

**IMPACT OF DIVORCE AND IN-LAWS: A CHALLENGE IN  
PASTORAL CARE IN THE PENTECOSAL AND CHARISMATIC  
CHURCHES**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT OF THE STUDY**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the question of “divorce” is one of the highest challenges that faces the Pentecostal/Charismatic in South Africa and mostly in local assemblies. In the beginning God had intended marriage from the beginning that couples should be joined together until separated by death. This according to the Bible Verse “Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split what God has joined together” (Matthew 19:6).

This study was prompted by the researcher’s observation of the challenge or need for a wholistic intervention in Pastoral Care in the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches posed by the questions of marriage and divorce and the challenges related to the role of in-laws in the tensions and contradictions of married life in this religious tradition.

The rate of divorce among the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians couples is alarming high that the church pastoral must be one actively involved to reduce the alarming problem.

Marriage in the African communities is often a communal affair; this study proceeds from the assumption that in-laws are involved in the initial stages of negotiations, but are often left out as the processes unfold, especially in matters relating to divorce.

A qualitative approach to the study was deemed appropriate; interviews were conducted in which participants were encouraged to tell their own stories (Wimberley and Gerkin). As the narratives unfolded, it was clear that in-laws were not the only ones affected by situations of divorce. Thus, the study also introduced literary sources to validate the assumptions on the psychological and emotional implications of marriages gone bad for all stake holders, especially children. As children oscillate between the maternal and paternal worlds of their parents, more questions arise regarding how in-laws contribute positively or negatively to their emotional and psychological development (Chapters 5 & 6) in the short and long term.

Chapter 4 established a framework in the light of Osmer's (2008) submissions in which the questions raised in Chapters 5 & 6 could be addressed within a practical theological context. Chapter 7 introduces a 'Pyramid for Pastoral Care' adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, "But seek ye first his kingdo, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33), Imperative and the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* as a viable answer to the research question and a more robust response to the challenges posed by an informed model of pastoral care in the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches.

## DECLARATION

I, **Sifiso Vincent Ngcobo**, Student Number: **1640079**, declare that:

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
2. This Thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This Thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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  - a. Their words may have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
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**Rev SV Ngcobo** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Student**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Prof. MJ Masango** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Supervisor**

**Signature**

**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my baby girls Khumo Ngcobo and Oluchi Ngcobo, the inspiration you gave me to finish every project I undertake, the motivation that I work hard and succeed in all that I do. You have been and you will forever be my inspiration and the source of strength. Most significantly daddy loves girls "Father by Choice".

My dear beloved mother Elizaberth Ndlovu, you always believe in me, you are my biggest supporter and thank you for your continued prayers.

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## KEY WORDS

Pastor

Church

Charismatic

Pentecostal

Divorce

Marriage

Family

In-laws

Makoti

Mkwenyana

Lobolo

Traditional Wedding

Western Wedding



## ABBREVIATIONS

RSA - Republic of South Africa

Stats S.A - Statistics South Africa

GP - Gauteng Province

JHB - Johannesburg

OT - Old Testament

NT - New Testament

NKJV - New King James Version

NLT - New Living Translation

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

In the African community, urban or rural, the notion of family is very important. Marriage is widely accepted as the legitimate foundation on which it is deep-rooted. It is regarded as the basic social unit for moving tradition and culture forward. Thus, from the very beginning it involves the families of a couple that contemplates to marry or to start a family of their own.

Eldredge (2002, 15) defines marriage as “an exclusive and intimate union of a man and a woman that is established when they make a covenant to leave their parents and form a new family unit.” The definition of marriage varies according to the different cultures; but in most cultures, it is a union between male and female. A pure and holy union is like the eternal union of Jesus Christ and His church. Ferraro (2004, 194) defines marriage as establishing a legitimate relationship between a man and a woman. He tends to assume that all marriages are heterosexual; however, some modern cultures do recognize homosexual marriages as being legitimate. However, this study will focus on the Biblical and heterosexual notion of marriage.

Christensen (1985:66) claims to correctly define marriage as a religious wedding service that recognizes God’s lifelong commitment. It is not a mere contract or bargain that has certain contingencies and escape clauses. The two participants in marriage pledge themselves for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health. It frankly recognizes in advance the possibilities of economic difficulties, illness, sterility, and other dangers and pitfalls (Christensen, 1985:66).

In the biblical tradition, God introduced marriage as a permanent social phenomenon to be esteemed by all partners, male and female. In the Old Testament (OT) in the book of Genesis 2:24 sets God's ideal for marriage as a permanent institution not to be put asunder by humankind. Jesus taught that '*what God has put together let no man put asunder.*'

However, man and women have missed the standard that God set for marriage in the beginning. Kunhiyop (2008, 190) argues that if families misrepresent God's ideal for marriage then society is lost. He is right because the Bible states that "righteousness" exalts a nation (Proverbs 14:34).

The notion of divorce is not new; that Jesus taught and even allowed it under certain circumstances in the New Testament (NT) Matthew 5: 31-32 predates modern culture by many centuries. Suffice it to say, it is not the standard God, society, or people getting married set for themselves when opting for marriage; however, it cannot be disputed that many marriages, for better or worse, end up in this most unpalatable of situations, as Hudson so well puts it:

*Few events in life are more traumatic than divorce. Families are torn apart, lives are disrupted, and wounds linger long after the final papers are signed. The future that once appeared so bright now looks like a dark cloud. You wonder if you'll ever get over the hurt, the grief, the anger. You wonder if you can ever love again. (Hudson 1998, 1)*

The decision to end a marriage relationship is traumatic, fearful and often filled with various emotions. Divorce is an old phenomenon stretching back to Mosaic times in biblical history. In the context of South Africa, Du Plessis (2006, 3) argues that in 2002, the divorce rate per 1000 legal marriages was 0.81; translated to 8.1% which says that 1 out of 13 marriages end up in divorce. That is an alarming benchmark or statistic by any measurement.

The process of divorce has various challenges, not only for the couple but other stakeholders such as in-laws and children born within the situation that is now confronted by the possibility of dissolution.

Often the psychological and emotional implications are experienced differently by all involved. This is well expressed in the statement by Hartin (1982) when he says, *“It is evident that individuals experience the various components of divorce differently.”* An element that is often overlooked in many studies is how the in-laws are affected by the decision to divorce made by their children. This study will pay particular attention to this aspect of marriage life.

Engelbrecht *et al* (1999, 4) define divorce as a choice that two people make, not to live together as husband and wife. Often this means that the legal process of divorce must begin, and the relevant documents ultimately signed.

Sometimes the other partner will sign against his or her will depending on how much of the situation can still be rescued. In South Africa, it is possible that one person can start and end the divorce process without the knowledge of the other partner. The grounds for divorce will most certainly differ from couple to couple.

While the researcher will draw from personal and related insights of his own Zulu cultural background, he is a pastor in an urban setting within the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. He has always viewed marriage as an important part of family, a centre of unity and a communal setting for raising emotionally and psychologically stable children into mature adults. As a pastor, he has experienced the pain of divorcing parents, seen families in the church and has been involved in the unfolding trauma of the process of divorce himself. Thus, the choice of the topic emerges from a deeper need to understand and address the challenges posed by the situation of divorce in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition among black people between ages 30-55 in Gauteng, with specific focus in the area of Roodepoort under Johannesburg where the researcher is a pastor at a local assembly.

This study will often use the word Pentecostal to refer to all, Charismatic and Change Bible Church Family of Churches (CBC-FC) that embrace, as a basic tenet of faith, the doctrine of ‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.’

## 1.2 Background of Study

Divorce brings humiliation in most families. Some parents feel they have failed their children and blame themselves for not instilling the right values in their children, particularly Christian background families. Biblically, it will be interpreted that shame brings lies and deception as part of the devil's plans to isolate people and thus making them to have a low self-esteem.

In the black family, when a child gets married, it is considered as an achievement and pride to the family or clan.

The family prides itself of this achievement in the community. There is what we can call a perceived "Family Honour" resulting in parents having high expectations from their children.

In some instances, at birth some parents create an ideal husband or wife for their child. They plan their children's imaginary wedding day and create an ideal grandparent's world for themselves.

This means some parents in the black communities unintentionally frame pictures in their sub-conscious mind and see their children as highly successful if they follow their parent's choices. In most cases, such decisions by parents reflect things they either failed to achieve in their own lives and thus the expectation that children should honour their parent's dreams. Essentially, they marry, not for themselves but for their parents.

To understand something of how shame is created in these family contexts is to begin to be aware of the origins and dynamics of one's own sense of low self-esteem, and to begin to take steps toward undoing it. Wimberly (2003, 55) introduces what is called Pastoral Theologians and Pastoral Psychologist, which tells us how devastating it can be to continue on a path of ignorance regarding the input of the social sciences to the notion of marriage and divorce.

Often, the community has self-imposed expectations that are based on family, cultural values, educational achievements, technological changes and demographic development. Expectations are often caused by social dependency some individuals are nurtured in; thus, the admiration for those who do well in marriages and are well catered for. This is particularly true for young women; their marriages are regarded as successful and they become the shining stars of their communities.

Marriage is perceived as an achievement, family and neighbours pride themselves with the success of their child and how they have achieved the best that society has to offer. Thus, marriage, especially for young women, is seen as an triumph and contributes to the community and family's sense of pride. The researcher experienced how his divorce affected both his family and his ex-wife's family. He witnessed how parents from both sides were determined to intervene to ensure that the marriage succeeded but to no avail.

The irony of all marriages is that one marries a total stranger; thus, the socio-cultural forces that shape each person's thinking are different. Ultimately, each situation stands or falls with how much the couple is willing and able to make their situation work.

### **1.3 Rationale of the Study**

When a couple gets divorced, the people that are mostly affected are undoubtedly the couple themselves and their children. Parents of the couple are also affected but tend to be left out until at the end. This is despite the important consideration that at the beginning, the marriage cannot be formalised without their involvement. The traditional *AmaLobolo* (dowry) negotiations are always between the two families as they work towards bringing their children together in marriage.

*AmaLobolo* is the dowry given to the woman's family by the man. In most African cultures, certain basic tenets of practice are common. A young man, ready for marriage, will follow the due processes of notifying his elders. His family will plan to meet with the young woman's parents on a mutually acceptable day.

On arrival they will make known what brings them over as per their request. As the process unfolds during the negotiations, the girl's family will say how many *Izinkomo*, literally "Cows" will be demanded from the young man proposing marriage to their daughter. As it happens now, she must consent to the proposal or request. In the past it used to be an arrangement between two families with little or no consent or approval of the children; so-called 'arranged marriages' (Sam 2009). Lately, in urban areas '*Izinkomo*' has taken the form of money instead of literal 'Cows,' but the implication remains the same. This 'transaction,' for lack of a better word, really concludes the marriage pact between the young people concerned; at which point the two families would now be known as '*Abakhozi*,' loosely translated friends but in a deeper sense, either side of the families now regard each other as family, brought together, as it were, by their children. In many instances, the woman's family would then conclude the process by 'handing' over their daughter as wife to the young man in the other family. In an urban setting, the couple may even legally register their marriage with the government for a 'Licence.' Beyond that, the young couple can decide, whether, they would like to celebrate in a so-called 'white wedding' involving, church solemnisation and other western offshoot formalities involving friends and related significant others.

As more and more young couples wed in urban settings, the fluid idea of marriage, this study assumes, contributes to the alienation of in-laws, especially as the couple face challenges that may lead to a situation of divorce. In the past, couples used to live near the man's family; in some instances, there would be intermarriage even among cousins; but that situation has since changed with the challenges of urbanisation and education of both young men and women. Thus, families were closely knit and problems arising from the children's marriages were a communal matter.

Lartey (2003, 23-24) argues that Western pastoral care models are more individualistic and pastoral care should be clearly seen as a communal and congregational matter.

He further argues that in the traditional black (African-American) church, one must mobilize the resources of the total community in caring for the needs of individuals and groups. It is this family 'Communal' thing that is lost, which perhaps if restored, could save a lot of marriages. To be sure, if in-laws were engaged in facilitative and positive ways in the processes of divorce contemplated by their children many marriages would survive.

The methods of helping in-laws to deal with shame and building self-esteem after divorce is part of broader social challenges that are affecting our congregations, workplaces and communities (Wimberley 1999). It has been proven that in-laws, who harbour an unhealthy view about their lives, will in time be manifested in a variety of distressing ways.

#### **1.4 The Research Question**

How can pastoral caregivers/counsellors within the Charismatic/Pentecostal tradition, facilitate a process of healing, forgiveness and empowerment using their own stories in situations of divorce to restore healthy relationships between in-laws, divorce incumbents, and the children involved?

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

This study intends to engage an in-depth analysis of the challenges posed by divorce and how that impacts on all stakeholders, especially the male partner and his in-laws. The purpose is to ultimately facilitate a process in which a pastoral care model can be designed in dealing with the psychological and emotional issues involved for all stakeholders, especially the in-laws.

#### **1.6 Relevance and Contribution of the Study**

EP Wimberly (1997) emphasizes that personal narratives are important in Pastoral Care (PC) because people share what they feel.



It is the qualitative and empirical nature of these narratives which makes an important contribution in pastoral care and ensures that pastors or spiritual caregivers in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition do not overlook experience as a source of important data in designing pastoral care programs. Perhaps in the beginning churches in this religious tradition thought they were resistant to the problem of divorce; however, the media is now inundated with pastors and adherents who struggle with the problem and do not know how to deal with it. This study will therefore contribute in structured and scientific ways of addressing the problem of divorce in these churches.

### **1.7 Wimberly and Gerkin's Narrative and Pastoral Care Methods**

Wimberly (1997, xii) has emphasised and explored the importance of 'storying' human experience in his 'Narrative Model' in Pastoral Care. He insists that, "*human experience can be storied or arranged in sequences that give a coherent account to that experience*". Gerkin (1997, 11-19) Takes us on a tour of his early beginnings in pastoral care and emphasizes, like Wimberly, the importance of human experience as you help people deal with their situations. It is this confluence of human experiences and narratives that this study will explore. People can 'story' what is inside them by drawing from personal experience because the narratives are within them already. In a situation of divorce, we all have a story to tell. As Jaco Dreyer pointed out, the importance of narratives for practical theology is today widely recognised (Dreyer 2014, 9). He maintains that 'embracing a variety of approaches could help practical theologians to 'steer between the Scylla of a one-sidedly scientific practical theology and the Charybdis of the immediacy of praxis.'

### **1.8 Methodology and Research Design**

Primary sources in the study anticipated participants who will share from personal experience by way of interviews, group-interviews and questionnaires.

Secondary sources were library based, including pertinent research with bearing on the research question.

Given the empirical nature of the research question, the study was conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. The study will consist of 5 carefully selected in-laws whose children had divorced and 5 persons who have been through the experience of divorce. Whenever possible the experiences of the children were solicited. In two instances, the researcher participated in seminars (Group-interviews) as a participant.

- Participants were encouraged to share personal experiences.
- Five of these had experienced the divorce of their children
- The other five are people had personally experienced divorce and shared their life experiences on the research topic.
- In scattered instances, the study will include the narratives of children's experiences in divorce situations.

Thus, this study encouraged research participants to share their stories and how they have been impacted by them in different ways. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed, analysed and interpreted in the context of the research question.

## **1.9 Ethical Considerations**

Bearing in mind the sensitivity and nature of the topic and research focus certain ethical considerations were taken regarding the participants in this project. This is an accepted practice in the social sciences with subject matter that has moral implications, good or bad, for participating incumbents. The prospective participants were mainly from with the Pentecostal/Charismatic religious tradition. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and why it is undertaken.

The prospective participants were given statements of intent and a letter of consent to maintain and assure their privacy.

The names of the participants were not used to keep information confidential and to 'hide' the identities of the participants. The participants were informed that they were

at liberty to withdraw their participation, including not responding to questions that they are uncomfortable to answer. The researcher further explained that there were no financial or material benefits for participating in the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This Chapter will capture a panoramic review and analysis of literature and structures pertinent to the research topic within Pastoral Care (PC) and the more encompassing discipline of Practical Theology (PT) in Europe and America and conclude with African perspectives on the subject as well as identifying the existing gaps within the discipline. As noted in the topic, the study will place emphasis on Pastoral Care within the Pentecostal movement.

As Gerkin (1986) points out, the notion of divorce has a long history in many cultures around the world and comes in many directions. In almost every situation it has some relevance to the families of the couple who, for better or worse, were involved in arrangements of the marriage in its initial stages; in the context of most African cultures at least.

In Chapter 1, the study will focus on the ending of marriage and how that impacts on the in-laws. Many studies have focused on the children of the couples contemplating divorce, but very little research has been done on how the two families brought together as 'one,' as it were, by their children are affected.

The study will therefore not over-elaborate the well-known bleak suggestion of divorce statistics in South Africa; these speak for themselves regarding the negative and critical nature of the high rate of marriages ending up in divorce (G. Baloyi 2011, 20-21).<sup>1</sup> It will also not attempt to introduce a new definition of what divorce is, given the fact that it is widely accepted that divorce is the legal or cultural dissolution or termination of a marriage relationship. In the context of a practical theology, one would say, 'what God has brought together is separated' despite the scriptural admonition that it should not be so. Effectively, a divorced couple is no longer married. This study seeks to address the psychological consequences of that dissolution and how it impacts all stakeholders, especially in-laws.

## **2.2. Trends in Practical Theology**

Practical Theology is now well established in South African universities. Browning (1983) and Osmer (2008) argue for a Practical Theology well-grounded in experience and informed by research in the social sciences. Thus, any authentic pastoral care initiative must take into consideration what the social sciences have to say regarding its area of focus. Scholars such as Moore (1971) and others have taken this challenge seriously. Pastoral Care, while it takes that submission seriously, must facilitate a process in which people draw strength from their own narratives (Gerkin, 1986; Caine & Steeves, 2009; Hopewell, 1987; Manda, 2015; Wimberly, 1997). Pastoral Care, by its very nature must consider the psychological implications involved as people deal with the tensions and contradictions of the experience of divorce in the context of their own spirituality.

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<sup>1</sup>See also [http://www.divorcelaws.co.za/uploads/1/2/1/6/12166127/divorce\\_statistics\\_south\\_africa\\_-\\_2014.pdf](http://www.divorcelaws.co.za/uploads/1/2/1/6/12166127/divorce_statistics_south_africa_-_2014.pdf).

In a sense, it introduces the 'God' aspect ignored by traditional therapies such as psychology and counselling. This study will attempt a synthesis of this thesis in following the pattern of narratives to address the overall research question.

### **2.3. Pastoral Care in the Practical Theology**

Thinking 'Theologically' is recent within the Pentecostal tradition (Belcher and Hall 2001, 64). Pastoral Care, while it has been exercised in different forms within different interpretations of the tradition, is not an exception. Indeed, it was Howard Clinebell Jr., who provided a standard text, published in 1984, that hurled Pastoral Care as a distinct theme within the movement (Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling 1984). Clinebell, a minister in the United Methodist pioneered an approach that combined psychotherapy and religion (Moss III 1984).

The notion of 'Shepherding' as related to Pastoral Care is as old as Biblical history. Evans argues that in its earlier days it captured both the understanding of 'Healing' and 'Restoration.' Gerkin elaborates on these primary thematic beginnings scattered throughout different epochs of history as well. These two scholars give us a well-rounded European and American perspective of the subject (Gerkin C. , 1997, pp. 23-51; Evans, 2000, pp. 1-11).

The initiative to explore Pastoral Care in South African Universities is fairly new and patterned on western models. This tendency is common as Juma submits regarding Psychology (Juma 2011). Professor M Masango, at the University of Pretoria is among the trailblazers in introducing the discipline in a South African University.

In October 2017 the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP) was officially accredited by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

This recognition formally launched the Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors (CPSC); this move officially introduced the recognition of Pastoral Care and Counselling as a recognized professional practice among Christian religious practitioners.<sup>2</sup>

It is on this new platform that Baloyi (2017, 11) decried *The Challenge of Pastoral Care in the African Context*. Baloyi highlights male patriarchy, among others, as one challenge the pastoral care and counselling practice needs to confront. African worldviews, as Juma has argued in Psychology, need to be accommodated in the bid to transform western pastoral care and counselling paradigms for the African context.

This move must be applauded given the sensitive nature of counselling and pastoral care over and above the traditional 45 minutes sermon presentation or preaching on a Sunday morning. Perhaps a legal regulatory and informed framework in the practice of religion has become urgent in South Africa and long overdue, especially in the less regulated Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that are often inclined to the abuse of human rights in the name of God.

#### **2.4. An African Philosophical Framework of 'Ubuntu**

According to Christian B.N. Gade the usage of *Ubuntu* as a philosophical, ethical and African worldview stretches as far back as 1846 (Gade 2011).

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<sup>2</sup> See Website, <http://saap.za.net>. Also see, <http://www.cpssc.org.za>.

He argues convincingly that the thought is rooted in many African leaders prior to its popularisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Zimbabwe by Stanlake Samkange (Makuvaza 1996) and in South Africa by, among others, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Tutu, 1999; Haws, 2009) and former president Thabo Mbeki and Reuel Khoza (Muchie, et al. 2009, 258-259).

In tracing, what he calls 'African narratives of return' Gade links the philosophy of *Ubuntu* to Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* in Tanzania in the 1960s. At the core of the philosophy emanates a sense of human-ness espoused in human relations on every level; a deep recognition of oneself in the humanity of others expressed so well in the Zulu maxim *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a human being is human because of others human beings).

Nyerere essentially forged a new form of African socialism that sought to strip itself of individualistic European forms of Socialism and Capitalism (Brennan 2014, 459-477). Thus, a resounding call in most African leadership is the need to restore 'human-ness' in all we do (Biko 1987); and resist in every sense of the word the exploitation of one by another (Mesaki and Malipula 2011). Marriage in the African context is the most fundamental level of human relationships.

In many ways the notion of *Ubuntu* speaks to the oppressive and patriarchal structures that dehumanise women and reduce them to objects of sexual exploitation by their male counterparts (Chisale 2017). In Pentecostal or evangelical churches this is made worse by a wrong exegesis of Pauline texts that speak to the 'submission' and consequently the oppression of women (Casimir, et al., 2014; Ackley, 2004).

In many cultural contexts, it is the men who reserve the right to send their women away (divorce), especially in situations of barrenness, without any consideration of the now scientifically proven fact that the problem may be male related too (Mangena 2009, 18-30).



While this study is focused on the notion of divorce, it does so from the assumption that both men and women are equally created of God. There are many reasons why a couple may end up settling on divorce as an option in their marriage; but often it has very little to do with who they are in terms of their human-ness. This study will therefore consciously desist from finger pointing and attempt to address the research question on an *Ubuntu* basis.

However, we must from the onset, recognise that *Ubuntu* is a heavily loaded concept even in South Africa. It is no longer a monopoly of people of African origins but has found its way into larger public and academic discourses in African Philosophy and other disciplines. Over and above the various ethnic groups, Van Niekerk, in his dissertation at Wits university gives a lengthy analysis of how the notion is used in a variety of disciplines such as law, Letseka in education, Khoza in social and political sciences, business and others (Van Niekerk, 2014; Letseka, 2012; Khoza, 2007).

Given the various disciplines in engaging the notion of *Ubuntu*, pastoral theology was not to be outdone. Nyengele engages pastoral theology and positive psychology in an intercultural dialogue with the African tradition of *Ubuntu* (Nyengele 2014). There is an increasing awareness of the notion of *Ubuntu* in relation to the practice of Psychology and related disciplines (Hanks 2008). It is perhaps the connection between pastoral care and psychology in an *Ubuntu* environment that must still be explored. The tension between humanistic and spiritual approaches to psychology and theology have a long history from Erich Fromm to Paul Tillich (Pavesi 2010). As we shall see later, some African scholars have raised a concern on the western paradigms adopted by African scholarship to deal with African problems. Pastoral care is not immune from these allegations and must in its unfolding processes engage and reengage new paradigms for its context.

As the processes unfold the challenges are many. Given the history of imperialism and colonialism in the formation of African mental models, and the shaping and reshaping of these by various forms of ethnic cultures within Africa itself; it is difficult to formulate common definitions of the concept of *Ubuntu*.

To claim anything as 'African' is often misleading given the fact that the cultural and ethnic tensions and contradictions are many in a situation already made difficult by western forms and interpretations of how African disciplines of inquiry should approach or engage their own situations in a homogenous manner. While the fundamental tenets of *Ubuntu* may be somewhat homogenous its interpretations will ultimately be affected by the ethnic heterogeneity of the context in which it is interpreted or sought to be applied.

## **2.5. Pastoral Care in Pentecostalism**

The weakness of most Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in South Africa is the glaring tendency and open desire to duplicate American Charismatic ways of doing things, especially as they gain more and more access to European and American trends of preaching and teaching on TV networks like TBN, thus worsening the tensions and contradictions of a cultural situation that is already fluid.

Unstructured fluidity has always been the downside of Pentecostal history. Robeck writes of the history of Pentecostalism from its early days in 1906 at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles (Robeck 2006, 188-280). Structure was not characteristic of this movement until perhaps in 1914 with the founding of the Assemblies of God USA (AGUSA). Most initiatives revolved around individuals, many of whom were suspicious of any initiative to formalise the new movement. These suspicions also reflected the pioneer's attitudes towards formal education. Anyone who was 'led by the Spirit' could follow their aspirations without fear of reprimand from the wider group. This fluid cultural trend of religiosity was soon carried to many parts of the USA and around the world through Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) missionaries and is prevalent within the Pentecostal tradition today.

Pentecostalism's main contribution to Practical Theology and theological ecumenism is the noticeable role given to the Holy Spirit as the movement increasingly embraces authentic practices in academic research.

That role was chartered by a South African named David du Plessis (Poloma 2014; Kärkkäinen 2000; Anderson 2002; Hollenweger 2000). Present-day Charismatics are however still languishing in the perils that plagued early Pentecostalism regarding a serious consideration of the academic world.

## 2.6. The Gap in the Literature

Juma (2011, III-IV; 16), a Roman Catholic Priest and registered psychologist, argues at length in his thesis that western models of psychology and psychopathology are an 'imported commodity' and 'insensitive to African cultures.' His argument is well informed since he has been a missionary in many parts of Africa before he started practicing in South Africa. He is calling for 'Indigenous' forms of Psychology traditionally ignored by western paradigms (Allwood and Berry 2006). Practical Theology and Pastoral Care in particular, needs to take cognisance of this observation. While there is much common ground, in terms of life experiences, with African-American scholars like Ed Wimberly, the historical realities of colonialism and imperialism diluted experiences and therefore how models, even by African-American scholars may not always be relevant to the African situation. Berglund (1989), for instance, describes the complexities involved in *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* that a black scholar in diaspora nurtured under western or other culture may not even be aware of. Thus, the importance of people's narratives and how they interpret and reflect on their own situation is crucial.

The nucleus of this study is in urban or township situations where, despite being African, there is a wide spread intermingling of people from different ethnic backgrounds (as opposed to what anthropologists call tribes). One aspect of African culture that we often neglect is the multifarious element that makes up the wide variety of ethnic groups within the continent. Gauteng, where much of the research will be conducted, is particularly disposed to this strength and/or weakness. This study will therefore be informed by both the Zulu and Xhosa ethnic contexts diluted as it were by urban cultural plasticity and fluidity. Pastoral Care is largely about counselling, and failure to recognise this aspect of care-giving may lead to more harm, emotional or psychological, in the facilitation of mental health whenever and wherever the need arises (Buhrman 1987).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology and Design**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

As in every research project this study is based on fundamental suppositions regarding the validity or invalidity of a research study; and which methodology and methods are appropriate for the development of knowledge. It is therefore crucial to know what those assumptions are to evaluate the authenticity of the research process.

This Chapter will discuss the philosophical suppositions and the approaches foundational to the study. Philosophical assumptions will be reviewed and presented. The Chapter will also discuss research methodologies and methods used in the study. It will explain the stages and processes involved in the study.

The research design for this study is narrative and interpretative and will be analysed using qualitative research method criteria. A descriptive statistical method will be used to analyse participant satisfaction and how they have been impacted by the study. Observation, face-to-face interviews, focus-group interviews, and questionnaires. The justification for each of the data collection methods used in the study will be discussed.

According to John Dudovskiy, in research, *ontology* means ‘the researcher’s view of the nature of reality or being.’<sup>3</sup> *Epistemology* is the ‘researcher’s view regarding what constitutes acceptable knowledge.’<sup>4</sup> *Methodology* on the other hand, ‘is a systematic theoretical analysis of methods applied to a field of study,’ this triangular approach is, according to TerreBlanche et al, (Terreblanche, Durrheim and Painter 2008), what comprises essential components of a good research paradigm.

### **3.2. Research Paradigm**

A paradigm, derived from the Greek word *paradeigma* and first used by American Physicist and Philosopher Thomas Kuhn, is an inter-connected and inclusive system, theoretical pattern or structure that defines disciplined practice and thinking within a conceptual framework of examining a research problem and finding a solution. It is therefore guided by a set of beliefs, values and assumptions of what constitutes legitimate contribution to a field of study.<sup>5</sup> Paradigms are influenced by one’s ontological perspectives or the researcher’s view of the nature of reality or being; and epistemology or what constitutes acceptable knowledge. Basically, ontology and epistemology are one’s worldview or philosophy on the nature of reality and acceptable knowledge. Research methodology reflects either one or a synthesis of the two. This study will be a confluence of the two approaches regarding my own view of the reality of what marriage should be and the nature of what the experience of divorce affects all stakeholders, especially one’s in-laws.

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<sup>3</sup> John Dudovskiy, see article, <https://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/ontology/>.

<sup>4</sup> John Dudovskiy, see article, <https://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/epistemology/>.

<sup>5</sup> See article, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm\\_shift](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm_shift).

### **3.2.1 Positivism**

Positivism is the submission that only observable phenomena can provide acceptable knowledge. While its interpretations are varied, it is based on the ideas of the French philosopher August Comte, its fundamental submission is that human behaviour can be obtained by observation, reason and experiment. Essentially, positivism assumes reality exists empirically and can be measured quantitatively. The outcome/s in research is/are therefore less subjective because the reality already exists, and its existence is experimentally verifiable. A positivist would therefore measure, within acceptable scientific perimeters, and thus confirm the existence or non-existence of reality; and that for him/her is the core of what establishes authentic knowledge; this becomes the basis of his/her ontology and/or epistemology.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.2.2 Interpretivism**

Interpretivism breaks from the rigidity of positivism by introducing the 'subjective' element into research. Interpretivists argue that human behaviour cannot be quantified, thus they focus on the details of the situation, the reality behind the situation, subjective meanings and factors that contribute to actions. Reality is not imposed on a context or field of interest; it is allowed to emerge from the situation and interpreted within acceptable standards of research methodology (Prasad 2005).

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<sup>6</sup> See article, Dylan Riley, <http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/faculty/Riley/positivism.pdf>.

### 3.2.3 Realism

Realism is the independence of an idea from the human mind, 'What you see is what you get.' It interprets the environment according to information received by the five senses. In other words, a phenomenon is real because it is seen, heard, touched, smelled or tastes real in the context of the research question. This kind of realism is often referred to as 'Direct Realism' as opposed to 'Critical Realism. Critical Realism argues that the five senses are not always a reliable source of information; what you see is not necessarily what you get; there are other environmental factors that contribute to the 'reality' of a social phenomenon.

This notion of 'Critical Realism' is affirmed in psychology; sensory information is processed by the brain in different ways and what one understands in a particular way may be understood and interpreted differently by another.<sup>7</sup> This is true for what is commonly known as 'perception' in psychology.<sup>8</sup>

In research therefore, 'reality' is, to a large extent, stained by the researcher's perceptions of that reality; which may be interpreted differently by another of a different background. This difference in the interpretation of a 'reality' therefore has implications one one's research ontology and epistemology. It is therefore unusual for two researchers to conclude in the same way even if they had to analyse the same or similar situation.

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<sup>7</sup> See article on 'Lip-reading' by Lawrence D Rosenblum in, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sensory-superpowers/201003/lipreading-the-fbi>.

<sup>8</sup> See article, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perception>.



### 3.2.4 Theories Adopted in this Research Study

This study adopted an amalgamation of the theories described above. Its ontological and epistemological framework was informed by a confluence of observation, subjectivism and critical realism.

As pointed out in earlier Chapters, the notion of divorce is common in most cultures and confirmed in biblical history since Hagar, Sarai's slave, escaped ill-treatment. Abram agreed to the Egyptian slave's being ill-treated; in fact, he gave permission for jealous Sarai to do with Hagar as she pleased. She proposed for Abraham to sleep with his slave; and when Hagar became pregnant she despised her madam, thus her maltreatment and subsequent escape (Genesis 16).

Perhaps, Sarai's jealousy, despite her consent, and later, Hagar's escape speaks about the emotional or subjective component of divorce. In some way, and for whatever reason, someone is bound to get hurt in a divorce situation; if not immediately then sometimes later.

Divorce statistics in South Africa speak volumes about the reality of the existence of the phenomenon. Thus, it is real, and this study will not belabour the point of its existence; its focus will be on the impact it has, psychological or otherwise, on all stakeholders. This ongoing debate has however focused very little on the in-laws of divorcing couples on both sides of the spectrum.

As stated before, my own experience of divorce contributes to my ontological and epistemological philosophies. I am divorced and have experienced the pain of observing my own parents go through the emotional and psychological processes of divorce. As a pastor, I've had to deal with broken families who have divorced or contemplate the process. I have spoken to in-laws regarding issues of divorce, or contemplating, children. While some may or may not have contributed to the process, not many escapes feelings of inadequacy on some level. Stake holders related to the couples concerned often have some way in which they think they might have contributed to the marital schism of their children.

Perhaps more pain is felt by the children of the divorcing or divorced parents. They forever remain the connection between the two now-estranged families of the couple, and sometimes must bear the anger or animosity of their paternal and maternal families at one level or another, especially in a situation where a family sides with their child in the marital fiasco.

Ignoring how in-laws are affected in the divorce debacle is often at the peril of the children themselves as they go between the two families. This study assumes that if the dynamics of what happens in the mind of the 'in-laws' is understood it can help either side of the families to assist or facilitate a healthy environment for the emotional and psychological development of the children.

The subject of in-laws, as all married couples may know, is a very sensitive one; depending on how one perceives them and the impact, wrong or right, they may have had on one's marriage. This study hopes to propose a middle-of-the-way conducive to healthy relationships and child development.

### **3.3. Research Methodology and Methods/Designs**

This research project distinguished between methods and methodology. While the terms are often used interchangeably researchers are generally agreed that there is a difference in meaning. Methodology may be described as a more all-encompassing approach to research which includes methods, or designs in which the research will be conducted. Thus, **qualitative** and **quantitative** fall within the category of methodology, the research designs that are accommodated within each methodology are referred to as methods. Thus, methodology is an umbrella term used to accommodate relevant methods or designs used to collect data in the context of a study. Methods within **qualitative** research may include designs such as interviews, questionnaires, surveys, or participant observation among others.

Within the **quantitative** methodology, designs or methods may include experimentation, measurements, or some or other forms of quantification related to the phenomenon being investigated.<sup>9</sup> It was earlier pointed out that, given the pragmatic nature of this study, I settled for the qualitative methodology of inquiry.

### **3.3.1. Observation**

'*Observation*,' in qualitative research, means taking a keen and often uncontrolled look at people's behaviour in a given and pertinent context to one's research question; or 'noting physical characteristics in their natural setting.'<sup>10</sup> Participants in this regard did not know they were being observed. The researcher, as a divorcee, listened-in or participated in narratives of others who have been through the process in personal discussions and seminar settings organised by other pastors to help persons deal with the adverse effects of the divorce experience. Focus was on how individuals were impacted by the experience and the extent to which their in-laws may have contributed for worse to the situation. As a participant in these seminars, the researcher always observed how others were participating. Among others, the questions discussed were, 'In what ways were your in-laws a negative influence on your marriage,' or 'how you would have wanted your in-laws to be a positive influence in your marriage.' Naturally, as we shall see later, there answers were varied and exposed the pastoral challenge this study intends to address. For ethical reasons, the identities of the participants have not been disclosed in this study except where the permission of the participants affected by the narrative/s has been given.

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<sup>9</sup> See article by Sonia Singh, <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-method-and-methodology-in-research>.

<sup>10</sup> See article, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief16.pdf>.

### 3.3.2. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are an acceptable and valid tool in qualitative research. In this study, they were used where participants were not easily accessible regarding observation, group or 'Face-to-Face' (FtF) interviews. These were however used to a limited extent. The study took cognisance of the fact that questionnaires are limited in drawing information from participants because of their rigidity and predetermined nature; and may often be susceptible to researcher bias in terms of what should be known. This deficit made it necessary to use FtF interviews as described below.

### 3.3.3. Face-to-Face interviews

'Face-to-Face' (FtF) interviews are a commonly used in qualitative research as a data collecting method. Some researchers argue that social cues, such as voice intonation and body language, can give the interviewer more information 'between-the-lines'<sup>11</sup> while this is true in some cultural settings, it may be biased by what the interviewer wants to hear or see in the interviewee responses.

Given the different cultural contexts of some participants, this study made a conscious attempt to reduce reading behavioural interpretations into how interviewees responded to questions. For instance, the researcher being an urban-Zulu man and married to an urban-Xhosa woman assumed that social cues such as mentioned above may not always communicate a similar interpretation or analysis of 'in-between-the lines' message.

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<sup>11</sup>See <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/viewArticle/175/391&sa=U&ei=FdsJTdDCGYOnrAer0YjVDg&ved=0CP4BEBYwXg&usg=AFQjCNEsC2J0wILvNuH7LEhQaA2znBkKvw> article,

In one instant, an interview was done of a naturalised African-American woman who looked the interviewer directly in the eyes; such behaviour would be considered appalling in cultural contexts where a woman is not supposed to make direct eye-contact with a man, especially her husband.

Given the advancement of technology and encrypted services in the social media; in some cases, 'FtF' interviews were conducted through unfiltered and recorded telephonic discussions. In one case the participant sent me a telephonic discussion between her and her ex-husband in which the husband blamed her mother (his mother-in-law) for their divorce; things got so madly out of hand she was almost murdered in the relationship. This discussion, carried almost five years since the near-catastrophic event occurred, was candid between the couple, especially the woman who took up the opportunity to emotionally express her frustrations and disgust while married to the man.

### **3.4. Summary**

This Chapter sought to explain the research methodology and methods adopted in this study. It discussed the ontological and epistemological philosophies foundational to the empirical approach suited for the social phenomena and nature of inquiry pertinent to the overall research question (Creswell 2003). The study focused on observation, questionnaires, group and FtF interviews as appropriate tools employed in the collection of data. Over and above these data collection methods, the study was augmented by library and relevant scholarly research on the subject under investigation.

The qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, methodology was preferred due to the nature of the research question. The connection of divorce and its impact on in-laws and other stakeholders is an empirical or pragmatic social phenomenon and therefore not quantifiable as would normally be expected in quantitative methodology usually employed in the natural sciences. Chapter 4 will discuss the emerging themes in the research results and present an analysis of the findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE THOUGHT OF OSMER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AN INFORMED PASTORAL CARE MODEL IN THE PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

Osmer, a professor of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary, in his book, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (2008), advocates a practical theology informed by a set of questions in the attempt to facilitate a robust and informed engagement with various contexts of ministry. He proposes a prototype with four tasks. A viable model must ask;

#### 4.1. 'What is Going On?'

This he calls the descriptive-empirical task. Practical Theology, he insists, begins with episodes, situations or contexts that require interpretation. Its primary focus is to identify the issues hidden within the context it seeks to interpret. Necessarily, the descriptive-empirical task must be preceded by a presence beyond the physical, it is a '*spirituality of presence*' that must embrace a '*priestly listening*' that seeks to deeply understand its context (Osmer 2008, 33-34). This is a listening beyond 'listening' that exhumes the hidden dimensions of a situation; otherwise it defeats the purpose if it walks away from the situation not having heard beyond what the surface, average or 'physical' ear can hear. Essentially, it seeks to understand the situation bottom-up and not top-down. It participates and interprets what it receives from, not what it imposes on the situation. It is what counsellors call empathy, despite its shortfalls (Coutinho, Silva and Decety 2014); to be sure, it becomes one with the context it seeks to understand. In a sense, it may be multicultural in approach (Steward, et al. 1998).

The descriptive-empirical task takes into consideration all sources of information on the ground and brings them into a dynamic non-prescriptive inter-play of the Hegelian thesis and anti-thesis dialectic to produce a synthesis in the effort to understand 'what is going on.' In that sense, it engages the meta and meso-questions raised from the context it seeks to interpret and allows the situation to speak for itself. Thus, qualitative methods are often ideal for research in practical theology in the desire to explore new directions. Thus, the importance of 'Narratives' in this study (E. Wimberley 1997); Pastoral Care must be informed by its context before it prescribes new directions informed by pertinent academic theory.

Pastoral Care in a sense includes an element of counselling informed by prevalent theories in psychology and psychotherapy. The weakness of these, considering Osmer's 'Descriptive-Task,' is that they introduce predetermined prescriptions for situations. They prescribe a cure for an 'illness' instead of mapping out new and proactive directions for the situation (Sutton, Arnzen and Kelly 2016). Thus, Osmer calls for a practical theology that is proactive and not reactive.

#### **4.2. 'Why is it Going On?'**

The 'Interpretative Task' is what Osmer calls 'Sagely Wisdom.' Three things are important in this task; the researcher must apply his/her own (1) *thoughtfulness* or analysis to the context he/she seeks to interpret. This calls for a deep reflection of the questions raised in the situation. While the researcher's approach is largely qualitative, it would be absurd to imagine that the person has no thoughts of his/her own in relation to why the situation turns out to be the way that it is. To be sure, he/she walks into the situation with preconceived ideas as to why things are the way that they are. It is this pre-understanding of the context that gives rise to the research question in the first place; these assumptions must now be revisited and revised in the context of the questions raised by the situation itself.

Another crucial element in the 'Interpretative task is, (2) *theoretical interpretation*; this is the researcher's capacity to engage pertinent theory in the human and social sciences to establish a deeper theoretical understanding of the issues within the context that must be interpreted. To be sure, the researcher must understand that the questions raised within the situation do not emerge from a social or environmental vacuum. While Osmer admits that the human and social sciences are not infallible, they do however facilitate a deeper and higher level in the understanding of the questions raised within a situation.

A third element in the 'Interpretative Task' is the engagement or application of wise judgement or what he calls (3) *sagely wisdom*. The researcher must take cognisance or recognise the fact that each situation has its own unique and relevant particulars; to be sure, no two situations are the same in relation to events and circumstances. He/she must discern the moral ends at stake and determine the most effective means of action to achieve the final research product within the constraints of time and place.

Osmer grounds his '*Sagely Wisdom*' in Judeo-Christian literature and western or American human and social science theories (Osmer 2008, 89). While this study takes that seriously; it does acknowledge the significance of African philosophies in the interpretation of African contexts, especially the notion of *Ubuntu* as pointed out earlier in the study.

It is almost impossible to explore the notion of Pastoral Care without some significant consideration of caregiving. *Ubuntu* in its existential and cognitive width and depth is an admission of the importance of the other; perhaps even above oneself. The maxim. 'I am because you are and you are because I am' is loaded and embedded in the very core of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. Marital-selfishness, in all its expressions and for lack of a better word, is often a deviation from that behavioural norm. Cultural patriarchy, for instance, is often the denial of the human-ness of the other; and thus, its denial of prerogatives determined along gender lines (S. S. Chisale 2018).



Perhaps Osmer presents a more multi-dimensional approach to Practical Theology and to the understanding of the questions thrown at us by the situation. In the final analysis, one's understanding of why his submissions are informed from every direction to cultivate contextual and dynamic directions in a given situation.

### **4.3. 'What Ought to Be Going?'**

Naturally, when one has asked, 'what is going on' and probed in all directions for 'why it is going on;' the next question should be, 'what ought to be going on?' This Osmer calls 'Prophetic Discernment.' In the final analysis, all Practical Theology must seek to discern 'God's Word' for its context. Prophets speak to communities on God's behalf; thus, any context that seeks to unravel the complexities and intricacies of its context must ultimately want to hear from God. Prophecy, in a nutshell, is God's message to the situation. In the longing to seek new directions; where is God saying we must go; or what is God saying we must do?

Pastoral Care, if it must be 'pastoral' in the name of God must ask that question within its context. As pointed out earlier; no two situations are the same. Even Israel's prophets spoke to different situations in different contexts, a message for Judah was never a message for Samaria or Galilee; God's message to God's people was always contextual or situational. Thus, Pastoral Care must take cognisance of the fact that no one model can be applicable to all situations; each must drink from the wells of its own questions and context. That observation is important and congruent with the cry prevalent among African scholars like Juma (2011) and Baloyi (2017). While western models of Pastoral Care are helpful, they do not speak to the African context. Even in Africa, given its multi-cultural diversity, no two models can speak in the same way to different situations or contexts.

The downside of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, given their influence by American forms of religiosity, is the blatant non-recognition of that submission.

Thus, Osmer's argument is correct, the practical theologian (or pastoral care practitioner), in seeking new directions, must interpret the contemporary lives and practices of the situation by establishing a grounded understanding of its 'living documents,' and derive meaning from its context (Osmer 2008, 32).

#### **4.4. How Might We Respond**

Osmer's fourth question introduces the implementation element of his model; what he calls the 'Pragmatic Task.' Implementation of any sort requires competent leadership. The kind of leadership required here is what he calls '*Servant leadership*.' This concept was first coined by Robert K. Greenleaf during his tenure at AT&T (Frick and Spears 1996).

Servant leadership is a model diametrically opposed to traditional Western leadership styles that invest power in one person at the top of a corporate hierarchy or pyramid. The servant-leader puts the needs of others first and focuses on the development of people instead of people working to serve the leader. The underlying presupposition of the philosophy is that when the leader empowers people bottom-up, he/she is empowered top-down. What psychologists call the irony of unintended consequences.

It was Greenleaf who said (Frick and Spears 1996, 1),

*The servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve; to serve first...*

While Greenleaf popularised the notion, it can be traced to sage sources outside the West, particularly Eastern and African. As others have observed; there are passages that relate to servant leadership in the Tao Te Ching attributed to Lao-Tzu. If that were too far off, Jesus taught servant leadership in Mark 10: 42-45:

*You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to give his life as a ransom for many.*<sup>12</sup>

The notion of 'Servant' is bandied around in Charismatic churches today, and almost always with the usual doctrinal aberration in bible hermeneutics characteristic of this movement. Its focus and emphasis are on those who exercise authority over others and how they can be served.

#### **4.5. Implications for a Practical Theology in the Charismatic Churches in Africa**

If the practice of theology, including pastoral care, in the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches must move forward in a knowledgeable and helpful way then it must take the sincerity of Osmer's theory, as noted above, into thoughtful consideration. A total overhaul of its current practices and understanding of ministry in all its dimensions is urgently required given its relentless growth in South Africa and beyond. Firstly, it must recognise its context and take it seriously given the vulnerability to western influences, especially North American, prevailing in its current practices. As Osmer (Practical Theology: An Introduction 2008, 32) submits, practical theology begins with 'episodes, situations and contexts that call for interpretation.'

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<sup>12</sup> All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version* (North American Edition), 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of the Zondervan Bible Publishers. For literary purposes, emphases (bold print) that did not appear in the scriptural verse are occasionally added to the quotations.

As noted earlier, the dire deficit in western theoretical frameworks of the human and social sciences is often the non-recognition of African worldviews or philosophies (Baloyi, 2017; Juma, 2011). While these frameworks are largely helpful; they are developed or designed with their contexts in mind. It is an African epistemology that must ultimately facilitate an interpretation of issues identified in the African context. Even in Africa, given the various ethnicities, epistemological perspectives may differ, but the underlying implications are usually the same.

The quest for *Ubuntu* is historically a cry among African leaders for what Gade (The Historical Development of the Written Discourses on Ubuntu 2011) calls '*narratives of return.*' Necessarily, 'return' means that a people have lost something of their own identity; or something to which they can relate their identity. Thus, identity is core to the interpretation of contextual situations. The crisis of urbanisation in South Africa has often been the post-colonial influences that permeate every level of society; and the temptation to elevate the values of others (European & American) above one's own (African). While the positive aspects of Christianity and the so-called western civilisation are many; their indelible corrosion of positive aspects of the African cultural value system cannot be underestimated.

Many marriages, for instance, in South Africa are still torn between the practice of *AmaLobolo* (bride dowry) and the so called 'White Wedding.' What is often missing is the ethic that must drive the moral desire that establishes a couple's need to start a family and the cultural dignity and pride that goes with it 'till death do us part.' In many instances, the exercise has become a 'financial transaction' between two families in which one scores and the other loses. *AmaLobolo awabuyi*, so goes the saying, a dowry paid cannot be returned.

*Ubuntu*, as an ethic; at its core, values the humanity of another as its or above its own. Perhaps, the answer then to the question, 'why is it happening'; fundamentally, is current western paradigms of individualism in pastoral care have lost a sense of *Ubuntu* that need to be inculcated into their value systems, especially in the African context.

It is here that one must draw a line of difference between *individualism* and what Carl Gustav Jung and others like Arthur Schopenhauer (in existentialism) have called *Individuation* (Burwell, 1975; Kleist, 2010).

*Individuation* seeks to draw deeper into how one understands oneself in the context of in-tense spiritual and historical undertones; *Ubuntu*, within similar implications, says one cannot understand oneself without understanding the other. Existentialism has long sought to incorporate the notion of humanism into individualism (Baldwin 1986). Essentially, you cannot be human unless you recognise the human-ness of the other in a deeper spiritual sense. You are because the other is; and the other is because you are. In recognising the human-ness of the other I recognise my own. Thus, in the processes of what seems to be a negation of the self the self is affirmed.

Pastoral Care, within the whole territory of Practical Theology, must ultimately seek to understand 'God's Word' for its context. This is the difference between it and the human and social sciences (Hughes, 2017; Hazle, 2003). It is this difference that maps out future directions for implementation within God's will for the situation.

In a marriage situation, for instance, the couple must constantly seek to understand what the will of God is for each context. As noted earlier; no two situations are the same, and so a 'one cap fits all' approach to any situation is not ideal. New directions in any situation must involve tensions and contradictions as the processes unfold. The questions arising from the context will always differ; how does one deal with an abusive spouse for instance? What are the psychological implications for the Children or for the abused spouse him/herself? Ideally, the situation requires that everyone involved should be willing to contribute to solving the problems in the context, but sometimes that is not the case. How does a pastoral care practitioner facilitate a process that takes everyone's interests into consideration? Traditionally Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are prescriptive, and often to the physical, psychological and spiritual detriment of those it seeks to help.

Thus, an informed Pastoral Care model is one that seeks to facilitate instead of prescribing in the context of its ministrations.

The researcher/practitioner, while s/he is part of the unfolding processes, is not the one in the centre of where things are happening; s/he merely facilitates the processes of interpretation.

To be sure, even though the researcher comes in and is informed from every empirical angle as a qualitative researcher, s/he remains an outsider to the situation. Facilitation implies that the situation must be guided or coached in such a way that the context finally gives answers to its own questions (Pienaar, 2013; Mills, 2010) in the framework of God's will for its circumstances. Thus, a pastoral care giver or practitioner is a facilitator first.

There is a very strong link in Osmer's submissions for a balanced approach to the practice of theology; while they seek to be informed by the human and social sciences they do not compromise what ought to be the ultimate intentions of a practical theology. His submissions refused to be trapped in the past but explore the past to inform the future in qualitative ways acceptable to current research methodologies. In the final analysis; God is brought back into the picture in ways that the human and social sciences ignore or take for granted.

What Osmer calls 'Servant Leadership' is not foreign to what one may consider 'God's will' for the situation. It can be based in two central texts in the teachings of Christ in Matthew 20: 20-28 and Mark 10: 42-45. A deeper meaning of 'Servanthood' is elaborated on in Philippians 2: 1-11. Its nucleus can be summed up in verse 5-7,

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus Christ. Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, and being made in human likeness...*

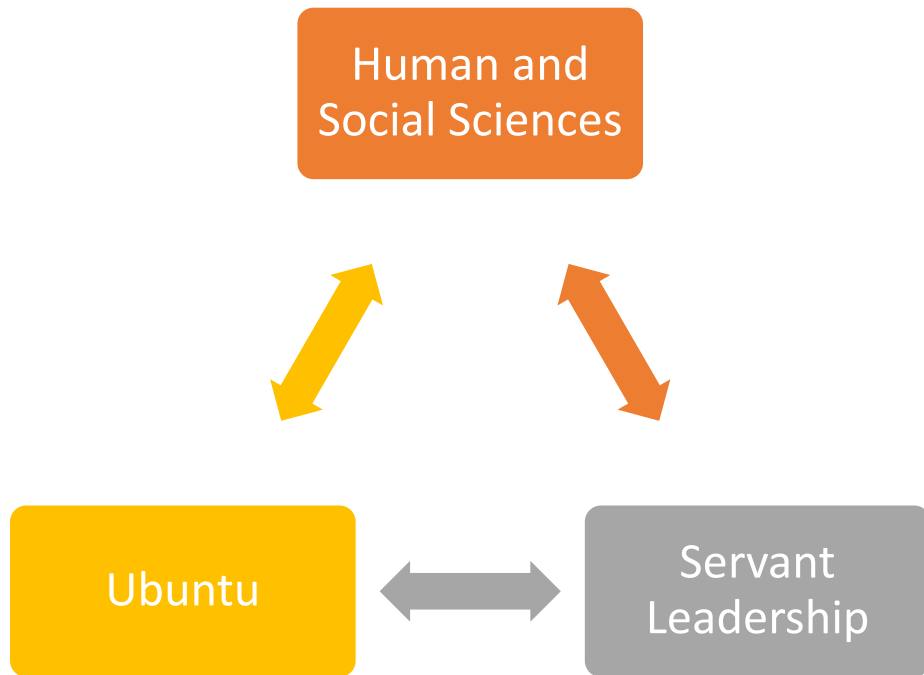
Numerous articles have been written on 'Servant Leadership' since Greenleaf first introduced the concept in organisational development in 1970 (Frick and Spears 1996).

The question at hand is what are its implications for a practical theology; and ultimately for Pastoral Care in an African context? Osmer (Practical Theology: An Introduction 2008) confirms a triad of insights that may prove helpful in the implementation of an informed and contextual paradigm for practical theology; a crucial inclusive dialogue and syncretical dialectic embracing, (1) a sensitivity to pertinent human and social science theory (Tiharihani 2017), (2) the philosophy of *Ubuntu* (Gade 2011), (3) a vigorous and a trustworthy (Archer 2001)<sup>13</sup> African biblical hermeneutic of 'Servanthood' (Adamo, 2015; Ramantswana, 2016). A robust model of pastoral care in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, given its different contexts must, in principle at least, include a dynamic, chemistry, interaction and interplay of all three areas as can be inferred in diagram 1 below.

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<sup>13</sup> This is deliberately intended to qualify the typical aberration of accepted norms of biblical interpretation in exegesis and hermeneutics typical prevalent among many Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians.

**Diagram 1**





## CHAPTER 5

### NARRATIVE THEMES AND FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH: THE CHALLENGE OF THE PASTORAL CARE DEFICIT IN PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC CHURCHES

#### 5. 1. An overview of Divorce in South Africa

It was pointed out earlier in the study that *divorce* as a phenomenon cuts across cultural divides and has a long history stretching to Mosaic Law (Toth and Kemmelmeier 2009, 280-297). As generations and centuries unfold it has taken on many forms, definitions and levels within many cultures.

South African perceptions of divorce are not very different from common norms in the western world, especially civil marriages captured through the Department of Home Affairs and registrars of the twelve Supreme Courts around the country that administer and capture this data. By and large, this is the information used by Statistics South Africa which is the Central Statistician Service in South Africa.

A study done at the University of the Free State (Ackermann 2014) and based on information from the source/s mentioned above, argues that divorce in South Africa, as compared to other countries, is relatively low but gradually on the rise. These sources however do not include information of marriages carried out according to traditional and religious rites as permitted by law after 1998 according to the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998. Despite the deficit, the study does, nevertheless, give a panoramic picture of the state of divorce in South Africa. The Stats SA (P0307) report in 2011 below confirms that divorce is a reality in South

Africa among all population groups, despite race, religion or culture; and is indeed on the increase.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 1**

Year	Total Number of Divorces Registered	Divorce Percentages					
		Black African	Coloured	Indian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
<b>2002</b>	31370	22,5	11,4	4,9	45,2	1,2	14,9
<b>2003</b>	31566	24,3	12,4	4,8	40,0	1,7	16,9
<b>2004</b>	31768	28,2	10,4	5,2	39,1	1,9	15,2
<b>2005</b>	32484	26,7	11,0	5,0	35,7	1,7	20,0
<b>2006</b>	31270	29,1	11,0	5,4	35,4	2,0	17,1
<b>2007</b>	29639	30,6	12,0	5,8	33,5	2,9	15,2
<b>2008</b>	28924	35,0	10,6	6,2	32,8	3,1	12,3
<b>2009</b>	30763	34,2	13,1	5,2	32,4	9,5	5,6
<b>2010</b>	22936	35,6	13,9	5,6	30,5	0,1	14,2
<b>2011</b>	20980	35,8	16,6	6,5	32,1	0,0	9,1

(Numbers of published divorces and percentages in South Africa by population group, 2002-2011: Statistics South Africa 2011).

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<sup>14</sup> See report, <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0307/P03072011.pdf>. P.33.

## 5.2. The Psychological and Emotional Implications of Divorce

At one point or another, for better or worse, couples may find it necessary to go their separate ways. As Meg Jay argues (2017, 28), *not every divorce is an adversity. But not every divorce is a 'good divorce'...even when it's for the best.*

There is a change for all involved (Amato, Kane and James 2011, 511-524). While this study is focused on the in-laws; they are often the least affected—except perhaps where it involves the invasion of their cultural pride—of the couple and their children (Bianchi 1987).

While the couple is 'free' to associate or isolate themselves from their in-laws, their children, in some way, belong to both worlds. *'Even a good divorce restructures children's childhood and leaves them travelling between two distinct worlds...it becomes their job to make sense of these two worlds,'* says Jay (2017, 32). How do children make sense of these two worlds if one side is not supportive or even recognises their emotional or psychological ordeal? Often, they are left on their own to unravel the surreptitious and negative effects of the situation. This is a challenge, especially if the man does not have a good relationship with his ex-in-laws as some studies have shown is so often the case (Ambert 1988, 679).

The fact that Pentecostal and Charismatic churches claim to believe in the inerrancy of 'The Word of God' (Wayman 1922) has done little to deter or prevent a situation where people and human institutions 'put asunder what God has put together.' If anything, the empirical reality of the existence of divorce in these churches demonstrates how they, like everybody else, are not impervious to the variety of reasons individuals, for better or for worse, ultimately choose to go their separate ways.

Thus, the notion of 'human perfection' so prevalent in the holiness tradition and its near and distant corollaries is not psychologically or spiritually helpful whenever persons affected by divorce want to tap into their spiritual experiences to explore mental health and spiritual healing (Thorsen 2015; Benn and Senturias 2001).

The following considerations in relation to the notion of divorce are therefore pertinent in our effort to understand the overt and covert consequences on people affected by divorce.

The challenge is not to stop the relentless charge of divorce rates in the church or in our communities; it is how we can help people to navigate through its pain and consequences in the context of an existentially informed Pastoral Care model that learns from the bottom-up as opposed to the rigid top-down prescriptions so popular in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (Koslander, Silva and Roxberg 2009).

### **5.3. Divorce and In-Laws**

In most African cultures the children will take on the man's surname but are often influenced by the woman's side of the family, thus the need to maintain or even sustain a healthy relationship with his in-laws. In some cases, it is easier for the woman to remain connected to the man's family more than it is for the man to have a cordial relationship with the woman's family (Ambert 1988), especially if he's remarried. One interviewee admitted to having a good relationship with her former in-laws even though she was no longer married to their son. In fact, they continue to see her as the 'older' *uMakoti* (daughter in-law) since she never remarried '*for the sake of the children*'.<sup>15</sup>

In one study it was determined that the quality of one's relationship with in-laws often depends on how a couple related to their in-laws before divorce (Duran-Aydintug 1993, 69-81). Cordial relations are unusual for a man, since his former in-laws may have taken sides with their daughter in the divorce debacle.

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<sup>15</sup> Code name, Mamthembu (Code name), Personal Interview, 7 July 2018.

It is very common for the woman's family to side with their daughters as opposed to the sons-in-law in a divorce situation.

One man lamented how, regarding identity, his children reflected more of his late ex-wife's side of the family than they did his own.<sup>16</sup> In custody battles in favour of the woman, the children become familiar with their maternal side of the family than they do with their paternal side of things. *Ke bana ba ngwanaka* (they are my daughter's children) his former mother-in-law would often squeal, as she oscillated in custodial bitterness between Sesotho and IsiXhosa so common with people from her village in the Eastern Cape. Another study determined how in-laws often, consciously or not, contribute to their children's marital demise. It didn't strike his mother-in-law, or anyone for that matter, that custodial battles may have long term psychological implications for the children (Smith and Palmieri 2007, 1303-1310), in some ways she thought it was her responsibility to 'protect' her daughter's children. The man though, saw it as the constant interference that surfaced so often during his marriage; and a reminder of how much he resented it. He blamed his former mother-in-law for the ruin of his marriage. That phenomenon is common across cultures where in-laws constantly interfere in their children's marriages (Rabho 2015, 455-470).

Grand-parents have a role to play in the lives of their grandchildren beyond a couple's divorce (Douglas and Ferguson 2003); what is not sufficiently defined is the extent of that role (Nkosinathi and Mtshali 2015). What is often underestimated are the traumatic consequences (Wallerstein 1991), and how in-laws can objectively facilitate a process of emotional and psychological stability without contaminating

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<sup>16</sup> Code name, Alpheus Zikalala (Code name), Personal Interview, 19 July 2018.

their own judgement with how much they blame one party or the other (Ong and Quah 2007).

Thus, in-laws often contribute, positively or negatively, to the identity crisis that children encounter in custodial battles. They often do not realise that problems in childhood will often lead to problems in adulthood with grand-children (Jay 2017, 17). The extent of the impact is often left to professionals to unpack and facilitate its resolution if a prognosis of the situation is determined in good time. Some studies have shown how most children hardly ever receive the psychological help they need to navigate through the unseen processes of battles adults engage in (Al-Obaidi and Piachaud 2007).

#### **5.4. Memories in Children of Divorced Parents**

Divorce obviously introduces a new and totally different world than children have always known since birth; some studies have shown how the change in family structure has an impact on them (Stevenson and Wolfers 2007). Suddenly, they must learn to live with one parent when they had been familiarized with a world of two since birth. Their experiences are suddenly '*halved*' and they must adapt to new experiences of being single-parented. In most cases, no one will even discuss what is happening; they just wake up one morning with one parent gone. 20-year-old Thobile narrated her story:

*The most shattering experience for me was to gradually realise that my dad was no longer coming home. Worse still, we no longer had a home because it had been repossessed after my dad lost his job, we had to stay with my maternal grandmother. We now had to meet him occasionally in a little room at the back of his mother's house, my mom didn't ever want to see him again. I know they argued*

*sometimes, but they had a way of presenting a united front for my brother and me. There was never any physical fight or anything; they just argued but never in front of us. All I heard my maternal grandmother, a divorcee herself, say to my mother, 'Bazawukhula Ntombi,' meaning the kids will grow. The truth that he wasn't coming back slowly deepened. I loved my dad.*<sup>17</sup>

Things got worse for Thobile and her older brother, their mother died of a heart condition. By this time, their father's relationship with his in-laws was at its lowest and receding. There was a tug-of-war between him and her mother's family regarding custody. Eventually, they couldn't even have to live with their father because he had no job or a place to live. At eight and eleven respectively, they were being dragged between their father and maternal grandmother right through their primary school ages (Bauserman 2002, 91-102). It was more conflict than they had experienced between their parents. *At that early age, she said, 'my brother and me didn't know what was going on and nobody cared to explain; I doubt if we would have understood; or so people thought.'* That phenomenon is common among children in South Africa (Botha and Wild 2013, 81-91).

Thobile is now in second year of university and her older brother, the more reserved of the two, dropped out because he wasn't coping, and nobody could relate it to the death of his mother some ten years earlier. He never spoke of his experiences openly, not even to his sister who shared them so deeply; maybe it was a form of what psychologists call *disassociation*. He escaped into his own secret world. According to Jay (2017, 70), it was Harry Stack Sullivan who said, *'The most basic capacity of the human mind is to protect its own stability.'* His maternal grandmother thought it had something to do with an African ritual that had not been observed after his mother's death.

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<sup>17</sup> Thobile Smanga (Code name), Personal Interview, 3 July 2018.

To be sure, no one considered any clinical interventions for the children to adjust to their mother's sudden death and how that would impact on them in the long term (Tremblay and Israel 1998, 424-438).

Thobile's brother probably had memories of his mother, especially when his maternal aunts and their children were around. When their father told them of their mother's passing, it seemed more unbelievable to him than it was to her. He asked over and over, *'Papa are you sure that Mom has died?'* Partly because their maternal grandfather had died the week before, and he thought his father was mistaken. One of his aunts filled his late mother's void from time to time, but she ultimately showed signs of withdrawal, she too had her own children to take care of. For some or other reason, Thobile never quite developed the same attachment, to her mother's side of the family as her brother did. She didn't know a lot of people on her father's side, but she was very close to him. Goossen has done a study on how girls often become very attached to their fathers (Goossen 2009).

*'Emotional memories'* says Jay, *'stand longer and stronger.'* 'Flash bulb memories' scientists have come to call them, and they live longer in some than they do in others.<sup>18</sup> Often people create little worlds in their minds to escape the impact of memories of adverse situations. Nobody knows the world Thobile's brother retreats, what psychologists call *'Escapism'* (Baker 1971), he never speaks to anybody about his deep self. Probably watching television is one way of doing it because he doesn't like confrontation and the people on TV don't ask him tough questions.

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<sup>18</sup> See article, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/flashbulb-memory>.



His mother had carved a TV watching culture into the children at a very young age, especially when their older paternal half-brother was part of a popular Coca-Cola popstar event that took the country by storm back in 2003. Some studies have suggested that *'Attachment'* to their mothers is common among boys (Cohn 1990).

Other studies suggest that the presence of both parents is important in the life of a child because they both bring something different one from the other. Most families have the mother figure and the absence of a father often leads to juvenile delinquency (Eastin 2003). It is even worse if both parents are absent in one way or another. Mpotsanyane grew up with his mother after his parents were divorced, but half the time he was stashed away in boarding schools and did not even get to enjoy his ambitious mother who was away on business meetings. So, being taken care of somewhere else safe was ideal, but it robbed him of parental-attachment. Much later, at 34 yrs of age, he wrote in 28 pages 'memoirs' about how 'he was robbed' of parental love. Often, as a child he would remind his father of 'how I never really felt like I have a father.' Something deep inside craved to hear him say, 'I love you.'<sup>19</sup> He ended up on drugs and serving a five-year prison term; 'it would have been different had my parents been here,' he pondered. He didn't even come to see me because he was working on a higher degree at the KwaZulu-Natal. His father was a pastor who was also frequently away on one kind of missionary service or another. His mother married again, and he adopted his step-father's surname. His father wanted him to revert to his old surname, 'I didn't do that' he said, 'just to hurt him back.' Similar stories are many among pastoral families in the Pentecostal churches where spouses often pursue their careers and corporate aspirations at the expense of the children.

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<sup>19</sup> Tumi Mpotsanyane (Code name), Personal interview, 18 September 2018.

## 5.5. Divorce in Early Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism or present-day Charismatic churches are all distant corollaries of a form of a 'Holiness' tradition that swept South Africa in the early 1800s. Its first missionaries scantily identified in the American Zulu Mission in Zululand in one Elder Weaver and his evangelist Mbiya Khuzwayo (Houle 2008, 141-170). A Holiness form of Zionism was introduced by John Alexander Dowie in Wakkerstroom and Johannesburg, and later followed by the arrival of Pentecostal missionaries of the Azusa sort in 1908 (Motshetshane 2016, 55-65). The first arrived in these parts from as early as 1904 with the coming of Daniel Bryant, the first emissary of John Alexander Dowie (Faupeel 2007, 226-223). Dowie was an Australian-American faith healer with churches around the world that subscribed to his teachings. Healing was at the centre of it all, but there were other doctrinal offshoots such as not eating swine meat, non-smoking, not taking western or African medicine or consulting doctors. It was all part of a holiness religious euphoria that began in Chicago, Illinois in the backdrop of the Expo in 1893 (Morton 2004; Harris 2016). It spread around the world like wild fire and introduced in South Africa through a periodical called *Leaves of Healing*.

In South Africa Dowie's teachings took root among Zulu-Zionists in Wakkerstroom and Ma-Apostola in Harrismith (Motshetshane 2016, 55-65). Thus, Dowie Zionism in South Africa and the USA was a forerunner of what is now known as 'Classical Pentecostalism' championed in its earliest days by Elias Letwaba and an American missionary, John G. Lake (Kgatle 2017). As in American forms of early holiness teachings, divorce was taboo in early Pentecostalism. 'God hates divorce' (Malachi 2:16) is a scripture frequently quoted to corroborate the doctrine and promote faithfulness in marriage relations (Attanasi 2013).

Whether or not this is a correct hermeneutic is beyond the scope of this study; suffice to say present day Charismatic churches of the Rhema sort do not take it seriously anymore, a well-known case is that of Pastor Ray McCauley and his wife Zelda of the Rhema Church in Randburg, Johannesburg in 2010.<sup>20</sup> Essentially, that hermeneutic does not take the reality of divorce among its own seriously enough to respond in an informed and intelligent manner. Thus, this study laments, the persistent and uncultivated deficit of pastoral care interventions prevalent among Pentecostals and Charismatic churches in relation to those affected.

As alluded to earlier, those affected by divorce are usually left to paddle through the complexities of the emotional and psychological repercussions of divorce all on their own. The question is, how does the pastoral caregiver help in this situation? How does one help the man or the woman and their former in-laws to create an environment conducive to emotional and psychological stability for themselves and the children involved? No one is saying couples should stay in unworkable marriages. But, how often do we consider the pain that all must go through? How often do we realise that all concerned go through some level of pain and suffering even if it is not inflicted on them directly? *'Social pain'* suggests Jay, *'travels along the same pathways in the brain as does physical pain'* (2017, 57).

The problem with most Pentecostal/Charismatic churches is their seeming emphasis on a 'positive psychology' hermeneutic, *'but very little of that is based on authentic empirical research,'* said one Pentecostal divorcee pastor.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See article, <https://mg.co.za/article/2010-01-29-zelda-and-ray-mccauley-to-divorce>.

<sup>21</sup> Dr Steve Mochechane, Personal Interview, 22 July 2018.

*'Often the hermeneutic or application is wrong because the sermons are based on a wrong exegesis of both scripture and human experience.'* It is also true to say most pastors in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition have very little training, if at all, in Pastoral Care. While Thobile goes to church regularly; her brother seems to gradually lose interest in the *'noise unto the Lord'* that is often accompanied by deafening and sophisticated musical instruments and popular gospel artists. *'All this spiritual-hype doesn't speak to my deepest at all,* her brother said.<sup>22</sup>

Thobile and her brother speak volumes about the challenges they face as individuals. They live with their maternal grandmother, and occasionally get to visit their father. The animosity between him and his in-laws is subsiding, but he continues to resent how their maternal grandmother keeps interfering in how he would like his children to be raised. Every divorce experience must deal with the constant psychological and emotional remnants of the ordeal however much those concerned try to find common ground to facilitate moving forward. *Our problem,* a divorced woman pastor in the Charismatic tradition said, *'is that we often operate from this legless theological premise that seeks to hide its head in the clouds.'*<sup>23</sup>

## **5.6. Divorce, Shame and Guilt**

In many ways divorce has grievous implications for self-esteem, especially in situations where one anticipated for the marriage to work. It is well known that Pentecostalism and Charismatics are corollaries of the 'Holiness Movement' of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 'Human perfection' was an offshoot of the foundational doctrinal tenets of this movement.

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Smanga (Code name), Personal Interview, 4 July 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Rev. Pauline Thabethe (Code name), Personal interview, 28 July 2018.

The guilt induced for many of its adherents is that they have failed to measure up to one of the doctrinal cornerstones of the movement (Tracy 2002). Thus, divorce is seen as a failure on one's part to seek 'spiritual direction' in finding the right partner for life. In this context, divorce, despite the reality of its existence, is considered distasteful; even more so if you are a pastor.

Shame is defined clearly through inner experience of feeling rejected of individual person some call it a feeling of feeling not wanted, feeling worthless.

The general explanation is that shame is a noun meaning a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. It is further explained as loss of respect or esteem; a person's, action, or situation that brings a loss of respect.

Thus, shame makes parents of the divorced childrens to believe that they have not been good in the upbringing of their childrens and that tend to take a personal blame for the marriage of their childrens that did not work. It further makes people believe that they are not loved because one is not lovable when they feel shameful.

What can you teach married couples in a church situation when your own could not work? Thus, feelings of guilt are prevalent among church leaders, and in many cases overlap with how in-laws feel about how their children were brought up. Indeed, there are studies which confirm guilt and shame as consequences of divorce (Kiiski, Määttä and Uusiautti 2013).

Biblically it will be interpreted that shame brings lies and deception as part of the devils plans to isolate people and thus making them to have a low self-esteem. It always carries with the sense that there is nothing one can do to eradicate its burdensome and toxic presence. The resrcher is much more aware from experience that it is a painful process and it will enable resercher to provide counseling to draw from own personal experiences.

The quest for worth and value is through our living together, through socially constructed categories, we each, both individually and communally, construct our definition of what it means to be worthy and valued (Wimberley 2003:15). With shame it comes as a result of feeling that one has failed in a particular area and with it as an unintended consequence it brings guilt, which is believing that one has done something that is incorrect and based on the standards in most cases people end up passing self-judgment.

In an interview with a former pastor in a well-known Pentecostal church, the interviewee confirmed how he had to deal with feelings of guilt and shame all his life after his first wife took off with an ex-convict during the Philip Molefe revivals in Sharpeville in the early 1960s.<sup>24</sup> He was newly married, had just graduated from of Bible School and taken up a new pastorate when he unknowingly met his future wife whose boyfriend was in prison. On his release, the man heard that his girlfriend was married to a pastor and went straight to the church to claim her back.<sup>25</sup> The pastor resigned from the ministry, due to feelings of guilt and shame, divorced and remarried and became an insurance consultant. He never looked back ever since. Even if he did, he would no longer be accepted given the taboo that divorce has always been in the Pentecostal churches. Thus his 'calling' for ministry was short-circuited.

With no adequately trained counsellors and resources in the Pentecostal movement that early in the day, he was left to paddle the adverse emotional and psychological waters alone.

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<sup>24</sup> Philip Molefe was a revivalist in the spiritual awakening of the 1960s in the Assemblies of God in Sharpeville (Motshetshane 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Saul X, Personal interview, 15 August 2018.

He was given the advice that 'he could not marry again unless his first wife had died because; the Bible said, 'if she was still alive then he was still married to her.'

'Thus implying,' he said, 'I would have to kill her first before I thought of getting married again,' 'Worse still,' he continued, 'nobody thought about how the experience almost killed me.'

That trend of an aberration in sound biblical hermeneutics is still very common among Pentecostals and Charismatics today despite the overwhelming empirical evidence of divorce happening more often than ever before. Even worse, there has never been any study in these churches regarding the connection of ill health, death related issues and divorce. Some studies have indeed established that connection.

Wimberly (2003:38-39) draws our attention to the fact that Jesus was rejected in His hometown for a number of reasons such as he was regarded as coming from the lower class, because people in Nazareth had difficulty accepting His reputation; they find it hard to believe that a person of Jesus low status could achieve notoriety, which was traditionally reserved for those with wealth, status, and position.

## **5.7. Divorce and Death**

That divorce is often related to some forms of illness, early death, murder and suicide is now a fact confirmed by scientific research (Sbarra, Hasselmo and Nojopranoto 2012). It is a fact that it introduces different life patterns for all involved much unlike what they are used to. Over and above the venomous strains in relationships that arise some people are affected health wise or contemplate ending their lives or that of others.

An interviewee blamed her ex-husband for her state of poverty after divorce; 'he's happily married and look at where we are with the kids living in an informal settlement' she moaned? 'While he's going on with a good life in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.'<sup>26</sup> Of course she did not mention that the divorce was due to her infidelity with her ex-husband's best friend during his away trips on government business and how she infected him with HIV. 'I could kill him for leaving us,' she said, and a determined bitterness was written all over her face.

'Spouse-murder' is very common in South Africa. While most of domestic violence is directed against women, a reasonable percentage is against men. Research must still determine how much of that is linked to the after effects of divorce. Such a study done in the USA confirms this assumption albeit in a different context (Kellermann and Mercy 1992). Not so long ago, a well-known media personality's son in South Africa was found burnt beyond recognition in the boot of a car because his wife was afraid he was going to leave her for another woman.

Pastoral Care cannot overlook these issues because they make up an important dimension of the profile in reaching our communities with the gospel of Christ. To prescribe prayer as the only intervention in healing the deep psychological and emotional scars often caused by such situations is to escape the reality of the pain often caused by divorce and to expose a dire element of the ignorance of our ignorance in shepherding the flock in the pastoral care programmes of our churches.

More importantly, it is to miss important dimensions of ministry for many sitting in the pews and thirsting for a healing that only a robust ministry of the Word and the Spirit of God can impart.

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<sup>26</sup> Sylvia Mathe (Code name), Personal interview, 15 August 2018.



## 5.8. Summary of Considerations

The down-side of early Pentecostal churches was, and to some extent still is, their disregard of research and education in the name of the Spirit (Kärkkäinen 2002). However, that trend is beginning to change given the undisputed and relentless growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement around the world (Peppiatt 2014).

Many articles on the connection between Psychology and Pneumatology are now available in several journals around the world (Rennebohm and Thoburn 2017). While there are scholarly attempts in this direction the challenge for Pastoral Care on the ground remains wanting.

The considerations above have demonstrated the connection often prevalent in divorce situations in relation to spouses, in-laws, children and the shortfall of pastoral care interventions in the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition. While some people would like to wish it away or drown it in the usual emotional hype of these situations, divorce is a reality that must ultimately be confronted. The implications for an informed pastoral care are deep and go well beyond issues most Sunday sermons take for granted.

Some pastors link that challenge to the attempt by the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition to undermine education and the socio-cultural context in which they minister. New trends in practical theology however insist that the practice of theology must begin to ask the right questions regarding ministry if new and emerging challenges must be met effectively (Osmer 2008; Browning 1991).

## CHAPTER SIX

### A CONTINUOUS MINISTRY OF HEALING

#### 6.1 Introduction

For Calvin and his supporters, the church need not have a continuing ministry of healing through prayers, exorcism, deliverance and anointing because that ministry ‘vanished away in order to make the new preaching of the gospel marvellous forever.’ Supporters of the traditional Reformed theology also add that there is no mention of healing in the great commission in Mt 28:16-20, apart from the disputed section in Mk 16:9-20, nor in Acts 1:8 and Lk 24:46-69 which also deal with commissioning of disciples. Some of Calvin’s supporters also point out the absence of the type of miraculous healing and miracles that we find in the Bible in the present age to prove their point against any continuous ministry of healing in the church.

Contrary to Calvin’s views, and those of his supporters, (against any continuous ministry of healing), the literature review, the empirical results and renewed critical theological reflections, approve of a vibrant continuous ministry of healing so as to continue with God’s healing works that began, according to our Christian faith, at creation; and ‘finding’ its fulfilment and perfection in Jesus and the continuous works of the Holy Spirit.

The research results then point, in the strongest terms possible, that the church needs to continuously challenge Calvin’s radical doctrine of Cessationism because such a doctrine is now proving to be un-biblical, un-theological, un-practicable and un-realistic. There is, therefore, an urgent need for the PCC to reformulate, reinstate and reshape its pastoral care ministry in a way that such a ministry must be meaningful to the sick and their relatives.

The central points in this chapter are that there are some theological grounds for arguing in favour of the church having a continuous ministry of healing. Such theological arguments are based on the reflections on the compassionate nature of God as revealed through Jesus' ministry and especially the significance of Jesus' healing ministry for the church today. There is a world of knowledge in the Bible about health, sickness and healing. This knowledge and treasure offer us the possibility of revitalising our personal, family and national health problems. It also offers us the opportunity to place our health crisis into the great drama of God's Creation of a healthy world, the tragic fall and the redemptive work of Christ in healing the sin-sick-world and the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in fashioning and renewing a new healthy Creation.

One of the aims in this chapter is that such theological grounds, together with the research results and further theological reflections, will help to reveal and to further challenge the PCC that its members and especially its sick members, need a much more effective and meaningful healing ministry. That is, an effective healing ministry, which is both theologically, socio-culturally and practically grounded. We will have to make use of the article of Lucas and May (1997: 85-99) where they outlined three important points in favour of a continuous healing ministry. These points will be discussed in relation to the empirical results, the literature review, my theological insights that go beyond the NT to creation, and further experiences. Lucas and May (1997:85) have rightly pointed out that:

Christians who want to be disciples of Jesus will naturally turn to the picture of his ministry as it is recorded in the Gospels in order to obtain inspiration, understanding and guidance concerning their ministry today. This applies as much to the ministry of healing as to any other form of ministry. Since the Gospels make it clear that healing played an important part in Jesus' ministry, there is no shortage of material. The problem lies in assessing its significance for us today...

The starting point in the reformulating, reinstating and reshaping of such an effective healing ministry is the historical Jesus-Christology from below. Through the historical Jesus, through the lens of Jesus, Christians arrive at a better understanding about God's self-giving-compassionate love (God's nature, plan and purpose) which begins in creation and continues through the fall, Israel and finally through Jesus. I need to emphasize here that no proper exegesis would be made of any Biblical texts, but one needs to draw out some significance in relation to our research problem, research objectives and research results for the PCC today. With such introductory remarks we need to explore those theological arguments in favour of continuing the ministry of healing for the church today. Such explorations can help the church to rediscover, reclaim or revitalise its healing ministry. This will be done in five reflections:

## **6.2. A reflection on God's on-going compassionate love**

## **6.3. A reflection on the significance of Jesus' healing ministry**

## **6.4. A reflection on the healing mission of the disciples**

## **6.5. A reflection on "my God my God why have you..."**

## **6.6. A reflection on the rareness of miracles today**

## **6.7. A Reflection on God's On-Going Compassionate Love**

Personally, I have always been reflecting on the practical implications of this (God's compassionate love) affirmation of God as I carry out my pastoral ministry and especially in 'showing' practical love to the sick and needy both within the congregation and the community. We will have to explore and understand the practical meaning of God's compassionate love further because this, like the rest of this chapter, has been some of my motivating factors in engaging so passionately in the healing ministry and healing services. In addition, God's compassionate love has been one of the motivating factors of the clergy who participated in the research project as seen in their responses specially to questions 1 and 3.

These reflections at time take me back to creation, God's continuous love for Israel and then to Jesus. Christian theology (cooperate, personal, laity or clergy), cannot effectively talk about the healing ministry without referring to the redemptive work of God in creation. This is what we are doing in the first section of this chapter. God's compassionate love and grace is centred and revealed perfectly in the reconciling and liberating work of Jesus; but through the lens of Jesus, Christian theology comes to understand that God's love is already active at Creation, where He created the world and humanity in particular in His own image.

We intend to achieve two aims in this section: The first point is that such reflections will enable us to understand better why God created the world and above all why He has to send His only Son into the world in the flesh; "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us..." (John 1:14, 3:16). MacNutt (2005: 27) is right when he writes; "He (Jesus) came because we had lost our inheritance and He intended to restore it" and this inheritance started at creation. The second point is to continue to challenge the current healing ministry of the PCC. At the same time as the results reveal to continue reminding or enabling the PCC to be much more aware that she is having the authority, means and opportunity of discovering and rediscovering the theological and practical basis of its pastoral response to the sick; a response that draws its inspiration and roots even from creation.

### **6.2.1 Creation**

The following paragraphs will constitute some of the foundational facts and thus basic theological reasons why the church needs to practise a continuous and meaningful healing ministry. The essence of these paragraphs are neither to write an account about the doctrine of creation nor an anthropological account of humanity, nor to make exegetical studies on Genesis 1 and 2, but to point out God's original plan and purpose and thus God's on-going enfolding love and care for His world.

In chapter 4 we said that, it is very true that the Christian confesses and affirms the lordship of God in His world as creator, sustainer and above all affirms His providential love and care over His creation. However, this confession and affirmation about the being and nature of God is seriously challenged and tested by the reality of sickness and the power of evil in God's world. The research results prove that even though our knowledge of God is only dim we have to continue to 'reconcile' the God whom we affirm as loving and caring with the realities of life; such a 'reconciliation' takes us back to the very beginning in Genesis 1:1.

We need to make this point, at the beginning that the creation of humanity in the image of God reveals the dignity accorded to humanity above all other creatures not because of any good on our part but because God's very nature is love. Out of His love He decided to graciously share His nature with us. What does creation and being created in the image of God reveal to us about the nature of God and the nature of the Church in relation to its continuous healing task of the sick-world? A reflection on this question will form the focus of the following paragraphs.

The Bible proclaims Good News in its very first verse, Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." and in verse 31, we read, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." One of the implications here is that the universe is very healthy; a healthy creation without sin, sickness or any form of agony. Creation is in total consistency with God's eternal loving nature. The creation of the world is the first of the majestic and gracious acts of the Triune God who welcomes into existence, out of His generosity, a world of creatures different from him.

All human beings are created in the image of God not because of any good on their part but because God's very nature, from eternity, is self-giving-love (Genesis 1:26-27). God freely gives Himself to humanity by letting us share in His image. The image of God in humanity is a precious gift (undeserved favour). A gift that humanity did not seek for, but out of God's love he gave it to us; because nothing compelled God either to create the world or to create humanity in His image apart from self-

giving love. It is a privilege to be created in the image of God. It is a privilege which entails mutual love, co-existence and interdependence not dominion and oppression. Genesis 1:26f intend to describe human life in relationship first with God and then with other creatures (Migliore, 1991: 80-81).

According to the classical Christian doctrine, God creates *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). “Nothing” is not a primordial stuff out of which the world was created. Creation “out of nothing” means that God alone is the source of all that exists in the world (Migliore, 1991: 84). If this is so, then it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid the question raised in the results concerning the relationship of sickness as God’s punishment to sin or wrong doing. Or how can we explain the fact that illnesses, suffering and evil do not come from God? We will return to these very important questions later. God calls into existence the things that do not exist. “In the act of creation, God already manifests the self-communicating, other-affirming, community-forming love that defines God’s eternal triune reality and that is decisively disclosed in the ministry and sacrificial death of Jesus” (Migliore, 1991: 84).

The dominant Western interpretation is that the image of God in humanity means humanity has the capacity to reason. “In the view of many classical theologians, including, Thomas Aquinas, human rationality is a participation in and reflection of the divine logos or reason by which the world was created” (Migliore 1991:121). Augustine, just like Aquinas, asserts that the image of God in humanity consists of humanity’s power to love and understand God (Cairns 1953:121) because the intellectual nature enables humanity to imitate God’s loving nature. There is an element of truth here because when human beings reason and act in the light of God’s loving actions, then they are living in the way God intended humanity to live. This is the way of life that the Church has to follow as it engages in a continuous healing ministry in God’s world. However, such interpretations do not embrace what is meant by that image in humanity because the essence of being human cannot be seen primarily in the process of abstract reasoning and this has also fostered an intellectualization of Christian anthropology (Migliore 1991: 121).

Some emphasise human freedom as the meaning of the image of God in humanity; just as God freely creates the world, human beings are free to do and undo. Again, one can see some truth here, “but its serious limitations become evident in the frequency with which modern culture identifies the idea of freedom with mere independence from others or even self-gratification” (Migliore 1991: 122).

Another school of thought asserts that, that humanity is created in the image of God means that physically, in our upright stature, human beings resemble God (Cairns, 1953: 30-31) but he went beyond this physical resemblance; this being the original idea behind Genesis 1:27. However, even though passages such as Genesis 3:8-40, Ezekiel 1 and Exodus 33 depict God anthropomorphically, the Old Testament is not always anthropomorphic (Deuteronomy 4:12). We have to move beyond this Old Testament understanding of physical resemblance to what the New Testament says because it is the New Testament that has given us the clearest understanding of Genesis 1:27.

In the paragraphs that follow we will briefly look at the works of Barth, Cairns, and Migliore again and their theological understanding of the image of God in humanity. We will then draw some conclusions. For Barth, (1958:195-196), the relation of the man to the woman is made the basis of the doctrine of the image of God in humanity; hence human existence is co-existence. While Migliore appreciates Barth’s relational concept, Hayter criticizes it on the grounds that Barth’s stresses upon the importance of marriage as a crucial expression of human ‘I-Thou relationship.’ This is more of his reading into the text (Genesis 1:26f) than objective Old Testament exegesis (Hayter 2002:91).

Through the historical Jesus, one can look in retrospect and understand the ‘Let us’ and the spoken Word of God in creation (John 1:1-14). One of the interesting aspects I find in Barth’s work is his relational understanding of the image of God in Genesis 1:26f. “No theologian of the twentieth century has been more influential in the development of a theology of human relationality than Barth” (Migliore 1991: 126) and his works have influenced and are still influencing many Christians. I agree with



Barth's position that every human being has to celebrate and accept gladly his or her sexuality, because humanity is created in the image of God as male and female.

Barth's relational concept of humanity as people in relationship is important because such a relationship entails sacrifice and unconditional love and care for each other. For Cairns (1953: 60) the image of God in humanity indicates first a purpose of God for humanity and secondly a quality of humanity's existence. The image of God marks humanity as God's possession, as holy, as one whose being is from God, from a power greater than humanity's power. 'The essential thing about the image in 'P' (Genesis 1: 26-27) is man's (sic) personal nature, his (sic) link with God and his (sic) dignity above other creatures (Cairns 1953: 30). He came to all these conclusions by carefully examining the three passages in the Old Testament where the image of God in humanity is mentioned that is, Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1-3 and 9:5-6. Migliore (1991:122) holds that the image of God in humanity:

Describes human life in relationship with God and with other creatures...To be human is to live freely and gladly in relations of mutual respect and love. The existence of human creatures in relationship—the paradigmatic form of which is the coexistence of male and female—reflects the life of God who eternally lives not in solitary existence but in community. Thus the image of God is not to be construed primarily as a set of human faculties, possessions, or endowments. It expresses self-transcending life in relation with others—with the 'wholly other' we call God, and with all those different 'other' who need our help and whose help we also need.... The image is more like an image reflected in a mirror.

Migliore's understanding of the image of God in humanity from the above quotation is much broader than that of the previous theologians. Three aspects can be drawn from him: the understanding of the image beyond a human possession to a self-transcending life, life in relationship with God and other creatures, and the reflective nature of the image of God in humanity. This reflective nature of the image needs to reveal itself in concrete practices, without which the image of God in humanity is disfigured.

I concur with the position of Barth, Cairns and Migliore that humanity created in the image of God has an active responsibility before God and that human beings find their true identity in coexistence and fellowship with the whole creation. Both have a Christological starting point, both use the New Testament to interpret the Old Testament, which is specifically Christian theology. Lastly, they hold that the image of God in humanity is universal, that every human being is in the image of God, even the sick in our case. Even though their various ideas have enormously enriched what it means to be created in the image of God, none of them embraces all that that image means.

### **The following Points Can Be Drawn:**

We have dwelt briefly on the image of God in humanity because we want to draw out certain pertinent points that can help the church to minister much more practically, especially to all who are searching for healing. Genesis 1:26-27 reveals the mystery of the origin of humanity. It also reveals that God is far above nature and sexuality but humanity by virtue of sharing in the image of God, has been lifted out of the plane of nature to fellowship with God, and to enjoy the fruit of that fellowship, both with God and creatures by living a life that ought to mirror God's intentions in Creation. Again, such an understanding is very crucial for the church's mission in general, and for the church ministry of healing to the sick in particular.

The image of God in humanity is a precious gift (undeserved favour); a gift that humanity did not seek for but out of God's love He gave it to us. It is a privilege to be created in the image of God, a privilege that entails mutual love and interdependence and not dominion and oppression. Genesis 1:26-27 intend to describe human life in relationship first with God and then with other creatures. And humanity in turn needs to respond by loving the near and far neighbour.

In this light, the PCC like any Christian denomination knows that they have been called through God's grace alone to participate in God's mission (mission Dei) in God's world.

God calls them not because they are perfect but because of God's compassionate love, (John 3:16, 1John 4:7-16) for His world. It is therefore imperative for her to pattern her mission in the light of the Gospel. One way to do this is through a continuous healing ministry; where the sick would be able, through the PCC, to keep on experiencing God's embracing love and care through their word and action (Tacheche 2007 :7-16). God has a purpose of revealing Himself in the world and continues to 'act' in His dynamic and purposeful World even when the human race fell into sin.

### **6.2.2 The Good and Healthy Creation Fall Into Sin**

In Genesis 1: 31 creation was good which implies that creation was healthy. In Genesis 3 we read that the good and healthy creation represented by Adam and Eve had fallen into sin and thus become unhealthy. We also read that Satan played a very decisive role in the fall. Just like the image of God in humanity, the fall was understood and interpreted differently but this will not be done in this project. However, we will return to Satan under the ministry of Jesus. The major consequences of the fall is that, using MacNutt (2005: 27-29) words, 'humanity has lost their inheritance' and has taken itself out from the good and beautiful garden into the one that is full of disasters, satanic controls, sicknesses, wars, grief and pain and has kept on struggling, to no avail, to get back into the original garden (MacNutt, 2005:27-38). The great and tragic fall had therefore separated God from humanity. The important point and the good news here, is that in spite of the tragic fall and tragic separation of humanity from God, God graciously and compassionately had never abandoned humanity on its own as seen in the next paragraph.

### **6.2.3. God's Love for Israel**

After the fall and separation, God did not abandon us. His compassionate plan from the beginning of creation leads God to help fallen humanity to enter back into the garden that they originally belonged to. He knew that we would not be able "to reclaim our inheritance on our own."

In his compassion, mercy and grace, He chose a particular nation (the Israelites) to come apart and learn more about Him, His plan and purpose of creation. “They were to start out by worshiping the One True God and were instructed to follow some basic commandments; most especially to take care of the weak and the poor” (MacNutt, 2005:24-25).

The Old Testament is familiar with the idea of Israel as the People of God. The very reason for its existence rests on the belief that God had entered into a covenant relationship with Israel, stemming from the time of Abraham (Genesis 12, 15) and that they had thereby become God’s chosen race. In Genesis 12, God called Abraham and told him: ‘I will make you into a great nation ...and all the people on earth will be blessed....’, and through Abraham’s descendants the nation of Israel became constituted. In spite of the fact that there is much material in the Old Testament that reveals Israel’s unfaithfulness to their covenant God and their eventual going into exile, there is also abundant material to show how Israel was faithful to their covenant God, and how God restored the remnant again after exile and continues to show a special love to them even when they kept on rebelling against their God. In all these, “God prepared them to look forward to a Messiah who would lead them and the entire world to freedom” (MacMutt 2005: 35).

In restoring the remnant, God continuously remains ‘faithful’ to the promises He had made to Abraham and prophecies in Isaiah 9, 11 and Jeremiah 31 are seen by Christians as fulfilling these promises. God’s love for Israel is that, God has chosen them among all the nations on earth to be His treasured possession, his chosen people, thus giving Israel a position of privilege, which importantly includes that of servant-hood service. Through the line of Abraham, Jesus, ‘an Israelite is born’(Mt 1:1-17) and through him, the image of God in humanity, and the truth and affirmation that God’s very existence or nature is constituted in compassionate love, acquired a deeper understanding from the perspective of Christian theology (Tacheche 2007:13-15). This leads us to another point, God’s healing plan.

## 6.2.4 God's Continuous Healing Plan

Theologically, one can argue that God in choosing and preparing the Israelites to become His special possession and His covenant people, He was at the same time restoring humanity to the good and healthy stage that they were before the fall. Thus, the Old Testament in several ways foreshadows what the Messiah in the New Testament will do finally in reconciling God's fallen creation unto God. MacNutt (2005: 37) puts it this way: "Long before the Messiah appeared, God was already working to repair the ravages of sickness plaguing the human race... Throughout, the Hebrew Scriptures show us a vision of healing that is to come in Messianic times" For instance, in 1 Kings 17: 17-24, (Luke 4:26) we read how Elijah raised the son of the widow back to life just like what the Messiah and his disciples would do in the New Testament. In 2 Kings 5:14, (Luke 4:27) we read how Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy. In the NT we read that the Messiah healed various types of illnesses and also raised the dead which we will come to later. In Isaiah 35:5-6 we read: "Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy" (MacNutt 2005 37). The list can go on and on but it is important to point here that Jesus is the fulfilment of the hope of God's chosen people. What God started with Israel finds its completion in the threefold ministry of Jesus and in particular in his healing works culminating at the cross. .

God's continuous healing plan continues to reveal God's love for His fallen and sick people. The whole purpose of God's continuous healing plan is to heal, restore, reconcile and increase the dignity of the human person above all other creatures. Humanity, on its part, has the freedom to respond to what God has done as already seen in the interpretation of the image of God in humanity. With this we return briefly again to the image of God in humanity.

To be created in the image of God means to live in faithful response to the gracious initiative of God, to mirror God's intention in our everyday living, to be actively responsible before God and before each other and the rest of creatures. God wants a free and glad response, which will enable humanity to serve, to live in partnership,

fellowship and to enjoy all the blessings and benefits of that response both from God and all creatures. God, in coming to humanity, has offered and communicated love (agape) to humanity. The understanding of the image of God in humanity cannot be restricted within the Genesis account; through the historical Jesus this image acquires a deeper depth of understanding (Colossians 1:15). What Migloire, (1991; 121) writes about this is important:

While the New Testament community speaks of beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthian 4:6, John 1:14), it is not Jesus' physical correspondence to God that is meant but the correspondence of his intention and action to that of God.

Even though we will explore Jesus' ministry, it is important to make these comments here partly in relation to creation. Jesus' entire life and ministry reflect who God is and what it meant to be created in the image of God and to love concretely. In Hebrews 1:3, we read: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of his being...." This text tells us a vivid relationship between the Father and the Son and this relationship of God and Jesus, of Father and Son permeate the whole of the NT. The one who reflects God's glory bears and shares God's nature and is the exact representation of God's being. Jesus is of the same nature with God (the Nicene Creed). This very nature of God enables God not even to spare his own Son but sent him (John 3:16, 10, 1 John 4:7-11), as an expiation for the sins of fallen humanity. And this Son revealed to the fallen humanity the immeasurable length and depth of God' love through his ministry culminating at the cross and the resurrection. In this light, it is appropriate to interpret the image of God in humanity in a different way, just like we need to do in relation to God's love and care and in relation to sicknesses and healings.

Through the historical Jesus, Christians can understand better the Old Testament, the image of God in humanity and God's plan in creation. There is a similarity between the situation of Cameroon and that of Jesus' day; situations of injustice, oppression, sickness and of sinfulness, in one word a situation of sickness. The

affirmation and confession of Christians about the providential love and care of God in the face of sickness can be illuminated through Jesus; and through him, we can in retrospect understand better God's ongoing love for his world.

For the Christian faith, Jesus is the icon of the invisible God (Hebrew 1:3, Colossians 1:15) and the fullest expression of what and how God intends humanity to live. Just as Jesus' ministry is that of inclusive solidarity with sinners and the poor, and sacrificial love culminating at the cross, so too should be that of the church. If it is not, then the church is failing to be what God has called her to be, a people open to all without discrimination.

The explorations in this section can offer the church the possibilities of not only revitalising the health problems of Christians, but also those of the nation. It will also give the church the opportunity to place our health crisis into the great drama of God's creation of a healthy world, the tragic fall and the redemptive work of Christ in healing the sin-sick-world and the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in fashioning and renewing a new healthy creation. In reply to the question "For what do we live?" The Westminster Catechism (1955:51) says, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. This implies that the end of our being is not only to serve God but also to receive from Him eternal life; thus in giving or serving, we receive far more than we give or serve. Humanity is called to respond in faith and action to God's original loving intentions, thereby having fellowship and enjoying all the benefits with God and other creatures. This becomes the ultimate goal of the creation of humanity in God's image. It is such an understanding of the image of God in humanity that is enabling me and some clergy and laity, as the literature review and the results in particular shows, not to respond to the traditional theology on healing because that theology does not reflect God's original loving intentions in the lives of the sick and their relatives. We return to Calvin and 'his supporters' to counteract their views with theological arguments for a continuous ministry of healing for the church today but this time drawing our inspirations from the healing ministry of Jesus.

### **6.3. The Significance Of Jesus' Healing Ministry for The Church Today**

The main points above (6.2) are that through the NT, and in particular through Jesus's ministry (preaching, teaching, healing, cross, resurrection, ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit), Christian theology and Christian faith, can in retrospect, understand better God's plan and purpose for God's world in Scripture. Also importantly is the fact that, this plan and purpose of God include a healing ministry. This healing plan of God will become much clearer as we focus now on the significance of Jesus healing ministry for the Church today. This section, like the previous one, will continue to challenge Calvin's healing views and those of his supporters, who had argued and are arguing that there is no need for a continuous ministry of healing for the church today. One of the reasons why some Presbyterians would adhere to traditional theologies while others feel that official Reformed theologies should be updated stems from the understanding of the significance and the implication of Jesus' healing ministry for the Church today. Put differently, one of the conclusions that we can draw from the clergy's responses especially to question 1, is that, one of the reasons for the tension arising from various Christian denominations concerning the healing ministry, is as a result of evaluating the implications of Jesus' healing ministry for the Church today. Different understandings of Jesus' healing ministry lead to different evaluations of what the nature and form of the church's healing ministry should be today. Lucas and May in their article (1997: 85-99) outlined three important points in support for a continuous ministry of healing: the kingdom of God, the battle with Satan and compassion. Each of these points will be discussed in relation to the empirical results, the literature review, my theological insights and experiences.

The phrase 'the healing ministry' can evoke a variety of responses among theologians or churches depending on their respective worldview, their general theological and practical interpretations of Jesus' healing works and the overall mission of Jesus' revelation of God's redemptive work in God's world.



Some theologians and Christian writers have discussed Jesus' healing ministry and its impact upon the Christian church; including some of the reasons for the decline of the healing ministry in the mainline churches. Such discussions also include some ways that the church can use to reclaim its lost God-given-duty of healing the sin-sick-world. I have already mentioned some of these theologians and Christian writers above but we need to add here the following: Zimmermann 2007: 61-90, Davies 1995: 1-203, Maddocks 1981, MacNutt, 1974, Dye 1997, Booth 1985 and Harding 1997 among others. The work of two groups made up of theologians and laity, is worth mentioning here. This was the situation of the Church of Scotland in 1998 and that of the Church of England in 2000. Both groups explored various ways in which their denominations could better contribute to the healing, not only of their sick members but also their respective nations.

We are not going to discuss Jesus' healing ministry as a whole but the aim here is to draw some implications and significance from Jesus' healing ministry in the light of the tension and the empirical results within the PCC. The first question we have to ask, as Lucas and May have also noted, is whether we should expect Jesus' healing ministry to continue among his followers after his ascension and what is the nature and form of that ministry? (Question 5 of the clergy, Lucas and May, 1997: 94-45, 99,).

Above all what is the significance of Jesus' healing ministry for the church today? In trying to answer these questions, this section is again putting forth the thesis that theologically and practically there are some convincing arguments for the continuous ministry of healing for the church today. In addition to what has been said so far in this chapter, the following theological reasons below, drawn from the significance of Jesus' healing ministry continue to challenge the PCC to engage and participate in a meaningful ministry of healing within the congregations.

### 6.3.1 The Concept of The Kingdom of God

Some of Jesus' healings, like his teachings and preaching, need to be understood in the light of the concept of the Kingdom of God's presence among his people (Lucas and May 1997:87). Jesus made two important claims that will be very significant in this chapter and the next and which in a way have influenced all that has been discussed thus far. In Mark 1:15 Jesus said: "The time has come, the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news," and in Luke 4:18-19 we read: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Luke 4:18f is a quotation from Isaiah, thus in quoting that passage, Jesus made Isaiah' (42:1-9) servant prophecy his own; and thus assuming the servant role of Israel's. Other servant texts that also have great significance to Jesus' servant role culminating at the cross include Isaiah 49:1-6, 50: 4-9, 52:13-53:12. He is called to be God's instrument of salvation (Maddocks1984:62).

Interestingly both the mission and the healing mission statement of the PCC quote Luke 4: 18-19 as 'a foundation' on which its mission and healing mission are based (Constitution of the PCC 2014:5). MacNutt (2005:44), confirms that Luke 4:18-21 is the heart of the Gospel; here Jesus is anointed to preach Good News, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and to release the oppressed; oppressed by sin, forces of evil, natural and man-made oppressions. The recovery of sight for the blind; blind physically and spiritually and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, that is, the year of Jubilee when debts (sins) are to be forgiven. One can argue that in both passages (Mark 1:15 and Luke 4:18-19) Jesus laid down his mission plan, his cause, his priorities, his purpose for coming into the world and what was central to his proclamation. By extension, these passages laid down the mission plan of the church which is empowered by the Holy Spirit; involving not only preaching and teaching but also an active healing ministry which includes exorcism (MacNutt:2005:43-47, 53).

Jesus' mission is God's mission, his cause is his Father's cause; 'the cause of establishing God's will and rule in the world not only in abstract form but also more importantly, in concrete ways. Jesus proclaims God's cause in terms of the kingdom of God (Maddock 1984:17). The Gospels (Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:23, 9:35, Luke 4:43, 8; 1), make it clear that Jesus' ministry must be understood in the light of the concept of the kingdom of God. "The time has come (fulfilled)... the kingdom of God is near (at hand).

The phrase 'the kingdom of God' was so central in Jesus's entire ministry. It was however, not a new concept to Jesus' hearers but Jesus gave a new modification to it to suit God's plan, and purpose in God's world. Maddock (1984:18) put it rightly that:

In Judaistic thought, there were two reigns of God corresponding to the two aeons, present and future. His lasting reign was his kingly rule over Israel during the present age: in the age to come his (future) reign would be over all nations. When Jesus came, he brought a new urgency to the situation by claiming that what would happen in the future kingdom was being determined now by the way in which people reacted to him and his message (Matthew 10:32). Jesus' view of the kingdom therefore differs from the Judaistic model in that he believes it to be bound up with himself. In short, the future rule of God has already begun to break through into the present in the words and works of Jesus. This is what some contemporary scholars call 'inaugurated eschatology' as opposed to the extreme eschatology views which are completely 'futuristic' or 'realized.'

The idea of God as king, judge and one who vindicates is very prominent in the Bible. The Prophets constantly reminded the Israelites that God is their king ( Isaiah 43:15, 2:2-4, Jeremiah 10:6-7, Ps 22:28, 96:10) and King of the earth ( Psalm 22:28, 96:10) and that a time is coming when God will establish his rule over all the earth, (Isaiah 2:2-4, Oba 21, Zec14:19). God's reign upon earth had begun with the presence of Jesus.

In Matthew: 4:23, 9:35 we read “Jesus went... preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people.” It is important here that Matthew links Jesus’ healing with the kingdom of God (Lucas and May 1997:87).

Jesus understood his ministry as fulfilling the future hope of His people, his presence is inaugurating the new age of God’s kingly rule in their midst while still waiting for the final consummation. The kingdom is being present and yet not completely.

This can also be seen in the Lord’s Prayer ... your kingdom come” (Lk11:2, Mt 6:10) and in Mt 8:11-12, where many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Central to Jesus’ message is that God is about to set the world right. Jesus demonstrated this throughout his ministry in words and actions. The kingdom’s inauguration will be by God’s grace alone; humanity can only wait for its coming watchfully, patiently and expectantly (Maddock 1984:18).

Healings were one of the expectations to happen when God’s kingly rule broke into this world. Jesus demonstrated time and again in words and actions that his presence is ushering in, the dawn of this kingdom; what is supposed to take place at the end time is happening already with the presence of Jesus. That is why in response to John the Baptist’s question Jesus said; “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor” (Luke 7:18-23, Matthew 11:5-6). Jesus’ reply to John’s question is reminiscent of Luke 4:18-19, as already indicated. Something new is taking place, here and now with the presence of Jesus into human history; people have started experiencing what was to take place in the future. Those with various diseases and sicknesses are healed and those with various evil spirits liberated, sins forgiven, the oppressed set free and the poor are blessed (Isaiah 35:5-6, Mk 1:14-15, Mt 4:23, 9:35, Lk 4:16-21, 6:20).

The goodness, the graciousness, the healings and the loving nature of God is being revealed concretely through Jesus' present on earth. Maddock (1984:19) rightly put it in this way:

The unconditional grace and goodness of God was now particularly available to the abandoned and destitute, the sick who need the physician, the outcast and rejected, the little ones and the simple ones, the abandoned and the poor.... It is this unconditionality of God's grace and goodness, characteristic of the kingdom, which is the essentially new element in Jesus' view of the Father's reign.

Jesus' presence, his preaching, teaching and healing really inaugurated a radical new way of thinking about God. The old order of thinking must give way to the new which Jesus embodied in himself and actualised in the life of his followers. Jesus sometimes speaks of 'entering the kingdom of God' (Mk 9:47, 10:15, Mt 7:21), or of belonging to it or being in it (Mk 10:14, Mt 19:14, Lk 18:16). He taught us to pray (Mt 6:10) "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

One of the interpretations to this phrase in this 'Lord's prayer' is that the foretaste of what is in heaven is already being experienced on earth and hence the continuous restoration work of God has taken a much more concrete dimension with the presence of Jesus in human history. The kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus can mean primarily the rule of God which Jesus embodied in his own life and actualised in the lives of those who responded to his message. The kingdom of God in Jesus teaching can also mean the sphere within which that rule operates on earth and in heaven (class lecture, New Testament, PTS 2000, Kumba, Lucas and May 1997:87-88, Cole:1989:111, MacNutt 2005: 53-54). Maddock (1984:18) summarises what has been said about the kingdom of God in the following words:

The kingdom of God therefore refers to God reigning, God actively ruling in his royal power, God visiting and redeeming men (sic) from sin, sickness, and evil and establishing new order of things. This is how Jesus furthered God's cause: he made this dynamic symbol of the kingdom of God the central theme of his public proclamation.

Reflecting on the concept of the kingdom of God in the light of Jesus' teaching, preaching and healing leads me to some interesting points. The first of these points has to do with the modern day understanding between the Kingdom of God and the mission of the Church. The church here is not a building or a denomination, but a 'mixed' body, or assembly or congregation of a people of God who have come together through Jesus' ministry. On the one hand it can be argued that Jesus never formally instituted the church during his earthly ministry. This can be substantiated by the fact that the Greek word for church occurs only twice in the synoptic Gospels. But this is not our concern at the moment. On the other hand, there is plenty of evidence in the New Testament to suggest that Jesus intended to create a community of followers who became a nucleus of the church in the post-Pentecost period. Such deliberations are important because they will enable us to understand better the un-theological argument of Calvin that the healing ministry ended with the death of the last disciple or apostle.

Fruitful deliberations are important because they help us grieve over the decline of the healing ministry of the church over the centuries and at the same time challenges us to reclaim and revitalise the church's healing ministry today. The New Testament suggests that Jesus intended to weld his disciples into a community and looked upon them as the nucleus of a reformed Israel who has to continue after his death. For instance, Jesus called various individuals and appointed the 12 (the remnants of the 12 Patriarchs) and made stringent demands on his disciples. He called them his little flock and pictured himself as their shepherd, and shared a memorial meal with the 12 at the last supper. All these must have marked them off from their contemporaries. These followers were to continue abiding in him, having very close relationship with him, enjoying the new era of salvation which Jesus is inaugurating and thus formed a community which was fully inaugurated at Pentecost where the disciples were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. In the ministry of Jesus (healing, teaching and preaching), the church is not identical with the Kingdom of God but bears witness to the kingdom that is, the church is an instrument of the

kingdom. But it must also be said that God's kingdom is not confined only to the church (B.Th. class lecture 1999, PTS).

Furthermore, if some of Jesus's healings like his teachings and preaching need to be understood in the light of the concept of the Kingdom of God's presence among his people, then, the church - a 'mixed' body made-up of the good and the bad, the well and the sick, the oppressed and the freed, the rich and the poor, has to include a continuous ministry of healing services because some of its members are facing various perspectives of illnesses just as those in Jesus' day. One can even sum up Jesus' concept of the kingdom and thus his entire ministry in one word - Healing. He came to heal the sin-sick-world (Luke 4:16-28, MacNutt: 2005, 53-57) that is, to restore and reconcile the world to its original healthy state before the fall in Gen 3. In a similar line of thinking Maddock (1984:20) writes:

... the kingdom will be the source of health for all people. The God who reigns is the infinitely gracious and loving God whose will and purpose for his creation is health and wholeness. Like the father of the prodigal, he goes out to meet his erring children and accepts them back into their rightful home unconditionally. He hears the cry of the distressed and answers the prayer of the despairing publican. This is what the kingdom will be because this is what God is like. Health will be a free gift for these poor ones, these little ones...For Jesus the kingdom of God meant the compassionate love of his father present and active in his creation. The coming of the kingdom would mean its final healing.

In this light the healing services including the practices of anointing, the laying on of hands and exorcism are part of the restoration and liberating work that began after the fall and finds its perfection in the ministry of Jesus. Since the church is the agent of the kingdom and continues Jesus' mission about the kingdom, it is natural that it should include in this a healing ministry so as to continue with the liberation of people bound by sickness, evil or Satan (Lucas and May 1997:99, Luke 4:18-21, 13:10-17).

The historical Jesus' presence was inaugurating the new age of God's kingly rule in their midst (Lk 17:20-21) and the risen Lord's presence continues (Matthew 28:20) to inaugurate this new age of God's kingly rule in our midst and the church needs to continue here and now with the inauguration through the healing ministry which reveals the gracious and loving nature of God. While the church awaits its final and full realisation, manifestation and establishment of the kingdom (Luke 11:2, Matthew 6:10), at the parousia, she needs to continue with Jesus' (restoration work) threefold mission of teaching, preaching and healing. If this is not so then the theology and mission of the church is under serious questioning.

The clergy in their responses to question 1,3 and 5 emphasise that the whole healing service is geared towards healing - the singing, meditations, exhortations, exorcism, laying on of hands, anointing and the intercessions including other vocational and practical activities within the wider community. In one sense the healing service is translating Luke 4: 18-20 (and by implication Jesus' entire ministry) which the PCC has rightfully quoted as the foundation of its mission and healing ministry statement of action. The PCC Christians need liberation from various forces, they need healing from various illnesses they need to continue experiencing the presence of God's kingly rule here and now through the healing works of the church. At times the healing services also involve special retreats focusing on the healing of individuals, families, communities, nation and the world. The inclusiveness of the intercession prayers during healing services extend to the healing of the nation and the world. The laity responses to questions 7 and 8 confirm these facts and such healing services need to be encouraged for the healing of the church and the nation. Healing services as the results reveal are a source of revival, strength, liberation, comfort, hope and healing. Even though the result equally reveals that not all are healed or are experiencing transformation and healing during and after the healing service, the majority is in favour of it because it is above all a source of hope for the sick.



I need to strongly emphasise here that God's kingly rule has already been established on earth. Since the church bears witness to this Kingdom and this Kingdom has not fully come (thy kingdom come), it is but natural for the church to include a continuous ministry of healing while she continues with the preaching and teaching mission of Jesus and while she awaits for the full realisation of the kingdom of God. Theologically then, the church (and the PCC in particular) is having a God-given- ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. History, especially in the works of MacNutt (2005) and DeArteaga (1996), reveals that the church has made certain crucial mistakes which led to the neglect or decline of this special God-given-ministry and such mistakes need not continue in the 21st century. With the advent of God's kingly rule embodied in the life of Jesus, the lost, the sick, the captives and the outcast (Migloire 1991:156-157) are offered new opportunities of experiencing God's inclusive and amazing, grace, love and mercy. The PCC as the research results rightly reveal has no option but to include in her preaching and teaching an active healing ministry through which some will continue to experience God's kingly rule here and now while waiting for the final and complete healing of all creation at the parousia.

### **6.3.2 The 'Binding Of The Strong Man'**

The second of Lucas and May's (1989:91-92) point in support for a continuous ministry of healing for the church today is that, some of Jesus' healings reveal the battle with Satan and the actual defeat of Satan. We return again to Luke 4:18-19 and Mark 1:15 - where we have said that Jesus set out his mission plan, cause and priorities. Part of his plan in Luke 4:18-19 is "to release the oppressed" that is to deliver, to set free, to unbind. Throughout Jesus' ministry we see this plan manifesting itself in various ways and finding its perfection on the cross, the resurrection and the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the world.

During my MTh studies, it was a common practice for research or MTh students to present written papers and the other students would give their feed-back. In November, 2006, one of my classmates in the MTh programme presented a paper in missiology and part of that presentation had to do with issues of witchcraft, magic and occults or secret societies; the 'crash of two kingdoms.' I was surprised at the reactions of some of my European and American colleagues (our class had students from four continents). Some of them said that it is ridiculous to believe there is Satan and that demon possessions or witchcraft is more a mental, primitive or psychological problem. Contrary to these colleague another European and theologian, Green (1999:15-27) gives seven reasons why he believes in the existence of Satan. I will briefly comment on two of them because they tie in with this section of the project. One of the main reasons that convinced Green (1999: 23-26) to believe in the existence of Satan is their realities as witnessed in the Bible. He writes (1999:23-26).

From Genesis to revelation we are confronted by anti-God force of great power and cunning...who is out to spoil and mar all that is good and lovely. We find him in the Garden of Eden at the beginning of the story. We find him in the lake of fire at the Bible's end. We find him tempting David, Saul, the Israelites. We find a major concentration on him in the Gospels and there can be no doubt whatever that the apostles made recognition of Satan's reality and enlistment against him a crucial part of their ethical teaching. Not only have we whole chapters given over to this, such as the Temptation stories in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, 2 Thessalonian 2, Ephesians 6 but scholars have given good reason to believe that 'stand' or 'withstand the devil' was a prominent feature in primitive Christian catechisms within the apostolic period. Belief in the personal devil was, then, firmly ensconced in Hebrew religion long before the time of Jesus. Satan is the tempter of men and the accuser of the brethren. He is powerful but not omnipotent. He is a force to be reckoned with. And this view is shared by all alike in the New Testament times. I do not see how anybody who regards the Scriptures as normative for belief or behaviour can possibly avoid the conclusion that this is the firm and unwavering teaching of the Bible. It simply will not do to say 'oh we can't believe that these days'.

Just like the Cameroonian (as the research results reveals) worldview, the Biblical people believe in the existence of Satan and above all Jesus believed it and confronted it so fiercely even to the cross. This leads us to another main point of Green, to believing in the forces of evil. Jesus has more to say about Satan than anyone else in the Bible does. Satan is the one who tempted Jesus (Mt 4:1-11). Satan is the one who snatches away the message of the good news from those who listen to it half-heartedly, who sow weeds in the field of God's wheat (Mk 4:15, Mt 13:39), and who chains people (Luke 13) like the bent-over woman. Furthermore, Jesus taught his disciples to pray 'and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one' (Mt 6:13) and commanded his disciples to keep on liberating people from the defeated Satan who will finally be crushed on the Judgement day (Green 1999:26-27, Lucas and May 1997: 91, Matthew 10:1, 8).

"In the course of his ministry the struggle with Satan and the powers of evil is most obvious in the exorcism" and this is summed up by the accusation that Jesus cast out demons in the power of Beelzebub, (Lucas and May 1997: 91, Mark 3:22-27). Jesus was accused by the teachers of the law of being possessed by Beelzebub-the prince of demons (Jesus was accused of being in league with demons, and thus using those demonic powers to heal. Jesus' good and gracious works were attributed to an evil agency). Jesus replied them in parables (Mark 3:23a-27).

How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand....In fact; no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.

Jesus ridiculed their accusations and their blindness that if Satan is divided then Satan has failed and is defeated.

Jesus' healing and especially his exorcism were part of the 'clash of kingdoms' which resulted as he freed and liberated people from Satan's rule. In Mark 3:22-28, Jesus makes it clear that there is no 'clash of kingdoms', that the kingdom of Satan, evil and darkness has out-rightly been bound and thus been defeated by the Kingdom of

goodness, light and God, (Lk 10:17f). Jesus' power and authority is stronger than that of Satan, the power and authority that come from God which implies that Satan's reign of sin, pain and of death is over with the presence of the 'stronger man' and that the presence of this stronger man in ushering in God's reign by binding Satan and liberating those whom Satan is holding captive (Cole 1989:141-142). Jesus' binding of Satan is also made evident in his reply to the report of the seventy disciples "I (Jesus) saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10: 17-18). The success of the disciples was a clear sign of the downfall of Satan.

Throughout his ministry he liberated and freed people bound by Satan and all its evil forces or agents. In Luke 13:10-17 he freed and liberated the daughter of Abraham 'whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen years.' He drove out demons and evil spirits and thus liberated and set people free from the forces of Satan (Mark 1:21-28, 5:1-20, Matthew 4:23-24, 8:16).

The binding of Satan was one of the things which the Jews expected to happen only at the end of the age. Yet Jesus declares that the binding of Satan is happening in his ministry "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you (Matthew 12:22-32; Mark 3:22-30; Luke 11:14-22; Lucas and May (1997: 91, Maddock: 1984:21). Jesus' exorcism was part of the manifestation of God's kingly rule on earth 'within you, in your midst' (Luke 17:21b). He revealed to his hearers God's graciousness and love for his creation. Lucas and May (1997: 92) summarises it in this way:

The healings of Jesus, therefore, fit into the context of the confrontation that is the result of God's kingly rule entering the world in a new way to free people from the rule of Satan, which holds people in bondage to evil. This bondage results in a variety of disorders which are the antithesis of God's shalom.

Jesus' resurrection finally reveals him as the stronger man and Satan and all its empty promises as the defeated one. Theologically speaking, Jesus has bound and defeated Satan. However, practically speaking, Jesus chose not to completely eradicate Satan from the surface of the earth. Thus Satan like sickness has not been

completely eradicated from the world (Eph 6:10-12, 1 Pt. 5:8) because we are still living in-between the two worlds; the present world or age and the future world or final consummation. While we wait for God's kingly future rule to be fully established, we continue in this present age to struggle with the forces of evil and Satan that are keeping some people captive and in slavery. I can write several books, share several experiences and give many testimonies concerning the devastating nature of Satan and evil forces in the lives of PCC Christians. I have shared a few under my personal motivations to the healing ministry in the previous chapters.

The ministry of healing through prayers, anointing, laying on of hands and exorcism need to be intensified today because various types of illnesses and evil forces (such as demonic attacks, occultism, secret societies, ritual killing among others), are on a daily basis devastating lives and no true church of the risen Lord can afford to be on the side-line.

One of the questions asked in the PCC liturgy to candidates for adult baptism or the rite of confirmation before their baptism or confirmation in the presence of the congregation is "Do you renounce Satan and all his evil works such as witchcraft, magic, fortune telling" (BODS 1968:18, 51). This liturgy reveals that the PCC is really aware of these forces but has not rightly devised means of helping those who are trapped or caught up with such forces of evil. Reflecting on the significance of Jesus' healing ministry for the church today, reveals that sickness and the forces of evil are still infecting and affecting Christians today just like in the days of Jesus and because of this the church needs to include in its preaching, and teaching ministry a healing ministry within the congregation. Again, reflecting on the image of God in humanity also challenges us to translate our faith into concrete practices and it is only through such concrete translations that we can mirror God's compassionate love to each other.

In response to question 7b, 18 (90%) of the participants said that, "exorcism brings deliverance, freedom, inner peace and breaks loose the power of Satan."

The results urge the PCC that healing services need to be intensified in all congregations because such services are having very positive outcomes. With this, we take up another argument in favour of a continuous ministry of healing today and which is related to the previous discussions.

### **6.3.3 God's Kingly Shalom**

Linked closely to the idea of God's kingly rule is that also of God' kingly shalom. The Prophets constantly reminded the Israelites that a time was coming when God would finally vindicate and deliver his chosen people and more importantly would establish His peaceful (shalom-) rule over all the earth, (Is 2:2-4, 21). 'In the Old Testament the kingly rule of God is characterized by shalom' and shalom implies harmony between God and His creation and between the creatures themselves. Such a harmonious living at present is marred by evil and suffering of various kinds (Lucas and May 1989: 90). One of the messianic titles according to Isaiah 9:6 is 'prince of peace' and Jesus is the embodiment of that peace. When God steps in to establish his peaceful reign, then all evils and sufferings will disappear (Isaiah 9:1-9, 35:1-10). He blesses the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) and pronounces 'woes' to the Pharisees, say in Matthew 10:34 that he has not come to bring peace; worldly peace but peace which involved suffering which will finally lead to the 'peaceful-good' of all who abide with him at the realised kingdom. As already indicated above, Jesus understood his ministry as fulfilling the future hope of the people expressed in the Old Testament, his presence is inaugurating the new age of God's kingly rule and shalom in their midst (Lk 17:20-21, Lk11:2, Mt 6:10). God's kingly rule includes the liberation of people from various forces. Maddock (1984:10) in a similar line writes:

Peace was a word frequently found on Jesus' lips; it was his first gift to his followers after his resurrection. Its general sense is determined by the positive conception of the Hebrew word shalom, which in the Old Testament covers the idea of well-being in the widest sense of the word-prosperity, bodily health, contentedness; good relation between nations and men, salvation...Again shalom is a gift from God...

The state of shalom comes about when the will of God is being done, when there is a harmony of being at once with the purposes of the Creator.

The healing ministry of Jesus was part of the demonstration that the Shalom (peace and harmony between human beings and their environment and between humanity and God), which is the results of God's kingly rule had become a reality in the world (Lucas and May 1997:90- 91). The Shalom ushered into the world through Jesus' healing ministry in particular is also being experienced by the sick within the PCC as the results of the empirical research and especially the participants' responses to questions 8b show. In our Holy Communion liturgy, we offer the peace of Christ to each other and the final benedictions on Sundays has peace that we wish for each other throughout the week. The healing services at least in my case end with the blessing of peace to all. Peace not as the world gives but peace that passes all understanding. Such a peace enables the healing services to have great effects on the overall quality of life of the sick.

If the presence of Jesus is ushering in such a new age of God's kingly shalom then theologically and biblically, that kingly shalom cannot end with the death of the last apostle or vanished after Jesus' resurrection as Calvin holds because that kingdom has not been fully realised.

#### **6.4 Jesus' Compassionate Love**

Another outstanding significance of Jesus' healing ministry is that it reveals not only Jesus' compassion but also it continues to reveal God's on-going compassion, which as already discussed, above started from creation and culminating in Jesus' ministry. We have also discussed above the centrality of 'the kingdom of God' in Jesus's entire ministry and importantly how concretely or practically Jesus made manifest this kingdom by inviting all and by binding and defeating Satan in the lives of people. This reveals that Jesus was not only concerned with the reality of the kingdom in an abstract way but also in much more concrete ways. Ways that make meaning and offer opportunities of prosperity, blessings and benefits to the realities of people's

experiences. We have to explore Jesus' compassion a bit further. We need to add the followings points here and we will be returning to them as we progress.

Compassionate love leads him to raise people back to life. There are three incidents showing that Jesus brought back the dead to life: Jairus' daughter (Lk 8:49-56), the widow of Nain's son (Lk 7:11-16), and Lazarus (Jn 11:38-44). "When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry' (Lk 7:13) and he raised back to life her dead son and gave him back to her (1Kgs 17:23). These, did not only reveal Jesus' compassion but also revealed that Jesus is Lord even over natural phenomenon like death.

It is also significant that Matthew's Gospel (9:35-10:1) links Jesus' compassion with the calling and commissioning of the disciples and giving them the authority to heal. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples. 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few'", he called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits". Jesus' compassion reveals God's compassion for His world. We return for the third time to these texts Luke 4:18-19 and Mark 1:15, which we have said, set the plan of action for Jesus' ministry. Jesus came into human history because of God's love as we read in John 3:16 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son' Jesus came as his name implies to save, heal and restore (1 John 4:10, MacNutt 2005:41).

In addition, throughout Jesus' ministry he revealed God's love in words and practical actions. One way in which he did it was through his healings. That is the loving heart of Jesus revealed to Christian theology and faith the loving heart of God that again begins at creation according to our Christian faith. "Love as a motive will always remain as long as human beings-God's children-remain sick, wounded and hurting" (MacNutt 2005:99). The majority of theologians, if not all, (cf. all the six clergy in empirical research results) would agree to the above statement and that compassionate love is one of the major motivations that lead Jesus to heal the sick. "God seems to pour out His power to heal the sick for two basic reasons: (1) it shows



His love and compassion for his sick children and (2) miraculous healing also serves as a witness to the truth” of who God really is; God is love (MacNutt 2005:97) and this love is not an abstract concept but reveals itself in various practical ways. Healing services are indeed, some of those practical ways.

The words ‘compassionate love’ are key words in Christian faith, as we have already seen above. These words may be described as being very pivotal in much of the practical action plans of many Christian and non-Christian organisations, institutions and of individual actions toward alleviating diseases, illnesses and poverty among others. Like the responses of two of the clergy, compassionate love is the starting point of my theological reflections and some of the many action plans including that of the NGO and healing services within and out of the Musang congregation and community. Jesus’ compassion involves self-giving-love that culminated at the cross in the healing of the sin-sick- world. The following paragraphs will enable us to understand better the concrete impact of God’s compassionate love in the lives of his people and the realities of the presence of God’s kingly rule that Jesus embodied in himself and made it possible in the life of his followers.

#### **6.4.1 “Filled With Compassion...”**

We are told, repeatedly in the Gospels that one of the reasons that motivated Jesus to heal the sick is his compassion for the needy people; crowds or individuals (Matthew 14:14, Luke 7:13). “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sicknesses” We read in Mk 1: 41; “Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man” with leprosy and healed him. Out of compassionate love Jesus reached out to heal the sick, raise the dead and reach-out to helpless or destitute people. Jesus’ compassion is not mere sympathy or pity but is much more than the word empathy.

Compassion that leads to peace-shalom of mind and happiness (total liberation in Luke 4:16-20) and above all Jesus healings reveal that God cares even for the sick.

## 6.4.2 Compassion in Parable

Parables are coded language with many hidden meanings. For instance, the parable of the lost in Luke 15 tells of the love of the father in practical actions- love in concrete action that is, God's undeserving love, mercy and grace to the sick, lost and destitute. Maddock (1984:24f) summaries that parable in the following words:

The reason for Jesus' concern for the abandoned and destitute is because they are God's concern. This is what health and the kingdom mean-God going out in his fatherly love to the destitute and the unloved, for his will is health and wholeness for all his creation... God is therefore like a shepherd; searching for his lost sheep... here (and especially the prodigal son) Jesus depicts the amazing grace of the heavenly Father going out to the undeserving. No single parable epitomizes more completely Jesus' teaching concerning the health of the kingdom at whose centre is the God of all grace, freely offering it to the abandoned and destitute, going beyond the limits of fatherly duty in his all-healing love... healing comes not by our own efforts but by his grace alone.... If Jesus is pointing to the unlimited love of God, he is also hinting that he is acting for him in making his grace and goodness available to his hearers. In his ministry the wholeness which God wills even for the sick and suffering, the lost and abandoned, is being actualized. The kingdom means health and wholeness for those who return and enter it: it means the best robe, the ring, the joy of the feast to celebrate the coming to life out of death, the being found after being lost.

The parable in Luke 15 also challenges me to keep on going after the lost, sick and destitute and this is reflected in the healing services including its various programmes. I think this parable also challenge churches to always make the first move towards the lost, sick and the destitute.

## 6.4.3 "I Lay Down My Life"

Theologians hold different views about the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Some hold that God the Father suffers with the Son (Fiddes 1988, Moltmann 1981 among

others), while others hold that the Father does not suffer and that consequently, the Son suffers alone. One of them is Weinandy (2000: 225-230). I will not explore these various differences or understanding of the cross. My aim is to draw out some significance from the cross in relation to our research problem and objectives. First a word needs to be said here about Jesus and the law. One of the questions that I have been reflecting on is: Can any tradition or law of a church, institution or nation supersede that of the glorious gospel? My answer is a big no. Reflecting mostly on Jesus' attitude toward the oppressive laws and traditions in his day enable proponents of healing services as the results pointed to, keep on rejecting any tradition of the church that is not Biblically grounded.

In 1995, in one of our class lectures 'NT theology on the topic 'Jesus and the law' some of our colleague raised the issue as to why Jesus was constantly antagonising (Luke 13:14) himself by healing on a Sabbath and worst still healings that were not emergency like that of the crippled woman in Luke 13:10-17. As usual, there were lots of discussions but the summary of the discussions were that Jesus healed on the Sabbath to challenge the wrong interpretation of the law (tradition) and to reinterpret the law beyond the time of Moses to the original intention to which God intended it to be.

Reflecting on Jesus' ministry in relation to the law, proponents of healing services are convinced that no tradition or law of a church or a nation can supersede (Mk 7: 1-13) the law of the Gospel. This has been one of the bases that supporters of healing services use to challenge the Synod decision of 2007. "Jesus and the law" is a very broad topic but the main point here is that he challenged any negative law or tradition of his day. One of the ways that Jesus challenged the traditions and laws of his day was by constantly breaking the rules, for instance, he healed on the Sabbath, he touched corpse, cleansed lepers and associated with sinners. Jesus with all his purity reached out to the untouchable according to the Jewish law (Lev 13:3), he polluted himself for others out of compassion and thus to challenge the law or tradition that failed to care and to show love to each other.

Where human needs were in question Jesus never worried about breaking the law and re-interpreting it or giving it the original intended meaning.

Such actions of Jesus angered the teachers of the law, the scribes, elders (Lk13:14ff) who claimed to be the custodians of the law and tradition and yet misunderstood them. Thus, Jesus was always antagonising himself from them, which one can even say, finally contributed to his death. MacNutt (2005:99-100) put it this way:

... we can make a good case that the main reason Jesus was condemned to death was because He continually broke the law by healing the sick on the Sabbath. He did it to show that God's love was more important than the restrictions of law and that Abba, the God He knew, was very different from the legalistic God the religious leaders worshipped

Jesus made it clear that, he had not come to abolish the Torah (Law) but to fulfil it (Mtt 5:17), and in fulfilling the Torah, he gave a new interpretation to it which went beyond the time of Moses (Mk 10:2-9), to the original meaning to which God intended it to be. Accordingly, Jesus taught the custodians of the traditions of his day and subsequently all his followers that the basis in the interpretation or re-interpretation of any law or tradition should be the agape-love law (Mt22:37-40). His birth, ministry, death and resurrection attest to the fact that, Jesus himself is the embodiment of this agape-love command. It is with such a conviction, that some PCC clergy proceeded with the healing services within the framework of the local congregation amidst all the difficulties and challenges. One of the motivating factors for doing things is not to antagonise ourselves from other colleagues or the leadership of our church but to reveal to the sick, God's continuous love and care.

We return once more to the cross. Another point to argue for a continuing healing ministry has to do with the significance of the cross. The whole of John chapter 10 reveals Jesus as the good shepherd (Psalm 23) and as a good shepherd he cares for his sheep to the extent of not even sparing his own life "I lay down my life" (John 10:11, 15, 18). He lay down his life wilfully (Mark 1:15, Luke 4:18-21) and out of love

for the sin-sick-children. In addition to what had been said above, the cross ushers in a 'new dawn' where God's entering into utmost solidarity with the world is better understood, that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world (2 Corinthians 5:16-19). This 'new dawn' can vividly be seen above all, when we reflect on the significance of the cross.

Central to Christian theology and faith stands the cross of Jesus of Nazareth, where the power of God is revealed in 'weakness' and above all in suffering. In Isaiah 53:4-5, like the other servant songs and texts of the Old Testament, we see the foreshadowing of the cross, a servant who lay down his life willingly for the sake of others (John 10:11,18). " In Isaiah 53:4-5, we read:

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we consider him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

This text is part of the Good Friday liturgy within the PCC. The amazing and astonishing insight and mystery here is that out of this 'weakness' and suffering comes the power of forgiveness, of reconciliation and thus of healing of God's sin-sick world. The cross sums up the full and all-embracing meaning of theology, Christology, history and existence and thus the total meaning of life itself and how Christian faith is to be lived out in real life.

His ministry, the cross and the resurrection are not only visible signs of compassion, or establishing God's rule and kingdom as already seen above but are vital clues to God's identity and nature. They are concrete signs 'pointing' to who God is, 'pointing' to the very nature and character of God. Jesus' sacrificial deeds correspond to God's sacrificial intention. The historical passion of love reveals God's eternal nature of love. If God was in Christ reconciling the world (2 Corinthian 5:19), if the Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being (Hebrew 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15), if true love involves suffering, then God the Father suffered with the Son on the cross.

The Father suffered on the cross in oneness with the Son; God is God-like in the suffering of the cross. If this were not so, no redeeming activity could radiate from the Son's death.

However, God the Father does not suffer out of deficiency of being, like human beings, the Father suffers from the love, which is the superabundance and overflowing of His nature. God suffers for us and continues to suffer with us and in this act He will draw all the faithful into His fellowship. The cross becomes that 'historical period' wherein God's wrath for the world was transformed to God's grace and love sealed with Jesus' blood. God's eternal bliss is bliss only through suffering's acceptance, which leads to transformation. In love the Father gives up the Son and in love the Son gives up himself for us and the Spirit of love is between them. At the cross, the Father forsakes the Son for us in order to become the God and Father of all who are forsaken even by the church. Paul puts it plainly that his death is 'for us' 'for our sins.' At the cross, the Son suffers death in this forsakenness. So the pain of the Father corresponds to the death of the Son (Moltmann 1981: 81, Tacheche 2007:24-26).

**Moltmann (1981:83) further writes:**

Jesus' forsakenness on the cross, the surrender of the Son by the Father and the love which does everything- gives everything- suffers everything- for the lost men and women reveals that God is Love, that God is self-giving.

The undeserved amazing grace, mercy and love of God for humanity which began at creation find its fulfilment at the cross.

At the cross, God took the initiative (John3:16) and defined and revealed Himself as a God of love and Jesus wilfully accepted God's initiative to be the sacrificial lamb used to restore fallen humanity back to its original state before the fall in Genesis 3. He constitutes Himself as love, in all eternity God lives and loves as Father, Son and Spirit; a 'koinonia' of persons in love; the nature of God is essentially self-giving-love and this is what happens at the cross.

Christians of every age will continue to reflect on such amazing grace of God and will continue to express that love on the cross in various ways. One of such ways is through songs. God's love is captioned in songs such as the one of Faber and some Cameroonian traditional songs. "There's wideness in God's mercy... there is plentiful redemption in the blood... there is grace... for the love of God is broader...." (Methodist 1983, hymn 230). "God is God, God is not man..." Thus the cross reveals that "Christ is the visible icon of the invisible God" (LaCugna 1991:21-22, Colossians 1:15, Hebrew 1:3). God the Father is nothing other than Love; true love involves suffering, consequently Golgotha is the inescapable revelation of the Father's nature in a world of evil and suffering (Fiddes 1988:16-31, Moltmann 1981:23-32). "From it (cross) shines out a redemptive inevitability: within it lies the reservoir of power, whose waters hold the salvific medicine for the healing of creation" (Maddock1984:62).

The resurrection is God's yes to all that Jesus has done and is doing. It is the triumph of God's reign over all forms of evil and unjust suffering. In as much as the cross is a sign of reconciliation between God and humanity it is at the same time a 'symbol' of protest against all forms of evil and suffering; be it that of individual, corporate, national or international. (We will not expand on the phrase suffering).

Through the historical Jesus who is the same yesterday today and forever (Revelation 1:4), Christians 'arrive at the Christ' and therefore at a better understanding of God's plan for His world which like God's judgement is no longer limited only to the "elect people of Israel" but transcend geographical and historical boundaries to embrace the whole world (John 4:42, Matthew 8:11). Through the historical Jesus, Christians have come also to the understanding that God the Father is also a personal God. Jesus taught us to call him, 'our Father' what a close intimate relationship. This personal relation between Father –child is prominent in the results especially in the laity responses.

God is a personal Father who loves us, hears us, sees, acts, cares and takes the initiative to meet our needs (Exodus 3:7, John 3:16, Luke 15:11-32).

Neither Jesus' healing, nor teaching and preaching (his threefold ministry) about the kingdom of God, nor his entire ministry are divorced from his teaching about God.

This Father out of compassionate love and mercy also warns in various ways throughout the Scripture those who reject (Matthew 22 1-14) his judgement. God in Jesus identifies himself with the sick, sinners and destitute, in the healing services, the church identifies with the sick by praying for the healing of the world. The church that continues with the mission of Jesus should be involved in people's real life situations so as to continually 'hear and see' the problems of the people, devise practical ways of helping and contributing to their various healing processes.

## **6.5 A Reflection on the Healing Mission of the Disciples**

We have already seen above some of the reasons to support a continuous ministry of healing drawn from the significant of Jesus' healing ministry and the cross. In this section, we will see furthermore of the reasons in favour of a continuous ministry of healing drawn from the ministry of Jesus' disciples. We really need to reflect again on these questions: Was the mission or authority of the 12 to heal and to cast out demons (Mt 10:1, 8, Mk: 6:7), to end with their death as traditional Reformed theology (and Calvin in particular) on healing holds? Was the gift of healing and anointing only a specific and limited mission?

For Calvin, and supporters of the traditional Reformed theology on healing, the authority to the 12 disciples (Mt 1, 7-8) was limited only to their age. Hence, there is no need for a continuous healing ministry after the ascension of Jesus Christ. Such a view as already indicated is supported also by the fact that there is no mention of healing in the Great Commission in Mt 28:16-20 apart from the disputed section in Mk 16:9-20, nor in Acts 1:8 and Lk 24:46-69 which also deal with commissioning of disciples. There are several points to support the fact that their mission to heal and cast out demons was not limited only to their age.

It is very true that Satan has been bound and subdued by Jesus but Satan and all its agents (demons, evil, principalities and powers), have not been completely



eliminated from the surface of the earth (1Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:10-12). It is also true that Jesus healed a wide range of illnesses in his day but did not eradicate sicknesses from the surface of the earth. People today like their counterparts in Jesus' day are experiencing various types of illnesses and various forces of evil in their everyday lives. The results of the 26 participants and the experiences already shared thus far in this project confirmed this fact. Hence, the people of today just like those in Jesus' day and those throughout human history are 'helpless and harassed' and thus yearning for various types of healing. If humanity's needs of healing today are similar to those of Jesus' day, then the command for the disciples to heal and cast out demons cannot be a once off event, rather it is a timeless mission until the return of Jesus. One of the implications of this is that "unless we share in Jesus' ministry of healing the sick and casting out evil spirits, our preaching about the kingdom of God being here among us (Mark 1:14) is simply an empty promise (MacNutt 2005:56).

### **6.5.1 "Go to the Lost Sheep"**

Compassionate love is linked with the choosing of the 12 disciples (Mt 9:35- 38, 14:14) whom Jesus gave them authority to heal, cast out demons and preach about the kingdom of God. One fact is also clear that Jesus earlier instructed the 12 in Mt 10:6, 15:24 to go on mission to the lost house of Israel and not to visit the Gentiles. There are some theological arguments and significances in support of Jesus' action of first choosing the number 12 and then sending them out for mission first to the lost house of Israel. The number 12 represents the remnant of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus saw in his 12 the beginnings of a renewed Israel (Lucas and May 1997:92-93). This is also confirmed by the replacement of Judas after his defection in Acts 1:15-26. Lucas and May (1997:93) writes:

Because he came to fulfil the Old Testament hope of Israel, God's chosen people; the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached to them first. The nation as a whole rejected Jesus and his message, but some individuals did respond in repentance,

faith and commitment to Jesus. Jesus seem to have seen them as the beginning of a new Israel as indicated by the choice of his twelve.

We will expand this point of Lucas and May in the next paragraph. However, before we do this let us first say something about ‘the church as the true Israel.’

### **6.5.2 ‘The Church as the True Israel’**

I must first say here that this is a very controversial and debated section because such a statement raises many theological, historical and sociological questions and may also imply exclusivism, sectarianism or supersessionism on the part of the church. However, the aim here is not to engage in these controversies and debates but to further point the roots of the inclusive service- servant-role of the church which need to include a continuous and meaningful healing ministry to the sick today. The phrase ‘the church as the true Israel’ does not occur in the NT, nor did Jesus explicitly make such a claim, nor was the church, constituted in the real sense during Jesus’ earthly ministry. The Greek word for church occurs only twice in the Synoptic Gospels- Matthew 16:18 and 18:17. This is natural given the fact that the Gospels deal mainly with the life and ministry of Jesus and the fact that the Church was born only after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Dunn (1977:237-239), Küng (1967:106-107) among others rightly agree that the first Christians were Jews or proselytes who, while believing in Jesus as the Messiah and that the last days were upon them, still identifies themselves as Jews. In contrast to all other ‘groupings’ these disciples could look back to the decisive Christ-event, which gave them hope, faith and the belief that the OT promises had been fulfilled, as well as the belief that the eschatological spirit had been bestowed on them because the messiah had already come. As members of Israel, they could share in temple and Synagogue affairs, keep its laws, affirm its history and yet see all things in a new way because of their experience with the Christ event. The “earliest community did not feel themselves to be a new religion, distinct from Judaism. They saw themselves simply as a fulfilled Judaism, the beginning of eschatological Israel”

(Dunn (1977: 239), Küng (1967:108) further asserts that the disciples of Jesus did not only see themselves as the true Israel but they saw themselves as the new Israel.

Thus the true and new Israel was already realized within the old; externally little different, inwardly already very different, but still waiting for the metanoia and the faith of the whole people of the promise. But, precisely because this expectation of the whole people of Israel was not fulfilled, the new Israel was revealed more and more clearly in its differences from the old.

This true and eschatological Israel finally breaks away from Judaism. Küng (1967:115) has rightly argued that the transference of the name Israel to the church can never be exclusive in character but at best an extended application according to Paul's parable of the olive tree. We will come to Paul later. According to Barth (1957: 340-341), the election of Israel finally is the election of one man (Jesus). When Jesus is on the cross, he and he alone is 'Israel.' The implication of Barth's assertion is that 'Israel' then is applied to all those who follow Christ after his resurrection. Richardson (1969:6) rejects this view because such an understanding he suggests does not provide continuity between Israel B.C and A.D.

Richardson holds that even though there is some theological truth to Barth's view, it obscures history hopelessly. This argument will continue in the next paragraph.

### **6.5.3 Jesus' Birth, his Disciples and his Teachings**

We will return to Jesus and his disciples later but the point here is that Jesus has a 'double' identity; a Jew and a son of God, truly God and truly man as we profess it in the Nicene Creed. The point here is that God through a particular people continue to redeem His fallen humanity and through this particular people, a renewed creation was constituted through one of their descendants. "He came to that which was his own" (John 1:11). Jesus was not a foreigner; he was born among his own people, of Israelite 'parents.' "Before Jesus was born he was already named.

Jesus means 'God saves or God heals' he is the one who heals and who saves (Luke 1:31-33, MacNutt 2005:39-41, Luke 1:59-65, Genesis 27:36, 17: 5-6, Matthew 16: 18-19).

One of the reasons why the Jews rejected Jesus' message was that they knew his parents and eventually they knew Jesus' background (Mk 6-1-6). Matthew's Gospel stresses the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham, which, confirms that Jesus is a true Israelite. Again, John's prologue 1:1-18 provides us with much material about the person and being of Jesus, which takes us back to creation. He was "with God in the beginning and through him all things were made. In him was life and that life was the light of men." One can at least argue that from Matthew's genealogy, and John's prologue, especially verses 11 and 14, that Jesus is no stranger in Israel and from Israel to a universal Christ.

In this light, Barth seems right to hold the view that the election of Israel is the election of one person- Jesus. For Barth, Jesus is the elect and the rejected (he died on behalf of the rejected and excluded). I turn to accept the assertion of Barth because in Jesus we meet inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Exclusivity was common among the Jewish leaders who believed in the strict observation of the Torah.

The presence of the two eschatological figures Elijah and Moses at the transfiguration confirms that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that Israel was called to be. In this light, I do not share Richardson's understanding that Barth's view obscures history hopelessly. As an Israelite, Jesus saw his mission as directed first towards the 'lost sheep of Israel' Matthew 10:6. That is why he replied to the Syro-Phoenician woman's request to heal her daughter that '...it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs' (Mark 7:24-30). The 'lost sheep' (Israel) rejected Jesus' message but that was not their end. Israel must be purged, reconstituted, and thus, led back to its original calling. Jesus' hope in doing this lies in the remnants, which he addressed as 'little flock' and pictured himself as the good shepherd. In both the images of the bride, and the flock and the good shepherd, the implication is

made that Jesus and his followers constitute the 'true' Israel. The same point is made by the image of the vine in John 15:1-11 since this image had also been used of Israel in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 2: 21, Ezekiel, 19:10-14). Jesus and those who 'abide' in him as branches in a vine therefore, constitute the true people of God - the new creation. All this would have had much significance for Jesus' contemporary hearers. In the Old Testament, not only is God often depicted as the 'shepherd' of his people, but the image of the 'flock' is used specifically of the 'remnant' in Old Testament prophecy (Jeremiah 23:1-8) as though Jesus saw himself as fulfilling those prophecies and creating the remnant of true Israel.

Furthermore, Jesus appointed 12 of his disciples to stand in a particularly close relationship with him, we will discuss this below. However, we need to emphasize that Jesus saw in his 12 the gathering in of the whole people of God and thus the beginning of the new creation and the beginning of an eschatological Israel. Importantly also is the fact that Jesus did not place himself among the 12. He stands over and above them, as God does in relation to Israel in the OT- an observation that has symbolic and Christological significance (PTS class lecture in NT by Ensor, BTH course 1999-2000).

One may then ask what then becomes of Israel and the entire promises made by God to them. Alternatively, is Israel now wiped out of God's plan and the church taken over her place? This is the danger one needs to avoid in dealing with the church and Israel 'relationship.' If Jesus as it were works within Israel and its institutions, goes to the Synagogue and temple, then he is not building a new house of Israel and a new 'Ekklesia Theou' But he is reinterpreting what the covenant people have failed to perceive and to do in the light of what God originally called them to be. When Jesus was asked, which of the supposedly 613 commandments is the greatest, he never gave any new answer but he took them back to Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18, love God and neighbor, which implies that Jesus is building on the foundation of the old. That is why he affirms the Law but reinterprets it, acknowledges the Sabbath yet frees it, accepts sacrifices yet reveals himself as the true sacrifice (class lecture 1995 NT theology).

Jesus saw himself as the messiah (even though we have passages about the 'messianic secret'-Jesus not willing to reveal his identity and waiting for the right time) and envisaged the creation of a messianic community made up of those who would receive the salvation he came to offer and acknowledge his messianic authority (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is also clear as he himself laid stress on the importance of hearing his message (Mark 4:9), and pronounced blessing on those who do not stumble over his message (Luke 7:23). This argument is reinforced by a consideration of Jesus' favorite way of referring to himself as "the Son of Man" with its background from Daniel 7. It seems that he regarded himself as representing the 'saints of the most High' Daniel 7:22, and that he regarded his disciples as belonging to the body of 'saints' to which the passage refers (PTS class lecture in NT by Ensor, BTH course 1999-2000).

Finally, Jesus shared the Last Supper with the twelve, signifying mutual acceptance and fellowship. This was the final expression of that communal fellowship, which had been such an integral part of Jesus' entire ministry and mission. This last meal brought into sharper focus the character of Jesus' mission as one of service. In the breaking, sharing and giving of himself in this last meal, Jesus 'poured out' the deepest insight into the mystery of the Kingdom. He spoke of his coming passion as inaugurating a new covenant. He distributed bread and wine as symbols of his body and blood signifying his sacrificial death. What the Old Testament priests could not achieve through animal blood, Jesus achieves through his blood (Hebrew 9-10). This he told the disciples to repeat in his memory following his departure and in anticipation of the final messianic banquet (Matthew 26:26-29). All this took place within the context of the Jewish Passover festival, and therefore the idea of a 'new' Exodus, leading to a 'newly' constituted people of God lies not far beneath the surface. What about Jesus' disciples, did they see themselves in that continuum or as having completely taken over the prerogatives of Israel? In line with Jesus, Peter (1Pt 2:9), James (1:1) and Paul sees the church as the true Israel. However, we need to say more about Paul.

#### 6.5.4. Pauline Literature

In Roman 9-11, Paul wrestles with the problem of the unbelief of the Jewish nation. The question at stake is: what is in the plan of God that led Jesus to be rejected by his people? Paul answers that God's promises are fulfilled in the "spiritual" Israel, which comprises both a remnant of the believing Jews and also Gentile believers who have been 'grafted' onto the olive tree which represents Israel, while unbelieving Jews are like branches which have been cut off. In spite of their disobedience, "God had not written Israel off" (Caird, 1994:52-55). Paul's hope is that the conversion of Gentiles will eventually make the unbelieving Jews 'jealous' so that they will also accept the messiah in time and be grafted back onto the olive tree. Membership of the olive tree is now evidently no longer defined by descendants from Abraham but by faith in Christ (2 Cor 5:17, Jer 31: 33-34). It is particularly interesting in this connection that Paul applies a prophecy about God's people to Gentile believers, which in its original context referred to Israelites (Hosea 2:23 in Romans 9: 25f). Along the same lines Paul spiritualizes circumcision and what constitutes a real 'Jew' in Romans 2, and calls all believers in Christ 'descendants' of Abraham in Romans 4:9-25, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. In Galatians 6:16, Paul calls the church the 'Israel of God,' repeatedly speaking of believers as 'saints' that is, set apart ones, a term used for God's people in the Old Testament and generally applies the language the Old Testament uses for Israel, to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:1-5, class lecture PTS Diploma, 1994, PTS class lecture in NT, BTH course 1999-2000).

I will further examine two passages that I have quoted in passing above: Galatians 6:16, and 1 Corinthians 10. I have made a claim above that in Galatians 6:16, Paul calls the church the 'Israel of God'. Richardson rejects such a view, for he holds that "...Paul uses 'Israel, not of the Church, but in a way that retains a large measure of continuity with the old entity." He takes the passage as a reference to the contemporary continuation of Israel, and not the whole church.

'Peace' according to him is applied to all that will walk in Jesus' way and 'mercy' is wished to those within Israel and not the church. Even though Betz (1979:332) disagrees with Richardson' interpretation, he however holds that Richardson is right in insisting that Paul does not use the term 'Israel of God' elsewhere when he refers to the church (Betz 1979: 332-333). However, what does the phrase 'the Israel of God' mean and precisely to whom is the benediction? I think Gaventa and Bligh have a convincing answer to the above question, which is contrary to Richardson's arguments above. For Gaventa the phrase 'the Israel of God' "functions as a parallel to the law of Christ, (6:2), that is, as the law is now the law Christ fulfilled, this Israel is that which God brought into being in Abraham and brings about anew in the Gospel of Christ." "The blessing therefore contains a final reassurance to the Galatians that they are already the true Israel; they have no need of the fleshly symbols, since they have the spiritual realities."

Paul uses the story of Israel in the wilderness told in Exodus and Numbers to speak metaphorically or better still typologically to the situation of the church in Corinth. "The Old Testament becomes not only a support for the Pauline train of thought, but is itself the basis from which Paul argues." "In the process of allowing themselves to be addressed by scripture, the Corinthians members were given the opportunity to see themselves differently as spiritual descendants of Israel." Israel under Moses is parallel to the Corinthian Christians confirming that the church is the true Israel. Verse 4f made mention of Christ accompanying the Israelites through their journey to the Promised Land. This confirms the 'Israelite nature' of Jesus and Barth's view that the election of Israel is finally the election of one person (Jesus). For Paul the Jewish nation is only 'Israel according to the flesh' the true, 'spiritual' Israel is the church. This is confirmed by the various images that he used to describe the church, (some of which are: the body of Christ, the bride, God's building, and God's household).

Following what had been said about the true or renewed Israel, it can be argued that Jesus did not institute a formal organisation but he did create a community of disciples and intended it to continue after his departure.



This community would form the nucleus of a renewed Israel, a faithful remnant of Israel, a 'true' Israel that would find its identity in a common allegiance to him. The early life and growth of the church are recorded in Acts 2:42-47, 3:1, 4:24-35, 12:12 and in the rest of the NT. The NT tells us about the story of the beginnings of the church- its conceptions, birth, growth, developments, the spread throughout till the end of the earth and the destiny of the church. Though buffeted by internal struggles and external pressures, the church remains the treasured possession of Christ, is continually guarded and strengthened by him, and will one day be finally saved and perfected forever. Then God's purposes will be complete, his promises fulfilled and his presence fully experienced by his redeemed people. While the church is awaiting this final manifestation, at present it continues with Jesus' 'threefold ministry and a continuous ministry of healing is part of that wider ministry. This needs to be so if we consider further the discussions in the next paragraphs.

### **6.5.5 The Sending of The 70 Or 72**

This paragraph will continue to support further the view that the disciples' healing ministry was a timeless one and again will continue to challenge Calvin's healing theology.

Only Luke, tells us about a larger group of 72, (some hold that the number is 70 and some try to give some significance to these numbers, but that is not our concern here); disciples sent out with a similar (Luke 10:1-20) authority to that of the 12 (Matthew 10:1 Mark 6:7, Luke 9:1) to preach about the kingdom, heal the sick and cast out demons. "One of the amazing things about Jesus' healing ministry is that He never tried to hold it to himself. He shared the ministry, first with the 12, then with the 72 and last with the entire church" (MacNutt 2005: 69). Those who regard the mission of the 70 or 72 as a widening of the mission of the 12 have a point. Jesus had already fulfilled the hope of the remnant with the symbolic 12 disciples and now his mission has to be widened. What seems to motivate such a larger group according to Luke and Matthew was the fact that the labourers are few and the work load is much and needing many more labourers.

These disciples report back to Jesus with joy “Lord even the demons submit to us in your name” Lk 10:17-20 (Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10). Lucas and May (1997: 97f) write:

Matthew does not record any debriefing, which might mark the end of their commissioning. The reaction of the disciples after their failure with the ‘epileptic’ boy indicates that they expected to be able to exorcize and heal people. Jesus’ reply does not suggest that their expectation is wrong, only that they went about it the wrong way (Matthew 17:20-21; Mark 9:29-30).

From the above discussions, it can rightly be argued that the mission of either the 12 or 70 or 72 was not a once-off event limited to time and space. One reason for this is that healing did not end only with them or in the Gospels, but also continued in the early church, as the next paragraph will review. It is also important to note that the disciples 12 or 72, were not equated with the kingdom as such they continue to bear witness to it until its final realization. And if this kingdom has not finally arrived then their healing, preaching and teaching mission cannot end half-way, it has to continue to the end of the age.

## **6.6 Healing in the New Testament**

The authority to heal and cast out demons did not only end with the 12 nor the 72 in the Gospels because other NT writings attest to healing, exorcism and signs and wonders happening among early believers after the ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We will focus on Acts of the Apostles and James. MacNutt (2005: 76) writes:

The basic teaching of the book of Acts is that the early Christians simply carried on the work of Jesus by preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand and then they made it all come true by healing the sick and casting out evil spirits.

It is significant just as MacNutt had also observed that one of the first major events after the Pentecost experience (Acts 2), was a dramatic healing of a crippled from birth Acts 3:1-10) by Peter and John on the way to the temple for prayers.

It is also of significance to read in Acts of the apostle that men like Stephen, Philip, and Paul who were probably not among the 12 or 72 also healed, exorcised and did many miracles and signs (Acts: 6:8, 8:5-7, 2:43). A word need to be said here again about Paul in relation to his healing of the sick. Paul was not one of the 12, or 72 nor did he see the historical Jesus. He had his encounter (conversion or call) with the risen Lord when he was on his way to persecute Christians (Acts 9). From this time onwards, he became a missionary for Jesus. Within the NT canon, Paul's writings are the earliest written documents based on the new faith and of and about Jesus. His writings have influenced and are influencing a lot of people and his writings have had great impacts on the lives of believers because most of the existential theology comes to us from Paul's writings. He can be described as the greatest missionary that the world had known. The main point I want to make about Paul has to do with his healings and exorcism, which are similar to those of Jesus, the 12 and the 72 in the Gospels.

Paul represented the next generation, someone who had not walked with Jesus in His lifetime. In fact, Luke makes a special point of showing that Paul, who reached out to the Gentiles, performed the same kind of miracles as did Peter, the leader of the Hebrew believers (MacNutt 2005: 77). Paul just like Peter, healed (Acts: 14:8-10, 9 32-35) and raised the dead (Acts 20:7-12, 9:36-42). "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul (like the disciples in the Gospels) so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them" (Acts 19:11-12, 5:15). In Acts 16:18 Paul cast our demons just like the disciples (12 or 72) in the Gospels. Again in Acts 19: 2-7 we read that Paul placed his hand on the disciples who have not received the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit came upon these 12 disciples just like Peter did in Cornelius's house and the Holy Spirit came upon the people (Acts 10:44-46).

The fact that the Acts of the apostles, attest that believers other than the 12 or 72 were involved in carrying out a similar authority of preaching, teaching and healing including the casting out of demons implies that, these disciples including their master Jesus expected an on-going healing ministry beyond the apostolic age to the

ends of the age, that is, when Jesus will come again (MacNutt 2005: 78). Furthermore, MacNutt (2005:78) had remarked that the open-ending of the Acts of the Apostles is of significance “this open ending indicates that the exciting mission of the church was meant to continue on and on and never end until the end of the time.” This exciting and continuous mission of the Church includes also an active healing ministry and exorcism. This view of MacNutt is in line with the empirical research results and further challenges Calvin’s doctrine of Cessationism and thus lay more credibility to my criticism of Calvin’s healing theology.

## **6.7 Spiritual Gifts**

Another point to counteract Calvin’s view and his supporters that healing and exorcism were to end with the death of the last apostles has to do with spiritual gifts and with the word evangelist. There are further indications that the apostle Paul like James expected an on-going ministry of healings to exist within the church (1Corinthians 12:28. James 5:14). In fact Paul refers to gifts (plural) of healings and distinguishes these from the ‘working of miracles’ (Lucas and May 1997: 98). The fact that healing is not named among the various texts (Rom 12:6-8, 1 Cor 12:4-10, Eph 4:7-11 and 1 Pt 4:10-11) that talk about spiritual gifts, except in 1 Cor 12:28, does not imply that healing is not important, nor does it mean that healing was not central to the ministry of Jesus or to the disciples and the earliest church. Nor does it mean that healing was a temporary ministry to end with the earliest church. We are not to imagine that these lists are exhaustive, rather they contain examples of the kind of gifts the Spirit inspires on each believer (Rom 8:9,14) and the content of each seems determined by the content(cf Lucas and May 1997: 99). This will be elucidated as we discuss the next point.

## **6.8 Evangelist**

The PCC today like other denominations have the ministry of evangelists, but this word is only mentioned once in Eph 4:11. This does not mean that the gift of evangelist or that of healing was a temporary gift or that it is not an important one

(Lucas and May 1997: 98-99). The important fact is that each gift should be used not for rivalry but for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7) that is, in the edification of each member in the household of God and thus the glorification of Christ. In this light the fact that healing is not named among the various texts that talk about spiritual gifts, except in 1 Cor 12:28, does not imply that healing is not important, nor that that ministry has to end with the death of the last apostle. It can equally be argued that James (5:14-15) like Paul (1 Corinthians 12:28) expects also an on-going healing ministry in the church. Since the church is an instrument of the kingdom and the kingdom has not been finally realised, it has to continue with its missionary task, which also includes healing and casting out of evil spirits that continually hold God's people in slavery, captivity and pain. This leads us to the great commission.

## **6.9. The Great Commission**

The great commission is recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 (Luke 24:46-69, Acts 1:8), "... therefore go and make disciples ... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the end of the age." Since there is no clear mention of the word healing, opponents of a continuing healing ministry use that as a basis to argue against any continuous ministry of healing today. It is true that the great commission is silent about any continuing healing ministry and lays clear emphasis on making disciples to obey Jesus' command and it is equally true that all services in the name of the Triune God within a congregation can be seen as healing. However, there is a special place for a continuing healing ministry today because in the great commission healing is implied. Supporters of a continuing healing ministry argue that healing is implied in the great commission for several reasons.

To begin with, Jesus' words, "all authority on earth and in heaven has been given to me:" sum up the whole Gospel. Jesus already has authority as seen in his earthly ministry and his resurrection crowned that authority also in heaven. That is, the authority of Jesus after his resurrection crowns him sovereign Lord over all nations and over heaven (Dan 7:13-14, Mt 26:64, John 4:42, Gal 3:28, Mt 8:5-13, Mk 7:24-

30). Again, this is fulfilled and made possible and perfect because of his victory over Golgotha. Jesus is now more than the saviour of the world. Jesus' universal lordship now demands a universal mission, the disciples' mission at this stage is not only limited to the nation of Israel but to all nations. It started with the 12, then extended to the 72 and then to the end of the earth. Throughout Jesus' ministry he had already given his disciples authority (Matthew 10:1) and at the great commission their authority is extended to all nations and the Holy Spirit will give them power to do all that Jesus had taught them (teaching, preaching and healing). There is no clear cut mention of this threefold ministry of Jesus. That is why they were to wait for power of the Holy Spirit to clothe them before they embarked on the greater mission to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8, 24:49).

The fact that healing is not mentioned in the great commission does not imply that the mission of the disciples to heal and cast out demons was limited to their age, nor that the healing ministry was not central to Jesus' entire ministry. In the great commission, the disciples' mission has expanded and membership to the kingdom is no longer determined by race but by a relationship with God through baptism in the name of the Triune God. In the wordings of Paul, we have been grafted in (Romans 9-11).

What constitutes membership of 'the elect people' now is faith in the Triune God. Jesus now takes his place along his Father and the Spirit as the object of worship after completing his earthly ministry. The disciples are not to teach just abstract ideas but putting into practice (moral and ethical obligations) all that Jesus had commanded them to do throughout his earthly ministry. ("All that belong to the Father is mine..." and "everything that I have learned from my Father I have made it known to you... I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruits-fruit that will last" (Matthew 28:18, John 15:9- 17, 16:15-16). Before the disciples embarked actively with their missionary assignment of making disciples and bearing witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), they were to be "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Jesus has been clothed 'with this power' and he uses it throughout his ministry and now the disciples are clothed with a similar power at Pentecost to go

and make disciples, bear fruits and be Jesus' witnesses to the end of the earth. All these will include an active healing ministry.

There have been some disagreements among theologians about what is written in Mark 16:9-20 but that is not the point here. It is of significance to note here that all that is written in this text can be found in the other Gospels and in Acts, therefore, whether Mark 16:9-20 is first century catechismal summary appended to Mark or even if this section is not canonical, one essential truth is that this text does witness to belief in the early church that there was an on-going ministry of healing and exorcism. The commission here is an open-ended one "Go into all the world...Whoever believes..." and this does not place any geographical or historical limitations hence, the ministry of healing and exorcism cannot be limited only to the apostolic era as some have argued.

In the same line of thought, the great commission is open-ended, till the end of the age which points to the fact that the authority to the disciples to heal and cast out demons (Mt 10: 1, 8) cannot be a once-off event limited to a particular period. Some have wrongly understood the great commission primarily as a commission of preaching and teaching and healing comes as secondary. This regrettably has contributed to the decline of the healing ministry especially among the mainline churches. Jesus never classified his threefold ministry, they had equal importance and any of such classification today is not very helpful to our church theology and mission. The risen Lord's assurance of his continuing presence means that Jesus is always present with his church and working through it at all times (Lucas and May 1997: 94-99) in the recreating of his people.

Taking the whole Gospel into considerations, the service tasks of the disciples was not only to teach, baptise and preach but also to heal and to observe all that Jesus had taught them. Nothing is recorded in the Bible to limit any of their missionary duties to their generation. In the OT, we often read about God's promise of his presence to those he had called and assigned for service (Ex 3:12, Jos 1:5) and now Jesus promises his presence with his disciple as God has done in the past. "Surely I

am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The eleven disciples of Jesus have taken over his earthly mission and they are not alone in their task. Jesus’ promise to being present with his disciples echoes the very meaning of Jesus’ name “Emmanuel; God with us” (Matthew 1:23). In Matthew 18:20 we read that where two or three are gathered in Jesus’ name he is in their midst. This promise was not limited only to the eleven but his continuous presence assures that his earthly ministry continues with the disciples from one generation to another till the realisation of the final consummation, that is, Jesus’ coming again. There are clear theological and practical grounds for a continuing healing ministry within the church today as also supported by the empirical results. All the 26 participants are in support of healing services within the congregations because of the several benefits that come with such services.

From what had been discussed in this chapter, the following summary points can be emphasised in relation to the significance of Jesus’ healing ministry for the church today:

In spite of the fact that Jesus healed people with various diseases in his days, raised the dead, liberated people from Satan’s power and the power of sin, he also chose not to eliminate evil forces and all forms of illnesses completely from the surface of the earth. Those in Jesus’ day did not only hear him teach and preach but they saw, experienced and felt through his concrete actions and specifically through his healing ministry, the love of God to them and to the world and as such put their faith in the ‘Abba’ of Jesus and continued with Jesus’ ministry after his ascension. People of today just like those in Jesus’ day are sick, harassed and helpless and ‘chained’ by various evil forces as the empirical research and the literature review point out. For this reason the church needs to continue with Jesus’ mission of healing and liberating people until the final kingdom is realised. One fact here is that the church’s ministry of healing is God given and the Church has no option but to carry it out with all humility. Since it is a God-given duty to the church, healing ultimately depends on God’s will and the church needs to continually make this clear to the Christians. And



if healing solely depends on God's will even if humanity is involved then the sick' 'dependent on God' is very crucial to our general health and that of the nation.

Such an ultimate dependence on God also enables those who are not experiencing healing the way they expected, to continue trusting and relying on God's healing will, grace and mercy.

When Jesus saw the needs of the people, he had compassion and that compassion enabled him to act in order to meet up with the healing needs of his people. One important fact is that Jesus' compassion like his mercy always results in some concrete actions to meet the need, which evokes it. The ultimate concrete action of Jesus is revealed at the cross as we have seen above. Any compassion, theological or practical reflection that is not translated into concrete practices to meet some of the needs that prompted such compassion and reflections is called into serious questioning. Calvin, in taking a position against any continuous ministry of healing failed to understand one theological fact that, Jesus' compassion toward the sick and his healing ministry is at the same time revealing God's compassionate love for His sin-sick people. We have spoken so much about the ultimate love that God revealed to humanity at the cross, that the cross-revealed the depth of God's love, and mercy to humanity and this love of God is not abstract but concrete love.

The church then is not only to be heard preaching and teaching but also to be seen practically through their concrete actions as they undertake mission to God's people in God's world. The church; the instrument that bears and witnesses to this love of God to the world needs to intensify its healing ministry to all who are chained or suffering from various types of illnesses because God's love embraces all without discrimination. The research results attest to the fact that Cameroonians are longing, needing and demanding for more healing services in the congregations. In this light, the healing ministry to the sick is not showing love to them but revealing to them in their particular situation the depth of God's love and concern He is having for all His children.

In continuing with the ministry of healing, the church is revealing to the sick how much God loves and cares for them. This is also consoling and can be an impetus toward the healing process.

Closely linked to the above point is the aspect of fellowship and togetherness between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Three persons in one, in fellowship, in partnership, in community, in solidarity with each other but at the same time upholding their identity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We said in chapter four that the African way of life is holistic in nature-a communal life style that is interwoven and each person thinks or cares about the near or far neighbour (1 Corinthians 10:24, 12: 12-26). Because the church is a family or using Paul's words a body with many parts, concern for the sick will foster our bond of togetherness and thus also the healing processes and also the mission of the church. We also spoke about the African worldview of health, illness (causes of illnesses) and healing. The African worldview holds that God is at the centre of life and 'control all human' activities. A continuous healing ministry in this light may lead to more understanding of God's nature and thus to a much more cordial relation between persons and between each Christian and God. Such a cordial relationship can improve fellowship, which may also reduce the issues of witchcraft, jealousy and hatred. This brings us back to some of the various ways of healing enumerated by the research participants, which can broadly be grouped under three headings:

Religious healing methods (such as prayers, anointing, exorcism, laying on of hands, reconciliation, forgiveness, change of life style, reflections and meditations, agape love, fellowshiping, Holy Communion among others).

Bio-medical healing methods (such as biomedicine, medicines covers a very broad spectrum ranging from the pain killer drugs that a community nurse or practitioner will prescribe to the more complex healings in hospitals with specialists, consultants and doctors).

The third type of healing which according to the results is the most commonly used one is traditional healing symbolised by the presence of the various traditional healers, natural healers and herbalists.

Through Jesus' compassionate love revealed perfectly at the cross, those who have been marked by death because of sin are brought back into God's fold, those that are marked by pain, agony or chained by Satan are healed and liberated and the excluded are invited to also have a foretaste of the kingdom of God here and now. Jesus' entire ministry culminating at the cross then reveals to the church the immeasurable compassionate love of God to the world, and the resurrection revealed the final triumph of the church even though at present it may be buffeted with its shortcomings or difficulties. In Holy Communion, the church participates in the foretaste of the banquet feast when all things on earth and in heaven will be made new. The church's mission then is to be patterned in the footsteps of Jesus' mission just as Jesus patterned his in God's 'footsteps' without which the church becomes just like one of the social organisations, which pull people of diverse interests together. If this is so then the church's mission needs to include an active healing ministry.

I am convinced that it is this compassionate love, caring, and loving Father's experience of the missionary societies (even with all their shortcomings), that prompted them to leave their various countries of origin 'to the end of the earth' to tell and bear witness to the Good News of God's love to the world. One can also affirm that it is the love of God and love of neighbour and also concern for the wounded and hurting people that enabled the missionary bodies to open hospitals, vocational centres and educational institutions among other social-economic activities. It is these same attributes of God that have enabled the various Christian denominations with the missionary work of preaching, teaching and healing. Within the PCC she has various departments, hospitals, health centres and educational establishments to name a few. There is no doubt that the PCC is really doing tremendous works of transformation within Cameroon and beyond, a fact to which the majority of the PCC Christians will attest. This makes me to be proud of being a Presbyterian Christian.

But, if (this is where one of my problems with the PCC lies) she can add and encourage in all these services an active healing ministry through prayers, exorcism and anointing within the framework of the local congregations then she will be experiencing more effective proclamation of the Gospel both in Word and action as stated in its constitution.

The PCC like any Christian denomination knows that they have been called through God's grace alone to participate in God's mission in God's world. God calls them not because they are perfect but because of God's compassionate love, (John 3:16, 1John 4:7-16) for His world. (Those who have been marked by death because of sin and suffering are brought back into God's fold through Jesus' inclusive compassionate love). The cross then reveals to the church the immeasurable compassionate love of God to the world, and the resurrection revealed the final triumph of the church. The church's mission then is to be patterned in the footsteps of Jesus' mission just as Jesus patterned his in God's 'footsteps' without which the church becomes just like one of the social organisations. One way for me to translate God's compassionate love is seen in the continuous conducting and organising of healing services including retreats in some cases, in praying with people and for people and in organising other outreach programmes. My sole aim of doing all these is not that I am showing love to the people but that I am contributing in revealing God's compassionate love, mercy and grace to His people. This brings us to another discussion that is centred on the significance of the healing service.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HEALING SERVICES

#### 7.1 Introduction

One of the points that have been ‘running through the veins and blood streams’ of this project and particularly confirmed by the research results is that the PCC’ ministry of healing is not contextualised, inclusive and realistic to the African people in general and to the PCC Christians in particular. Put differently, unless the PCC’s ministry of healing identifies with the context of Cameroon or Africanised that is, bear its identity-symbols, norms and values, it would not produce the efficacy it ought to produce in the lives of the sick and their relatives. The question is: how can the PCC ministry of healing become more meaningful. The Good News can only be good if it makes sense to the everyday realities of the people; if it ‘speaks’ to the people in their context here and now. The ‘speaking’ in this sense needs to be a critical one with the aim of promoting those African values which do not contradict our Christian faith and challenging and transforming the negative ones that is, those that contradict our Christian faith. In this light, I wish to propose that the healing service is a way forward and towards such a contextualisation (Cameroonisation or Africanisation) of the church’s ministry of healing within the PCC and thus a way forward and towards a more meaningful healing ministry. I propose such a view because the healing service generally tries to embody or upholds the African identity in its structure, nature and aims.

This brings us to one of the main points of this project namely that approving of healing service and a unifying liturgy is not just enough. The structure and nature of the healing service and the unifying liturgy need to reflect the African identity and especially the African worldview of health, illness and healing. It follows that such healing service that is, the structure, nature and liturgy needs to be matched by appropriate theological assessment, exploration, reflection and critical evaluation.

In this way some justice is being done to those experiencing various kinds of illnesses and to these complex phenomena called illness and healing and thus informing our Christian healing responses within our socio-cultural context.

This chapter will consist of five sections:

## **7.1 Introduction**

## **7.2 ‘The church and spiritual healing’**

## **7.3 The structure and nature of the healing service in the Musang congregation**

## **7.4 The understanding of healing within the healing service**

## **7.5 The significance of the healing service**

## **7.6 ‘The church and spiritual healing’**

‘The church and spiritual healing’ is the title of the Presbyterian messenger: A Christian magazine for Cameroon, number 23, September 2014. Presbyterian messenger is a document produced quarterly for the PCC Christians and also serving the Christian population in Cameroon and beyond. The articles in this quarterly magazine of the PCC usually cover a wide range of issues, concerns and reflections. This particular messenger is of interest first because of its title and second because nine out of 14 articles in this messenger has something about the church’ ministry of healing and thus its title the church and spiritual healing. I must also say here that this is a milestone on the part of our church, a milestone that really needs applauding or appreciating. This reveals that the PCC is becoming more and more aware and taking particular interest in the ‘wind of change blowing within churches’ and across the world concerning illnesses and various religious healing methods. It further confirms the stance of proponents of healing services and above

all confirms the research results that the Christians and clergy are demanding, needing and longing for such services and thus the significance of healing services.

We have already made mention of some of these articles above, we will focus here on two of them from the two former leaders of the PCC: the secretary committee of the ministry and the Moderator. Both of them taught me in the seminary in the period 1992-1996. One of the aims in presenting some of their ideas concerning spiritual healing is to lay more emphasis that more still need to be done so as to enable the PCC' ministry of healing to create the impact and effect it ought to create in the lives of her sick members. In his article (Mokoko eds. 2014:3-4), the former secretary committee of the ministry writes:

We are living in times of uncertainty and anxiety caused by many competing ideas and ways of life. The poverty level is on the rise giving birth to suffering and desperation to many a people. In times like these smart people take advantage of the weak and desperate. "Prosperity gospel" which promises easy solutions to all types of problems is gaining popularity. Theological tenets are being abandoned and the core of theological education neglected. One notices that there is a mad rush for material benefits to the neglect of the four-fold mission (preaching the word, teaching, healing and liberating God's people) of the Church. On realising this weakness, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon set up a committee to study the pit falls of today's approach to Christianity and to make specific proposals as to how to redress the situation. The study is on-going coordinated by the committee of the ministry. As first step, a liturgy for anointing and healing has been worked out. The liturgy for anointing and healing will be published in the next issue of this magazine. The church cannot afford to departmentalise her mission. The four-fold mission is treated and applied holistically in the interest of her members. The four-fold mission of the church is made operational by the Holy Spirit, who enhances people differently according to their gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-12). While looking towards the publication of the liturgy for anointing and healing in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, we urge every Christian to return to the study of the Holy Scripture....

The Moderator emeritus, the Very Rt Rev. Dr Festus Asana, before his term of office as Moderator of the PCC ended in 2014, was granted an interview by the Rev. Ebai Gustav who is one of the editors of the Presbyterian Messengers on the stance of the PCC on spiritual healing. Part of that interview goes thus:

Rev. Ebai Gustav: Sir, the ministry of today challenges our church not to sit quiet about the issue of spiritual healings. We have to speak out and to reassure our members to know where to stand. So our first question is: what is the official stance of the PCC on spiritual healing?

**The Moderator:**

If spiritual healing is something Christianity endorses, it has its place in the Christian church. It is just a matter of how we orient and understand what it is all about. If by spiritual healing we can pray for someone and the person gets well it is possible. If in spiritual healing we recognize that we can also count on the doctors who can heal because, God can also intervene through the doctors to heal someone... spiritual healing is of many sides. Healing of the body, soul and society has worked before and it continues to work and depends on our understanding of how it works, who should do it and what it implies. I believe in spiritual healing and I believe that the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon stands and confirms that spiritual healing works, and that it exists.

Rev. Ebai Gustav: Gradually spiritual healing is occupying 70% of what goes out to be the Christian ministry. Is the PCC thinking about giving this a bigger place in it ministry?

**The Moderator:**

We just have to know that ministry is made of many parts, we should not emphasize only on one part far more than the other, the same thing implies for the God head...



sometimes we can tear apart the trinity and lay an emphasis in Christianity we believe in the Triune God, and the three work in harmony and once we start separating, laying emphasis on one and leaving the others, we can make very big mistakes... we should aim at making the Triune God complete and not thinking that one aspect of the God Head should be forgotten or given more emphasis. This is where the mistake of spiritual healing is coming from where everybody says the spirit, the spirit. We have to pray to God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. So when we lay emphasis on Spiritual healing and only talk about the Spirit, it is as if the spirit was working alone. When we do that we are dividing the God-Head, and there is something lacking in that. I think the church should concentrate at highlighting the power of the trinity... This is what is dividing the church even more, when we make those divisions on the trinity.

Rev. Ebai Gustav: The PCC prides itself in that we are a church of order and discipline. Is there really a standard liturgy for healing in the PCC or is there one in the making?

**Moderator:**

The PCC being a church of order has come up with different types of liturgies for different occasions and instances. When there was disorder about healing services, about emphasis on spiritual healing, we set up committee that came up with a short liturgy to guide us when we have to conduct what we have often termed 'healing services' because when people act without some order, we get out of control... God is a God of order. We have guidelines on how to handle such services and even in our older liturgy; we have a program on the healing of the sick.

Rev. Ebai Gustav: I ask this question now to the Right Rev. Moderator of the PCC because your capacity as the spiritual leader of the church calls to mind every single member of our church to listen and follow exactly the leadership you have put in place. There is a Presbyterian member seated on the pews every Sunday and who moves during the week from one prayer place to the other in search of break through

or spiritual healing. As the leader of the church, what do you say to that PCC member who thinks that the church cannot provide his/her spiritual needs?

**Moderator:**

In fact, if that Christian keeps going round and round, I tell you, he/she may never find God. God is always present where we are present. I have seen pastors of the Presbyterian church who are very spiritual-good preachers, good counsellors- and yet individual in that same church jump out to look for churches where people collapse, because it is in collapsing that they see that the Holy Spirit is really present. It is not true. I believe that the spirit of God is working in the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon; I have experienced it, in many ways. I also recognize that there are some pastors who are misleading the people by their character and by their attitude. God is everywhere. If we discipline ourselves and seek God's face we will find him. Let us not waste time going round to look for God because we want a church that is perfect. There are people who are now performing magic in the name of healing and people fall for that. But I tell people always, Jesus did not come into this world to make miracles, he came to preach the good news of salvation. Jesus used the miracles as signs, but his priority was to preach the good news of salvation and God offers that salvation to everyone who believes in him.

Rev. Ebai Gustav: You once said that every service is a healing service. Can you elaborate a bit on this statement?

**Moderator:**

When people only look for a particular service in which all prayers are about healing, they are mistaken. If you organize a special service for healing as something unique, it does not mean that throughout the year people are not healed. When I go to worship on a Sunday morning or Wednesday during bible studies and pray, as I pray with my fellow Christians, as I read the bible with any fellow Christians, I feel healing in my soul because the word of God itself heals. When fellow Christians pray, they heal and people have come for services or for just other prayer meetings and gone

back healed in the soul and in the body, instantly or gradually. We should understand that every time we come into God's presence in a special way, through a worship service, our presence and adoration of God in that unique moment is a healing process and many people have really testified that they were healed. So we shouldn't think that we are healed only when a special service is organized for healing. Such services organized and referred to as healing services are for special occasions but I still insist, that every worship service in which the word of God is preached, in which prayer is offered, in which we praise God, each of them is a haling (sic) service.

Generally, there are two comments that I wish to make here in relation to the above quotations. The first is that approving a common liturgy as earlier indicated will not really create the impact that the healing ministry ought to do. We need something more than a unifying liturgy, something that has to reflect the worldview of the sick and at the same time reflecting our Christian theology and faith as already discussed above. The articles in this magazine deal with spiritual healing with the implications being that healing services are geared only or mostly toward spiritual healing which this thesis is in disagreeing with. The second is that the ministry of healing and healing services just like any other ministry in the church must be matched by appropriate theological reflections, assessment and critical evaluations which again the above articles fail to do. In addition, this thesis is proposing it and if the PCC really wishes its healing ministry to have greater effect in the lives of its sick members then what is done, how it is done and by whom have to be matched with appropriate theological reflections, assessment and critical evaluations.

## **7.7 A Brief Summary of the Structure, Nature and Programme of the Healing Service in the Musang Congregation.**

One of the outcomes of my theological reflection in relation to my experiences of sickness as already mentioned is the introduction of a healing service in the Musang congregation in 2002. Before the actual introduction, I took about three months to sensitise the Christians on the importance of such services.

During this period of sensitisation, I realised how some of the Christians have been longing for such services and how some of the PCC Christians have been attending evening crusades for healing wherever they hear such services are being held. It was the first time in its life that, that congregation had experienced such a healing service, including the practice of anointing, exorcism and the laying on of hands. Its focus is on holistic healing which involves other aspects such as: Christian education, moral teachings, Bible studies and above all exhortation, intercession, laying on of hands, exorcism, anointing and interceding for all the sick and all that are God's instruments of healing. Thus, the concept of healing within these services is broad; it includes physical, spiritual, social and psychological healings and this is reflected in the structure and nature of the program of the services. The structure presented is the one I developed in the Musang congregation and I am currently (2017) using it everywhere I ministered. I used it in Dschang congregation and I am currently using it in the Batibo presbytery. The service is held fortnightly in the congregation averagely between one and a half hours to 3 hours and depending on the population present.

This time period falls within the normal time range for normal Sunday services where other activities like Holy Communion, baptism, thanksgiving, dedications, introductions of leaders, inductions, ordinations among others may be included. Normal Sunday services without any of the above activities or other activities are between 1 and a half hour to two hours. Before we continue with the structure we need to say something about the preparation for such services.

### **7.7.1. Personal Preparation**

Some few comments about my spiritual life are necessary here: Firstly, there is evening devotion in our home every evening from January to December. Secondly, it is a daily routine for me to carry out special prayers between 3am and 5am in my room. One of the focuses of such prayers has to do with all that I will do that day or week and all whom I will meet. Thirdly, every Wednesday is set aside for my personal retreat and thus personal spiritual fortification through special reflections

and prayers. These have really been one of my major sources of strength for the daily pastoral ministry.

In addition to all the above, during the week that I have arranged for a healing service, I usually spent the day or a few days before the service day proper in personal preparation through reflections, meditations, retreat, thanksgiving and prayers. Most of the times, I do this out of the house or office to avoid interruption. During this time, I also go through the lessons and texts, which before this time, have been selected and pre-prepared. The prayers on this day or days include placing the healing service and those officiating including those for the intercessory prayers and all the sick entirely in God's throne of mercy and grace. In doing all these, I am fully aware of burnout and take every measure to reduce it. One of the cautions we had during our pastoral formation and training at the Seminary has to do with the issue of burnout that is, over working without rest, refreshing, re-equipping or refilling oneself. I always take time off amidst the busy schedule for personal fortifications and encourage individuals to do same before each healing service. With this, we return to the structure of the healing service.

### **7.7.2 Singing.**

The service starts with some choruses. Any Christian can give a chorus or series of choruses and all will join together, with all the instruments available in the congregation. Singing is part of healing, some songs are so consoling and at times, I put more emphasis on such songs.

### **7.7.3 The Liturgy**

After the singing and dancing (those who are able), then the service continues (at least in my case) with the salutation, the opening hymn, the invitation, the act of penitence, the word of grace, the act of praise (which is omitted during the period of advent and lent), the collect, and Bible readings lessons (up till this point I follow the normal PCC liturgy for Sunday services while awaiting now for the official one from the church).

### **7.3.4 Meditation, Exhortation and Moral Education**

Some general comments are also necessary here: Firstly, it is a weekly routine wherever I ministered to carry out two midweek services- one in the quarters (where the Christians live) and one general one for all the Christians in the church premises. Secondly, the main focus here is teaching which may include Bible studies, moral education, the catechism of the PCC and other current topics or social concern issues.

On the day of the healing service itself, some healing passages or other passages in the Bible and/or some social concern usually raised by the Christians such as ‘the relationship between sickness and sin, the power of forgiveness and reconciliation, why all prayers are not being answered’ among others may be expounded upon. All these three (meditation, exhortation and moral education) go together that is, they form a unit within the healing service.

### **7.3.5 Prayer for Healing**

The sick are invited to stand in front of the altar or where they are sitting in the following order:

- i) Physical sickness (this is always the largest group)
- ii) Spiritual sickness,
- iii) Emotional, social, psychological, addictions among others

Our prayers at this point includes that God should bless the medicines that the medical practitioners have prescribed, bless even the food, water and air around the patient and hear our prayer (and that of the patient and friends) in granting relief, healing and peace to the sick. In his article: (ed.Mokoko 2014:15) in response to the question: what is the relationship between spiritual and physical healing Kinge said:

There is a strong relationship between spiritual and physical healing. One automatically affects the other. Let us not forget that man (sic) is a unit composed of body, mind and spirit. Good health necessarily involves all of these components. In a more direct manner spiritual healing accelerates the process of physical healing.

### **7.3.6 Intercessions**

The intercessions prayers follow immediately after the prayer of healing because they form part of that prayer. These intercessions are in four parts. At times, this section is shared beforehand to some members of the congregation and at times given to elders on the spot. The first part is intercessions for all who are sick within the PCC and the nation at large. The second part deals with intercessions for the political, socio-economic or the systems and structures that help to promote illnesses of various kinds or help to prolong the healing processes. Thirdly, we intercede for all who are promoting healing anywhere in any part of the world. Fourthly, we pray for God's mercy and compassion for His world. The rest of the congregation joins in the "Amen" or other responses such as "Lord in your mercy." This is another reason that I say the healing service is not only about spiritual healing, it is more than that, and it encompasses all of the creation.

### **7.3.7 Anointing and the Laying on of Hands**

"Words spoken in prayers follow with words acted - anointing and that special touch." The anointing and or laying on of hands are solemnly done amidst slow and meditative singing. The singing continues after the anointing and the tone here is very joyous and prepared for the offering and the benediction. Because of the attendance, it is practically impossible for the clergy, during the various prayer topics to name all those who are of concern. That is, why some space is given for individuals to do so silently. The same with the anointing and the laying on of hands; the majority anoint themselves with the church elders standing behind them and I anoint only serious cases.

The session members (elected elders or deacons who assist the clergy in the daily administration of the congregational affairs) and the whole congregation are encouraged to continue with the healing prayers within the weeks until the next healing services and continue after that service as part of our continuing responsibility toward healing. There is a continuous chain prayer by Christians week by week, month after month and throughout the year for the healing of the sin-sick-soul in the PCC, Cameroon and beyond. However, more needs to be said here about the rites of anointing, exorcism and the laying on of hands within the healing service. All these rights are done in the midst of prayers, meditations and singing.

The rite of anointing as we saw in chapter 2 was one of the reasons why Calvin had to develop his doctrine of Cessations. He was right as earlier indicated in ridiculing the way this rite was carried out in his days but he over did it. For the Roman Catholic Church this rite is a sacrament but in this project and within the Protestant circles it is not a sacrament but it has a sacramental character. In addition to what had been said in this project about anointing, it is understood within the healing service as a means through which God in His grace, love, care and mercy reaches out symbolically to His people and blesses them even in their situation of sickness or other misfortunes. The research results point to the importance of anointing: It is medicinal that is, the blessed oil heals holistically; physical, spiritual, social and psychological (holistic healing) and it has a spiritual function. In addition to the first point, anointing reassures God's continuous presence and care for the sick and thus strengthens the faith of the sick to rely on the Triune God.

We will return again to the definition of exorcism earlier given, that it is a process by which indwelling evil spirits, other spiritual entities or demons or Satan are compelled to leave a person's body or place, area or things that they are believed to have possessed with destructive effects on that person, place, area or thing (Pearsall: 1998; 645). Again, this is a complex issue but I see exorcism as a healing process wherein fervent prayers in that name Jesus are made, or casting out 'any evil forces' by the authority of that name Jesus. Again, like the issue of anointing, exorcism in this project does not imply any magical or mystic power but all our prayers are made



in all humility and in faith to the Triune God. That is, exorcism just like anointing and laying on of hands is the work of God and a sign of God's kingly rule here and now; it reveals Christ's power over all other powers under heaven that the Christians are constantly at war with (Ephesians 6:12). Exorcism fits in with our African worldview of causes of illnesses, the devastating experiences of witchcraft and all other forms of evils. It reassures the sick of the absolute power of Christ's blood on the cross and thus a strong symbol of God's protection against any harm of the evil one. Some of the words that the research participants used to express the impact of exorcism in their lives include exorcism "brings deliverance, inner peace and the breaking loose of the power of Satan."

I am also very cautious not to understand exorcism only in a negative sense of expelling evil spirits as the results show but I practice it also as a means of revealing Christ's power and goodness over evil and over wrongdoing. I made this clear during the exhortations, meditation and educational talk during weekly Bible studies and during the healing service.

For instance one of Jesus' teachings is love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:43-48). The Christians are constantly being challenged to 'pay evil with good' and this is reducing hatred, witch hunting and other forms of evil forces. The laying on of hands-that special touch or contact (Mark 1:40-41) has a strong symbolic meaning and is contributing holistically in the healing process. It is a sign of love, care and concern, a sign of Christ power made manifest through the church to the sick world. The exorcism, anointing and laying on of hands all help to in-still hope, joy, liberation and faith in the Lord Jesus and his Father and the Holy Spirit in the lives of the sick.

### **7.3.8 Offering and Benediction**

The service continues with singing, dancing and offering. At times, some space is provided for healing testimonies. After some considerable amount of time, the singing and dancing stops and a thanksgiving prayer is made and the service ends

with the benediction. In addition to the definition of healing already presented above, I think more needs to be said here about the understanding of healing at least within the context of healing service.

## **7.4 A Reflection on the Understanding of Healing**

There are two facts that we need to bear in mind before we proceed to the understanding of healing within the context of the healing services. The first is that healing covers a very broad spectrum, which includes a wide range of practices (Maddock 1981:9, Dow and Strammers, and Lees and Fiddes 1997, 37-38, 5-18, Pattison 1989:5-20, 87-93). The second is that “there are clear limitations to the realization of complete health” such as in-built genetic defects, the process of aging, environmental factors, various forms of illnesses, damaged relationships between each other and also between humanity and God.

We need to further explore the meaning of healing at least as I understand it in particular or understood by proponent of the healing services in general. Such explorations, I believe can further help the PCC towards a more meaningful practical theology of healing not only of its sick members but also of the nation. One of my points that I have been raising within our conferences or where healing services are discussed and thus in this project, is that the leadership of our church does not only need to approve of healing services or a unifying liturgy but to also understand the broader meaning of healing within such services. Such understanding will help to shape the structure, liturgy, programmes, nature and purpose of such a service within the congregation and outside to the wider community who are also in need of healing. This is one of the purposes of practical theology. With this, we return to the significance of the empirical results and will incorporate some of their meaning of healing as we explore the concept of healing within the context of the healing service.

The research results show a range of healing methods, some of which may include prayers, intercessions, bio-medications, anointing, laying on of hands, the

Sacrament, sacrifices and rituals, protective charms or objects, exorcism, retreats, meditations, Bible study, exhortations, rebuking, therapies, educational programmes, reconciliation, forgiveness, healthy living information, re-orientation, change of life style and the encouragement of NGO in congregations among others. Harmonising some of these dimensions of healing is one of the aims of the healing services. Not all these dimensions or methods may be used at the same time; different aspects are used at different times depending on the situation(s) or the understanding of the illnesses and the healing methods. Here our focus is on physical, spiritual, social and psychological healings. Again, these four aspects to healing are interwoven and are holistic in nature at least by the understanding of the African worldview.

There are various perspectives and dimensions to illnesses and therefore to healings and from the results and our African worldview, these perspectives and dimensions are interrelated or knitted together, and that is, they are understood holistically. The sick and their relatives have one common aim which is to get healed or better their condition as much as possible. As already indicated by the research results, the healing services aim at various dimensions of healings and the service is patterned to meet these various healing needs and aspirations of the people.

I have earlier said that my understanding of healing is as a result of a combination of care and compassion, skills and experience and theology and practice. With this in mind we have now to expand (In this expansion we will also have to remember some of the experiences already shared so far and especially the experiences I shared about four heart breaking incidences -the 24 year old woman whose only child aged 9 was raped; the couple with their 21 year old son who had cancer, the accident that prompted some family members to visit traditional medicine men and the accusation and counter accusation concerning witchcraft related problems at the beginning of this projects) on the definition of healing which I have earlier given that: healing tries to meet the physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs or aspirations of the people, healing is a process which tries to cure, restore or bridge broken relationships, healing tries to re-establish peace, harmony and stability. From this definition, which reflects the views of the results, we can deduce some key

understanding to the meaning of healing, how people are healed and the impact of healing services upon the lives of the sick and their relatives. In doing this, we are at the same time, exploring various aspects of healings.

#### **7.4.1 Healing as Challenging the ‘Power that Be’**

Beside poverty and various types of illnesses, the tribes of Cameroon, just like most nations in Africa, are plagued by the disease of corruption and injustice. Some Cameroonians have even described corruption and injustice as a way of life and this is really impinging negatively on the health of some Cameroonians. Corruption and injustices are at their pick in offices, high way and seaports. I had a very terrible experience when I shipped my things from England to Douala seaport and billions of such experiences can be recorded each year. The prophetic (watchman of God) voice of the church needs to be heard in all directions. There is then a need for the PCC to focus more also on the structural and institutional features of the Cameroon’s society and politics and its place in the world economic and political system because these structures and systems impinge upon the health of the people. For instance, some may be sick because of the effect of conflict or the political and power struggle or policies. Again, some may be sick because of poverty related problems caused by injustice. Christian healing and all healers should address the real needs and root causes wherever possible and also have an in-depth understanding or knowledge of specific illnesses and the various ways that the people are searching for healing. Jesus never condoned any form of evil in his day and throughout the Bible and church history we have martyrs who have stood firm in their faith against all odds. Above all, the church that is an instrument of God’s Kingdom needs to really liberate people from all that chained them. With such an understanding, part of the intercession prayer during the healing service is focused on justice and peace not only in Cameroon but also in all the nations in this world.



## 7.4.2 Healing as Curing

The definition of healing which I have given above, challenges the medical model of healing which, is predominantly a Western concept, which some churches in Africa have followed for quite a long time. The problem with it, is its focus on physical healing as if that is the only healing method nor reflects the whole of healing concepts in other cultures. In other words it focuses more on the physical aspect of healing. As earlier indicated, the tearing apart of healing in this way does not reflect our African holistic understanding of healing and thus is proving inadequate in our culture. Some Christians and Christian doctors see no opposition between medicine and the church's healing ministry. I think the insights of Kinge quoted above about the relationship between physical and spiritual healing needs to be taken seriously. This position is similar to Booth's views: "I believe that a combination of good medicine, enlightened counselling and sound religion points the way forward, and that those who are practitioners... need to work closely together in order to meet the totality of human need" (Booth 1985:viii). That is why prayers can be made and doctors consulted as part of the healing process and at the same time upholding our Christians values in all these methods.

"We cure but God heals" is one of the captions often seen on signposts or notice boards in hospitals in Cameroon. For Christian doctors or practitioners this caption implies that healing is not in the hands of any human being but in the hands of God. He is the one who has the final say. The doctors, other health practitioners or promoters may carry out the operation or surgery, administer or prescribe the medications, bandage the wounds, fast and pray but God has the final say to the healing of the patient (Deuteronomy 32:39 Psalm 30:2, 103:2-3, Jeremiah 17:14). Such a Christian understanding of healing is different from that of the secular or Western understanding (Lees and Fiddes 1997:5-6) already mentioned. The church's ministry of healing in this light cannot be understood or limited only in terms of physical healing as also revealed by the empirical research results. I agree with those theologians and Christian writers who hold that modern medicine needs to be highly valued as God's gift and also that there are some needs that modern medicine

cannot meet and that there is no clear distinction between the so-called Natural and supernatural (Nature and Grace) (Maddock 1981:9, Dow and Strammers and Lees and Fiddes 1997, 37-38, 5-18, Pattison 1989:5-20, 87-93). In response to the question how are people healed today? Fiddes (1997: 16-17) writes:

It is always through cooperation between God and his creation, through divine initiative and creaturely response. God, that is to say, never fulfils his purposes unilaterally. He often takes the initiative in his actions, but the character of his activity is persuasion rather than coercion, influence rather than compulsion, a drawing out of response rather than forcing obedience. This is the divine character which is revealed through the cross of Jesus: 'divine weakness is stronger than human strength.' In his humility God desires the creatures he has made to contribute to his project in creation, to his aim to form truly personal beings. When we speak of 'grace through nature' we should then have in mind a real partnership between grace and nature, and the healing process shows this especially clearly.

I must emphasise here, that in praying and consulting the doctor (especially traditional doctors or using any alternative means for healing) our distinctive Christian values must be upheld. For instance, any Christian that receives any protective charm from the traditional healer is going against our distinctive Christian values and norms. It is important that Lees and Fiddes (1997:18-34, I was one of Fiddes' student at the University of Oxford) emphasises the aspects of cooperation and partnership in the process of healing. This in a way is in line with the communal aspect of life and living in the African context. These will be further elaborated in the next paragraphs

### **7.4.3 Healing as Cooperation**

Cooperation is in various ways. Some include the patient cooperating with the health practitioners in taking the medicine in the right ways and observing all the advice of their doctors. Another area of cooperation can be seen in the structure and programme of the healing service. For instance, the prayer of intercession goes

beyond the individual sick person. That is the whole congregation joins in prayer in lifting up not only the individual but all the sick and all who are concerned with healing to God's throne of mercy. (Lees and Fiddes 1997:18) write;

When we pray for the healing of another, we are surely not asking God for something which he could achieve perfectly well unilaterally, but refuses to do until he hears our prayers. Such an understanding of prayer not only raises questions about the moral nature of God, but seems very unjust to the person in need and in pain. Rather, as we pray for another person we are expressing our love and concern for her, and God takes that love into his own. Our love for her and desire for her health augment and amplify the urgings of his own Spirit, that together God and the intercessions begin to work transformation. Healing comes through partnership between God and His creation, and prayer is a means of entering into such a partnership.

Importantly, this prayer does not end only in the healing service but the community of the faithful is encouraged to continue with it throughout the weeks and round the year including other practical healing means. Another area of cooperation and partnership is from the individual who need healing. The 'patient' needs to be conscious in his or her effort towards healing including trust in God and an acceptance and offering of forgiveness. Let me illustrate this point with this experience already shared about the 24 year old woman whose only child; a girl of age nine was raped. After several weeks of counselling, reorientation, Bible study and prayers with this woman and her child, she began to view her situation in a different way; in a more positive way. And that is cooperation in the healing process. Similarly, there were also some positive healing results after months of counselling and praying with the family where one of them went to the traditional medicine men to find out the cause of the death of their dear one. Both parties were able to reconcile and forgive thus a cordial relationship once more was re-established which is vital for both the health of the family and that of the community.



Another aspect of cooperation can be seen in a new way of reflecting over our lives or even coming to terms with one's past and stop feeling guilty or blaming oneself. In this light 'healing is a matter of the formation in faith, changing one's nature including seeing, hearing and understanding in a new way' (Schhlauh 2000:211-212). Healing can also be understood as a process of formation and reformation of our Christian faith in a way that such faith does justice to our Christian theology and heritage and at the same time to our human experiences. Healing may be a process of transformation which may lead to change of character, diet or reshaping our understanding of particular worldviews. From these one can see healing as a process and this process may take different directions as already indicated and as the next paragraph will further reveal.

#### **7.4.4 Healing As A Process**

From my pastoral experiences and especially from my active involvement in the Christian healing ministry, I agree with all those research participants who understand healing as a process of being healthy in body, mind, and spirit (New Bible Dictionary 1962: 461) and in relation to other members of the community, nation, the Creator, and the rest of creation. Maddocks (1981:9) is one of those who have also understood healing as the process, which brings about the restoration to health. Maddock further holds that the term healing denotes the idea of spaciousness and growth, which have their root from the story of creation. This restoration process can take various means that are available depending on people's knowledge and worldview with the hope of alleviating pains, discomfort, suffering or even death. Healing is a process and not just a state, a process of curing or becoming well, a process of restoration, a process of maintaining or promoting good health and wellbeing. These processes are interwoven that is they include physical, spiritual, social and psychological. Physical healing has to do with the treatment or curing of physical pains or symptoms of diseases within the body, tissues, or blood. Social healing involves a process of cordial relationships within the family, community, nation and the spirit world.

Spiritual healing is a process of healing the mind, soul or spirit. Psychological healing is a process of healing the human mental state, mind, emotions, thoughts and behaviour. Again all these processes need to be understood as interwoven, interrelated or knitted together because of the holistic nature of the human body (1 Cor 12: 12-26, Kinge, 2014:15). In the process of healing (for example) the physical body (fever, pain, disease) one or more of the other processes are also involved even though at times unnoticed or unaware.

That process may also mean accepting our sickness and learning to live with it positively or even reconciling with ourselves and others including reconciling with God. Healing does not necessarily mean disappearance of pain or complete cure of symptoms of illnesses but, may also mean, a new way of accepting and living with our condition and hoping that one day healing will finally come. Moreover, in all these processes prayer has a major role of enabling all types of healings to be possible - with God, everything is possible.

This does not mean that prayers is only to be used when all else have failed as two research participants hold. If one understands healing as a process toward the restoration to wholeness then that process is much more effective by the combination of prayers, biomedicine and 'healthy life style' ways. This is one of the major points of Lees and Fiddes when he talks of cooperation in healing. There are many facets to prayers and medicine. Prayers need to include words and practical actions. The use of medicine can include modern medicine or other alternative forms of healing provided these alternative forms of healing are not clothed with superstitions or mystical activities or clashed with our distinctive Christian values.

By modern medicine, I mean all that can be associated with mainline medicine, and healthcare institutions. By alternative medicines I mean all the remedial practices or techniques which have not been associated with mainline medicine (Dow and Strammers 1997:35- 39). There is no doubt, that there are tension and controversy among churches concerning prayers for healings. Dow and Strammers (1997:38), have outlined some of the reasons why the practice of prayers for healing is causing

controversies in Christian churches such as the worldview, interpretations of Biblical passages concerning healing, understanding of the meaning and causes of sickness and healing. Healing is not just a state, period, or absence of pain or illness but a process towards restoration to 'wholeness' in body, mind and spirit and in relation with the Creator and the rest of creation. We may call it a 'spiritual' process or journey wherein the physical, spiritual, psychological or social 'pain or agony' may even still be experienced in the body but the mind, mental state and the spirit are healing; that is, continually coping with the 'pain or agony positively.

#### **7.4.5 Healing As Wholeness (Holistic Aspect).**

Healing is a search for wholeness, that total wholeness (whole person) that liberates humanity from all that dehumanises us. I am very cautious with the use of the word wholeness in relation to healing. The insights of Pattison, Dow and Strammers (1997:34-36) and Duncan and Wilkinson 1997:59-80, seem to be important here. Pattison says to describe healing, as wholeness is to define one vague concept in terms of another which is equally vague and that the word wholeness trivialises and spiritualises healing and may suggest that healers and healthy people are far from being whole. If we reflect again to the four but interrelated understanding of the concept of illnesses and healings from the traditional perspectives which include the physical, spiritual, social and psychological (including the environment) then the healer, healthy people and the sick are all in the process toward wholeness though in different dimensions. However, I think one of Pattison's points is that in the search for healing one should not ignore the structural, institutional, economic and political systems because some illnesses can have their root causes from such systems as already indicated.

#### **7.4.6 Healing as an act of Compassion and Love**

Compassion and love are central to the healing ministry. We have already seen this act of compassion and love in chapter six, where God's very nature is constituted in self-giving-love culminating at the cross. Compassionate love for the sick was one of

the motives that enabled Jesus to heal the sick in his days and through his compassionate love, we get a picture of God's compassion for his world and the 'hurting peoples' in His world. Moreover, this agape-love dimension is compelling me and other clergy as the research results show to engage actively in the healing ministry because there are many who are sick and looking up for healing. The needs of the sick in Jesus's day are similar to the needs of the sick today. The overall need of the sick is to get well no matter the cost. That is why some of them roam from denomination to denomination or from one traditional healer to another or grasp anything in the name of healing. One of the aims of the healing service, is to enable the sick to have a better understanding that God cares, loves all, even in our pain and to encourage the sick to remain faithful to God who hears and knows all our thoughts, words and deeds and is having the spare parts to repair our worn out tissues and our brokenness.

That is why the healing service is made up of different sections or parts. The church's ministry of healing is an act of expressing and sharing God's love to the sick. Hence, the healing ministry is not an option for the church but one of its duties here and now while waiting for the complete healing at the parousia.

The purpose of our explorations of the devastating consequences of sickness and the Cameroonian traditional beliefs and practices in the area of sickness and healing is to highlight the values that this society holds in their search for an answer to their pains and afflictions. Highlighting these values, beliefs and practices will enable the church to have a better understanding of the society in which it operates and thus offer the church a better way of integrating, inculturating, and evangelising and above all will contribute significantly to the church's ministry of healing. Authentic integration by the church can better be achieved by establishing a solid theological foundation based on the Scripture, reason, experience and Christian tradition.

Healing is not an end in itself but a means, that is, healing is for a purpose, healing is enabling humanity to experience the original state to which God created the world before the 'fall of creation in Gen 3.' This again has some connection to the first point

that healing is a process not a once off situation. It is a process leading us to eternity. We return again to this concept of wholeness. We saw above that in the Old Testament, the word health is often expressed by the phrase: Shalom and this word has been translated as peace, soundness of body and soul, wholeness, wellbeing and harmony and that the similar understanding to the meaning of health in the New Testament is expressed by Jesus in John 10:10b (1 Thess 5:23, 3 John 2).

We equally saw above the criticisms of Duncan and Wilkinson to the WHO's definition of health and their understanding of a Christian concept of health. "Health is the complete wholeness of a person's entire being in all aspects of body, mind and spirit. ..." Healing is the complete wholeness of a person's entire being in all aspects of body, mind and spirit including human relationships to God, to fellow humans and to their environment. The focus of healing is first the individual and that 'healed' individual needs to express the healing experiences with his or her fellow human beings including the environment (social relationship) and his or her Creator. Christian views differ on how to use, understand or respond to alternatives medicines. I have said above that, 'medicine makes use of what is available in God's world.' This is the type of concept, according to the results or idea that the traditional healer propagates to entice Christians to accept any form of healing they provide to them by telling them that God created for instance protective charms or "heaven helps those who help themselves" or to falsely quote any Biblical passage like, seek and you shall find...Mt 7:7. Again, the issue of value that is distinctive Christian values need not clash with any alternative medicine. If Christians consult diviners or witch doctors then there is a clash of faith and belief. Let me explain this point further in a more practical way in relation to Christians who are members of the PCC.

A traditional doctor may want to heal a Christian by protecting them or their homes with charms and other concoctions as the laity pointed out during the interview. This is wrong for our Christian values, this is syncretism because Jesus is our protector and no power can be compared with his. Again, if Christians trust or pray to the gods of fertility for children or offer any forms of sacrifices to the gods then this is against traditional Christian values. But to pray for roots of plants or herb for God's blessing

over them is good. Alternatively, for the traditional experts to prepare various types of herbs and roots for drinking is fine for me. The use of natural substances for healing, where there is evidence to support healthy outcome and such uses are not clashing or conflicting with our Christians value is acceptable.

There are many facets to prayers and prayers need to include words and practical actions. For instance, if the church prays for the healing of starving children in any part of the world, then, the church has the duty to also seek ways of practically preventing starvation from occurring or reoccurring or at least reducing its negative effects. Or if the church preaches about abundant life in Jesus then she has to concretely enable people to experience this life here and now through its healing ministry and other practical actions geared toward healing. In this light, healing is enacting the experience and presence of God's reign in God's world. The experience of healing reveals the foretaste of what is still to come; healing is invading the present with a foretaste of what is to come (parousia). Healing is more than the restoration to physical, spiritual, social and psychological health, healing is part of the proclamation of the Good News of God's kingly rule in our midst (Mark 1: 14-15), yet not finally. As we wait for the final consummation, we need to continue healing the sin-sick-world. That is why healing can be seen as a process or journey towards wholeness (Parousia), because at present none of us (even the healers) is fully whole (healed) nor will be until the Kingdom of God is complete. The permanent attainment of complete healing must await the resurrection. Yet it is Biblically justifiable for Christians to seek this wholeness by making use of what God has given to us in his world (Dow and Strammers in Christian healing 1997:35).

Biblical methods of healing should not be seen as more important than others (medicines) nor should Biblical methods of healing be classified, that is, seen as more important than others. The various ways of healings should complement each other rather than oppose each other. Yet in giving and receiving healing our Christian values should be upheld at all times. We can summarise all what had been said above concerning healing with these words: "The work of God in the world is characterized by a combination of nature and grace.

The pattern of healing is of cooperation between God and his creation, of divine initiative and creaturely response. Cooperation is evident in medical work, prayer, caring and spiritual ministry” (Lucas: 1997: 194). This leads us to the significance of healing service.

## **7.5 The Significance of the Healing Service in the Musang Congregation**

The research results reveal that Cameroonians need a church that is both Christian and African, a ‘wounded healer church’ which is healed and healing, a healing church that is holistic in nature. This can be done if the PCC reclaims the lost healing history, reinstate its African values which do not contradict the Christian theology and engage in more healthy preventive measures. I hold and clearly supported by the research results that the healing service is a way forward and towards a more meaningful, effective and efficient ministry of healing within the PCC for several reasons which in some ways have already been mentioned above. But for purposes of emphases I will mention further some important hallmarks of such a service and which in some ways constitutes part of my vision and dream of a healing church which is both Christian and African in structure, nature and mode of operation in Cameroon.

The first is that aspiration for good health or the maintenance of good health is one of the highest core values (as we have already seen) not only of the PCC Christians and Cameroonian people but of any human society. As also seen above this aspiration to this highest core value is rooted in Scripture and above all in the healing ministry of Jesus as well as his teaching, preaching, the cross and the resurrection.

In his article the former secretary committee of the ministry in the PCC rightly pointed out that “... the church cannot afford to departmentalise her mission” (2014:3). Theologically, the threefold ministry of Jesus (preaching, teaching and healing) cannot be successfully separated and any attempt to do so is tantamount to heresy

and thus will only help to render the healing ministry of the church to remain shallow in the lives of the sick and their relatives.

Structure, nature, mode of operation and programme of the healing service 'combined together Jesus' threefold ministry.' Put it differently, the teaching, the preaching and the healing are all embedded in the structure and nature of the healing service. With this we return again to the cause and plan of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 and Mark 1:14-15. The healing service continues to translate this cause and plan of Jesus into concrete actions as also seen in its educational programmes.

I will briefly explain some of these educational programmes. We have already seen some of the various understanding of healing within the context of the healing service. There are also educational programmes within the service that educate the Christians for instance on health preventive measures. At times, I invite health personnel to educate the entire congregation within the healing service or worship service on pertinent health issues such as diabetics, high blood pressure, the benefits of good sanitation measures, healthy eating habits, the benefits of exercise, food and nutrition, the importance of vaccinations especially for kids of 0-5 years, importance of antenatal clinic among others. In this light healing also, goes beyond the bio-medical healing model to reflect the holistic nature of healing within the African context and vision of health put forth by the WHO. Within the structure and nature of the healing service we have the preaching, teaching, healing and the translation of all these into practical actions, all going on simultaneously. The healing service practises Christ's healing ministry, this then makes the healing service more meaningful to the everyday realities of the sick. The healing service' structure and programmes also laid special emphasis on prayers, fasting, mediation, love in action activities and these are regular among the members of the Musang, Dschang parishes and now Batibo presbytery where I am currently the Presbyterial Secretary since 1st July 2016. These are extended to the sick in the homes or hospitals and this reflect our African communal system. The more Christians are actively involved and participate in the various educational programmes, the more aware they are and all these preventive measures reduce some types of illness and at the same time



facilitate the healing processes of the sick. If all these visions of healing are extended to all the congregations within the PCC then more people would be experiencing God's healing grace, love and mercy.

The second is that the healing service upholds the three cardinal principles of the Reformed theological stand: Sola Scriptura, Sola Fides and Sola Gratia. One of the implications here is that the healing ministry is God's gift to the church- God the healer has endowed the church with the power of the Holy Spirit to continue in the recreation of a healthy world through its preaching, teaching and healing. Another implication is that the healing service is one of the ways in which the church is translating its preaching, teaching and faith into concrete actions. Again it is also important to note that the healing service does not only end in the congregation with the prayers, anointing, exorcism, laying on of hands and intercession but also involves a lot of practical action and outreach activities such as further caring, educational, moral, faith-building and vocational activities (James 2:16-26, Matthew 25:31-40, such services reflect also the African community and solidarity holistic nature) all with the aim of enabling various ways of healing all those who are experiencing various forms of illnesses. Thus it can be rightful affirm that the healing service reflects the healing ministry of Jesus and that of the early church and thus it is Biblically grounded.

There is an important connection between the first two points and this third point, a connection which needs to be taken seriously by the PCC (and churches in Africa) if it wants to continually uphold its God-given- healing ministry. In the first two points we have pointed out that the healing service is Biblically grounded, that healing is part of the proclamation of the Good News and the third point is emphasising that this Good News must make sense to the hearers within their socio-cultural context.

This has been one of the main points of this project and it is well reflected in the research results and in chapter four. There must be a balanced critical meeting point or dialogue, between Scripture and theological traditions with the worldview of the hearers of the Gospel. That is the local context and its tradition and belief systems

and the Biblical tradition are critically examined and a dialogue reached so as to continually uphold the Biblical truth and the local tradition's positive values together. This can in some ways enable the African to be a more faithful Christian and thus being a true Christian and a true African. In this way, the Gospel is not foreign but makes some sense in the local context. The healing service then critically incorporates the African values especially of 'causes of illnesses,' the African holistic nature and the African religiosity nature in its structure, nature, the mode of operation, outreach programmes and vocational services and activities.

Importantly also is the fact that forgiveness, reconciliation and making peace with oneself, neighbour, family and community are important components of the healing service which also reflect the African worldview. We actually pray and encourage each other to learn to forgive and at times we share ideas and especially those painful situations that make people hard to forgive and members provide some practical solutions. Furthermore exorcism, anointing and laying on of hands reflect the African worldview of illnesses and their belief in the supernatural and thus are powerful means of healing and such methods also help to calm down fears including that of the supernatural world, and fear of witchcraft and its related illnesses and brings about liberation from some entanglements. In addition, the cross-placed in the homes (after the blessings of such homes) of the Christians is a strong symbol of protection, security and power and the continuous presence of the power of the Holy Spirit in such homes and in the lives of its occupants. I must also emphasise here, that all these go with continuous preaching, teaching, education, meditation, exhortation and retreat. All these practical actions aim at a continuous building or strengthening of the faith of the believers and again all these are reflected in the structure, nature and mode of operation of the healing service. Let me expand more on this last point.

The healing service, through its various nature and structure continuously point out that Christ's power cannot be compared with any other power the sun. Christ's power is above that of all forms of evil forces including supernatural evil forces. Such emphasis lends more credibility and efficacy to the ministry of healing and of

deliverance through the practice of exorcism, anointing and laying on of hands during the healing service. These rites are not only Biblically grounded but make sense in our African context in terms of illness, health and misfortune. There is also provision for continuous counselling and prayers and more pastoral care measures to all and especially those with specific needs and concerns. The healing service in the Musang congregation becomes more a communal activity wherein we care for each other. Again I need to emphasize that the NGO in the congregation coupled with all the healing programmes and services are really transforming lives. If all these visions of healing are extended to all the congregations within the PCC then more people would be experiencing God's healing grace, love and mercy. This is one of the reasons that I keep on emphasising that a unifying liturgy is not enough but that we need to understand the broader meaning of the term healing and let this reflect in the structure, nature, programme and liturgy of the healing service and if not then the healing ministry of the church will continue to lack in its efficacy.

Hence, I must say here that more still needs to be done in the area of structure, nature and the liturgy of the healing service in the light of all the visions and dreams presented above. This has been and will still continue to be one of my points that the leadership of the PCC do not only have to produce a unifying liturgy (which we are still waiting for ) but also such a liturgy needs to be structured to adequately incorporate the three points just mentioned above. If this is done then part of the goals of this work, which is to help develop, challenge and raise awareness will in some way be achieved. In this way the church can be viewed as a 'healing community' wherein God's love will be overflowing to all creatures and in this way the sick will be experiencing more of the healing grace of God. There are three main points that I wish to make here about the prayers in the healing service which are also contributing significantly to the importance of such services.

Firstly, such services or prayer for healing is not necessarily aimed at prolonging life but at maintaining or improving the quality of life with both God and humanity and the environment. This brings us back to one of the core values of our people already discussed above which is that of aspiring for good health. Prayer for healing

(including anointing, exorcism, laying on of hands, modern medicine and 'alternative medicine' that do not contradict the Christian faith) is one way of maintaining this good health.

Secondly through prayer, the patient is brought into 'special touch' with Jesus, the source of life, and thus into the presence of God's love, mercy and grace, who created life and knitted each person together in the mother's womb (Psalm 139: 13, Lucas 1997:16f) and can renew it when it is affected or scattered even by sickness or sin. That is why part of the ending of all the healing prayers is "yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). In this way the result of the healing is left in the hands of the Triune God who knows what is best for the patient, with the hope also that the patient has given his or her life totally under God's control.

Thirdly, as a congregation, it is our continuing religious and social responsibilities after the service to continue to obey Jesus' command to heal the sick in further concrete practices out of the boundary of the church building into the wider community. We encourage all who attend the service that we can all contribute in the healing process of family, world and ourselves and there are many ways to do this, for instance, changing our (negative) live styles. In John 10:10b we read about the joy of healing that is healing not out of pity but out of the desire for service and thus revealing God's compassion to the sick. Thus, prayer for healing (the healing service) does not only end in the church but continues through various means in the community. There are times that some members of the congregations and some of the sick have retreats and special counselling sessions before the healing service. Moreover, this can continue after the healing service and in some cases continue for weeks or months depending on the individuals healing needs.

One of our understandings for doing this is that God in Jesus is revealed as a loving, caring and merciful God, and thus Christianity needs to be understood as a way of life, a way of loving and of caring especially for the destitute who include 'the sick.' Through the various parts of the healing services and especially as the results attest, some of the Christians came to realise that the church is a healing agent and that the

church's healing ministry and 'biomedicine' complement each other, which reinforces holistic healing. Some came to realise that some of the sicknesses (evil spirits, exorcism) can be cured through fervent and continuous prayers (Mark 9:29). This however does not contradict the role of biomedicine in healing as earlier indicated. Furthermore, some also realised through the sharing of experiences that Spiritual and physical healings are really becoming a very big and lucrative business in Cameroon wherein some traditional or the so called 'spiritual prophets' or 'traditional or faith healers' are really preying on the vulnerable who in their desperation get hold on any one who promises them healing and prosperity. There is no shortage of literature in this area in the internet and many advertisements are going on (ed. Mokoko 2014:1-2, 17).

It would be difficult to convince a sceptic that, through prayers, (anointing, exorcism and the laying on of hands), holistic healing, is really taking place in the lives of people, because they would often attribute the healing to other factors, for example medicine, spontaneous or faith healing, or even witch 'doctors.' In Jesus' days not all the people recognised that his healing power was from God (Luke 11:15). However, both the clergy and laity as already seen above (testimonies of healings) are telling many positive results of healing experiences. The healing service is really creating a positive impact not only in the lives of the sick but also in the lives of those who are around the sick person. And even if some of the physical pains are still there, leading even to death, the 'sufferer's' attitude to the sickness is changed, and some are able to cope in a new or more satisfying way with their situations.

Central to the Christian faith, is the belief that Jesus is alive today and is present with those who pray and those for whom healing prayers are made, and can offer such healing as he did during his earthly ministry and throughout the Christian history to those who are brought through prayers into contact with him and thus into the presence of God's love. By implication all healing comes from the Triune God. This is just as true whether the sick person recovers spontaneously, receives treatment from a doctor, or is brought before God in prayer. Fervent prayers can really reinforce the healing process in various ways. That is why the Church needs to

constantly seek God's transforming power that will enable her to effect healing in the sick world. Weatherhead (1951) is right when he says that there is a spiritual power to heal, which has not been adequately used by Christians.

But if the Church returns to her early devotion to Christ and creates united fellowships, even faintly like the small body of men who went out in the power of the Risen Christ and His Spirit to turn the world upside down, then a power more potent to heal than any atomic bomb to destroy will once more surge through sick souls and minds and bodies.

The quotation brings us back to the fundamental presupposition of this thesis that the church and the PCC in particular has the authority and opportunity of discovering and rediscovering the theological and practical basis of its pastoral response to the sick in such a way that can continue to enable holistic healing and thus enabling such a ministry much more meaningful in the lives of the sick and the community at large.

The church's ministry of healing is revealing how God is at work and bringing about healing in His world through the network of interrelationships and cooperation between nature and Grace. Faced with various situations Christians use all that God has given to seek wholeness; that is why doctors are consulted, prayers are made in faith, and concrete actions are initiated and implemented. Hence the ministry of healing cannot be thought of in a restricted sense, healing cannot be divorced from preaching, teaching and evangelism. Healing includes -healing of the whole person, which means first and foremost enabling personal relationship with Jesus Christ and then the practice of medicine, caring, counselling, enabling repentance, reconciliation and forgiveness, offering opportunities for formation, transformation, orientation, re-orientation, active prayer sessions which may include anointing, exorcism, laying on of hands, the Eucharist, struggle for justice and vocational activities among others. It is also true that different persons with their various gifts can contribute in various healing processes (Lucas 1997: 196-198).

The structure and programme of the healing service need to be holistic and in this way the healing ministry continues to reflect that of Jesus who out of His grace has commissioned the church to continue healing the sin-sick-world. Healing is part of the mission of the church- a God-given-mission which the church has no option but to humbly engage in alongside preaching and teaching.

Healing is one of the ways in which God, our Father responds to our human need. Healing is rooted in the very name of Jesus (God saves, God heals) and Christians of every age are called to follow and obey the Christ who heals. However, sickness is a fact of life, a feature of creation, sickness at times just had to attack us, and we are vulnerable to disease and pain hence there is no perfect attainment of complete healing here on earth. But while we look forward to that perfect attainment of complete healing in the kingdom (... thy kingdom come... as in the Lord's Prayer) we continue here and now to reduce the pain and burden that weigh down God's children through the healing ministry.

The results rightly point out that all those involved in the church's ministry of healing, (like all other ministries), should do this God-given duty in all honesty and humility and in complete reliance upon God's healing grace, mercy and power with the aim of enabling the sick people to continue to experience God's kingly rule of shalom and joy in their lives even here and now.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### 8.1 SUMMARY OF STUDY

While the study adopted Wimberley (1997) and Gerkin's (1997) narrative approaches; it sought to do so in Osmer's (2008) theoretical framework of Practical Theology. Given the considerations in previous Chapters, this Chapter will focus on the question of the in-laws as raised in the research question, and how they pose a challenge for pastoral care in the Charismatic churches. In continuing thematic overlaps emerging from the narratives, research findings and the analysis thereof the study sought to respond to Osmer's questions, *what is going on, why is it going on, what ought to be going on*. Chapter 6 and 7 will focus on the last question; *how might we respond?*

The study was motivated by the challenge faced by Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in relation to in-laws. To be sure, the question was, how could the church help facilitate good relations between former children in-law and themselves? The study earlier pointed out that children have no option because they belong to both their father and mother's worlds in terms of relations. Not much has been written on this subject in the African context. It is however plausible to infer, based on observation and interviews, that most mothers-in-law, given their closeness to their children, often interfere in the marriage relationships, more so than the fathers.

A man confessed that the reason he almost murdered his wife was that his deceased mother-in-law interfered in their marriage from time to time. 'She didn't think I was good enough for you,' he said.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes they do it in the name of

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<sup>27</sup> In this instance, a woman, in confidence, sent me a telephonic 'Voice-clip' of her discussion with the man about why their marriage ended up in divorce, Midzo Tsotetsi (Code name), 22 May 2018.



protecting their own from the dreadful experiences they themselves may have gone through even though they do want their children, especially daughters, to be married. Those good intentions often have unintended adverse emotional and psychological consequences in the long-term.

While pastoral care is not a specialisation in human behaviour; this study submits that a working knowledge of psychology and other pertinent disciplines in human behaviour are important if the Pentecostal and Charismatic ministry should have a robust response to its adherents. Ministry is never conducted in a vacuum; thus, the need to be informed. The following are recommendations regarding new directions in responding to the challenges of pastoral care to the overall research question as inferred from the findings above.

## **8.2 The Long Term Psychological and Emotional Implications of In-Law Interference on Children after Divorce.**

As indicated above, the study found that in some situations of divorce, mothers-in-law interfere in their sons or daughters' marriages because the sons-in-law may not be measuring up to what they know to be 'standard' practice, or what they did in relation to their men or husbands, if married at all. On the other hand. It may be out of the matriarchal concern of wanting to protect her grandchildren from perceived or real hurt.

In one situation, a mother-in-law, in which her daughter was deceased, interfered with how her ex-son-in-law wanted to bring up his children because they were her daughter's children.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See the story of Thobile and her brother in (5.4).

While such concerns may or may not be justified, they contribute to the long term negative psychological or emotional issues children must deal with. Thus, some mothers-in-law do not create enough space for their children to explore their own creative-ness in building their own families. She knows how marriage should be run even though hers may have failed; or she may not have been married at all. Some studies have shown how parents have expectations regarding their daughters or sons-in-law (Apostolou 2010); it is the impact of these expectations raises concerns and challenges for pastoral care. In many cases they hinge on how much the son-in-law will be able to play the role of provider for their daughters, and in clandestine ways, for them also. Thus, the usage of expressions like '*O winile Jackpot*, (she's won the jackpot),' are often heard used by the woman's relatives or friends in relation to the man's job or other means of raising income. In other situations, infidelity is sometimes caused by the fact that the man is unable, for one reason or another to provide for his family.

A man complained about how he took his wife through schooling and when she qualified she left him and joked to her friends about his stupidity. His mother-in-law supported her daughter's decision to leave.<sup>29</sup> In Musina, Limpopo, a man supported his wife and parents-in-law because he lived with them; when he was retrenched from a nearby mine and ultimately rendered penniless; they drove him out.

He was furious, in the process, he shot his 'loudmouth' mother-in-law stone dead.<sup>30</sup> Another was sent away after he squashed his SANDF pension money and his cars and home were repossessed; he was now referred to as a 'good for nothing.'<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Mashabatakga, Personal Interview, 04 September 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Silas Ndou, Personal Interview, 07 June August.

<sup>31</sup> Matthews Sefolosa, Telephonic Personal Interview, 10 August 2018.

'Monna wa jewa,' said his wife and mother-in-law. *What is a man good for if he can't provide, he was often told. My children were kept away from me and all the good I had done was forgotten,*' he said.

While these scenarios sound fictitious, they are well known in marriage relations among urban black people in South Africa. The study demonstrated that such remarks are often based on ignorance and the inability of in-laws (and pastors) to consider the long-term emotional and psychological implications of their actions in relation to the children. Often such perceptions are influenced by how either of the couple was brought up thus introducing some level of incompatibility in the couple's mental models regarding their marriage.

Sometimes divorce is inevitable, but psychologists have confirmed in a variety of studies that the consequences do have an adverse effect on children (Lansford 2009).

### **8.3 The Question of Culture in Marriage and Divorce**

Most Pentecostal/Charismatic churches emphasize the importance of marriage and the woman's recognition of the need to identify with the man's family. Some pastors are fond of the story of Abraham and how he asked his servant to find a wife for Isaac;

*I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I'm living, but you will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac (Genesis 24: 3).*

In a sense, Abraham recognised the importance of what one may call 'cultural common ground' between spouses and how that is often an advantage in gluing couples together in important cultural aspects of their marriage relationship. Mr and Mrs Ntabezwe both belong to the AmaZizi in the Eastern Cape. They confessed to how they often had to struggle with the tensions of their Christian beliefs and cultural demands; especially because the man is a Chief in his village and had to adhere to

cultural stipulations of the ethnic group. Among others, the men are not accepted as 'men' among the men of the village unless a specified portion of a finger is chopped off (no anaesthetic). Their sons insisted they wanted the practice carried out on them as well, if they should be acceptable as men among their people.<sup>32</sup> The practice, much like male circumcision (going to the mountain), is venerated among some AmaXhosa ethnic groups in the Eastern Cape. While the couple may have differed about many things, culture was not an area of conflict between them, their children and in-laws. Even better, both were accepted as son and daughter in their in-law families. All the men and women in the family could come together and discuss their children's relationships because both the man's and woman's family had cultural ties that they did not want broken. In a sense, the couple was 'mentored' by the elders of the families on how to keep their situation together.

Another Ndebele couple were comfortable with relinquishing much of what they considered negative aspects of their cultural practices because both families were Christian. Such common ground also made it possible for parents to intervene if disagreements arose on one level or another. 'I have the best parents and parents-in-law in the world,' one woman confessed.<sup>33</sup> *'Iskhwele asiwakhi umuzi mdanam,'* her mother and mother-in-law would often caution; (too much jealousy towards your spouse will never help you build a home my child).

While Christianity, culture and education are a matter of interpretation, both families discussed above show how culture or the negation of certain features thereof can bring spouses and their children-in-law together in relation to cementing their

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<sup>32</sup> Code names, Personal Interview, 20 May 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Gabi Skosana, Personal Interview, 17 May 2018. Her father-in-law frequently referred to her as 'Na-Masobuka.' 'She's my daughter, the old man would often say.'

children's marriage together. Many young couples, however, are not as fortunate. The tensions and contradictions of culture, faith and education brew a lot of areas of conflict.

Culture, however, is not often a binding force between couples in urbanised situations; and is frequently an area of conflict between spouses and their in-laws. The peril of urbanisation or life in Johannesburg is that many marriages do not have the advantages of common cultural rooting as the two described above. People now marry, not only across African ethnic groups, but also across what used to be racial and continental divides. Given the grip of culture on mental models (Jones, et al. 2011), it would be absurd to think there will be no clashes regarding cultural perceptions formed over time in marriages of this nature.

The complications and complexities are many as some studies have noted (Ryan 2004; Radina 2004). These cultural intricacies and complexities do not only present a problem of communication for the married couple; it is a problem for the in-laws too. In most cases it presents a relational or behavioural problem in that parents or their children in-law do not often know how to behave towards each other. Given the diversity of races in South Africa, the undercurrents differ from one setting to another. In one situation the researcher observed how two 'coloured' sons-in-law were in perfect comfort with their mother-in-law even in the absence of her daughters who were away on a trip<sup>34</sup> That, in most African ethnic groups is unlikely; sons-in-law do not often get to sit around and discuss everything and anything freely with their mothers-in-law.

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<sup>34</sup> 'Coloured' in this study refers to people of mixed raced descent as was popularly used by the apartheid government. 'African' speaks to those of African descent without any consideration for 'tribal' or ethnic connotations. Where 'Black' is used it embraces all 'Non-White' people who belong to what others call 'Previously disadvantaged groups.'

As pointed out earlier, African marriages/weddings are often a family matter, combining not only two lives, but also two families, and sometimes two communities. Culture is complex and dynamic and in its intricate and contextual evolutions must ultimately consider and reconsider the ethics and ethos that drive its need in fundamental human relations. Pastoral Care in the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches must take these cultural dynamics and submissions into consideration in a healthy practical theology that seeks to be relevant to its times and adherents.

#### **8.4 Divorce and Memory**

Often, parents and their children-in-law do not understand the long-term implications of divorce, especially on children; or even themselves should they consider getting married again. As cultures evolve over time, the modern professional family is confronted with many challenges. The 'freedoms' of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has introduced many changes in the lives of traditional 'stay-at-home' women, especially in urbanised settings. The modern woman now has a powerful feeling of personal and legal independence and work, and their psychological and social levels, compared to those of their mothers, have changed in many respects (Alexander 2009). Most women no longer depend on their husbands for resources and provision. They take part in wars and many other professions that used to be exclusive male territory. Thus, a change in traditional and cultural perceptions of why women should be married has been introduced.

This shift comes with new challenges and creates platforms for new memories for all stakeholders across generations in the long-term. Many in-laws still hold on to mental models shaped by the forces of their time and thus, contribute negatively to the marriages of their children. The challenge for Charismatic churches is to formulate and design new models of practical theology that basically 'stand in the gap' and are informed by an intelligent and spiritually robust context in every direction.

While marriage is often encouraged and held in high esteem in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches; it is true that many do not offer programmes that cater for pre-counselling and post-marriage mechanisms that are intended to address the adverse challenges that create traumatic encounters confronted by the 'modern family,' their children and parents.

The pastors themselves are, by and large, are ill-equipped to deal with these situations in an informed manner and often resort to emotional hermeneutic aberrations of the pulpit ministry to engage problems that need professional attention. While this study does not suggest that leaders in the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches should specialise in all disciplines, it does propose that a recognition to refer such situations to specialists for assistance must be encouraged.<sup>35</sup>

### **8.5 Marriage: An Experience to be Enjoyed or Endured?**

It is very common, in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, to hear people mention the number of years they have spent in marriage with one spouse as a trophy prize in a marathon. 'We've been married for 42 years' one pastor said. One might ask, 'Was it 42 years of enduring or enjoying? Why make it sound like a long prison sentence? To be sure, duration in marriage does not necessarily suggest a mutually satisfying marital relationship. As Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) argue so well, there are many levels of *intimacy and growth* in which most marriages may be found wanting. Some couples may be 'divorced' even as they continue to live together.

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<sup>35</sup> Judge Aubrey Ledwaba, Personal Interview, 22 September 2018. Judge Ledwaba is a member of a Pentecostal/Charismatic church, 'Captured by Grace,' in the Pretoria CBD.

While divorce was not so common, and often frowned upon, in the early days of Pentecostalism, it has become a widespread reality that cannot be denied. In some ways, divorce is an indication of how couples have not learned how to *'live together for seven straight days with any assurance of harmony and personal growth.'*<sup>36</sup>

In the relentless growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic tradition around the world, and its undisputed massive attraction to young and more educated people, it is important for pastoral leaders to inculcate a culture of a practical theology informed by a passion of ongoing research and development in the context of its ministry. While the pulpit ministry occupies an important dimension, and rightly so, in these churches; it is no longer enough. As noted earlier, the institution of marriage among young, more educated and urbanised couples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is facing many and different challenges compared to those faced by their parents. The sooner in-laws deal with this reality the more they will be able to contribute positively to their children's marriages thereby creating a conducive environment for the growth of the notion of family in the churches.

### **8.5.1 The Denial of the Theological Anthropology of Human Imperfection in Pentecostalism**

The downside of the Pentecostal tradition and its side-shoots is its denial of the theological anthropology of human imperfection espoused in the theologies of St Augustine (Bonaiuti 2017), Paul Tillich (Dreisbach 1980) and Reinhold Niebuhr (Kanamori 2000) and others. Just as sin has encroached and introduced imperfection in every aspect of human existence as seen and expressed across the

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<sup>36</sup> George B. Leonard, 'The Man and the Woman Thing,' *Look*, (December 24, 1968), p. 55.



spectrum of the tensions and contradictions of the landscape of human experience; marriage has been affected.

To be sure, no human relationship is perfect, including marriage. There is now more than enough empirical evidence that divorce is a reality and a potential outcome of any marriage relationship, even within Pentecostalism itself. Denial of any sort is weakening to one's defences to respond or confront one's situation.

It is this human deficiency that necessitates a conscious and intentional ongoing effort for the couples to work on their bonding from the inception of the first 'I do' moments in their marriage relationship. *There is a 'latent marriage' hidden within each actual marriage relationship; but to bring the latent potentialities of the marriage into actuality takes sweat and struggle,* says Clinebell & Clinebell (1970, 12).

No two marriages are the same; so, each one, depending on its circumstances will have to work on its potentialities without necessarily using another as a frame of reference.

In juxtaposition to the well-known psychological notions of the 'will to power' (Alfred Adler) and the 'will to pleasure,' (Sigmund Freud), Clinebell and Clinebell (1970, 12) argue for the 'will to relate.' *'There is in the heart of every human being, a powerful longing for a meaningful relationship with at least one person.'* This 'will to relate' is fulfilled, at best, in a mutual 'give and take' facilitated in a relationship that creates space for the psychological and emotional processes of actualisation for both spouses.

The problem in most marriages is the perpetuation of the Judeo-cultural and patriarchal myth that women were created for men as 'things' to be used rather than people to be 'loved.' Many of the men who rush to quote the Genesis scripture of '*Rib of my ribs*' or the Pauline statement on '*Women submit*' hardly ever consider the 'Love' context in which they are written.

To be sure, the era of dealing with women as property is ended. One pastor, immediately after the celebrations of the day told his father-in-law, '*Senglinde impahla yam,*' literally, 'I am now waiting for my property,' which means he was now ready to take his wife home. Perhaps some cultures still entertain those notions, but it is no longer true for young women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many young and educated women do not subscribe to those cultural tenets anymore.

By and large, marriage relationships are no longer connected to the mythologies that governed their mother's relationships and marriages. The man, for instance, may no longer be the sole family-provider in a milieu where some women may be making more money in salary earnings than their male counterparts in the corporate world. In some cultures, the roles traditionally ascribed to women have changed, men tend to cook and look after the children when their career-driven wives pursue their aspirations in the industrial world or other vocations.

What do you do as a traditional man when your wife goes to war or occupies a government position that requires frequent travelling around the world? It is no longer foreign that women must often leave their husbands at home when duty calls.

The challenge for pastoral care and counselling in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches is to adapt to these ever-changing patterns in marriage relationships and to facilitate the embracement of such psychological and cultural revisions to their adherents. 'If you marry the spirit of your generation,' one pastor said, 'you'll be a widow in the next.'<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rev Mandla Khumalo, Personal Interview, 17 October 2018.

## 8.6 Dealing with Guilt and Shame after Divorce

The concepts of guilt and shame are bigger and the perceptions around them are shaped by many forces. Fundamentally, guilt and shame are derived from one's sense of having wronged another (guilt), or not appreciating what another has done in one's name (shame). That is true, for instance, in situations where someone was not the perpetrator of an act but is associated with the act in some way. The younger generation of white people in South Africa, may not be guilty of the atrocities of the racism of, colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, but may feel ashamed that it was committed in their names. Thus, guilt is often associated with the perpetration of the act and guilt with some devious connection to it. One may not be the perpetrator, but one maintains a connection, at one level or another, to the perpetrator of the shameful act (Caze 2013). One would argue that the emotional and psychological dynamics at play are similar in situations of divorce (Stierlin 1974).

The egoism of divorce, rightly or wrongly, is that it often takes the feelings of the married couple into consideration much more than it does of other stakeholders, especially children if there are any involved. As noted earlier; it may be a good decision for the moment and context, but the consequences are often long-term, especially for the children. Mpotsanyane's mother regretted why she pushed for divorce after reading her 34-year-old son's 28-page memoir. 'Now that I'm older and wiser,' she said, 'I believe I could have done things differently'<sup>38</sup> 'I didn't realise then it would hit him so hard.' The young man had just returned from serving a five-year prison sentence and was trying very hard to put his life together; he was less than ten years old when his parents divorced and disclosed how often the thought of

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<sup>38</sup> See footnote 19.

suicide had crossed his mind.<sup>39</sup> The question is, how might have the church responded to facilitate its occurrence much earlier?

It was noted earlier that Pentecostalism's sense of 'human perfection' largely contributed to a long-term sense of shame and failure in some of the in adherents; many of whom decided to give up on what they have always believed to be 'God's will for their lives.' The pastor whose first marriage had failed, and he became an insurance consultant is but one example.

Nobody considered that his second marriage was more successful than many first marriages within the fold that seemed largely successful on the surface.

While he never heard from his ex-wife who deserted him, his second wife was very supportive and his new job as a consultant was thriving.<sup>40</sup>

What Pentecostalism and its corollaries must recognise is the subtle promotion of the biblically unjustified self-righteousness within its ranks and the implications of its devastating long-term spiritual, emotional and psychological consequences. It must learn to confront the realities of the exigencies of human existence and develop informed pastoral care strategies to deal with these situations. In appropriating Jesus as the answer to the existential questions that life throws at all of us, it must establish an adequate understanding of the questions to empower the resourcefulness of, among others, the pulpit ministry. Better still, it must take cognisance of the deeper implications of the need for a profounder level of ministry in relation to the whole person.

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<sup>39</sup> Telephonic Discussion between Tumi Mpotsanyane's divorced parents, 'Voice Clip,' 28 September 2018.

<sup>40</sup> See footnote 25.

## 8.7 Dealing Depression and Suicide

That depression sometimes leads to suicidal behaviour has been studied in many directions. In the social sciences. Harrington submits that the last decade 'has seen important advances in research into the epidemiology, aetiology and treatment of depression and suicidal behaviour in the young' (Harrington 2001). Of course, the symptoms are not limited to the young but can be traced across all ages (Seyfried, et al. 2011).

Some studies have connected divorce, depression and suicide (Stack and Scourfield 2015; Kposowa 2003).

'I just wanted to die,' said a pre-school teacher after her husband left her for a younger woman medical-practitioner in the church.<sup>41</sup> 'How could he do that to me?' She did not mention the few times she travelled long-distance for sex to the embarrassment of her bishop-husband.

Marriage, as in all existential experience, has its high and low moments of anxiety (Dreisbach 1980). As pointed out earlier, Pentecostalism and its latter-day corollaries have always created an impression of perfection about human behaviour, only to be caught up in the tumultuous waves of what people did not expect as the journey unfolds. 'As a believer, I did not think I would have to deal with such problems; especially because I met my partner in the church,' a man confessed.<sup>42</sup> For some, these experiences catch them totally off-guard and unprepared leaving

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<sup>41</sup> Mary Zibongo (Code name), Personal Interview, 22 June 2018. Her story was splashed all over the media, the events have slightly been adapted to conceal her identity.

<sup>42</sup> Sidney Babalo (Code name), 08 September 2018.

them with a feeling of despair and emptiness in a situation that promised to have all the answers. He was divorced after he started a flourishing church in the Eastern Cape; he gave it up and joined the music industry; feeling let down by the only situation he thought would help him.

His ex-wife walked away from the marriage bitterly disappointed by the divorce; nothing prepared her for such an experience; it never crossed her mind that it was possible in the church. Nobody knew how to intervene, except that the pastors, typically, advised them to pray. She didn't know what she had done wrong, but that she did things like she saw her divorced mother do when she grew up. The only problem though, was that she wasn't married to someone like her father who tolerated verbal abuse.

She later got to understand these were, among others, the contributing factors in her divorce. 'But all of it was a prayer too late,' she said.<sup>43</sup> It took a while before she began to work away the bitterness towards her ex-husband, anger towards the church and its unfulfilled promises, and her late mother; whom she now got to blame for being a bad role model. But at least, through professional counselling sessions, the process of healing and forgiveness had begun (Nagra, et al. 2016).

## **8.8 Resilience and Forgiveness in Marriage**

One study noted how 'Resilience' in marriage is often connected to 'Forgiveness' (Gayatrivadivu, et al. 2015). Sometimes people feel offended, emotionally manipulated, cheated upon, abused and a whole host of other experiences; as one maxim has it, 'Marriage is not a bed of roses.' Whoever coined that saying forgot to

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<sup>43</sup> Lindiwe Makwe-Motsala, Personal Interview, 22 June 2018.

mention that roses have thorns, and that one gets to admire the beauty of the roses if and only if one can separate the flower from the thorns. Occasionally you get stabbed but that is not why, the rose, in its majestic beauty should be thrown away. Forgiveness in marriage is when you learn to separate the two and consciously make the choice to celebrate the beauty of the rose with the thorns.

While not every marriage can be saved, not every marriage should be thrown away; the challenge is how to keep it healthy. This study has shown how keeping a marriage relationship energetic and creative is a constant and ongoing challenge—not only for the couple—but for those who must provide a supportive environment for it to thrive. Chapter 5 and 6 demonstrate the different existential dimensions in which the challenges are confronted; particularly the challenge posed by one's in-laws in the bid to move the situation forward.

In the context of this study, the challenged is focused more on how pastoral care in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches can facilitate an environment that provides healthy relationships.

## 8.9 Conclusions And Recommendations

The problem in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, this study submits, is a problem of leadership. Any casual observation of the history of Pentecostalism and its offshoots will see how much of leadership in this tradition revolves around static models of leadership gyrating around individuals who claim spiritual superiority over and above the rest. From the rise of its early beginnings in the late 1800s one person is usually at the centre; from John Alexander Dowie in Chicago to present day Tele-Evangelists, hundreds of people follow the thinking patterns of one person who often, in the name of 'The Spirit,' has a narcotic and narcissist hold on his/her followers (DougMcManaman 2005).

The recent court proceedings in South Africa in which Cheryl Zondi testified to the 'hold' Pastor Timothy Omotoso are well known; only to be repeatedly raped by the Nigerian in the name of God.<sup>44</sup> Scriptures like, 'Do not touch my anointed one; do my prophets no harm' are usually used to subjugate and pacify people into submission.<sup>45</sup> If one disobeys the 'Man/Woman of God,' an impression is created that one is disobeying God. Not many Pentecostals want to find themselves in that position because 'God is a consuming fire.'<sup>46</sup>

Osmer (2008), in his last question; *how we might respond*, addresses the question of leadership in the congregational setting; he calls this *The Pragmatic Task*. After having considered, *what is going on, why is it going on and what ought to be going*

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<sup>44</sup> See article, <https://www.heraldlive.co.za/news/2018-10-18-wave-of-support-for-brave-cheryl-zondi-in-omotoso-rape-trial/>.

<sup>45</sup> 1 Chronicles 16:22.

<sup>46</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24 & 9:23



on, the next step must necessarily be *how might we respond?* Essentially, no program of action is possible without effective leadership. Pastoral Care, within the whole ambit of practical theology, if it must make any significant and relevant impact, rises or falls with the rigidity or dynamism of its leadership.

The interpretations are many, and each interprets as s/he receives from the 'Spirit.' Basically, disobeying God is an invitation of divine wrath and righteous anger that utterly consumes and destroys anything in its path. Notwithstanding that the 'Man/Woman of God' may be wrong; in which case his/her judgement must be left only to God. So, God will judge everybody else except the prophet. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart speak to these caricatures of interpretation so widespread within Pentecostalism and its offshoots (Fee and Stuart 1982). But these sources of critical academic information are unlikely to be considered or taken seriously because everyone receives his/her revelation of truth 'directly' from God through his 'Spirit.'

It was Paul Tillich who established the connection between fear and anxiety:

*Anxiety and fear have the same ontological root but they are not the same in actuality...Fear as opposed to anxiety has a definite object...which can be faced, analysed attacked, endured. One can act upon it, and in acting upon it participate in it—even if in the form of struggle (Tillich 1952, 36).*

The prophet will, lest he be questioned, usually shift the focus from himself to God. In the thought of Tillich; this makes the situation worse because it becomes 'anxiety.'

*But this is not so with anxiety, because anxiety has no object, or rather, in a paradoxical phrase, its object is the negation of every object (Ibid.)*

Anxiety has no object and thus it cannot be confronted. In fear, the narcissist prophet can be confronted; but when he shifts attention to God, fear becomes anxiety in that God cannot be seen and therefore confronting God is impossible.

Thus, most Pentecostals do not question the prophet because he is God's representative on earth; and questioning him/her is tantamount to questioning God;

and questioning God deserves judgement. This theological aberration in interpretation is the root of all abuse in Pentecostalism and its Charismatic offshoots. People would rather not be 'consumed by fire' but instead submit to blatant abuse in the name of God. The history of Pentecostalism confirms that its preachers have often claimed exclusive access to God; thus, it is not unusual to hear someone say, 'God said to me.' Effectively spiritually elevating him/herself above the rest and nullifying anything that contradicts his/her message because it is from God.

Essentially, how much the situation grows often depends on how much the leader grows. It is these limiting notions, often based on the ignorance of one's ignorance of the findings of research in the social sciences, that exacerbate the lack of adequate strategies in dealing with marriage and its related adverse consequences. A new practical theology in Pentecostalism and its corollaries requires a robust engagement with its theology and the social and cultural environment in which ministry is done.

The challenges posed by marriage and divorce, as seen above, are deep, enormous and have drastic implications in relation to how these churches can respond. In Osmer's thinking, leadership is important in the implementation of change in congregational settings; thus, he speaks of *Servant Leadership*. New directions in practical theology cannot be implemented unless there is a paradigm shift in models of leadership with Pentecostalism.

### **8.9.1 The Challenge of Biblical Interpretation in Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches.**

An accurate exegesis and hermeneutic of the notion of servant leadership introduces the first challenge in the Pentecostal and Charismatic religious tradition in South Africa in particular.

Marius Nel (2016) has observed that 'for the first three decades of the past century [20<sup>th</sup> century] Pentecostals had no inclination towards any theological training.' Nel obviously argues for white Pentecostalism in South Africa given the fact that he says

there were no theological training institutions among Pentecostals until the 1970s. He ignores the fact that Elias Letwaba in the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) had a school running in Potgietersrus for African pastors very early after 1908. The Assemblies of God USA (AGUSA) missionaries established a school, the African Bible Training Institute (ABTI), in Spring Valley, Witbank under Fred Burke which ran until the 1960s at least. Burke arrived in South Africa in the 1920s. ABTI was forced to shut down and relocate to Rustenburg by the apartheid government because it serviced African pastors in a white area contrary to the laws of the day. ABTI was a forerunner of what became the African Bible College (ABC) in Tlhabane, Rustenburg and was still run by American missionaries of the AGUSA after its relocation from Witbank. It is however true that white Afrikaner Pentecostals did not have any inclination for training until the 1970s. That trend was common even in the AGUSA; and the white AFM later patterned its curriculum, by and large, in line with their American counterparts (Archer 2001).

The present-day Charismatic movement followed similar patterns in developing theological training. Ray McAuley of the Rhema Church in Randburg, Johannesburg initially used books written by his mentor Kenneth Hagin in his school. McAuley was a graduate of Hagin's school in Tulsa, Oklahoma; the forerunner of the 'health and wealth' hermeneutic in the so-called 'Prosperity Movement.'

Training in Pentecostal schools, with their millenarian focus on lost souls, placed a lot of emphasis on evangelism. The shift to the 'wealth and health' gospel, like its predecessors, lacked good exegesis and did not have much to say regarding family life. That trend soon caught up with the tradition as seen earlier with the divorce of McAuley and his wife Zelda in 2010. Thus, the first challenge of Charismatic churches is in the correct interpretation of biblical scripture and the a interpretation informed by its socio-cultural context of ministry.

Gordon Fee considers this kind of 'health and wealth' hermeneutic as an aberration (1982, 57-71) of biblical interpretation. Of course, he comes much later in what came to be a more academic inclined bible interpretation within Pentecostalism,

especially his blockbuster in 1 Corinthians (Fee 1987). Thus, a shift has been introduced in biblical interpretation in some theological seminaries within the Pentecostal tradition. The tendency to disregard the abundance of such scholarly work is however still widespread in the so-called Charismatic churches (Johnson 2016).

This is only possible if the leadership in these Charismatic churches will admit the ignorance of their academic ignorance, stop hiding behind the Holy Spirit and thus open up to being informed by the social sciences and other similar schools of thought like the evangelicals and Baptists who have long explored intelligent ways of biblical interpretation in South Africa and abroad (Schoeman 2016; Espinoza 2015).

### **8.9.2 A Practical Theology of Servant Leadership**

*Servant Leadership* is a practical theological notion long before Robert Greenleaf introduced the concept in the corporate world in the 1970s (Frick and Spears 1996). Its Christological foundation in the New Testament are found in both Matthew 20: 20-28 and Mark 10: 35-45. The core of its theological submission as taught by the Christ of God is, 'The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.'

*Serving* is a concept widely used in Charismatic in the townships today; and much of it is directed to the 'Man/Woman of God' of the situation. A casual observation of the hermeneutic or present-day application of the notion in these settings reveals the interpretational caricatures prevalent in these churches across Africa.

One pastor said, 'In Africa, to be a pastor is to be a king.'<sup>47</sup> From the 'royal' seats exclusively used by the 'Men of God' to literally walking on the backs of adherents

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<sup>47</sup> Rev Elijah Maswanganyi, Telephonic Discussion, 17 October 2017.

lying on the floor as 'red carpet' for him/her not to soil his/her feet on the ground; the caricatures are rampant and come in many forms. The story of Timothy Omotoso and his sexual innuendoes in South is an extreme case of the consequences of religion gone mad.<sup>48</sup> Not too long ago, in the Eastern Cape again there were stories of the Mancoba Brothers who claimed to be angels and therefore untouchable.<sup>49</sup> While these are many and often life-threatening and dangerous, Pentecostalism and its corollaries continue to attract thousands of people. Naturally, this situation raises moral and theological concerns; why are so many people attracted to a situation that will often openly abuse them in the name of God? While this is true, it does not ignore the fact that there are churches and leaders who do the right thing.

The notion of *servant leadership* is particularly vulnerable to abuse because it has implications for power and control; what Alfred Adler called *the will to power* (Adler 2004). The concept of servant leadership, if correctly understood and interpreted, is a viable practical theological option regarding the cultivation of new directions in pastoral care in the Charismatic churches; especially in facilitating the challenges confronted in marriage and divorce between parents and children in-law.

### **8.9.3 A Brief Exposition on Servant Leadership**

The notion of servant leadership in the congregational setting must derive its theological basis from the teachings of Christ. Thus, a brief exposition of the foundational scriptures in relation to the notion is important. The primary texts are

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<sup>48</sup> See article, <https://ewn.co.za/2017/09/08/timothy-omotoso-s-second-bail-bid-fails>.

<sup>49</sup> See article, <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-02-27-mancoba-angels-vow-to-surge-ahead-with-business/>.

Matthew 20: 20-28<sup>50</sup> and Mark 10: 35-45; both provide the context in which Christ taught on the notion of servant leadership. As pointed out earlier, the nucleus of his teaching was, 'The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.'

Thus, the primary intention of a Christological servant leadership is its focus—not on self—but on the other.

*Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of Him. 'What is it you want?' He asked. Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom. (Matthew 20: 20-21).*

Clearly, this woman, at the expense of the other disciples, sought the best places for his sons. Perhaps, she did what any mother would do; seeking the best for her own. The other disciples were angry, but it does not say they would have wanted it differently for themselves. That kind of thinking is not different from what most people would want for themselves or their children; in our deepest, we all want what is best for ourselves. It was Abraham Maslow, in his hierarchy of needs, who established how human beings move from physiological needs to self-actualisation (Mathes 1981). When one level of needs is satisfied it leads to the demand for the next to be fulfilled.

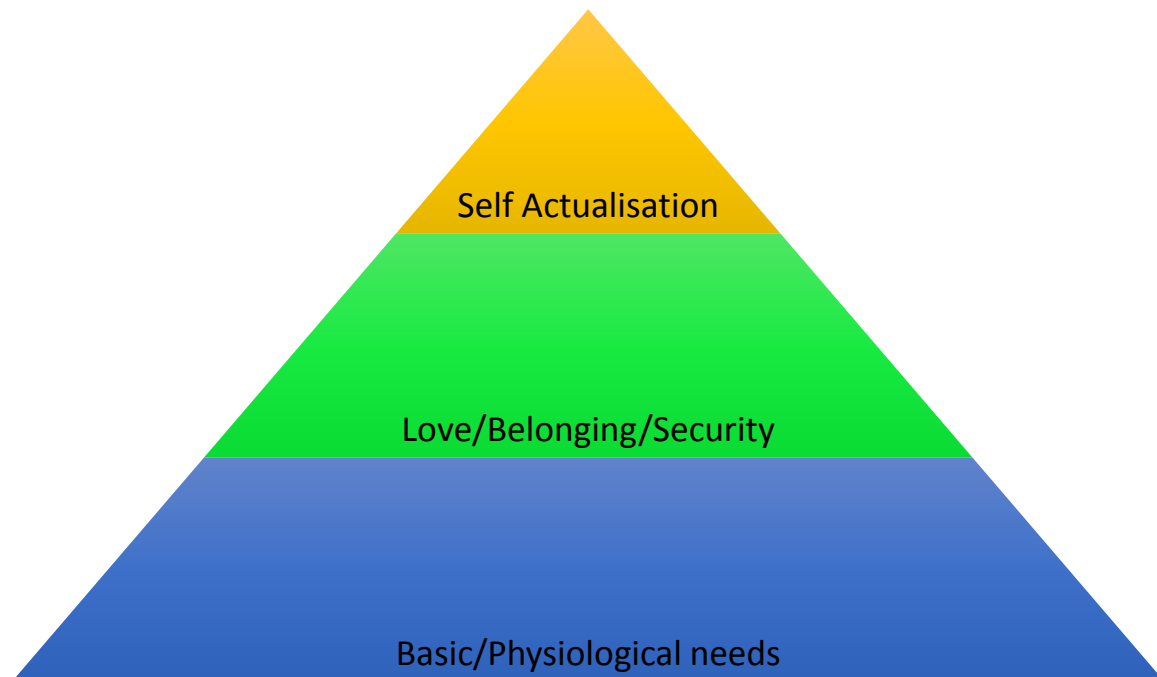
Perhaps the mother to Zebedee's sons desired for them to be more secure in the kingdom; their security was hers as well, and she had to move fast; even at the risk of others. Some studies have demonstrated the relatedness of anxiety, self-actualisation, the need for attention (Sarason 1988; Gambrel and Cianci 2003).

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<sup>50</sup> All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version* (North American Edition), copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. For literary purposes, emphases (bold print) that did not appear in the scriptural text are occasionally added to the quotations.

Sitting on either side of Jesus in the kingdom would ensure that these psychological needs for security, power and greatness are met. What Freud and Fromm described as narcissism (Grey 1996; Sakurai 2014).

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**



As shown above, some psychologists break the pyramid of needs down into three main areas, and that is

1. Basic/Physiological needs
2. Love/Belonging/Security needs
3. Self-fulfilment/Actualisation

Maslow's hierarchy, in relation to the first two levels, has been used in many disciplines in the humanities; what has not been sufficiently explored is the third or final level of self-actualisation in relation to one's 'inner nature.' Maslow himself, decried how his theory of self-actualisation was taken as the whole truth and often

called for criticism from colleagues (Maslow 1991). Maslow, towards the end of his days, turned his original theory upside down with powerful reinterpretations of self-actualisation in his *Towards a Psychology of Being* (1999, 5-10).

It would not be implausible to assume that he was inspired, among others, by Tillich's existential approach; indeed, he is convinced that existential psychology promises new directions that move his original humanistic approach forward. It would come as a surprise if he did not read Tillich's blockbuster *The Courage to Be*.

In what one might consider a refined Maslow he described the overarching characteristic of self-actualising as a 'more efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations to it.' People no longer look at the world through the clouded lens of a deficiency motivation (Maslow 1999, xi). In the words of Christ, 'Man does not live by bread alone.'<sup>51</sup> Essentially, Maslow recognises what ought to be the foundations of an effective model in practical theology or pastoral care; seeing reality through the eyes of one's 'inner nature.'

The 'old' and 'new' Maslow represent the tensions faced by pastoral care. No one can deny that most western models of pastoral care are informed by old patterns of humanistic psychology. In a sense, they are reactive instead of being proactive; fundamentally, they respond to a sickness instead of creating an environment that prevents the sickness in the first place.

Thus, new models of pastoral care must create an atmosphere of proactivity instead of reactivity in dealing with new and evolving situations in the practice of ministry.

Jesus turned the humanistic notion right-side-up:

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<sup>51</sup> Matthew 4:4.



*Jesus called together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them. Not so with you. Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave (Matthew 20: 25-27).*

It all sounds inconsistent if not self-contradictory. Greatness in human terms is achieved by doing great things. That is how we recognise one's contribution and perhaps accord them the respect they or we think they deserve. One's greatness is measured by how others admire one's achievements. We honour them only because we have not been able to do what they have done in terms of the predetermined measurements of our environment. Thus, to be great is to lord it over others and to insist on being recognised as such. History, from monarchs to politicians, is often captivated by men and women who impose their greatness on others; insisting on being served instead of serving. Yet history is a witness of how those who forced their greatness on others have often been overthrown. If Maslow's submissions are true, then leadership imposed is a prerequisite for leadership deposed because where you are is where others desire to be.

If pastoral care must respond effectively to the challenges it faces with in-laws and their children, it must begin to develop new and dynamic models informed by what one can put into the situation to make it work, instead of what one can get out of it.

#### **8.9.4 The Matthew 6:33 Imperative**

Jesus, in many of his teachings, was known for what one might call a pedagogy of unintended consequences. He taught, among others, for one to 'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Luke 6:38.

Traditional teachings promote self-interest; you have, only if you hoard and not if you give away.

Thus, models of modern capitalism put 'self' first before others. Adam Smith's words form the cornerstone of self-interest in his *Laissez-Faire* theory (Pack 1993). 'Whoever offers to another a bargain of any kind,' he wrote (2003, 23), 'Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want...' John C. Cort captured what came to be Smith's foundational teaching on capitalism:

*The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it alone and without any assistance, not capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations (Cort 1988, 10).*

In a sense, that trend of thinking was validated by the 'old' Maslow as discussed above. In the Matthew 6:33 Imperative below the Christ of God overturned Smith's principle.

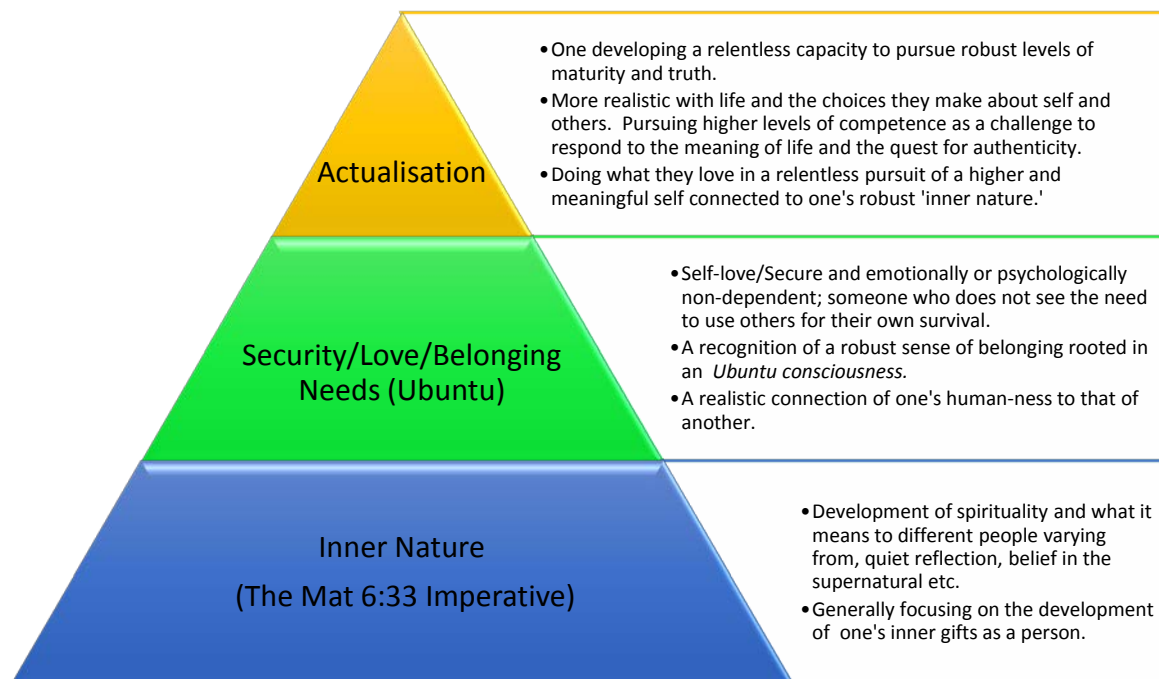
*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

How then does this inform new perspectives in pastoral care? Chapters 5 and 6 showed how the institution of marriage is facing many challenges and the long-term implications of self-interest between couples and their in-laws. Everyone is in it for what they can get out of it. The encounters are many and often children are the most adversely impacted in the situation; if not immediately then in the long-term. Trends in pastoral care in the Charismatic churches seldom facilitate healing for all stake-holders, including the in-laws. In responding to Osmer's question, *how might we respond*, the challenges are many and often informed by frozen cultural and psychological models of the past (Garcia, et al. 2003) that prescribe for situations. Like the doctor who waits for the patient to be ill and then recommends a remedy; traditional counselling models respond instead of preventing adverse situations. New and dynamic leadership in practical theology must be proactive and anticipate situations before they happen.

In conclusion, they must restructure or reprioritise Maslow's pyramid and implement principles of servant leadership based on accurate methods of exegesis.

They must draw from a synthesis of the Matt 6:33 Imperative, the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, Maslow new thinking regarding self-actualisation in *Towards a Psychology of Being*. If one focuses on the development of one's 'inner nature,' then the needs beyond are easily catered for or taken care of as implied in the following diagram:

### An Ubuntu Pyramid in Pastoral Care



At the end where divorce is inevitable it is important for both the in-laws from the groom and bride side to have greater tolerance for their divorced children. The divorce is never a reflection of the parents as such no one should be blamed including the divorcing couple.

The important thing in the entire process is that the divorced couple and their respective parents, in-laws and families are Christians and it is mandatory and expected that Christians they should walk in forgiveness, show love and be the

bearers of the fruits of the spirit as Apostle Paul writes in **Galatians 2:22-23** “**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this.**

The pastor as part of Pastoral Care should always encourage the congregants and the community that the church is a place where all social restoration matters are addressed and that the church is a significant place where people who are hurt, heart broken, despised and those ridiculed find comfort in the church.

The church is for the entire community even those who do not worship at that church should feel free to come to present their life challenges and the pastor is expected to be of help despite differences in scriptural doctrines.

The church, pastors are called upon to serve the community not a congregation and are expected to uphold biblical values of marriages to be according original plan from the beginning of creation.

In the similar way that the church has dedicated resources to have outreach programmes to visit schools, hospitals and prisons, dedicated time to visit and pray with families should be entrenched in the church programmes.

It is the church that can deal with the body, mind and spirit of people. The Western Eurocentric view to undermine the African ways of doing things and their relationship with God. Africans believe that God can handle and solve any situation on earth. They strongly believe that nothing is impossible with God. Mbiti says in names and short phrases, Africans describe God as the one whom complete wisdom, knowledge, or understanding belongs. (Mbiti, 1970, 3). The church is also better placed to be the fountain of wisdom, knowledge and understanding in building Godly marriages.

### 8.9.5 Recommendations

Based on the research findings the researcher has made the following recommendations:

As the researcher conclude this study, the researcher has also drawn and reflect from personal experience as a Pastor that has experienced divorce and has observed the breakdown of relationships with the in-laws and the entire family of the ex-spouse after the divorce.

In general, there is nothing like a peaceful or smooth divorce, even if the process can be concluded amicably by both parties through a settlement agreement on the division of estate. The settlement agreement is then endorsed by the divorce court into the final divorce decree. Any divorce will always leave behind scars and pain in different stages.as a result of a broken marriage. The researcher has explained and emphasized the negative consequences and effects of divorce, to the divorcing couple, such as emotional factors, the break down of relationship with the in-laws, the children's and the church in general, therefore this empasisis the view that there is no amicable divorce.

In the obervations, interaction and the interviews process most of the respondents have indicated that some in-laws never wanted to let go even during the process Lobola leading to the marrige ceremony and that has been evident through the in-laws direct and indirect interference in their marriges. As a result of high expectation from the in-laws soon after marriage, couples who are unable to meet these parental expectations often experience increased frustration and ridicule from the in-laws. Hence, the researcher recommended that the Pastor, Pastoral in their role in Pastoral Care should undertake the following:

- a. The church should be be an institution that prepares men and women for marriage maturity.
- b. The pastor should also provide a parallel pre-marital counseling to both the in-laws of the bride and the groom.

- c. The counseling on the processes involved in building strong marriage by the newly married couple.
- d. In addition, the fact that parents place high expectation on their children's should be addressed as part of the problem of parental interference.
- e. The Pastor should include as part of the matrimonial service the vows for the in-laws, to make a commitment to support the newly married in building their marriage as God intended from the beginning of creation.
- f. The church to have marriage plans and programmes aimed at building strong relationships.
- g. The researcher recommends that as a matter of urgency, the Pastor and Church leaders in collaboration with the in-laws and general members of the families.
- h. Furthermore, the little attention that is given to the extended family, in modern society may serve as a recipe for the collapse of the much favoured nuclear family. Hence, family heads should ensure that the extended family, which could serve as an agent of social control should be made a pivotal part of modern marriages.
- i. In a nutshell, measures should be put in place to reduce the rising number of divorces among the Christians in the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches.
- j. Parents should have an understanding of the modern forms of marriages.
- k. The Pastor should ensure that mechanisms such as programmes and activities of the church aimed at building couples and marriage information session's forms part of the integral of the church.

The final conclusion is based on God original creation of marriage as the permanent institution, all other things of the world comes secondary to the institution of marriage. The researcher is of the understanding that marriage as an institution should serve as a model to other institution such as family, church, society, country and all others would be well in order. God intended intention about marriage between husband and wife to enjoy marriage according to the Bible principles. The husband and wife should always have a good relationship with God.

We have seen that God is love, families, the in-laws should live in love and embrace the forgiveness of Christ to live in good harmony amongst all the families.

**RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORMS**

I \_\_\_\_\_ an interviewee for **Rev: Sifiso Ngcobo** who is interviewing me for a case study on, the Impact of Divorce and In-Laws, the Research Study (Analysis) of Marriage and Divorce among the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches, a Challenge in Pastoral Care.

This as part of his research for Master's thesis has my permission to use the information I have provided as checked in the boxes below.

I offer my permission to him this day the \_\_\_\_\_ day of **September 2018**, to use the information for the purpose of his studies.

Permission to use information (Circle below accordingly)

**YES / NO**

\_\_\_\_\_:

**Signature Interviewee**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature Researcher**

**Rev: Sifiso Ngcobo**



## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**1. How do you feel about the rate of divorce amongst the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians?**

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**2. How many years were you married and how long are you divorced?**

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**3. In your opinion, what do you think are the causes of divorce among the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches** **Christian families**

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**4. Share your relationship with your in-Laws prior and post your divorce?**

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**5. In your opinion, what are the effects of divorce in the In-Laws?**

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**6. In your opinion, what steps should be taken to maintain the relationship with the in-laws?**

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**7. In your opinion, what can be the role of pastors when church members divorces?**

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## 8.9 Interviews Summary

The researcher as part of a qualitative research has developed questionnaire into three categories that is the divorced couple, the in-laws and the pastoral:

- a. Questionnaire for people who have divorced.
- b. Questionnaire for the In-Laws (Parents).
- c. Questionnaire for the Pastoral.

The questions were discussed with all the respondents separately, that they should give their personal experiences about the relationship the relationship with the in-laws after the have undergone through the process of divorce. Interviews were conducted to ten people. The five people interviewed have gone through divorce and they shared from personal experiences, of the relationship they had with the in-laws after divorce. There are also three respondents to the questionnaire of parents as in-laws to share their experiences as results of their child.

The last respondents were two pastors to share their views based on their divorce one male and one female additional the pastors to provide an overview independent pastoral views and experiences.

The interviews were conducted one on one to keep to confidentiality and protecting the identity of the respondents to the questionnaire. The names that are used are not the real names of the respondents thus protecting them and keeping to confidentiality. There is one respondent to the questionnaire who was gave permission that her real identity can be used, and she is comfortable with the process. The University of Pretoria ethical standard would be upheld as an Institution of Higher Learning is prescribed by the educational academic regulations.

The Process of interviews and Respondents:

### 8.9.1. The story of MaNdlovu:

MaNdlovu is a 63-year-old retired nurse who was divorced to her husband in 1974, which is forty-four (40) years now.

MaNdlovu story is one of the most interesting and shows that relationships with the in-laws are important and critical, when the in-laws don't take the side of their own children's.

She indicated that she was married at a very young age 20 years old, and they had two children's. Her ex-husband was physically abusive and she suffered constant abuse and was protected by the younger brother of her ex-husband. She shares a very interesting love shown by the in-laws during her time hardship during her marriage. She shares that her father in-law who was a Reverend at the Lutheran church and mother in-law were on her side and the relationship was very amazing, till this day.

Most amazing in her story is that it was her parent's in-law who where the one who initiated the divorce process on her behalf. She tells her story with get joy and you can be able to see happiness all over her. The in-laws first sat her down and explained to her that as they have seen how she is always physically abused and they don't want her to be killed and will struggle to explain to her parents the consequences leading to her death. They spoke to her that they are setting her free to divorce their son. Most important in her story was that she was taken back to her mother and her in-laws explained to her parents that their daughter has been a faithful and good "makoti" daughter in-law and as such they have brought her back to her parents not because she was wrong.

She informed the researcher that the parent's in-law were the one who also assisted her to file for divorce process from their biological son. This she says was all done to protect her because they loved and cherished as their young makoti.

The parents in-law testified in her support at the divorce court she further says that a lawyer was also arranged for her that she must have full custody of her two children's.

## **Analysis of MaNdlovu**

MaNdlovu shares that her parent's in-law displayed support, love and continuous offer for prayers that the Lord should heal her. After 44 years of divorce she has had a rich relationship with the in-laws. She further states that both her parents in-laws have gone to be with the Lord, but she has an amazing relationship with sister in-laws. At the in-laws family gathering she is invited and given a prominent role to play.

Her ex-husband was remarried and she shares that the other wife was not well received by her parents in-laws, as they believed their son disrespected the name of the family in the manner she treated MaNdlovu. When MaNdlovu father in law passed away in 1990, she was the one asked to seat at the mourning matrass. According to the Zulu tradition only the selected important elders of the family can be seated in the mourning matrass most importantly for the head of the family, her father in-law whom was a priest.

The conclusion on MaNdlovu's analysis is an indication that relationship with the in-laws is the model of inspiration and even to date the after 44 years the relationship with the in-laws is the most loving experience she has ever experienced in her life. She speaks proudly about her in-laws and cherishes her relationship as the model of great love ever given to her by her in-laws.

### **8.9.2 The Story of "Princess M"**

Princess M, comes from one of the royal families in the Bapedi Nation has an interesting story almost similarly to that of MaNdlovu, she was divorced to her husband as a result of his infidelity. She was in courtship for two years and was married for 12 years, in total they were together for 14 years.

At the time of her divorce she had two young children's and she struggled, as a single parent for her ex-husband was not supportive financially. She shares that even though the ex-husband did not support financially he however was there emotionally to speed time with children's. In her response to the questionnaire

Princess M, shares a very interesting story that she had an amazing relationship with her in-laws.

She shares that her in-laws were disappointed about her divorce to their son. Interestingly is that the relationship with the in-laws continued to be strong even after divorce. She states that she had to personally cut the relationship as she observed that the new woman in her ex-husband was not well received.

On response to the questionnaires she indicated that she used to be invited to her ex-husband family events and gathering, however the challenge has always been her in-laws showing more affection to her than the new women in her ex-husbands life. As a results she was not comfortable uncomfortable and decided to only attend funerals not celebration events.

She indicated that they tried to get together with her ex-husband after divorce on several occasions but things did not work out when she divorced that her infidelity has not changed. There relationship with her ex-husbands is very minimal compared to her relationship with her in-laws is very much alive and they keep in touch from time to time.

### **Analysis of “Princess M”**

Princess M, had enjoyed a good relationship with her in-laws even after 14 years or so after her divorce from her ex-husband. As a woman of integrity she took a personal decision to personally minimize and limit her relationship mostly the type of events she can attend.

She records that she does not attend to social event like birthday parties and chooses carefully, which wedding ceremony to attend to ensure that she gives space to the new woman on her ex-husband life. She choose to do this not to create any tensions between her ex-husband and the new woman in his life, this was as a result of her observations she would notice that the new woman in her ex-husband life was not well treated, she then decided to minimize her contact with her in-laws.

Her decision should be well commended as highly noble and unselfish on her side to think for the other woman in her ex-husband life. Her conclusion is that she choose to personally limit her relationship with the ex in-laws to give space to the new woman in her ex-husband life. To this day she still has good relationship and communications with her ex-husband in-laws.

### **8.9.3 The Story of Mr. and Mrs. Tobia**

The story of Mr. and Mrs. Tobia who are both Zulus were childhood friends until they were married in customary marriage in 1992, and only registered their marriage with Home Affairs in 1997, when she was 21 years old. The Marriage Act 25 of 1961 at the time stipulated that the legal age to enter into a Marriage was 21 years of age. With the advent of democracy and the subsequent repeal of the Marriage Act 50 of 1997 stipulated a new age limit to be legally married at 18 years of age. They have been married for 26 years and got divorced in June 2018.

The divorce was as a result of differences and a shift in priorities as well as unfulfilled expectation, key to that was lack of communication. Of interest in this couple is that they legally divorced and have a temporal arrangement that they stay together in their matrimonial home. They have three children's all boys the oldest is employed, the second born is at the university whilst the last-born is at High School.

The couple was interviewed separately they gave permission to the fact that their separate responses should be sampled for the purpose of the study.

The following are responses to the interview questionnaire from both Mr. and Mrs. Tobia:

### **8.9.4 Mr. Tobia**

Mr. Tobia is the first son in-law in the family who still actively attends, supports the family gatherings and performs manual labour. Their divorce did not change the relationships that he had with his in-laws. Mr. Tobia stated that he grew from the

family of the in-laws because he dated their daughter since childhood. Thus he feels comfortable as he regards himself as a member of the family.

Mr. Tobia was the one who filled for the divorce making him the Plaintiff, and the divorce was uncontested.

### **Mrs. Tobia**

Contrary to Mr. Tobia, Mrs. Tobia has never attended any family event from the side of her Mr. Tobia since their divorce. She however has developed an open communication with the in-laws, were necessary they communicate whenever necessary. Her main challenge was that Mr. Tobia is generous financially to his extended family and church members at the expense of his wife and children's. Mrs. Tobia felt that Mr. Tobia is not fulfilling his financial responsibilities and obligations as the head of the family. This unfulfilled obligations placed a considerable high financial burned to Mrs. Tobia who was now taking care of all financial responsibility of their matrimonial home.

During the interview she expressed that she indirectly contributed to Mr. Tobia lack of financial support to her and the children's.

She states that it started with small things and when Mrs. Tobia would ask for finical support from Mr. Tobia he would respond that he does not have money or undertake to cover the expresses until the eleventh hour, because of due pressure she would end up taking over additional financial obligations and it placed a huge financial strain on her.

Mrs. Tobia further indicated in her response that there was also a challenge of Mr. Tobia borrowing monies and cars to his friend and that placed an emotional strain in their marriage. The monies borrowed were never returned and cars came back damaged or broken down and it was always placed on her to fix the vehicles. She was never consulted when the vehicles were borrowed no gave permission for the use of her vehicle, which Mr. Tobia did on his own.

## **Analysis of Mr. and Mrs. Tobia**

The temporal arrangements of both Mr. and Mrs. Tobia to leave in their matrimonial house, with their children's even though they have been divorced for about 5 months now. Whilst Mr. Tobia has kept the relationship with his in-laws contrary to Mrs. Tobia who has never attended

### **8.9.5 The Story of Mr. Popo Tau**

Mr. Popo Tau not his real name is a Tswana male in his early forty (40) years, he was married in 2000 and he got divorced in 2016, and has been married for sixteen years. At the time of his divorce he had two children's his first-born daughter and last-born son. His divorce was as a result of constant fighting with his ex-wife and he admitted to infidelity. The relationships with the was never good from the beginning of his relationship from the time of lobolo negotiation the two families fought. In the first meeting of the lobolo negotiations his father and the delegation left as a result of disagreements with the negotiations, his father passed remarks that the in-laws think they are selling a car, because the money they requested was just too much.

He states that the relationships were soured from the time they were dating with his ex-wife in-laws. He stated that her ex in-laws even prior to marriage used to frustrate him and he was given difficult time by the mother in-law during the time for their wedding preparations. At times he was refused to see his ex-wife even though he had paid lobola and the "Ukuvuma Abakwenyana" to welcome the groom ceremony was performed.

He was honest to the fact that from the beginning the relationship with his ex-wife in-laws was just cordial. He points out the challenges experienced with his mother in-laws, to the fact that she was a single mother who divorced his ex-husband and that she struggled as a single mother to raise her children's. Mr. Tau ex-wife was the only girl amongst two boys and she was the last-born and her mother's precious princess.



Mr. Tau states in his response that after his wedding the relationships became better and they were able to be communicating cordially with the mother in-law. Like any other any other marriages they experienced their own challenges to adapt to each personal culture the ex-wife was Xhosa and as indicated Mr. Tau is Tswana. However the tension between the elders and parents was never resolved and it became a challenge between him and his ex-wife. The in-laws had no communication towards each other and they never attended the ceremonies from either family.

The tensions from the in-laws contributed to their marriage failure, whilst the Mr. Tau indicated that at the end he had an affair outside marriage and when his ex-wife discovered the relationship she filed for divorce.

### **Mr. Tau Analysis**

Mr. Tau states in his interview response that his marriage had its own challenges they had constant fighting and grew apart from each other. He responds that his infidelity was to seek time off from his ex-wife, it was a deliberate and does not regret it for his marriage was only in paper.

It is interesting that Mr. Tau says he should have listened to his father not to proceed with the lobola as in his view his father was no longer interested in anything that had to do with his in-laws. His parents had no relationship with his in-laws and he states that it was like a TV drama. According to Mr. Tau's words he has no relationships with his in-laws they are like "cat and dog" or "water with oil" basically meaning they don't mix.

He concluded by saying he regrets the day he came into contact with the ex in-laws, and he boldly states that even if he meets them he does not greet them. We conclude Mr. Tau interview that not only has his marriage ended on a sour note he also ended any relationships with the in-laws.

### 8.9.6 The Story of the Mabuza Family

The Mabuza family shares their pain of seeing their only son divorced to his wife after being married only for just three years. The elders are in their early sixties and have been married for 38 years and they are so close to each other it is like they are newly weds you see love all over their face.

However the subject about their son divorce is a different menu all together, Mrs. Mabuza in her response which she is filled by tears of the pain of seeing the marriage of their only child crumble and they couldn't do anything to save it. Mr. Mabuza did not talk a lot during the interview either than to say "mfana wami inhliziyoyami ibuhlungu" meaning my son I am heart broken, as a result of my son divorce. Whilst Mrs. Mazibuko in her expression the devastation was written all over her face in her words she expressed disappointment that she no longer has a makoti that joy is gone. The them the joy of having a makoti

They share the pain that their son divorce was not a good one it was a mess and they tried to bring in their pastor but the other in-laws were involved and directly contributed to the divorce, almost similar to that of Mr. Tau. Their makoti in-laws behaved like they own everything that the children's had jointly accumulated. His son would tell them that the in-laws would come to their matrimonial home un announced and they would stay for weeks and they were wasteful on food, and took his stuff such as clothes, Cd without permission he will only discover later when he is looking for his running shoes and to only find out that his in-laws took them used to make him angry.

The in-laws had a lot of demands the mother would call late and demand to be picked up were ever she was to be dropped home, she was very demanding would ask for money and you must never say no because she would insult and say why are you working if you don't have money.

They tried to intervene after their son first told them about this thing and instead of the in-laws understanding and to stop interfering on the affairs of the children's they

just ignored and made comments like *“you can also do what you want no one is stopping you”*

They share their pain that their in-laws ill treated them as if they don't exist in one of the joint family meeting they informed the in-laws that their daughter is a Mazibuko now and things are done in a Mazibuko culture. That meeting never finished well as Mr. Mazibuko says they were told in their eyes that their daughter does not need their surname, if they want to keep it let them do so. True to their words their Makati started to use a double barrel surname without discussing with their son.

The elders explain that one Saturday evening their son came home with few clothes and told them that he is done and is divorcing his ex-wife, their efforts to bring the pastor to be involved did not work because the in-laws and the makoti stopped coming to church. Their divorce was a mess because they were demanding everything. Post the divorce their have had no communication with the other in-laws and his son wants nothing to do with them as he was traumatized on how thing ended.

### **The Analysis of the Mabuza Story**

The researcher was has observed that the Mazibuko are a loving family and their son grew up in the environment of love and respect for family values. They indicated that as much as they could see that things were not working out but they encouraged their son to pray and fight for his marriage. The have resolved to encourage their son to go for trauma counseling and they have been helping him to regain his self-confidence and rebuild his life. The church has played an important role with prayers and spiritual counseling.

The sad conclusion is that there is no longer any communication or contact with the in-laws their son wants nothing to do with them, he even said it is a blessing that they left church on their own choice, thus giving him space to heal.

### **8.9.7 The Story of Mrs. Nkosi daughter Gugu**

As a single mother Mrs. Nkosi, was joyful when her daughter Gugu came home with the news that she had been proposed and would be getting married. The joy was amazing and the joy was greater when she received a letter from the in-laws that they want to come and pay lobola.

The discussions of the lobolo went very well she says, there were greater collaborations and everything was just so glorious. Her daughter was married for 7 years and they were blessed with two children's a boy 6 years old and a girl 3 years old. She was sadden when her daughter told her that her husband

came to their matrimonial home one day and informed her that he wants a divorce. Her daughter was devastated about the unexpected new she was shocked as according to her everything was ok and this did not expect these news.

The two families had several meetings to try to understand the challenges in their children's marriage.

Both families persuaded him to reconsider his decision to divorce, the pastor was brought in to assist with spiritual counseling. Her daughter was devastated when her husband revealed that he was living lie he is gay and had been dating males behind her back. She was hospitalized for week as a result of emotional distress and dehydration because she was not drinking any liquid or eating any food. Her daughter needed constant care, assistance and support in dealing with the fact that her good marriage had come to an end.

### **The analysis of Mrs. Nkosi**

The two families were united to Mrs. Nkosi daughter Gugu the in-laws were very supportive. Her daughter mother in-law stayed with the children's when Gugu was at the hospital. She states that 1-year after her daughter divorce, the relationship with the in-laws is very good and she communicates frequently with the in-laws. They visit each other from time to time as in-laws and Mrs. Nkosi good relationship with the daughters Gugu in-laws.

The positive conclusion for Mrs. Nkosi and her daughter Gugu have positive relationships with the in-laws and they are also assisting in raising her grand children's and are enjoying the love from both families. Mrs. Nkosi and her daughter Gugu they enjoy one of the most loving relationship with the in-laws.

Pastorally the relationship is one of the models that is positive and should be encouraged that the church is an important institution to build marriages.

### **8.10 Interviews Summary Conclusion**

The interviews and interview questionnaire presented an important mechanism of dealing with forgiveness. The church should continue to preach the Theology of forgiveness, which is about the principle of letting go of individual's anger and pain experiences as results of divorce. According to Muller-Fahrenheit, "*in the bible forgiveness is of a paramount important*" (1997:2) in the wholeness of one's heart.

In his PHD Thesis Dr. Gift Tlharhani Baloyi (2011 page 157) he states that with the theorist of forgiveness is imperative in unleashing anger and restoring wholeness in a person's heart. He further states that the notion of forgiveness should not be confused with reconciliation. The term "forgiveness' in Greek is 'aphesis', meaning letting go of negative thoughts, bitterness and heavy feeling in response to animosity" (Muller-Fahrenheit, 1997,4). This Baloyi concludes that, in other words, letting go means releasing feeling of resentment, pain and anger that may have been in the forefront during divorce process.

In this regards the principle of forgiveness is about walking in the peace of God, to seek the approval of God and thus be a righteous Christians is the desired outcome.

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