denomination.

A rather arrogant question like this brings to mind the very popular colourful rubber wrist bands sold at Christian outlets. Though, lately almost a cliché, the one with the letters WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) rings true to a question like this. Therefore, some Dutch Reformed congregations in the inner city of Pretoria like NG Grootte Kerk and NG Bronberg are already heading this call and assisting NGOs like PEN with their infrastructure to be able to reach out to people in need in the inner city.

### 7.3.2 It appears to be the latest do-good craze for almost all churches to have some or other kind of Outreach programme to a remote rural area of South Africa ridden by HIV and Aids, why all of a sudden?

This question in a sense contradicts the first one. In this question, it is clear that most churches have already moved away from the stance of contemplating involvement to active involvement in the crisis. Yet, I would agree that I myself have also wondered about the motivation for this involvement at times. Must we not in the first instance address problems within our own congregation – like the plight of the white AIDS orphans mentioned earlier – before moving so far a field to offer assistance? As the saying goes – charity begins at home.

This begs the question – where as Christians is our home? Is this limited to our own families, our own congregations, denominations, South Africa as a country or the world? Involvement with the plight of others less fortunate than oneself is a very humbling experience. Charity and outreach should maybe not be seen as exclusive and privileging some, while neglecting others, but rather as a balancing act – looking after one's own while still extending a helping hand to others.

And, although some people may be getting involved for wrong and selfish reasons, the fact is they are in the process still doing something to better the lives of others. I believe that the beauty of God's work is that He can still use people doing it for the wrong reasons and their efforts positively. So be it a current do-good craze to get involved in HIV and Aids Outreach programmes that might blow over as soon as the next major crisis strikes, or a sincere attempt to reach out, this help is needed and does make a difference – how small and insignificant it might seem.

### 7.3.3  Why the involvement with HIV and Aids orphans?

My sincere answer and counter argument to this question would simply be – why not? The way some people would phrase this question, it would seem like these children are already lost to society, so why bother? They are in their minds next in line to follow in their parents' footsteps and as such are a liability to society. I always get hot under the collar when somebody bombards me with a question like this and I am quite sure most people arrogant enough to ask me this have noticed my discontent with them for asking.

The Bible clearly states that widows and orphans should be everybody's responsibility, not just that of the State or the Church. So, for me, to live out and live up to the Word of God, we need to get involved in their plight. It might not be easy or even possible for each of us to become directly involved with helping not only HIV and Aids orphans, but for that matter, any child left orphaned and bereaved, but we can surely make an attempt at it.

In this I am guided by something my maternal grandmother used to say – You can judge a man's character by the way he treats animals, the elderly and children. My mother added that a child is a child. Children – especially after losing their parents – need love and acceptance and if by working with just a few of them, I could provide that for them, this whole experience was worthwhile.

## 7.4 ADDRESSING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BY THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

In light of the oral defence that is required for most PhD theses as part of the examination process, questions pertaining to the research and the research process by the academic community – especially members active in the field of Theology and more specifically Practical Theology – is inevitable.  The broader academic community, especially disciplines related to social science and the Humanities might also have certain questions regarding the research and the field of research that might need clarification after studying the research report.

In this section, I aim to address some of these possible questions most relevant to this specific research endeavour, as it might be posed to me during the upcoming oral defence of my PhD research report.  Consequently, sub-headings were phrased as questions and not as statements.  Little text references are also made in this section, as would be likely during an oral defence, which focussed mainly on the candidate's personal understanding of the questions and relevant concepts.  Text references are however properly acknowledged in the relevant sections earlier in the thesis.

### 7.4.1 Please explain in short the narrative approach to therapy and research and how adhering to this approach impacted on your research

Coming from a pre-graduate and honours background in psychology that still operated from a modernistic approach to therapy when I was studying I would say that I experienced the narrative approach as very freeing when I was first introduced to it during my Masters studies in Practical Theology.  (Psychology later also introduced the narrative approach to its discipline).  Freeing not only for me as potential therapist and researcher, but more importantly for the people whom I would be working with.

For me the narrative approach whether relating to therapy or research is about stories – life stories or parts thereof of the people you are working with.  At its basis is social-constructionism, closely related to postfoundationalism as proposed by Wentzel van Huyssteen. It is no longer about being the expert knowing it all (in therapy) or having a checklist of things to look into (in research).  Clients in therapy aren't referred to as 'patients' anymore, a stance that assumes that something is wrong with them or that they are sick.  In the same manner research participants are referred to as 'co-researchers' because they are now actively involved in helping to create the research story and are no longer seen as the passive 'subjects' of research.

Rather it is about the specific person's truth and how that person is experiencing it in his or her life at present.  Certain storylines or discourses might be prevalent and favoured in a person's life, while other storylines are marginalised.  The aim of the narrative approach is to move away from the modernistic view of the therapist / researcher as the expert and taking on a not-knowing position.  Setting the ball in motion by asking some 'opening space' questions and then allowing the person to tell his or her story, helping to 'thicken' the storyline along the way by asking some follow-up questions.  This all aims at helping the person or the research to achieve a 'unique outcome' or sometimes referred to as a 'sparkling moment'.  Creating space for previously neglected storylines and discourses to become active in the person's life or in the research process.

### 7.4.2  What would you say is the contribution of Practical Theology to the research field of HIV and Aids?

As we have seen throughout this thesis, Practical Theology is about the living out and living up to God's Word.  We as Christians are not alone in this world.  We find ourselves in the midst of a community of faith, whether that be our family, our circle of friends, and / or our church.

We also find ourselves living in the world with its harsh realities and problems. In light of the scope of this thesis, one might ask what impact we as Christians can make in this world. How can we as Christians help and where do we start?

In order for us as Christians to know how we can help and where we can start, it is important to get to grips with the problems people infected and affected by HIV and Aids are facing. We can not – in a modernistic way – roll up our sleeves and jump in to start solving so-called problems, without even being sure of the validity of the problems we ourselves have identified.

In comes Practical Theology and research, especially research from a narrative, postfoundational approach. By actively involving people infected and affected by HIV and Aids as co-researchers in our research, together we can start to delve into the discourses informing problems identified by themselves and not by us as researchers, to help them find unique outcomes for their own problem-saturated life stories. In doing so, helping them to heal holistically – mentally, emotionally as well as spiritually.

### 7.4.3 Briefly recap the seven (7) movements of Postfoundational Practical Theology (PFPT) and evaluate the chosen methodology of your research

The first three movements have to do with the context of the research. The discussion on these three movements can be found in Chapter 2 of this thesis. In most qualitative research and especially in PFPT, it is important to not only study and analyse the research data gathered, but also to situate the data within the specific context wherein it has taken form, thus to contextualise the research. In order for the research data to be collected and analysed in an empirically sound and ethical way, it is therefore in the first instance important to describe the greater context wherein the research activity has taken place.

In the case of this study, the greater context has to do with the HIV and Aids field and more specifically as the stories of the adolescents are played out in the context of the faith-based organisation (FBO) PEN and related to us (Juanita and I) during the two TOL camps.  We used the TOL camps to gather the relevant data to be analysed as well as using this as an opportunity for the adolescents to help us to describe, interpret and analyse the experiences as lived by them.  My own context and motivation for doing this study also impacted on the greater context of the study and was discussed as such.  For me the value of contextualising the research before moving onto collecting and analysing the research data was a very interesting experience.  As I not only had to look at the experiences of the adolescents that were to form my data, but I also had to critically reflect on my own context as a student, researcher and as a Christian doing research.

The discussion of the fourth movement of PFPT is situated in Chapter 3, and is a description of how experiences are continually informed by certain traditions of interpretation.  The context of HIV and Aids is influenced by many factors, and in turn influences the context around it as well.  Much has been written about HIV and Aids, and it would have been an impossible task to write about everything.  Therefore I chose to give only a short overview of HIV and Aids and related discourses in a creative way, by using cartoons, and  to limit my literature study to HIV and Aids orphans, before looking at how theological interpretations also impacts on this field.  Storytelling and especially African storytelling are explored as another tradition of interpretation, before integrating some of the creative activities of the adolescents as further traditions of interpretation.

What started out as a very difficult movement and therefore chapter to write actually became a fun activity when I moved away from the traditional discourse of interpreting the Aids phenomena and rather decided to reflect on it by integrating the Arts into my discussion of traditions of interpretation.

A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, that forms the fifth movement of the research can be found in Chapter 4. Since the research focused on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, it was important to look at how these adolescents experience and perceive God in their lives. Doing research within Practical Theology, this movement helped me tremendously in gaining a better understanding of the adolescents' experiences after losing loved ones.

What became a cornerstone in this research is the sixth movement of PFPT that is situated in Chapter 5. Here the analysis of the adolescents' experiences is thickened by interdisciplinary investigation. This relates to transversal rationality, as the researcher's own analysis of the data are strengthened by multiple perspectives on the data by professionals from different, but related disciplines. I was fortunate enough to have interdisciplinary team members from not only theology, psychology, social work, but also inputs from information science as a discipline as well as that of a life coach. These inputs helped me to elaborate on certain discourses that became evident in the life stories of Dee and Zee.

The penultimate chapter refers to the last movement of PFPT, namely the development of alternative interpretations that also points beyond these contextualised stories of the adolescents' and the local community to open up possibilities for the development of a pastoral care approach to bereavement issues within the African context.

Much research still needs to be done with reference to the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, yet African storytelling as a tradition of interpretation opens up great possibilities for working with these and other children who have experienced the loss of their parent(s) or caregivers.

### 7.4.4 What is the difference between the movements and the methods of this specific research?

The difference between the movements and the methods relates to how the research is approached. The seven movements form the backdrop to how the research was conducted and subsequently presented in this thesis. It relates to postfoundationalism as a paradigm that was developed by Van Huyssteen.

The methods of research refer to the so-called research tools used to collect and analyse the research data – or as it is referred to in narrative research, the research stories.

The TOL camps and the *TOL* metaphor were used to collect and to a certain degree analyse the research stories in collaboration with the adolescents themselves as co-researchers to the research. This was done through the integration of narrative methods with focus group discussions, the Arts and specifically developed TOL workbooks.

### 7.4.5 A great deal of theses submitted lately has focused on the topic of HIV and Aids. What would you say is your research's contribution to this research theme?

When I started out with my research for my Masters in Practical Theology, I was very interested in looking at how children and adolescents experience bereavement – especially parental bereavement.

Prof Julian Müller consequently suggested that I look into the field of HIV and Aids and the impact it might have on parental bereavement as a phenomenon. It is true that much have been researched about HIV and Aids in recent years and how it affects people, whether infected or affected by it.

Yet, at the stage I subsequently embarked on conducting research for my Masters, much of the research published up to that point focused on physical and material support of these orphans some of whom were living in child-headed households. Little of the research available focused on the emotional and psychological needs of children left orphaned by this disease.

My Masters research with rural AIDS orphans in KwaZulu-Natal indicated the need to not only focus on these children's bereavement needs, but also to situate these needs within the realm of spirituality. I therefore focused the topic and scope of my PhD research not only on bereavement issues as such, but also looked at the role of spirituality in this phenomenon. I also looked at the phenomenon from the perspectives of adolescents mostly living in the inner city of Pretoria, some of whom are in the care of PEN.

Not all of these adolescents are acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans, yet they all share the experience of losing someone close to them and who were responsible for caring for them and that impacted greatly on their lives in the greater context of the HIV and Aids phenomenon.

### 7.4.6   Why should this thesis be accepted in the Faculty of Theology and not another, say, Humanities Faculty?

As was already said, this thesis focuses on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of adolescents, some of whom are directly affected by the HIV and Aids phenomenon. Their bereavement has brought on certain issues that affect their lives henceforth, not least of this being their view of God and His role in the death of their loved ones and their subsequent bereavement. Their spirituality therefore informs other psychological and emotional needs these adolescents might be experiencing due to their bereavement.

Therefore, although this thesis might also be accepted in for instance the Department of Psychology in the Humanities Faculty, I am of the opinion that this thesis with its unique emphasis on spirituality would be best suited for submission within the Department of Practical Theology in the Faculty of Theology.

### 7.4.7 With reference to the section on interdisciplinary conversations, how did these conversations help you regarding your co-researchers' view on God?

For both Dee and Zee who recently lost their mother (Dee) and father (Zee) to HIV and Aids, religion, God and the faith-based organisation PEN play important roles in their daily lives.  Both of them are cared for by PEN.  Both girls view God in a protective and caring manner.

Although God is seen by them as the one responsible for the storms in their lives, He is also the one protecting them during these difficult times.  It was clear that God had a great impact on both of their lives.  Some of the interdisciplinary team members did indeed interact with these cues presented by the girls on their view of God.  Team members such as the counselling psychologist, Ilze Jansen and Dr Jerry Streets with his background in social work and theology, as well as François Wessels the life coach and fellow PhD student, commented on the impact of God in the lives of these two girls.

It was of concern for François Wessels that Zee viewed God as responsible for the storms in her life, and how it might impact on her life story further on.  Dee's spirituality as a meaning-making discourse was also mentioned by him as a possible concern. Yet, in my opinion he contradicts himself as he acknowledges the fact that, although most of her relationships are characterised by conflict, her relationship with Zee and her church does not seem to be.

Jerry Streets links onto this by emphasising the support from religious people and organizations such as the church that seems important to them as a source of strength. Ilze Jansen with reference to Dee's story also sees her spirituality as a positive aspect and mentions how her view of God could be used in therapy to help develop her coping mechanisms and resilience further in life.

I was a bit disappointed that not more of the interdisciplinary team members chose to interact with cues on how the girls viewed God, but I think this might have been related to their own presuppositions on religion and spirituality in research.

### 7.4.8  How do you understand transversal rationality?

Van Huyssteen in his exploration of postfoundationalism as a paradigm coined the concept 'transversality'. It can be seen as his attempt to engage different disciplines working within the same field, yet sometimes from different paradigms and with different perspectives in an attempt to speak to each other; trying to find common ground between the different disciplines in relation to the field of interest, while still acknowledging the differences between the disciplines.

Transversal rationality, therefore in my opinion is not endangering one's own discipline's paradigm(s) and work methods by exposing it to different disciplines' perspectives, but indeed helps to 'thicken' the research story with multiple academic inputs. It leads us to learn from one another's disciplines and in doing so may shed some light on possible 'blind spots' created by our own discipline regarding the field of research.

It may even lead to new research questions being posed and will hopefully contribute to future interdisciplinary research endeavours between the different disciplines ensuring a more holistic approach to research.

### 7.4.9 Please summarise your research in a few statements

1.  Various perspectives on the phenomenon of HIV and Aids exist, due to the involvement of different disciplines in the research field, of which Practical Theology only represents one such perspective. Subsequently it can only provide a limited focus on the needs of HIV and Aids orphans.

2.  The epistemological positioning of the research lies in Postfoundational Practical Theology. The underlying research methodology is the narrative approach that is embedded within social constructionism.

3.  This Postfoundational Practical Theological approach delves into the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents by listening to their descriptions of their experiences and how they relate to God's presence in their lives and context.

4.  It is important to keep in mind the African context wherein these stories of bereavement are lived. As such, language and metaphors within this context needed to be acknowledged and incorporated in the research.

5.  Interdisciplinary discussion and consultation related to the co-researchers' stories and in the field of adolescent bereavement is essential, in an attempt to broaden the focus beyond the perspective of Practical Theology.

6.  What emerged in this research were the experiences of loss through bereavement, the integration of this loss through storytelling and the sense of community – *Ubuntu* – that came to the fore through storymaking.

7.  An African approach to narrative pastoral care is suggested that focuses on the integration of the lived experiences with a positive view of the future.

### 7.4.10 What did you learn from your co-researchers?

Some hip-hop slang words and a new hip-hop-and-happening dress code. Only joking! While on the subject of hip-hop however, Shaun especially taught me once again – as I have also mentioned in Chapter 2 – not to judge a book by its cover. Behind the brave façade, lay hidden deep hurts that needed to be given a voice.

In spite of all the pain and anguish these 10 co-researchers have already experienced in their young lives, they were all the paragon of resilience. Lesser people would have in my opinion given up hope a long time ago – even in less trying situations than theirs. They reminded me – in a time I myself needed to be reminded thereof – to always put my trust in God. To give my problems over to Him in prayer and at the same time doing what I can to better my own situation as well. For me the sparkling moment in my interaction with my co-researchers came when they let Juanita and I become part of their group and showed us that the spirit of *Ubuntu* – although in need of a bit of nurturing to once again flourish – was still alive in our South African society.

### 7.5    SELF-REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS: ON QUESTIONING MYSELF

Reflective thinking turns experience into insight
- John Maxwell -

As with many other people, I am possibly my own worst critic. My left brain kicks in at the most unexpected times to start asking all sorts of fear inducing and even down right debilitating questions. As a result, I was constantly questioning myself during this research process. I would be lying if I said I was sure of anything during this journey. I questioned my methods and motives almost on a daily basis. At times, I became very unsure of my ability to conduct and complete a research project of this magnitude.

At one stage – during the writing up process – I told Professor Müller that the process was more difficult than I would ever have imagined it to be, and he replied tongue in the cheek by asking me if somebody ever told me that it wouldn't be difficult. I guess it isn't supposed to be an easy process, why else would you need to complete at least three other degrees to get to this point?

This whole chapter up to this point testifies to this fact and represents an attempt at finding a creative outlet for the stress induced by my inner Critic. This is done by turning the tables on my inner Critic and applying it in a positive manner as a way of checking if I understood and clearly articulated my understanding of the concepts, the context and the process of the research. Also as Dr Lourens Bosman – research associate to Prof Müller – repeatedly reminded us during our PhD meetings, this thesis is not the writing of a book, but the documentation of the process of research; therefore it is equally important to reflect on my own thoughts and feelings during this process in order to progress in the process. This I have tried to do throughout this thesis by ongoing reflection on the process.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to become a writer. At school, languages were my strength and I actually thought becoming a writer might be a viable career option. That was up and until the day my brother read my diary out loud to his friends. Needless to say, it was the very last diary I ever had. Ever since, I was a frustrated writer – still enjoying writing, but at the same time being conscious at all times of how other people might perceive my writing to be.

Prof Müller's suggestion to keep a research journal to document the research process as it developed was therefore a scary prospect for me. Although still viewing myself in light of the young frustrated writer I became, I made a concerted effort in this research process to find my voice as a reflective writer. It was at times very difficult, but I tried and kept to it and think in my own way my attempt at it was successful and worth it.

**7.6     MY STORY OF *UBUNTU*: BRINGING AN ELEPHANT INTO THE HOUSE**

People helping one another can bring an elephant into the house
- African Proverb -

The very first thing I read in a dissertation or thesis I consulted in doing numerous assignments throughout my tertiary education, was the acknowledgements and dedications.   I found myself fascinated with and drawn to it.   It tells of a story of the author as a person and of the people who participated in and formed an audience to the author's achievements.  A story most often silenced throughout the rest of the study by more traditional research practices.

This is my attempt to story my gratitude towards those people who helped me – not only in the completion of this study – but also in pursuing and achieving my life goals.   After all, in light of the Zulu concept of *Ubuntu,* a person is only a person through other persons.

**7.6.1   My brave new friends: The co-researchers**

To all the adolescents whose stories in one way or another have formed part of this research project – a big thank you!  From those whose stories were collected during the initial pilot study that was undertaken as part of the greater SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project of the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, to the ten adolescents who had great fun with Juanita and I during the two TOL camps while sharing their individual stories with us.  It probably took great courage to revisit these very sad incidence(s) in your lives and for that I salute you!   Thank you for your willingness to trust us with your stories and I truly hope that by doing this, it helped you all to realise that your stories aren't over yet.  So go out and look for that elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, because it is surely within your reach if you try hard enough!

Special thanks go out to the adolescents who attended the two TOL camps, the girls – Annie, Dee, Dimakatso, Palesa and Zee as well as the boys – Michael, Moses, Shaun, Victor and Wiseman.  By having met and getting to know you, you have all in your own special way enriched my life – *ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

## 7.6.2  Personnel of the NGOs

The field workers, facilitators and the directors of the three NGOs that took part in the greater research study of the Department – those of Heartbeat, PEN and Hospivision (Kurima).  Thank you for taking the time to engage yourself in a study of this nature – thank you especially to Dr Sunette Pienaar of Heartbeat, Dr Marinda van Niekerk of PEN for being an inspiration to me as well as a source of encouragement, and Drs Andre de Porte and Simon Mailula of Hospivision.

A special word of thanks to Susan van der Walt and Jasmyn van Heerden of PEN's Teenage Ministry for helping me with issues surrounding the practicalities of the two TOL camps and especially for Susan that acted as a go-between between myself and the adolescents on many an occasion.

Three other PEN facilitators also joined us over the weekend of the first TOL camp – Louisa Taukobang, Timothy Qibi and Marumo Lekwankwa – thanks guys for participating in all the activities with such enthusiasm!  The teens really enjoyed your presence and involvement.  The love you have for them was evident and they are truly blessed to have such caring people in their lives who are positive role models for them!  *Ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

You all are the angels of this world.   I can't put into words the thanks I owe you!  *Dankie vir die leen van julle pragtige kinders!* [Thank you for entrusting your beautiful children to us!]

### 7.6.3 Sponsors who made the study possible

### 7.6.4 Helping professions: The interdisciplinary team

One of the cornerstones of Postfoundational Practical Theology is interdisciplinary conversations between different disciplines in the field of interest of the study – in this instance the phenomena of orphans in the context of HIV and Aids. I am grateful to the following persons for participating in these conversations via e-mail, while being extremely busy themselves, and for some even while being abroad on holiday or work-related visits: Ilze Barnard, Mieke de Gelder, Hanre Hattingh, Suzanne Jacobs, Ilze Jansen, Tilda Loots, Corlie van der Bergh, François Wessels and Drs Andre de la Porte, Jacques du Plessis, Simon Mailula, Jerry Streets and Arnau van Wyngaard.

### 7.6.5 Professional help with the completion of the study

Special thanks to my promoter Prof Julian Müller. Thank you for opening up a world of possibilities by introducing the narrative approach to me. You have contributed much to my own story. *Dankie vir die vertroue wat Prof in my geplaas het en die geleenthede wat Prof aan my gebied het! Ek waardeer dit!* [Thank you for the trust that you have placed in me and the opportunities you have given me! I do appreciate it!]

Thanks to the academic information personnel at the Merensky library of the University – Retha Kruidenier, the information specialist for Theology, the personnel from the interlending service, for their invaluable assistance as well as Joy Wilson at the front desk, who were always friendly and helpful.

Thank you to Prof Ncedile Saule of the Department of African Languages at the University of South Africa (UNISA) for helping me with the isiXhosa story of Magoda and the magic horns and concepts related to the story. I greatly appreciate your help in this regard.

Also thanks to Thembi Kemisho and other personnel of *The Translation World* for assisting with the translation of the abstract, key concepts and various other words into Sepedi. *Ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

### 7.6.6 To true friends

Fellow PhD student and friend – Juanita (Loubser) Meyer who helped to facilitate the TOL camps – *baie dankie vir jou ondersteuning en hulp Jua!* [Thank you very much for your support and help Jua!].

I wish to also thank the friends I made through studying and working at the University. Ilze Jansen and everyone at the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies – Nina Grundlingh, Proff Dirk Human en Piet Geyser. *Dankie vir al die ondersteuning deur die jare!* [Thank you for the support through the years!].

As well as Prof Ernest van Eck, my former next door neighbour and Mrss Rina Roos and Bonga Tsebe of the faculty administration who were always willing to lend a helpful hand and a sympathetic ear when needed, and in the process became friends. *Dankie! Ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

To my fellow South African adventurers who attended the fifth AAPSC Congress in Abuja, Nigeria in July 2006 – thanks for a great experience! To my then co-worker, now minister in the Dutch Reformed Church – Pieter 'Knapie' Visser as well as someone who recently received his own Doctorate in Practical Theology – Llewellyn 'MacMaatjie' MacMaster of the University of Stellenbosch. Thank you very much for your companionship, friendship and self-imposed guardianship of me – I always felt safe! *Dankie julle dat julle gehelp het om 'n vreesaanjaende ervaring te omskep in die onvergeetlike avontuur wat dit was! 'Amandla'.* [Thanks for helping to transform a terrifying experience into the memorable adventure it became!].

### 7.6.7 My pillars of support: God and my family

*Laastens wil ek my gesin bedank vir hul hope geduld met my – veral die laaste paar weke terwyl ek (uiteindelik!) my tesis afgehandel het.   Ek waardeer dit baie.*
[Lastly, I want to thank my family for their patience with me – especially the last couple of weeks while (finally!) finishing my thesis.  I do appreciate it a lot].

*Aan God – vir Sy groot liefde en talente wat aan my uitgedeel is – dankie!*
[To God – for His great love and the talents given to me – thank you!]

## 7.7    CLOSING THE BOOK ON THE RESEARCH STORY – FINAL REMARKS



*UTHINGO LWENKOSIKAZI*

*The rainbow: The queen's bow*
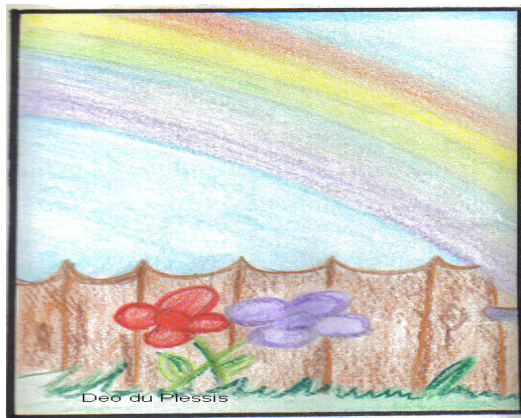
When it rains, at the appearance of the rainbow men say: "It is going to clear up, for the bow of the queen, the rainbow, has appeared".  And it does clear up.  Even though it rained heavily, it clears up at the appearance of the rainbow; it rains no more.  Even when it has rained for two days, the sky clears up when the rainbow appears.

(Canonici 1993:58)

*I have set my rainbow in the clouds,*
*and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth*
Gen 9:13 (NIV)

The above isiZulu folktale is in total contrast to the isiZulu tale of Tshintsha and the rainbow in chapter 3.  It promises that after storms have raged the rainbow will appear – as a sign of hope for a promising tomorrow.  There is a definite intertextual conversation between this tale and the story of Noah and the Ark in Genesis 9 and the covenant that God had made with His people.  May this story serve to always remind my co-researchers of God's unwavering love for them.  My wish for my ten co-researchers is that they would – like Magoda who journeyed with us in an inspiring way – 'live a long and contented life to a ripe old age'.  May they through wise choices and being responsible with their lives as well as the lives of others, experience that which their parents never had the luck to experience – live to see their children grow up and be actively involved in their lives.  May they find 'true happiness' – whatever their individual definition thereof might be and may they be willing and able to share and spread this happiness to other people by touching their lives in a positive way and in the true spirit of *Ubuntu*.

And so, we have come to the end of our research journey together.  I hope it was as great an adventure and learning experience for you – the reader – as the research and the two TOL camps have been for Juanita, I, and our ten courageous co-researchers.

I wish to end with some words taken from the song *Somewhere over the rainbow* as sung by Judy Garland in 'The Wizard of Oz' (http://www.lyrics007.com) as an inspiration to all of us to always dream:

Somewhere over the rainbow

Skies are blue

And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true

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## ADDENDUM A
## 'I AM AN AFRICAN' POEMS
## (Refer to Chapters 1 & 3)

http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/orders/new2002_mbeki.htm

Author        :        Thabo M Mbeki

Uploaded        :        8 May 1996

Retrieved        :        24 April 2010

### TM MBEKI: ADOPTION OF RSA CONSTITUTION BILL

**STATEMENT OF DEPUTY PRESIDENT TM MBEKI, ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ADOPTION BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY OF "THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA CONSTITUTION BILL 1996"**

CAPE TOWN, 8 MAY 1996

Chairperson,

Esteemed President of the democratic Republic,

Honourable Members of the Constitutional Assembly,

Our distinguished domestic and foreign guests,

Friends,

On an occasion such as this, we should, perhaps, start from the beginning.

So, let me begin.

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land.

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the veld.

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito.

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say – I am an African!

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence and they who, as a people, perished in the result.

Today, as a country, we keep an audible silence about these ancestors of the generations that live, fearful to admit the horror of a former deed, seeking to obliterate from our memories a cruel occurrence which, in its remembering, should teach us not and never to be inhuman again.

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert.

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongqause. I am he who made it possible to trade in the world markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns.

I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence.

Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that – I am an African.

I have seen our country torn asunder as these, all of whom are my people, engaged one another in a titanic battle, the one redress a wrong that had been caused by one to another and the other, to defend the indefensible.

I have seen what happens when one person has superiority of force over another, when the stronger appropriate to themselves the prerogative even to annul the injunction that God created all men and women in His image.

I know what if signifies when race and colour are used to determine who is human and who, sub-human.

I have seen the destruction of all sense of self-esteem, the consequent striving to be what one is not, simply to acquire some of the benefits which those who had improved themselves as masters had ensured that they enjoy.

I have experience of the situation in which race and colour is used to enrich some and impoverish the rest.

I have seen the corruption of minds and souls as (word not readable) of the pursuit of an ignoble effort to perpetrate a veritable crime against humanity.

I have seen concrete expression of the denial of the dignity of a human being emanating from the conscious, systemic and systematic oppressive and repressive activities of other human beings.

There the victims parade with no mask to hide the brutish reality – the beggars, the prostitutes, the street children, those who seek solace in substance abuse, those who have to steal to assuage hunger, those who have to lose their sanity because to be sane is to invite pain.

Perhaps the worst among these, who are my people, are those who have learnt to kill for a wage. To these the extent of death is directly proportional to their personal welfare.

And so, like pawns in the service of demented souls, they kill in furtherance of the political violence in KwaZulu-Natal. They murder the innocent in the taxi wars.

They kill slowly or quickly in order to make profits from the illegal trade in narcotics. They are available for hire when husband wants to murder wife and wife, husband.

Among us prowl the products of our immoral and amoral past – killers who have no sense of the worth of human life, rapists who have absolute disdain for the women of our country, animals who would seek to benefit from the vulnerability of the children, the disabled and the old, the rapacious who brook no obstacle in their quest for self-enrichment.

All this I know and know to be true because I am an African!

Because of that, I am also able to state this fundamental truth that I am born of a people who are heroes and heroines.

I am born of a people who would not tolerate oppression.

I am of a nation that would not allow that fear of death, torture, imprisonment, exile or persecution should result in the perpetuation of injustice.

The great masses who are our mother and father will not permit that the behaviour of the few results in the description of our country and people as barbaric.

Patient because history is on their side, these masses do not despair because today the weather is bad. Nor do they turn triumphant when, tomorrow, the sun shines.

Whatever the circumstances they have lived through and because of that experience, they are determined to define for themselves who they are and who they should be.

We are assembled here today to mark their victory in acquiring and exercising their right to formulate their own definition of what it means to be African.

The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins.

It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.

It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern.

It recognises the fact that the dignity of the individual is both an objective which society must pursue, and is a goal which cannot be separated from the material well-being of that individual.

It seeks to create the situation in which all our people shall be free from fear, including the fear of the oppression of one national group by another, the fear of the disempowerment of one social echelon by another, the fear of the use of state power to deny anybody their fundamental human rights and the fear of tyranny.

It aims to open the doors so that those who were disadvantaged can assume their place in society as equals with their fellow human beings without regard to colour, race, gender, age or geographic dispersal.

It provides the opportunity to enable each one and all to state their views, promote them, strive for their implementation in the process of governance without fear that a contrary view will be met with repression.

It creates a law-governed society which shall be inimical to arbitrary rule.

It enables the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means rather than resort to force.

It rejoices in the diversity of our people and creates the space for all of us voluntarily to define ourselves as one people.

As an African, this is an achievement of which I am proud, proud without reservation and proud without any feeling of conceit.

Our sense of elevation at this moment also derives from the fact that this magnificent product is the unique creation of African hands and African minds.

But it also constitutes a tribute to our loss of vanity that we could, despite the temptation to treat ourselves as an exceptional fragment of humanity, draw on the accumulated experience and wisdom of all humankind, to define for ourselves what we want to be.

Together with the best in the world, we too are prone to pettiness, petulance, selfishness and short-sightedness.

But it seems to have happened that we looked at ourselves and said the time had come that we make a super-human effort to be other than human, to respond to the call to create for ourselves a glorious future, to remind ourselves of the Latin saying: Gloria est consequenda – Glory must be sought after!

Today it feels good to be an African.

It feels good that I can stand here as a South African and as a foot soldier of a titanic African army, the African National Congress, to say to all the parties represented here, to the millions who made an input into the processes we are concluding, to our outstanding compatriots who have presided over the birth of our founding document, to the negotiators who pitted their wits one against the other, to the unseen stars who shone unseen as the management and administration of the Constitutional Assembly, the advisers, experts and publicists, to the mass communication media, to our friends across the globe – congratulations and well done!

I am an African.

I am born of the peoples of the continent of Africa.

The pain of the violent conflict that the peoples of Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan, Burundi and Algeria suffer is a pain I also bear.

The dismal shame of poverty, suffering and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share.

The blight on our happiness that derives from this and from our drift to the periphery of the ordering of human affairs leaves us in a persistent shadow of despair.

This is a savage road to which nobody should be condemned.

This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

Whatever the setbacks of the moment, nothing can stop us now!

Whatever the difficulties, Africa shall be at peace!

However improbable it may sound to the skeptics, Africa will prosper!

Whoever we may be, whatever our immediate interest, however much we carry baggage from our past, however much we have been caught by the fashion of cynicism and loss of faith in the capacity of the people, let us err today and say – nothing can stop us now!

Thank you.

**Issued by: Office of the Deputy President**

Author         :         Llewellyn LM MacMaster

Uploaded       :         20 February 2007

Retrieved      :         24 April 2010

The following poem was written in Afrikaans and translated by myself (Amanda Richter):

| **Ek is...** | **I am…** |
|---|---|
| Ek is van Afrika, | I am from Africa, |
| Sonder twyfel, onmiskenbaar – | Without doubt, undeniable – |
| Al sê wie ook wat! | No matter what people say! |
| Die wat dit probeer ontken | Those who try to deny it |
| Stry teen hulself, tevergeefs. | Dispute against themselves, in vain. |
| | |
| Ek is Khoi-San, Bruin, Kleurling, | I am Khoi-San, Brown, Coloured, |
| Maak nie meer saak wat jy my noem. | It does not matter any more what you call me. |
| Feit van die saak is, ek is hier | Fact of the matter is, I am here |
| Suid-Afrikaner, Afrikaan, | South African, African, |
| Deel van hierdie land, hierdie kontinent, | Part of this country, this continent, |
| | |
| Was nog altyd hier – | Always have been here – |
| Al sê wie ook wat! | No matter what people say! |
| | |
| Ek is | I am |
| Trots op wie ek is | Proud of who I am |
| My geskiedenis, my tradisie, | My history, my tradition, |
| my kultuur, my geloof | my culture, my faith |
| Het dit, gebore met dit – | Have it, born with it – |
| Al sê wie ook wat! | No matter what people say! |
| Hou maar op om te konfereer | You can stop conferring |
| Te sukkel om my te definieer. | Struggling to define me. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ek is | I am |
| Outentiek, genuine | Authentic, genuine |
| Proudly South African | Proudly South African |
| No strings attached | No strings attached |
| What you see is what you get | What you see is what you get |
| No pretence, no disguise | No pretence, no disguise |
| | |
| Ek is | I am |
| Moeg van politieke speelbal wees | Tired of being a political plaything |
| | |
| Ek is | I am |
| Niemand se ding, se objek, se verbruikersartikel | Nobody's thing, object, consumer article |
| Kry dit nou in jou kop | Get it in your head |
| Jy kan my nie eers omkoop met 'n dop! | You can't even bribe me with a drink! |
| Hou op my te objektiveer | Stop objectifying me |
| Te marginaliseer | To marginalise |
| Te generaliseer | To generalise |
| Te reduseer | To reduce |
| Dit maak diep seer | It hurts a lot |
| | |
| Ek is | I am |
| Van die suidpunt van Afrika | From the southern point of Africa |
| Hier gebore, hier getoë | Born and raised here, |
| Ek ken geen ander tuiste | I do not know another home |
| Ek weier om te emigreer | I refuse to emigrate |
| Hier sal ek lewe, hier sal ek sterwe | This is where I will live, this is where I will die |
| Uit die grond tot die grond – | From dust, to dust – |
| Al sê wie ook wat! | No matter what people say! |

Author        :        Wayne Visser

Uploaded      :        Date unknown

Retrieved     :        24 April 2010

***I am an African...***

An inspiring poem about being an African written by Wayne Visser, a South African currently based in Nottingham, UK.

I am an African

Not because I was born there

But because my heart beats with Africa's

I am an African

Not because my skin is black

But because my mind is engaged by Africa

I am an African

Not because I live on its soil

But because my soul is at home in Africa

When Africa weeps for her children

My cheeks are stained with tears

When Africa honours her elders

My head is bowed in respect

When Africa mourns for her victims

My hands are joined in prayer

When Africa celebrates her triumphs

My feet are alive with dancing

I am an African

For her blue skies take my breath away

And my hope for the future is bright

I am an African

For her people greet me as family

And teach me the meaning of community

I am an African

For her wildness quenches my spirit

And brings me closer to the source of life


When the music of Africa beats in the wind

My blood pulses to its rhythm

And I become the essence of music

When the colours of Africa dazzle in the sun

My senses drink in its rainbow

And I become the palette of nature

When the stories of Africa echo round the fire

My feet walk in its pathways

And I become the footprints of history


I am an African

Because she is the cradle of our birth

And nurtures an ancient wisdom

I am an African

Because she lives in the world's shadow

And bursts with a radiant luminosity

I am an African

Because she is the land of tomorrow

And I recognise her gifts as sacred

**ADDENDUM B**
**INFORMATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEMBERS**
**(Refer to Chapter 5)**

## 1. THEOLOGY

## A. André de la Porte

I am the Managing Director of HospiVision, an organization that provides emotional and spiritual care in the health care environment (www.hospivision.org.za). I coordinate the value-based prevention programme which is part of the CompreCare's Initiative (**C**oordinated **H**IV and **A**IDS **M**anagement **P**rogramme**s**). As part of this programme, HospiVision has developed and implemented a prevention programme for faith-based communities called: "Choose Life: A value-based response to HIV and AIDS". This programme is funded by the United States Agency for International Development. I attained a Masters Degree (*Cum Laude*) in clinical pastoral counselling at the University of Stellenbosch and completed a doctorate in pastoral care for the sick in 1988. I am involved with care and counselling for people living with HIV and AIDS as well as training for professional and lay caregivers. I am also a part-time lecturer at the Centre for Contextual Ministry at the University of Pretoria, where I teach an advanced course in pastoral counselling. I am married to Annette, a businesswoman. We have two daughters, Danica and Githa.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite André de la Porte**

We have met with Dr André de la Porte as the director of HospiVision a number of times as part of the Departmental research project SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS.  I found him to be very knowledgeable on the research field of HIV and AIDS and how this disease can also affect a person spiritually.  Dr de la Porte was very approachable and I wanted to include the views from people who also formed part of the greater Departmental research project in my own research study.

**B.     Simon Mailula**

My short job description (at HospiVision) was:

• Regional coordinator for Kalafong, Dr George Mukhari and Mamelodi Hospitals and HIV/AIDS Counselling and Pastoral care for the sick, trainer and community developer.

• Co-developed programme called "Choose Life, a value-based response to HIV/AIDS".  My responsibilities were to mobilise faith communities (pastors, church leaders, Sunday school teachers as well as youth leaders) and facilitate, monitor and evaluate the "Choose Life" programmes countrywide.  I also facilitated the HIV/AIDS programme at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus for the final year social science students.

• Head: Counselling and spiritual care for the sick at the Tshwane District Hospital.

Currently I am involved as a:

- Part-time lecturer: Centre for Continuing Education (Prof Malan Nel), University of Pretoria.

Providing lectures on: Counselling and emotional and spiritual care for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

- Part-time therapist at Coram Deo Pastoral Centre, doing trauma and family therapy.

(CV shortened)

## Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Simon Mailula

Dr Simon Mailula and I met while we were still both Masters students of Prof Müller. When we enrolled for our PhD studies, we both became part of the research team for the Departmental research project SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS. Simon was our link with the HospiVision (Kurima) fieldworkers, who helped to conduct the first round of interviews with HIV and AIDS orphans. Having also been a PhD student of Prof Müller and previously employed by HospiVision, I contacted him to be part of the interdisciplinary team.

## C.    Arnau van Wyngaard

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Serving for the past twenty five years as pastor of the *Swaziland Reformed Church (Shiselweni Congregation)* during which time responsibility was taken to start with the training of indigenous church leaders. In 2006 became Project Manager and CEO of *Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care.*

**PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

*As Pastor:*

Pastor and leader of the SRC Shiselweni with all responsibilities normally linked to this task.

Facilitated the process in order for the *Swaziland Reformed Church*, which was formerly part of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, to become an indigenous and independent church in Swaziland. Has been serving as General Secretary of the *Swaziland Reformed Church* for the past twenty years. Representative of the *Swaziland Reformed Church* on the *Reformed Ecumenical Council* and from June 2010 also the representative on the *World Communion of Reformed Churches*. Member of the *Swaziland Conference of Churches*.

*As Lecturer*

Involved with the training of indigenous pastors of the *Swaziland Reformed Church*. Frequently used on part-time basis as lecturer for EE III in order to train pastors and theological students in an effective discipleship program. Visited a Bible School in Samara (Russia) annually for eight consecutive years to present lectures on the *Theology of Mission.*

*As Project Manager of Shiselweni Reformed Church Home-Based Care*

Initiated the training of the first group of 32 home-based caregivers in an area in Swaziland, known as Dwaleni. By the end of 2009, 700 caregivers in 22 different communities were involved in this project. Together they are caring for almost 2500 clients, most of whom would not have received much care.

(CV shortened)

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Arnau van Wyngaard**

I knew about Dr Arnau van Wyngaard and his involvement in the HIV and AIDS field through (Reverend) Pieter Visser, who accompanied me to Nigeria. Pieter and Dr van Wyngaard's son Cobus were university friends. After finding an article written by Dr van Wyngaard, I contacted him through the social network Facebook. I wanted Dr van Wyngaard to participate as part of my interdisciplinary team, because whereas my research focussed on adolescents living in the inner city of Pretoria, he was more involved with rural communities in Swaziland. I was interested to see what his perspective on the two chosen stories would be in relation to that of Drs de la Porte and Mailula who both worked mostly in more urban areas in Pretoria and surrounds.

## 2.    PSYCHOLOGY

### A.    Ilze Barnard (Clinical psychologist)

> I am a Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Kempton Park. I also function as a consulting psychologist for Wedge Gardens Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Centre and run the "Leadership Training Course" for pilots and management at SA Airlink. My fields of interest include addiction, positive psychology and eating disorders.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Ilze Barnard**

The focus of the current study falls on not only the spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and AIDS orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, but jointly on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of these adolescents.

Since I already had a counselling psychologist as well as an educational psychologist on board – Ilze Jansen and Tilda Loots respectively (see below) – I thought it good to actively seek out the perspective of a clinical psychologist as well for a holistic psychological perspective on the chosen stories. Ilze Barnard's interest in positive psychology sheds an interesting light on the identified concerns of the girls and links up well with the narrative approach to research and therapy, by also focussing on helping the person cope by emphasising their unique strengths.

**B.      Ilze Jansen (Counselling psychologist)**

I am a Counselling Psychologist in private practice. I currently work from home. I am involved in the counselling of individuals between the ages of 10 and very old. I do a lot of adolescent psychological assessments for subject -and career choice. I have a special interest in the counselling of parents who have a baby or babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of hospitals in South Africa.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Ilze Jansen**

Ilze Jansen was first on board as part of my interdisciplinary team. I have known her for some ten odd years – we started out working together as tutors within the Department of Biblical and Religious studies, University of Pretoria while both simultaneously being enrolled for postgraduate studies in Psychology as well as Biblical Studies. Our mutual interests helped us to become great friends. I knew she would have much to contribute to the conversation as she herself worked with adolescents in her practice as a counselling psychologist.

Furthermore, due to her training she also has a good working knowledge of the narrative approach to therapy and research as well as an interest in spiritual and religious matters and how this might affect the well-being of individuals.

## C.     Tilda Loots (Educational psychologist)

I am an Educational Psychologist, currently employed on a part-time basis at the University of Pretoria and also have a private practice. I am currently busy with my PhD, which is a comparative case study of teachers' implementation of an asset-based approach intervention for school-based psychosocial support.

One of the barriers identified as preliminary findings is HIV/AIDS.

## Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Tilda Loots

Prof Müller suggested upon enquiry about my preliminary interdisciplinary team members that I also try to enlist the perspective of an educational psychologist. The counselling psychologist Ilze Jansen referred me to Tilda Loots, as they knew each other and had a working relationship.  She was on holiday overseas at the time I contacted her, but still kindly made the time to assist me.  Her interest and involvement in a school-based psychosocial support approach and the fact that HIV and AIDS was identified as a barrier in this intervention programme, meant she brought a valuable perspective to the table with regards to adolescents as well as HIV and AIDS.

**3. SOCIAL WORK**

**A. Suzanne Jacobs**

I hold a BSocial Work degree obtained at University of Pretoria. I am currently employed at CMR (Christian Social Council) in Benoni. Previous experiences include two years working at Bramley Children's Home and one year at Child Welfare South Africa, Kempton Park.

I was also part of a counselling team at our congregation for three years where we counselled youth / teenagers when needed and offered them emotional and spiritual support.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Suzanne Jacobs**

Social work also forms part of the social sciences, and in light of this I wanted to include professionals from this discipline in the interdisciplinary conversations. Suzanne Jacobs is the younger sister to a university friend of mine. We had sporadic contact over the last few years, lost touch and recently reconnected. She was more than willing to assist me, and her contributions were helpful.

**B. Jerry Streets**

Rev Dr Frederick J Streets, former Chaplain of Yale University and Senior Pastor of the Church of Christ in Yale, USA is the Carl and Dorothy Bennett Professor of Pastoral Counselling, Wurzweiler School of Adjunct Associate Professor Pastoral Theology, Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Jerry Streets**

Jerry Streets and I met when he visited South Africa and the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria for a couple of months in 2008. We shared an office during this time, and I found him to be a very pleasant and knowledgeable person. He shares my interest in HIV and Aids research and is not only involved in social work, but pastoral counselling as well. I invited him, because I knew that from his position he would bring interesting insights to the interdisciplinary discussions.

## C.    Corlie van der Berg

My name is Corlie van der Berg. I am a Social Worker. I have been working in a small private practice over the last few years, doing brief therapy with adults, children and adolescents. Currently I am a practice lecturer at the Department of Social Work and Criminology at UP. I have had two years of training in Narrative Therapy at the Institute for Therapeutic Development. I hold a masters degree in Mental Health from UNISA. I have started my doctoral studies this year specializing in social constructions of marriage. I approach my work in my own practice from a narrative perspective.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Corlie van der Berg**

Prof Antoinette Lombard of the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria put me in touch with Corlie van der Berg, as she herself was unable to assist me at the time I did the interdisciplinary conversations. She was kind enough not only to respond, but to give great insights into the stories of Dee and Zee.

## 4.     OTHER DISCIPLINES

## A.     Anthropology: Mieke de Gelder

PhD Candidate, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Toronto

I conducted doctoral research in Pretoria's inner city (at PEN and elsewhere) and surrounding townships (Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Soshanguve) for a total of 18 months (in 2005, 2006, 2007). One chapter in my dissertation examines the labour of HIV/AIDS outreach in the inner city; another focuses on the omnipresence of "bad death" (more generally) in contemporary S.A. and the way this becomes or is salient in women's everyday lives and concerns.

### Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Mieke de Gelder

Mieke de Gelder and I met in 2006 during the first round of data collection for the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project of the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria at the offices of PEN.  She also acted as a field worker during this round of data collection.  I wanted to include anthropology as a perspective in the interdisciplinary conversations, and Professor Müller agreed that it would be a good idea to include it.  Mieke de Gelder was contacted as she also worked in the research field of HIV and Aids, and was involved with PEN.  Her response to the conversation was interesting and invaluable.

**B.      Information science: Jacques du Plessis**

I research information poverty in Africa, and ways to improve the provisioning of information in underserved communities. I also research the impact of culture on the filtering and acceptance of information.

School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin (UWM), Bolton 510 3210N Maryland Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53211

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite Jacques du Plessis**

Jacques du Plessis contacted me via email near the end of 2009.  Professor Müller referred him to me.  As a South African living and working in the United States of America, and with his interest in poverty in South Africa, he conducts a yearly study tour with some of his students to South Africa.  He was interested in us (Juanita Meyer and I) telling his students about our research project and our own research.  We met up with them early in January 2010 and had an interesting discussion.  Later when I started the interdisciplinary conversations, he was willing to assist me in this regard.

**C.      Life coaching: François Wessels**

**François Wessels, MSc MTh.** Initially trained as a statistician, he spent some time in academia before joining the pharmaceutical industry as a biostatistician.  He then became involved in pharmacoeconomics and worked as business development manager for a multinational pharmaceutical company. He has been managing Outcomes Consultants, his own healthcare consultancy for the period 1997-1999.

In 1999 he opened up the local office of an international consultancy, The Lewin Group, a subsidiary of Quintiles Transnational. As part of Quintiles SA his main focus was the strategic elevation of data to business knowledge. From 2005-2008, he has revived Outcomes Consultants.

He has done knowledge-based strategy development, market research, impact analyses and pharmacoeconomics studies, and the disease areas he has been involved in include rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, HIV/AIDS, rhinitis, GI conditions, acne, pneumonia, hyperlipidaemia, hypertension, diabetes, epilepsy and arthritis. He has been involved in a number of vaccine studies, both in the private and the public sector. He has extensive experience in disease management.

He has written the only South African text on pharmacoeconomics, *Pharmacoeconomics – The Value Argument in Medicine*, a resource which has been used extensively in local pharmacoeconomic courses.

Apart from his involvement in Pharmacoeconomics and statistics, Francois also works as a coach, facilitating leadership development, change management and transition processes and work community development or team building. He manages a pastoral care centre, Coram Deo, as Manager: Human and Spiritual Development. In this capacity he is responsible for general management, narrative therapy and facilitating three training courses. He has developed and is co-facilitating a postmodern leadership course.

**Reflection-in-Progress: Choosing to invite François Wessels**

François Wessels was a fellow PhD student with Professor Müller. He submitted his PhD in April 2010 and graduated in September of the same year. As a qualified life coach, he also focussed his research in this research area. I thought it would be interesting to include a discipline, which might not be academic in nature, but gaining popularity by the day. His insights into the stories of both Dee and Zee were very interesting and overlapped with some of the comments made by professionals in some of the other disciplines at the interdisciplinary table.