

**A PASTORAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WHOLENESS PROGRAMME**

**A contextual cross-cultural contribution to enrichment, growth and healing through pastoral care and counselling in the South African context, with particular focus on Methodist families in the community of KwaNdengezi in KwaZulu-Natal.**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Following decades of political struggle in South Africa, the 27 April elections in 1994 offered many people a long-awaited chapter in their lives as democracy was ushered in. The researcher has observed that the result of this political change has had a profound impact on the people of South Africa, especially for the Black constituency, in many ways. The political changes caused thousands to move from the rural areas to live in the peri-urban or township areas for economic reasons. The uprooting of families from their original rural homes has had a negative effect on the new generation with respect to principles and values about marriage and family. The researcher has further observed that in the area of research at KwaNdengezi, as well as surrounding areas, the social, political and economic changes have contributed to an increase in separation and divorces and a general weakening of the moral fibre of families. The marriage and family system is under a lot of strain. There is a critical need for enrichment, growth and healing.

As an ordained Methodist minister, the researcher has been fortunate to witness the development of various milestones of the Methodist Church, which has been an instrument of change in the Southern African context in the past decades. In the context of transition into “a New Land” (Olivier 1996: 1), the mission statement of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has created a relevant message. The vision in the mission statement as declared in the MCSA Year Conference book is “A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations” (2010: 2). This is achieved by fervently “proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation” by both ministers and laity (L & D 2010: 3).

This study seeks to align and broaden the above MCSA vision through pastoral care and counselling. The intention is to precipitate the work done by clergy training laity in basic Christian care giving and counselling skills. This will hopefully address the apparent brokenness in marriages and families in the various contexts in the communities and precipitate healing and transformation.

The approach of this thesis, whilst predominantly pastoral, is ecclesiological as well as missiological. Elements of contextual theology bring forth the cultural perspective of the community in the area of research as hermeneutical tools of reading scriptures are applied. A cross-cultural dialogue between existing Western pastoral care and counselling models and African care giving and counselling practices plays an important role in this study.

Through fieldwork, data was collected via questionnaires, interviews, recording, transcribing, participant observation and empathetic listening to the responses of the participants in the communities of KwaNdengezi. Valuable themes emerged from the process of assessment and analysis through theological reflection on the data.

The various themes emerged through engagement with married couples, single parents and families. These include communication skills, scriptural values in marriage, Zulu cultural values and customs in a Christian household, the parent-child relationship, family health matters, family finance matters, teenager problems, resolving conflict, forgiveness and healing.

Emanating from the themes, the study seeks to publish a contextual booklet or manual on “marriage and family wholeness”. In an effort to bring about enrichment, growth and healing to marriages and families, the new programme intends to use the lay team trained in basic Christian counselling as resource people when marriage and family retreats are offered by the local church. The programme also emphasizes partnership and interdisciplinary engagement with other disciplines through engaging with, for instance, social workers, clinical psychologists, medical doctors, local congregations, ethical theologians and financial accountants.

This study presents the programme as a new tool or model relevant for a specific cultural context. The context encompasses the Methodist people of KwaNdengezi near Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal. However, because of its cross-cultural dialogue, the model can be adapted for use in any cultural context as an enrichment, growth and

healing tool for all people of God as they struggle with the complexities of marriage and family life in a changing world.

**INGQIKITHI NGESIZULU (Abstract in Zulu)**

*Umhla ka 27 kaApril kunyaka ka 1994 eNingizimu neAfrika, weza nomlandu owawukade ulindiwe wenkululeko. UHulumeni wentando yeningi waletha ushintsho kwezePolitiki kwabakhona ukucabanga nokwenza okungajwayelekile kubantu kakhulukazi abomdabu. Ushintsho ebantwini lwalethwa ukuthutha kwabantu emakhayeni emafama beza nganeno emadolobheni ukuze kubekhona isinkwa phela phezu kwetafula. Lokuhlukana nokuxhumana namakhaya emuva nabantu abadala bekhaya kulethe okukhulu ukulimala emphefumulweni emindenini kwabashadile nabangashadanga. Imishado iyabhidlika, amakhaya akasabumbene njengakuqala kuya le; kuya le emindenini. Kubonakala sengathi kukhona ukudideka ezinganeni ezikhulayo. Azikwazi ukwehlukana okuhle nokungalunganga.*

*Umcwaningi obhala lencwadi ukubonile loku njengoba esebenza nabantu enguMfundisi Bandleni lamaWesile KwaNdengezi ngase Phayindane KwaZulu-Natal.*

*Phakathi koshintsho lwezwe emindenini olubonwa noma ubani iNkonzo yamaWesile ayisisebenzi kuyona umcwaningi; yabanombono ngomunye wabagcotshwa bakaNkulunkulu othi ngolimi lwesiNgisi: A Christ-Healed Africa For The Healing Of Nations [iAfrika ephiliswe uKrestu ukuze kuphile izizwe](MCSA Yearbook, 2010: 2). Ngomunye amaze abounds nabaShumayeli nezisebenzi zeBandla lamaWeseli bathe shu phansi naphezulu beshumayeza abantu ngokuphila okukuKrestu uMsindisi. Ithemba lokuphila nasemishadweni nemindenini liku Jesu Krestu efile wavuka wanqoba esiphambanweni.*

*Lolucwaningo ke lufuna ukuxhumana nokwengezelela kulombono ngokusiza abantu ngokubanakekela nangokweluleka .Loku kumele kusize ukulimala kwabantu emishadweni nasemindenini yabo.*

*Ucwaningo luza ngengalo yobunkonzo, ukuvangela, nangokucwaninga izifundo zeBhayibheli kubhekwe neziphathele enhlalweni yeSintu abantu bangabi kude nabantu abadala nezeluleko zabo ngoba bathi “inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili”.*

*Loku kwenziwe kulelibhuku ngokuqoqa okushiwo abantu bendawo yocwaningo ngemibuzo, ukubhala phansi nokugcina izimpendulo. Kumsebenzi wocwaningo KwaNdengezi kuvele imigomo abantu abafisa ukufundiswa ngayo kuze imindeni isimame. Lemigomo iquka ukuxhumana, okushiwo yiBhayibheli ngomshado, amasiko esiZulu nabantu abakuKrestu, ubudlelwane kumzali nengane, impilo yomndeni, izindlela zokuphatha umnotho ekhaya, izinkinge zabantu abasha, ukucazulula ingxabano ekhaya, ukuthethelela, ukuphila okuphelelesiwe enyameni, emphefumleni nasemoyeni. Lolucwaningo luzoqopha ibhuku elinezigaba zokufundisa abantu ngalemigomo ukuze imindeni ithole ukuphila okuphelelisiwe.*

*Lolu hlelo lukhuthaza ukusebenzisana naboNonhlalanhle, oDokotela, amaBandla ngamaBandla, abantu abafundile ngokugcina umnotho wekhaya, nabakwaSayikholoji noma abafundele okuphathelene nomqondo.*

*Lolocwaningo luza njengesikhali esisha esingasiza abantu emishadweni nasemindenini kubuntu babo. Ngenxa yokuxoxisana namakhono avela ekhona okusiza imindeni avela eNtshonalanga nezindlela zase Ningizimu zokululeka abashadile, abangashadile nemindeni, loluhlelo loba lusizo kubantu bonke bengakhohlwanga bubuntu babo bomdabu. Kulomhlaba oshintshayo umcwaningi uyakhuleka eNkosini ukuthi lolu hlelo lusize abantu bonke ababhekene nobunzima emishadweni nase mindenini esiyiphiwe uNkulunkulu.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Quite a number of people have been a source of encouragement and inspiration in this humble effort.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, who has tirelessly stood by me with great patience and understanding. My supervisor continued to support me even when I had to put my studies aside for a while due to sudden illness. Professor Edwina Ward's gift as a pastoral counsellor helped me recover quickly and undertake my research work again. My professor's motherly instincts are something I will never forget.

Two Methodist ministers at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Professor Neville Richardson and Rev. Dr Smangaliso Kumalo, have offered invaluable support. Both showed earnest interest in my research journey by making frequent enquiries as to the progress I had made and supported me throughout.

I am grateful to my Methodist colleague Rev. Dr Leon Klein, who is a consultant family therapist in our church. His assistance in laying the foundations for and commencing lay training in basic Christian counselling in our circuit at Clerpine has caused the staff and laity to become aware of our own "woundedness". This motivated us to contribute to alleviating the brokenness we see around us and become "wounded healers".

I specifically acknowledge the support from my Bishop, Rev. Mike Vorster. His willingness to embrace and make use of the emerging pastoral care and counselling programme in the Natal Coastal District has been humbling.

My superintendent, Rev. Peter Crundwell, and staff at the Clerpine Circuit sustained me through my research in many ways. When I went on study leave, my colleagues took care of the people of God at KwaNdengezi. This gesture cannot be ignored; it is greatly appreciated.

My prayers go out to every participant and every person interviewed as part of this study. The leadership and congregation in the KwaNdengezi region were exceptionally cooperative in the process and their contributions are much appreciated.

My research assistants, Biblewoman Thandiwe Kumalo and Reuben Mvelase, were of great help when I conducted interviews with the elders at Gezangane. The youngest minister in our circuit, Rev. Simphiwe Shange, has done great work in translating some of the appendices from English to Zulu.

Great gratitude goes to Buyie Ngongoma, who worked hard typing this manuscript. Your competent computer skills have helped improve my own computer literacy. I appreciate Richard and Lundi's (our last-born son) help with their graphic design skills, which they used to create the graphs and maps in this dissertation.

Great appreciation goes to the professional editing work done by Katherine Evans from Pragmatics Support Systems in this thesis. Other than her assistance in the layout and other editing logistics, her work addressed my limitations in expressing myself in English, which is my second language.

May this resource be a blessing to all God's people, Christian and non-Christian, Methodist and other denominations in the Body of Christ, in any cultural context in the African continent and our world.

God bless you all.

Rev. Avis Lumka Sigaba



## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
FAMSA	Family and Marriage Association of South Africa
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IRM	Intentional Relationship Method
L & D	Laws and Discipline: the church polity used by the Methodist Church
MCSA	The Methodist Church of South Africa
SAAP	Southern African Association for Pastoral Work
YMG	Young Men's Guild
YWG	Youth Wesley Guild
YWM	Young Women's Manyano
WM	Women's Manyano
<i>Manyano</i>	Unity

**A LIST OF DEFINITIONS CONCERNING THE TOPIC OF THIS STUDY  
(with inclusion of Zulu words to add a contextual meaning to the concepts  
through syntax):**

**MARRIAGE:** Marriage is a journey of commitment undertaken by one man and one woman with the purposes of procreation, companionship and the desire to nurture a family unit with constructive values and principles from Judeo-Christian as well as cultural roots, with the intention of helping to meet the survival needs of the family unit, including the extended family. This definition assimilates the Zulu *ukushada*, *ukugana*, *ukwenda*.

**FAMILY:** Family, or *umndeni*, comprises a group of people who are descended from a common ancestor, share the same clan name, dwell together in the same household and follow a set of rules, roles, structures and forms of communication that are used to unite the family as well as promote interdependence.

**KINSHIP:** Kinship ,or *ubundeni noma ubuhlobo* and family play a very important part in Zulu society and ramifies through every aspect of their culture. The bonds of kinship serve to bring together and knit the group into strong relatedness. Kinship networks vertically with the transcendence of the group as well as horizontally to embrace everyone as brother, sister, cousin, uncle, aunt, mother father, grandparent going back even to the fourth or sixth generation of the living and departed. Those who are in the same family and kinship share the same clan-name, sacred clan-song (*izithakazelo*) and common rituals and taboos.

**SYSTEM:** A system, or *uhlelo*, is a structure comprising elements that are part of a process. A human comprises a set of elements undergoing multiple processes in cyclical patterns as part of a coherent system. Thus, a system comprises structured elements related by various processes that are interrelated as well as interdependent, for example, in marriage and family.

**GROWTH:** In general, growth means to increase over time. In the context of pastoral care and counselling, growth takes place in individuals and groups within the realities of struggle and pain during the journey of life. This growth, *ukukhula* or *ukukhuliswa* often happens in people as the individual, or individuals, goes through the developmental stages of life.

**ENRICHMENT:** Within the context of pastoral care and counselling, enrichment, which can be translated as *ukunothiswa noma ukuvundiswa* in Zulu, comes with imparting basic truths and skills through education seminars and workshops in the Christian context. Enrichment produces growth in a person or persons in terms of life skills.

**HEALING:** Healing is a *process* of being restored to bodily *wholeness*, encompassing mental, emotional as well as spiritual well-being. Healing can extend to instilling wholeness and restoration in personal relationships as well as emotional wounds. Healing can also address social, political and economic ailments in races and nations. Achieving equilibrium in a person or persons can be facilitated by religious rituals in the Christian or cultural context. Synonyms that express healing in Zulu are *ukuphila* and *ukuphola noma ukwelapha*.

**PASTORAL CARE:** Pastoral care encompasses those activities that are directed toward restoring wholeness in individuals and communities within the context of God's redemptive purposes for creation. The Zulu word that places deeper meaning on pastoral care is *ukunakekela noma ukukhathalela*. The context of the redemptive activities can take place in a home, hospital, church or community.

**PASTORAL COUNSELLING:** Pastoral counselling, which translates as *ukweluleka* in Zulu, is an essential part of the total ministry of pastoral care. Uniqueness in pastoral counselling comes from training pastors and equipping them with insight into psychosocial sciences. This discipline encourages the combination of psychotherapeutic methods with healing resources from Jewish and Christian heritages. When effectively applied, the person, persons or couples learn to help

themselves. For deeper effect, the model pastoral counsellor, or *umeluleki* in Zulu, has to consider the cultural milieu of the context of intervention.

**CROSS-CULTURAL:** Within the context of the discipline of pastoral care and counselling, a cross-cultural dialogue happens when participants share cultural thoughts, opinions, feelings and beliefs. This particular study explores the dialogue between the Western, African as well as Hungarian cultures. In Zulu, this notion can be expressed as *ukucobelelana*.<sup>1</sup> The depth of the traits is centred in the language of the group and is passed from generation to generation.

**CONTEXTUAL:** In this study, contextual refers to looking at relevant constraints of communication surrounding social, political, economic and religious premises of a situation or event. For this study, the context encompasses Methodist and Christian families as well as Zulu communities at KwaNdengezi and surrounding areas in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup>*Ukucobelela* literally means giving tobacco to someone. This is a Zulu idiom meaning to give or share advice with someone.

## DEDICATION

I sincerely dedicate this thesis to my precious husband and prayer partner, Mbonisi, to whom I have been married for forty years. His contribution to the rediscovery of roles in our marriage and family are exceptionally appreciated in this work and in our own household. I believe God will restore the “marriage time” that was stolen while I wrote this thesis in a divine way.

Much appreciation goes to my departed parents, Elijah and Ella *uMaduna noMaSikhosana*. They were my role models in marriage and family. I sincerely appreciate their efforts in sending my siblings and me to school to learn how to read and write. I am grateful that they provided us with a Christian household where we could not go to bed without first saying a family prayer. Those evening prayers continue to be a legacy and heritage in our family unit. Mbonisi and I are committed as grandparents to passing this legacy on to the upcoming generations as we take our roles as *umkhulu nogogo*.

This work is also dedicated to my departed father-in-law and mother-in-law, *uDlamini noMaKumalo*. They were a valuable subsystem and support system to us as a family. They patiently taught us much about traditional cultural practices from a Xhosa perspective during our children’s developmental stages.

Valuable time was taken away from our beloved sons, Nikita, Luyolo, Linda and Lundi-loThukela. My sincere prayer is that God, our parent, restores this time by giving you a special blessing in your own family units. *UTHixo wenu Mazizi makanigcine nina namakhosikazi enu amahle kunye nabazukulwana bethu oYolo, Lindiwe, Khanya, Lungile, Nandipha, Ayanda naye u “Ponko” owasishiya kabuhlungu wagoduka kusekwangoko, nabazukulwana labo uNkulunkulu asazosipha bona.*

To the precious people called Methodists and all Christians in the Body of Christ, and generations to come :may we all enjoy “abundant life” in our households.

## DECLARATION

As required by university regulations, I hereby declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, represents my own original work.

This research work has not been submitted to any other university for the purpose of a higher degree.

Signed.....

Date

Avis Lumka Sigaba  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Pietermaritzburg  
February 2011


This thesis has been examined:

Signed.....

Date

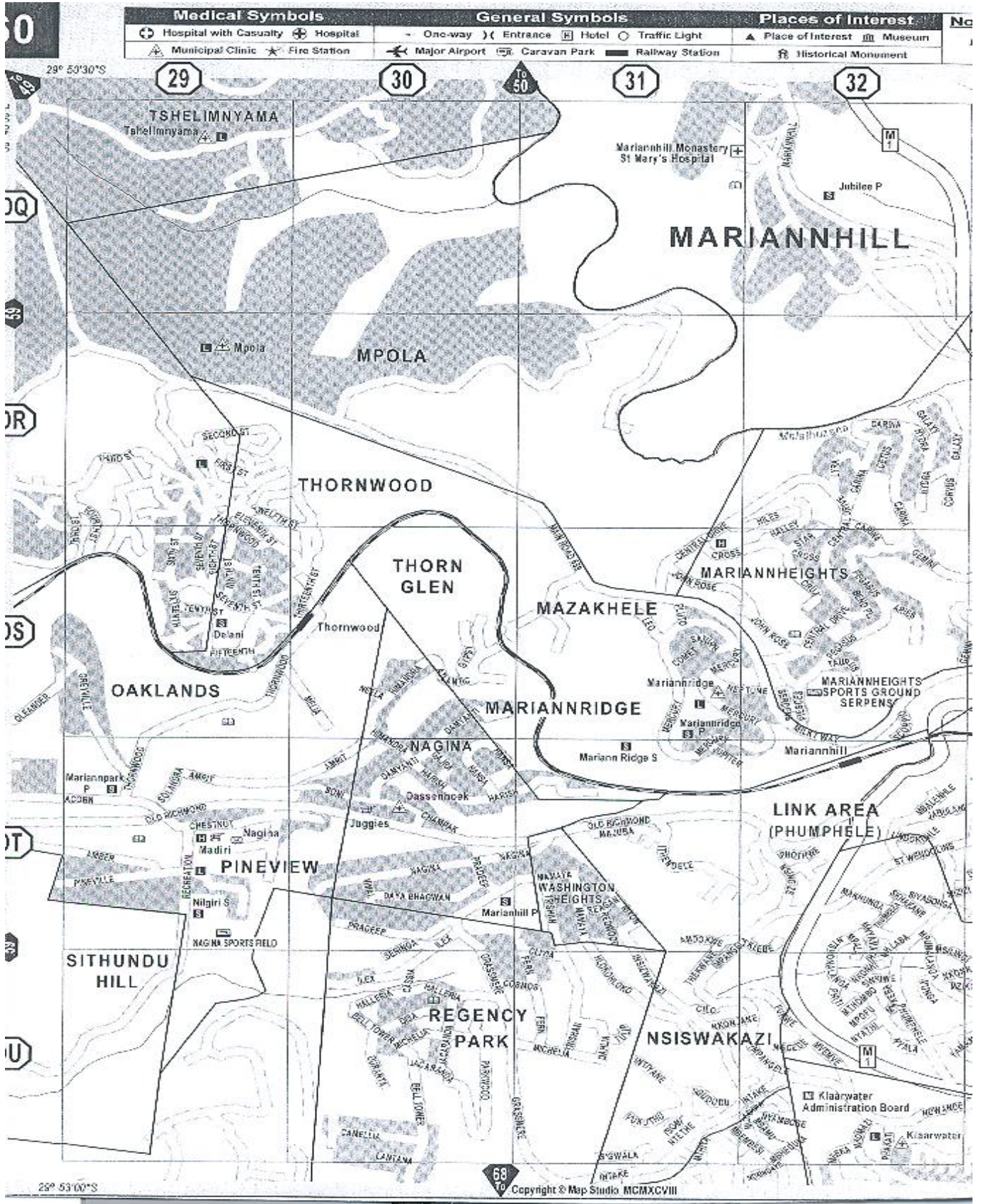
Professor Edwina Ward  
Supervisor

Most of this research work has been edited.

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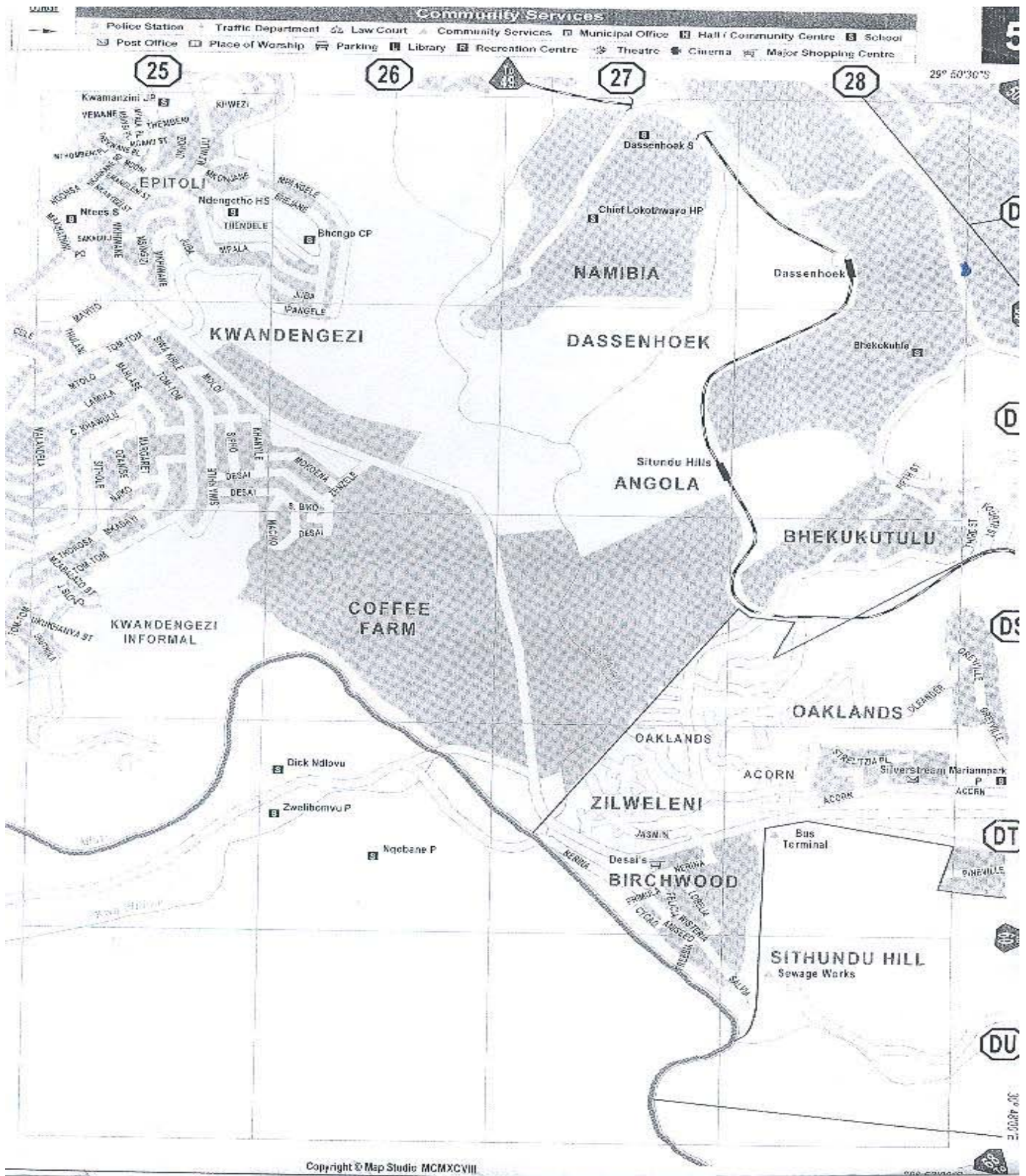
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Table 1: Area of research 1





**Table 2: Area of research 2**





## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations	viii
Dedication	xi
Declaration	xii
Map 1: Area of Research	xiv
Map 2: Area of Research	xv

## **CHAPTER 1** **1**

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### **INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE**

<b>1.1 SETTING THE CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1.1 TITLE</b> 1	
<b>1.2 MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING THE TOPIC</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2.1 PERSONAL MINISTERIAL EXPERIENCE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2.2 COMPLETING THE TASK</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MOTIVATION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1.2.4 REDISCOVERY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ELDERS IN ZULU COMMUNITIES AS A VALID RESOURCE IN CARE AND COUNSELLING</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2.5 DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE WESTERN MODELS OF PASTORAL CARE AND ITS COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES AND AFRICAN COUNSELLING PRACTICES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2.6 CREATING AN ECCLESIOLOGICAL STUDY</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2.7 EMPHASIS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN THE BIBLICAL ORIGINAL FORM</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE STUDY AND LOCATING THE RESEARCH WITHIN THE EXISTING LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.4.1 MAIN PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.4.2 SUB-PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>1.6.1 DESIGN</b> 18	
<b>1.6.2 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>19</b>

1.7	LIMITATIONS.....	21
1.8	RESEARCH ETHICS.....	21
1.9	THE THESIS OUTLINE.....	22
1.10	THE PEOPLE IN THEIR NEW LAND .....	24

---

**CHAPTER 2** **26**

**THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY**

INTRODUCTION.....	26
2 DEFINITIONS – AN EXPLORATION .....	28
2.1 MARRIAGE – A DEFINITION.....	28
2.2 A CONTEXTUAL WORKING DEFINITION.....	31
2.3 FAMILY – A DEFINITION .....	32
2.4 A CONTEXTUAL WORKING DEFINITION.....	34
2.5. THE FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY .....	35
2.5.1 SYSTEM – A DEFINITION .....	35
2.6 EXAMINING THE EVOLUTION OF FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY.....	36
2.6.1 THE EVOLUTION .....	36
2.6.2 SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS .....	38
2.6.2.1 THE ELEMENT OF HOMEOSTASIS .....	38
2.6.2.2 THE SUPRA-SYSTEM ELEMENT .....	39
2.6.2.3 THE ELEMENT OF BOUNDARIES.....	40
2.6.2.4 THE SUB-SYSTEM ELEMENT.....	41
2.7 THE MAIN FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORIST IN THE THESIS – IVAN BÖSZÖRMÉNYI-NAGY .....	42
2.7.1 BÖSZÖRMÉNYI-NAGY’S GENERAL BACKGROUND AS A FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORIST ..	42
2.7.2 BÖSZÖRMÉNYI-NAGY’S OWN FAMILY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND.....	43
2.7.3 CONTEXTUAL FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY EVOLVES.....	44
2.7.3.1 THE FACTS DIMENSION .....	44
2.7.3.2 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION.....	46
2.7.3.3 TRANSACTIONAL OR POWER ALIGNMENT DIMENSION.....	47
2.7.3.4 THE ETHICAL DIMENSION .....	48
2.8 SOME KEY TERMINOLOGY USED IN CONTEXTUAL FAMILY THERAPY.....	50

<b>2.8.1 LEGACY AND THE LEDGER OF MERIT AND INDEBTEDNESS.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>2.8.2 SPLIT LOYALTY AND THE REVOLVING SLATE.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>2.8.3 SCAPEGOATING.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2.9 SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>54</b>

---

**CHAPTER 3** **57**

**EXAMINING THE ZULU FAMILY ORIGINAL OR NORMAL FAMILY PROCESSES AND PROBLEMATIC FAMILY PROCESSES IN A CHANGING WORLD**

<b>3.1 ENCOUNTERING THE ZULU NATION IN THEIR LAND .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>3.2 NORMAL FAMILY PROCESSES IN ZULU CULTURE.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.2.1 ROLES IN A TRADITIONAL ZULU FAMILY.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>3.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN A TRADITIONAL ZULU FAMILY .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>3.2.3 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN THE TRANSFORMING ZULU FAMILY .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.2.4 THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN A ZULU TRADITIONAL FAMILY .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>3.2.5 THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN A TRANSFORMING ZULU FAMILY .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>3.2.6 THE ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS IN THE ZULU TRADITIONAL FAMILY .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>3.2.7 THE ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS IN THE TRANSFORMING ZULU FAMILY .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>3.3 THE RITES OF PASSAGE IN A ZULU TRADITIONAL FAMILY .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>3.3.1 MARRIAGE IN ZULU TRADITIONAL CULTURE.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>3.3.2 THE WEDDING CEREMONY IN ZULU TRADITIONAL CULTURE .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>3.3.3 POLYGAMY IN ZULU TRADITIONAL CULTURE .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>3.3.4 BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD IN ZULU FAMILY TRADITION.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>3.3.5 NAMING THE CHILD IN ZULU FAMILY TRADITION .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>3.3.6 INITIATION AND PUBERTY RITES OF PASSAGE IN ZULU FAMILY TRADITION.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>3.3.7 DEATH AND BURIAL IN ZULU FAMILY TRADITION.....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>3.4 THE RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION OF THE ZULU PEOPLE .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>3.4.1 THE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>3.4.2 THE METHODIST CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>3.5 SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>3.6 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>81</b>

---

**CHAPTER 4** **82**

# THE CHURCH AS A CENTRE FOR ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING FOR MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION	82
4.1 IMPORTANT BASIC DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITIONS	84
4.1.1 GROWTH – A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION	84
4.1.2 ENRICHMENT – A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION	85
4.1.3 HEALING – A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION	85
4.2 IDENTIFYING THE CHURCH’S STRUCTURE, GOALS AND MISSION	88
4.2.1 THE CHURCH AS <i>KYRIAKOS OIKIA</i>	88
4.2.2 THE CHURCH AS <i>EKKLESIA</i>	89
4.2.3 THE CHURCH AS <i>SANCTORUM COMMUNIO</i>	90
4.3 THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY	91
4.3.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE MCSA	91
4.3.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MCSA	91
4.3.3 THE FAMILY FOUNDATION OF METHODISM	92
4.3.4 THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF THE WESLEY BROTHERS	92
4.3.5 JOHN WESLEY’S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE	93
4.3.6 THE ORGANOGRAM OR STRUCTURE INTRODUCED	94
4.3.7 THE ORGANOGRAM (RESEARCHER’S EMPHASIS ON EXISTING MCSA POLITY MODEL)	95
4.4 THE MISSION OF THE MCSA	96
4.4.1 THE VISION OF THE MCSA IN THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY	97
4.4.2 THE RELEVANCE OF THE MISSION PILLARS FOR ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY	99
4.5 THE ROLE OF THE MINISTER OR PASTOR IN ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING...	100
4.5.1 THE SYMBOLIC POWER OF THE MINISTER	100
4.5.2 THE PASTOR AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF GOD	101
4.5.3 THE PASTOR AS A REMINDER OF JESUS CHRIST	102
4.5.4 THE PASTOR AS A FOLLOWER OF THE LEADING HOLY SPIRIT	102
4.5.5 THE PASTORAL INITIATIVE OF THE MINISTER	103
4.6 THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION IN ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY	104

4.6.1 THE CONGREGATION AS A GROUP CARING RESOURCE IN COUNSELLING.....	105
4.6.2 THE CLASS SYSTEM AS A SMALL GROUP CARING MODEL IN THE MCSA.....	105
4.6.3 THE RELEVANCE OF THE CLASS SYSTEM AS A CARING AND COUNSELLING MODEL IN THE MCSA FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE .....	106
4.6.4 THE RELEVANCE OF THE MANYANO ORGANIZATIONS AS A CONGREGATIONAL CARING TOOL IN THE MCSA.....	107
4.7 SUMMARY.....	108
4.8. CONCLUSION.....	109

---

**CHAPTER 5** **110**

**TRAINING LAY LEADERS IN BASIC PASTORAL CARE GIVING AND COUNSELLING: FIELDWORK**

INTRODUCTION.....	110
5.1. SOME EXPLANATORY DEFINITIONS .....	111
5.1.1.LAITY – AN EXPLANATORY DEFINITION.....	111
5.1.2.PASTORAL CARE – AN EXPLANATORY DEFINITION .....	112
5.1.3.PASTORAL COUNSELLING – AN EXPLANATORY DEFINITION.....	113
5.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF LAY PROGRAMME 1 .....	115
5.2.1.PREPARATION FOR SEMINAR WITH A CONSULTANT FAMILY THERAPIST .....	115
5.2.2 THE ONE-DAY BASIC CARE AND COUNSELLING DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR.....	115
5.2.2.1 SETTING THE SCENE.....	115
5.2.2.2 THE SEMINAR INPUT.....	116
5.2.2.3 IMPORTANT STEPS TO FOLLOW.....	117
5.2.2.4 THE COMMITMENT FORM.....	120
5.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF LAY PROGRAMME 2.....	121
5.3.1 PREPARATION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME BY THE RESEARCHER.....	121
5.3.2 INVITATION LAYOUT .....	123
5.3.3 THE FIRST DAY TRAINING FORMAT .....	124
5.3.4 THE LAUNCHING OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME .....	125
5.3.4.1 ROOM ARRANGEMENT .....	125
5.3.4.2 THE PROGRAMME PRESENTATION .....	125
5.3.4.3 DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS .....	126
5.3.4.4 SAMPLE ANALYSIS.....	128
5.3.5 THE TOPICS OF LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME 2.....	128

5.3.5.1	IDENTITY OF THE COUNSELLOR AS AN INSTRUMENT OF HEALING .....	128
5.3.5.2	IDENTITY OF THE CLIENT .....	130
5.3.5.3	DEVELOPING THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS FOR COUNSELLING TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION.....	131
5.3.5.5	DEVELOPING THE SKILL OF LISTENING .....	135
5.3.5.6	LEARNING ABOUT INTEGRATIVE UNDERSTANDING .....	136
5.3.5.7	LEARNING ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES .....	137
5.3.5.8	LEARNING ABOUT BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS.....	137
5.3.5.9	LEARNING ABOUT THE GENOGRAM .....	138
5.3.5.10	LEARNING ABOUT COPING SKILLS .....	139
5.3.5.11	LEARNING HOW TO ATTEND TO THE SOUL .....	140
5.3.5.12	THE PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL.....	141
5.4	WINDING UP LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME 2.....	142
5.5	IMPLEMENTATION OF LAY PROGRAMME 3.....	143
5.5.1	INPUT FROM ASSIGNMENTS SUBMITTED .....	143
5.5.2	PREPARATION FOR LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME 3.....	144
5.5.3.1	BASIC INPUT ON FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY .....	145
5.5.3.2	SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY .....	146
5.5.3.4.	ZULU TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PRACTICES .....	147
5.5.3.5	INTRODUCTION OF THE IRM METHOD (INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIP METHOD) .....	147
5.5.3.6	WINDING UP AND CLOSURE .....	149
5.6	SUMMARY.....	149
5.7	CONCLUSION.....	150
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>		<b>151</b>

**CASE STUDIES OF PRESENT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE ZULU PERI-URBAN COMMUNITIES AT KWANDENGEZI – FIELDWORK, CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS**

INTRODUCTION.....	151
6.1 ENGAGEMENT AND INTERVIEWS WITH MARRIED COUPLES .....	152
6.1.1 CASE STUDY 1: THE KHUMALO COUPLE.....	153
6.1.1.2 PROFILE OF THE KHUMALO COUPLE.....	153
6.1.1.3 VERBATIM REPORT (ALL OF THE SUBSEQUENT VERBATIM REPORTS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED FROM ZULU) .....	154

6.1.1.4	ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE KHUMALO FAMILY .....	157
6.2.1	PROFILE OF THE MHLONGO COUPLE .....	158
6.2.2	IDENTITIES .....	158
6.2.3	VERBATIM REPORT.....	158
6.2.4	ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE MHLONGO FAMILY .....	161
6.3	CASE STUDY 3: THE NGUBANE COUPLE .....	161
6.3.1	PROFILE OF THE NGUBANE COUPLE.....	161
6.3.2	IDENTITIES .....	162
6.3.3	VERBATIM REPORT.....	162
6.3.4	ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE NGUBANE FAMILY .....	165
6.4	CASE STUDY 4: THE ZIKODE COUPLE .....	166
6.4.1	PROFILE OF THE ZIKODE COUPLE .....	166
6.4.2	IDENTITIES .....	166
6.4.3	VERBATIM REPORT.....	166
6.4.4	ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE ZIKODE FAMILY .....	168
6.5	CASE STUDY 5: THE JOZI COUPLE .....	169
6.5.1	PROFILE OF THE JOZI COUPLE .....	169
6.5.2	IDENTITIES .....	169
6.5.3	VERBATIM REPORT.....	169
6.5.4	ANALYSIS OF THE NEEDS OF THE JOZI FAMILY .....	172
6.6	SUMMARY OF THE CRUCIAL NEEDS FOR MARRIED COUPLES .....	172
6.6.1	THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE 10 CRUCIAL NEEDS OF THE MARRIED COUPLES: WHY ENGAGE IN THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION?.....	174
6.6.2	UNPACKING JOHN WESLEY’S QUADRILATERAL TOOLS FOR THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE INTERVIEWED.....	177
6.7	ASSESSING THE NEEDS.....	180
6.7.1	COMMUNICATION SKILLS .....	180
6.7.2	SCRIPTURAL VALUES IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY .....	184
6.7.3	MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ROLES.....	188
6.7.4	ZULU TRADITIONAL CULTURAL VALUES IN A CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD .....	190
6.7.5	PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP .....	192
6.7.6	FAMILY FINANCIAL MATTERS.....	194
6.7.7	FAMILY HEALTH MATTERS .....	196
6.7.8	TEENAGE PROBLEMS .....	197
6.7.9	RESOLVING CONFLICT, RECONCILIATION AND HEALING .....	198

6.7.10	THE NEED FOR A SUPPORT SYSTEM OR GROUP.....	199
6.8	SUMMARY.....	201
6.9	CONCLUSION.....	201

**CHAPTER 7** **202**

---

**SINGLE PARENTHOOD AS PART OF FAMILY ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING – FIELDWORK, CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS**

INTRODUCTION.....	202
7.1 PREDISPOSING FACTORS TO SINGLE PARENTHOOD IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES ...	202
7.1.1 BEREAVEMENT.....	204
7.1.2 SEPARATION OR DIVORCE.....	207
7.1.3 TEENAGE PREGNANCY .....	208
7.1.4 SINGLE PARENTHOOD AND SINGLENESS AS AN ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE .....	210
7.2 ENGAGEMENT WITH SINGLE PARENTHOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH.	211
7.2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SINGLE PARENT INTERVIEWS (APPENDIX 3).....	211
7.2.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CASE STUDIES .....	211
7.2.3 SUMMARY OF THE NEEDS OF THE SINGLE PARENTS.....	212
7.2.4 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT OF SINGLE PARENTS' NEEDS .....	214
7.2.4.1 SOCIAL NEEDS .....	214
7.2.4.2 ECONOMIC NEEDS .....	216
7.2.4.3 SPIRITUAL NEEDS .....	216
7.2.4.4 RELATIONAL NEEDS .....	218
7.2.4.5 EMOTIONAL NEEDS .....	218
7.2.4.6 OTHER NEEDS .....	219
7.3 SUMMARY.....	219
7.4 CONCLUSION.....	220

**CHAPTER 8** **221**

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**PRESENTATION OF THE EMERGING SEMINAR PROGRAMME DEVELOPED FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>221</b>
8.1 PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAMME.....	222
8.1.1 THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAMME (SEMINAR).....	222



8.1.2 WHO NEEDS TO ATTEND THE PROGRAMME? .....	222
8.1.3 LAY TEAM PREPARATION AND TRAINING .....	222
8.1.4 ADVERTISING THE PROGRAMME .....	225
8.2 SEMINAR PRESENTATION .....	231
8.2.1 SESSION 1: SCRIPTURAL VALUES IN MARRIAGE .....	234
8.2.1.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 1 .....	235
8.2.2 SESSION 2: ROLES IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY .....	237
8.2.2.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 2 .....	238
8.2.3 SESSION 3: ZULU CULTURAL VALUES AND CUSTOMS IN A CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD....	
.....	240
8.2.3.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES FOR SESSION 3 .....	241
8.2.4.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES FOR SESSION 4 .....	244
8.2.4.2 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 4 (COMMUNICATION CONTD.) ..	
.....	247
8.2.5 SESSION 5: PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP .....	249
8.2.5.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 5 .....	250
8.2.6 SESSION 6: FAMILY HEALTH MATTERS .....	252
8.2.6.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 6 .....	253
8.2.7 SESSION 7: TEENAGE PROBLEMS .....	255
8.2.7.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 7 .....	256
8.2.8 SESSION 8: RESOLVING CONFLICT .....	258
8.2.8.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 8 .....	259
8.2.9 SESSION 9: FORGIVENESS AND HEALING .....	261
8.2.9.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 9 .....	262
8.2.10 SESSION 10: SESSION FOR SINGLE PARENTS .....	264
8.2.10.1 SUMMARY SUGGESTION NOTES ON SESSION 10 .....	266
8.3 CREATING A MANUAL FOR THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WHOLENESS PROGRAMME .	
.....	268
8.3.1 LOGO OR SYMBOL FOR THE MANUAL .....	269
8.3.2 PROGRAMME EVALUATION .....	269
8.4 PARTNERSHIP AND THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WHOLENESS PROGRAMME .....	269
8.4.1 A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE PARTNERSHIP MODEL .....	269
8.4.2 AVAILABLE LOCAL PARTNERS .....	271
8.5 VERBATIM REPORT WITH CATHOLIC PRIEST .....	272
8.6 SUMMARY .....	274

<b>8.7 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>280</b>

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Demographics of the participants.....	127
Figure 2: Needs for marriages and families at KwaNdengezi Methodist Church .....	173
Figure 3: Needs of single parents at KwaNdengezi Methodist Church.....	214
Figure 4: Proposed logo for the cover of the handbook for sessions.....	231
Figure 5: Session logo that explains the themes .....	232

**APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX 1: CLERGY QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW: STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR MARRIED COUPLES.....</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW: STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR SINGLE PARENTS .....</b>	<b>289</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SINGLE PARENTS .....</b>	<b>292</b>
<b>APPENDIX 5: MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708.....</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>APPENDIX 6: MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708.....</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>APPENDIX 7: MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708.....</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>APPENDIX 8: MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708 .....</b>	<b>307</b>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE

#### 1.1 Setting the context

##### 1.1.1 Title

The title of this thesis is:

A Pastoral Marriage and Family Wholeness Programme:

A contextual cross-cultural contribution to enrichment, growth and healing through pastoral care and counselling in the South African context, with particular focus on Methodist families in the community of KwaNdengezi in KwaZulu-Natal.

#### 1.2 Motivation for choosing the topic

This study intends to be contextual<sup>2</sup> as well as cross – cultural<sup>3</sup> in its approach.

The researcher identifies seven points that motivate the choice of the above-mentioned topic.

##### 1.2.1 Personal ministerial experience

“Marriages are breaking down; families are hurting. What can be done?” (“*Imishado iyabhidlika, nemindeneni isenkingeni. Kungenziwa njani?*”)<sup>4</sup> As a practising minister in

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<sup>2</sup>The contextual approach in this study includes relevant constraints of communication involving social, political, economic and religious premises. In this study, the context includes Methodist and Christian families and Zulu communities at KwaNdengezi in South Africa.

<sup>3</sup>Cross-cultural includes sharing of thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings. The dialogical approach is to be encouraged between Western and African cultures.

<sup>4</sup>*Imishado iya bhidlika; nemindeneni isenkingeni. Kungenziwa njani?*” In English, this statement is translated thus: “Marriages are crumbling; families are in trouble. What can be done?” The word *ukubhidlika* is mostly used in African Nguni languages (mainly Zulu and Xhosa) and it refers to a crumbling hut in heavy rains. *Imishado* means marriages. *Imindeneni* is a Zulu word for families.

Built with mud bricks, the hut’s structure cannot withstand heavy rains and then *ukubhidlika* happens as it succumbs to the rains. The researcher uses this *ukubhidlika* (“crumbling”) symbolically, to depict

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa for a couple of decades, the researcher has constantly been part of such conversations. This question is expressed in the church environment by the Zulu-speaking members of the congregation in the region of KwaNdengezi, the non-Zulu-speaking members of our church in general, by the community at large, at ministerial retreats, at conferences as well as through the mass media. The writer's reaction to this universal lamentation has always been that of despondency as well as a feeling of inadequacy as a minister in the community she serves.

One humbly notes and accepts the work that has always been done by people like clinical psychologists, marriage counsellors, social workers and other professional service providers in the cities around the community. However, not everyone in KwaNdengezi finds it easy to make use of these services. The reasons are diverse: a lack of resources, lack of knowledge about the availability of the services and/or a lack of readiness shown by African communities to go for counselling. In the same vein, one constantly encounters a general quest for healing whenever people experience brokenness in their family relationships. Informants in the area tend to regard the mentioned disciplines as Western in their approaches. Most people in the area see ministers as constantly available resources who can address marriage and family issues. The researcher observed that this conviction probably comes from the fact that ministers are constantly engaged with the congregation, their non-churchgoing relatives and the community at large during various events, whether pastoral or social.

As a minister, the researcher constantly encounters families as they go through the various common ventures of life. These revolve around preparation for marriage, the marriage event itself, birth, parenting, baptism, initiation ceremonies, the announcement of death in the family, making funeral arrangements and funerals. In all of these events, it is inevitable to see the family collectively. Relevant family members often have to be involved in the preparation for the events. The various

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marriage and family relationships that fail to survive under the strain of a changing world. The strain can be due to social, economic or spiritual forces, whether local or global.

family occasions offer an open door for enrichment, growth and healing. Development of skills in the field of marriage and family becomes critical if one's ministry is to be effective. Sending people away without offering some form of help does not do justice to the wholeness and healing ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who says:

The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. I have come in order that you may have life in its fullness.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2.2 Completing the task

The researcher was further motivated to choose this topic in order to complete and elaborate on her Masters thesis on marriage enrichment (Sigaba, A.L, 1999). The paper mentioned grappled with enriching the marriage institution with survival skills in the midst of the secular challenges of this day and age. The context of the research was of course different, as the focus was mainly on the Xhosa-speaking Methodist families in the Eastern Cape. Historically, Xhosa and Zulu communities are both Nguni tribes.

According to Magma Fuze (1979)<sup>6</sup>, the Nguni tribe came from the north in South East Africa, from the Suez Canal or the Horn of Africa, and migrated southwards and eastwards to settle across the Zambezi River in Natal and the Cape. The Nguni people apparently have a common history, common origin and common genetic inheritance (Fuze, 1979: ix, x).

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<sup>5</sup>The Good News version in John 10: 10 speaks of having life in its fullness. The Open Bible in the New King James Version speaks of "having life more abundantly" in the same quoted verse. The Zulu version talks about *Mina ngize ukuba babe nokuphila babe nakho kuchichime* in the verse. *Buchichime* is a Zulu expression about something that is in abundance, spills over and brings nourishment. This normally pertains to sour milk in a calabash, which spills over when it is full. The overflow is often enjoyed by the pets around the house as well as by the children and needy neighbours in the community. Symbolically, the ministry of Jesus Christ spilled over from the Jewish community to the Gentiles, bringing nourishment, healing, wholeness and wellness. Healing, wholeness and wellness are associated with things that are complete, undamaged, repaired and healthy. The goal of this thesis is to achieve abundant wholeness, wellness and healing in communities' marriage and family relationships.

<sup>6</sup>Magma Fuze accompanied Bishop Colenso in his missionary journeys in Zululand in around 1902. Fuze (1979) partially wrote the book *The Black People and Whence They Came*, which translates as *Abantu abamnyama Lapho bavela khona*, and first published it in 1922.

However, their languages as well as customs differ to a certain extent. The researcher viewed her Masters thesis as an unfinished task that needed to be concluded with this research work. Collectively, there are now resources on marriage and family ministry for both Xhosa and Zulu families, although they are rudimentary.

Although the researcher wished to focus more on family in this research, it was impossible to do so outside the premise of marriage, as marriage forms the foundation in the formation of a family unit. Satir (1983) postulates that marriage is the axis around which all other relationships are formed (Satir, 1983: 2). The researcher is also convinced that the formation of stable family relationships is crucial in the newly formed democratic country of South Africa. In fact, this is the main goal of the research.

### **1.2.3 Socio-economic and political motivation**

Having mentioned the newly formed democracy in South Africa, it is worth highlighting an observation that Zulu-speaking families in KwaZulu-Natal in the post-apartheid era have experienced rapidly changing economic conditions, sexual freedom, political changes, urbanization, migration and many other global forces. These forces have had a negative impact on their family relationships.

Exploring the church's role in the new democratic state of South African, Nurnberger (1994) posits in his book that the post-apartheid South Africa has an ailing economy. He states that the exponential population growth has resulted in gross poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, disease (mainly the HIV/AIDS pandemic) as well as crime. Because of this, many people in KwaZulu-Natal are uprooting themselves from rural areas and are settling in towns and cities to find work so as to survive. According to Nurnberger, Durban is estimated to have grown by half a million inhabitants per year since 1994 (1994: 21).

Just as the above author has observed, the researcher has also noted that most of this population explosion is happening in townships as well as around the city, in blocks of flats and other residential areas. The area of research is situated about fifty kilometres outside the city of Durban in South Africa.

Nurnberger (1994) also emphasizes that the state of the economy as well as the adverse social conditions have precipitated the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The pandemic has claimed many lives and has left those at home with a lack of peace, trust and prosperity. The diminished economic state of post-apartheid South Africa has impelled Nurnberger to challenge the church:

The church has immediate access to the family on the ground so begin there. Offer courses in sexual discipline, family planning, marital faithfulness and the AIDS epidemic (Nurnberger, 1994: 56).

The writer identifies with Nurnberger (1994) in many ways regarding the above “diagnosis” and challenge to the church to reconstruct marriage and family. Given the writer’s observations and that she has been involved in conversations about marriage and family dysfunction in the area of research, she notes that it is critical to help the people through the development of skills in pastoral care and counselling. The developed skills need to address the needs of the Zulu-speaking people within their African and Zulu context.

Clinebell correctly mentions that the church is a family of families (Clinebell, 1992: 283) and is in a strategic position to become a family wellness centre. The connotation of an extended family, which features predominantly in African cultures, is resuscitated as families worship together and grow together as a congregation. Mbiti (1969) also echoes this conviction as he emphasizes that the extended families in African culture are comprised of several families and the bond within the

household members grows to be very strong. This has given rise to the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of existence which states:

I am because we are; since we are, therefore I am (Mbiti, 1969: 107).

This solidarity within the extended family gives rise to a stable support system. It is in this context that the exercising of humanity, which is referred to as *ubuntu*, arises. Within this premise, disciplines such as family therapy could be used effectively to help the people in resuscitating firm family structures within their South African context.

Taking the discussion of *ubuntu* further, Augustine Shutte (2001) emphasizes that *ubuntu* was developed over many centuries in traditional African culture, before the people in Africa learnt to read or write. The concept of *ubuntu* was expressed in songs, lyrics, stories, customs and the institutions of the people. Without going back to the mythical stone ages, some insight into *ubuntu* is helpful if applied to our present time to rediscover a positive and healthy family value system. The dominant culture of the apartheid system, which ended in 1994, separated and isolated people and families. This brought about the destruction of marriage and family values for the indigenous people of South Africa (Shutte, 2001: 9).

The researcher identifies with Shutte (2001) and is deeply convinced that the concept of *ubuntu* can revive marriage and family values, which will bring forth enrichment, growth and healing to the marriage and family institutions of the people of Africa as well as to all South Africans, especially the Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **1.2.4 Rediscovery of the involvement of the elders in Zulu communities as a valid resource in care and counselling**

The Methodist Church, like any other denomination, has a clearly structured formation. This is clearly drawn in the township congregations. The Manyano



organization has specific times when the elderly women meet the younger women. The same applies to men; the elderly men meet the younger male members at their meetings. At these meetings, the elderly share their wisdom with the younger members about the issues of marriage, family and other issues pertaining to bringing about enrichment, growth and healing to the affected. Caring is in process all the time. This is the time to further involve elders in the art of counselling, which can be enriched by their experiences. They could be a great resource to help the younger generation to survive in their marriage and family relationship struggles.

Because of this conviction, the researcher included a chapter on the training of the laity in basic Christian counselling. Clinebell (1992) sees this as crucial for caring ministries (Clinebell, 1992: 392). This training needs to consider the cultural heritage of the people in the area of research.

### **1.2.5 Dialogue between the Western models of pastoral care and its counselling techniques and African counselling practices<sup>7</sup>**

In the past decade, the Western models of counselling have been used to counsel people through disciplines like clinical psychology, family therapy and social sciences. These services, although effective and valuable, often carry a rather high price tag, making them difficult for ordinary working-class South African citizens to access. The researcher intends to offer services that are affordable and easily accessible, on the premises of the local church.

Merging the Western models and the African counselling practices will make congregants more comfortable with the methodology used in the service. In addition, the service requires only a nominal donation from attendees, which makes it more accessible than Western models.

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<sup>7</sup>African counselling practices refers to the original traditional ways used by elders to address the complexities of marriage and family life.

### **1.2.6 Creating an ecclesiological study**

This research work specifically attempts to create an ecclesiological study that is theologically acceptable to the Methodist Church of South Africa. Having interviewed clergy and observed participants in marriage programmes, the researcher identified a need to produce a marriage and family programme within the constraints of the Methodist Church. The interviews with clergy were conducted at Mariannhill in June 2009. The topic was on the Marriage Encounter Programme, which was published by the Roman Catholic Church. The researcher observed people taking part in the Alpha marriage programme offered by the Anglican Church in November 2009 at St Agnes Anglican Church in Durban, South Africa.

### **1.2.7 Emphasis on marriage and family in the biblical original form**

The intent of this research work is focused on “marriage” and “family” according to its original form and purpose in the creation story. In Genesis 1: 27, it states that God created humankind in His own image, creating a male and female. God then gave the original couple a mandate to be fruitful and to multiply. God’s intention was for Adam and Eve to grow the human species as well as commence the institutions of marriage and family.

The researcher is aware that there are different types of “families” in the modern age. However, the “normal family” in this thesis is the nuclear family that consists of a married couple comprising a male and female with children, as displayed in the Marriage and Wholeness Programme logo in chapter eight. The chapter on single parenthood is included in response to the findings of the research, which mandated the need for inclusivity in God’s family. However, same-sex relationships do not form part of the discussion in this research.

### **1.3 Preliminary literature study and locating the research within the existing literature**

The researcher is not aware of much work done in the field of pastoral care and counselling, particularly for the Zulu communities within the South African context. The researcher is aware of only one writer who speaks about emerging literature in pastoral care and counselling in South Africa. This author is Dr Vivian Msomi<sup>8</sup>, who has recently produced a book that emphasizes pastoral care and counselling within the South African context. Msomi's focus is on case studies of various issues in Zulu communities. However, the researcher has observed that Msomi (2008) does not focus on a specific community or specific topic. He focuses on Zulu communities in general. Conversely, this research focuses on the Methodist Christian community at KwaNdengezi. Msomi also does not specifically focus on marriage and family, which this work does. The approach of this presentation is to encourage research work to be specific because there are differences in counselling practices in the various *izigodi*, or clans. The different clans in the African context, and even in the Zulu context in South Africa, result in differences in how the people understand, interpret and address marriage and family issues.

Mbiti (1969) also offers a useful preliminary foundational work on family patterns in various African tribes in his books. These are mainly the sub-Saharan communities. He postulates there are about three thousand African people (tribes or clans) with different religious systems. To ignore the different traditional beliefs, practices and attitudes can lead to a misunderstanding of African behaviour and problems. According to Mbiti (1969), traditional beliefs, practices and attitudes greatly influence the thought patterns and lives of various African tribes (Mbiti, 1969: 1). The writer identifies with the aforesaid, hence focuses on African, Zulu and Methodist Christian communities of KwaNdengezi. The researcher has also observed that a Zulu Methodist living at KwaNdengezi thinks and lives differently to the Xhosa Methodist living in the Eastern Cape.

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<sup>8</sup>Msomi, V. (2008). *Ubuntu Pastoral Care and Counselling with Reflection and Dialogue on Zulu Case Studies in a Cross-Cultural Context Perspective*. Pretoria: C.B. Powell Bible Centre University. p. 253f. This is one of the few publications that has laid a foundation by dealing with case studies in the discipline of pastoral care and counselling, specifically in the context of KwaZulu-Natal.

However, coming back to Msomi, he emphasizes the above conviction by stating that it is important to acknowledge that people exist within a specific “cultural milieu”. Msomi’s work offers a relevant and useful cultural and contextual foundation for the pastoral care and counselling research of this thesis.

Switzer (1986) takes this discussion further, highlighting that Paul Tillich points out that caring is going on in every moment of human existence. Motivation and context change such caring into pastoral care. Specialized techniques then change pastoral care into pastoral counselling (Switzer, 1986: 11-12).

This thesis seeks to provide useful information about training people in pastoral counselling so as to increase the resources that promote growth, enrichment and healing in marriage and families, especially in the local church.

Referring to healing in families, a feminist theologian, Mercy Oduyoye (2001), states that relationships in Africa comprise the main issue in women’s theology. She stipulates that the concern for community, respect for life and connectedness go hand in hand with communality. This feminist theologian is convinced that it is through marriage that a person grows into a responsible individual. This author states that marriage is an inescapable context from which to address marriage and family dysfunction with women theologians (Oduyoye, 2001: 25).

Although the above statement is acceptable, the researcher feels that it can be open to debate. We live in times where single parenthood has grown to be prolific. The researcher has observed that this alternative lifestyle has contributed to putting the marriage institution in jeopardy. On the other hand, the researcher has noted that some single parents, especially those with a Christian upbringing, do also grow into responsible adults as well as parents. However, marriage will always be a desirable norm for all young people. As described in the book of Genesis 1: 28, the institution

was formed by God for procreation and companionship. Nevertheless, we now seem to be in a transitory era where single parents do raise their children well. All the same, it is the responsibility of the minister to revive the awareness that marriage continues to be a God-created institution available to the congregation. In a marriage partnership, one finds healthy growth in relationships and stability for the growing children. The children are exposed to both male and female influences, which are crucial in the development of the children's moral code. The parents become role models for their growing children.

Mpolo Masamba and Wilhemia Kalu (1985) offer a useful foundation for pastoral counselling in the African context. Masamba and Kalu correctly state that the extended family system re-invents itself to create "a centre par excellence" of support for the entire family through dialogue and rituals of reconciliation. Masamba and Kalu (1985) stipulate that the rituals help to address family conflicts and promote personal growth and family cohesion. As family members get involved in rituals of reconciliation, covenants with each other are renewed. According to Masamba and Kalu (1985), an example of a ritual of reconciliation involves the understanding of the existence of ancestors. They state that remembering them is a symbol of continuity within the clan and not worshipping the departed per se. This work intends to explore the rituals of reconciliation that exist in Zulu-speaking communities and to see how these can be engaged in Christian communities (Masamba & Kalu, 1985: 2-3). The researcher believes that such engagement should be useful in the promotion of healing and reconciliation in family units during times of dispute.

When discussing the issue of marriage and family in the context of communality being a crucial norm in African Zulu culture, it is necessary to discuss the concept of culture. It is within the context of culture that the ritual of reconciliation emerges. Lamin Sanneh (1993) expands on the importance of understanding culture. He states that culture has to do with customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of racial, religious or social groups. Sanneh further defines culture, citing Lesslie Newbiggin's statement thus:

Culture is the sum total of ways and living developed by a group of human beings and handed on from generation to generation. Central in culture is language. The language of the people provides the means by which they express their way of perceiving things and coping with them (Sanneh, 1993: 26-28).

For the researcher, understanding the nuances of the Zulu language is important in perceiving how Zulu-speaking communities perceive and cope with things. Very often, a Zulu word has symbolic as well as literal meaning. For instance, the writer learnt from informants that the Zulu expression of greeting is *sawubona*. The consonant *sa* is in plural form, meaning, “I greet you and those who are with you from your family”. These people include both the living and the departed relatives. It is therefore evident that with Zulu-speaking communities, a person is addressed in plurality because it is believed that such person is surrounded by unseen beings.

These unseen people are what Axel-Ivar Berglund (1976) refers to as *abakithi*. This author describes *abakithi* as shades within the clan or lineage. Berglund states that in Zulu culture, *uNkulunkulu*, God the creator, and *abakithi*, the living and the departed, always surround the person and the household. In Zulu, understanding the presence of *uNkulunkulu* and *abakithi* keeps the members of the household in close proximity to one another and strengthens the relationship amongst relatives (Berglund, 1976: 18).

From the above discussion, it is evident that language plays a vital role in expressing the feelings of the people in the African context (including in Zulu communities). This is crucial when healing of relationships needs to be undertaken in the quest to engage in growth, enrichment and healing of marriages and family units.

In an attempt to explore the existing preliminary work in the African and South African context, the researcher has put across how the authors have offered concepts like *ubuntu*, communality, connectedness, rituals of reconciliation and language as

important channels to consult in the effort of bringing about enrichment, growth and healing.

As source of dialogue, a considerable amount of work from Western published sources have been consulted, as has already been explained. Writers such as J. C. Wynn (1991), who has experience training and helping clergy dealing with marriages and families in crisis, have recorded western forms of pastoral care and its counselling. Wynn (1991) describes case histories, illustrating basic procedures and techniques of intervention in marriage and family problems. He also postulates that the minister who comes into a therapy or healing situation as a wounded healer is able to empathize with counselees and understand their stressful family situations. The writer believes that this is crucial for the minister when he or she deals with growth, enrichment and healing in marriage and families.

The writer has examined further pertinent literature on the Western context by authors such as Virginia Satir (1983), Murray Bowen (1978) and Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1980). Another resource relevant to this research is Hungarian writer Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy<sup>9</sup>. Böszörményi-Nagy's approach is contextual and addresses family issues of the disadvantaged people in Hungary. This resonates with the writer's area of research in the semi-rural, semi-township context. The works of Western authors will be juxtaposed against the works of African scholarship, with a view to producing an applicable approach to pastoral care and counselling. The cultural concepts and practices of the Zulu-speaking communities will be closely scrutinized. In other words, it is not the researcher's intention to duplicate the work of authors mentioned and their approaches to marriage and family. The intention is to borrow insights from their work as a foundation for a new contextual programme applicable to the Zulu communities that have been the focus of this research.

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<sup>9</sup>Böszörményi-Nagy, I. Grunebaum, J. & Ulrich, D. (1991). Contextual Therapy. In A. Gurman & D. Kniskern. (Eds.). *Handbook of Family Therapy, Vol. 2*. New York: Brunner/Mazel. Böszörményi-Nagy's contextual approach will be the main reference in this research paper.

## **1.4 Research problem**

### **1.4.1 Main problem**

The divorce rate is high and families are breaking down in the Christian Zulu communities. There is a need for healing.

The **research question** that drives this research could therefore be: “Can modern Western pastoral counselling and its caring models be used alongside African cultural practices to help marriages and families be enriched, grow and be healed in Zulu Christian communities in KwaZulu-Natal?”

The research hypothesis would be as follows: “When modern Western pastoral care and its counselling models are encouraged to engage with African pastoral care and counselling practices, enrichment, growth and healing can be achieved in marriage and family dysfunction in African communities.”

### **1.4.2 Sub-problem**

1. Are the people participating in the research ready to engage in dialogue with Western theories of pastoral care and counselling?
2. Will the men from the Zulu context confide in a female pastoral counsellor? Will Zulu women confide in a male pastoral counsellor? The trend in the congregation is to separate members according to gender and age groups.
3. Will the children participating in the research be comfortable in sessions with adults? African traditional culture normally separates the young from the old when it comes to family discussions.

The above questions raised awareness about the issues that could be problematic in this work. The researcher had to be sensitive to cultural expectations. Issues of gender equality and the inclusion of children in sessions were handled with care as people were interviewed in an effort to facilitate meaningful research.



Sanneh (1993) confronts the dichotomy between Christianity and culture. He states that in Africa, Christianity could not be shaken out of its Western cultural forms. While the West demonstrated superiority over African culture, the result was that converts could be seen as “cultural orphans” with an ambiguous identity (Sanneh, 1993: 16-17). The researcher feels that by engaging with African Zulu cultural practices in addressing marriage and family needs in KwaZulu-Natal, the identity of participants could be preserved, to an extent,. The result would be the precipitation of self-worth as South African citizens and the achievement of enrichment, growth and healing.

## **1.5 Theoretical framework**

A number of theories are addressed in this paper to analyse the research data, thereby offering a meaningful interpretation of the work.

- Family system theory

Theories like Bowen’s family systems theory (1978) will be consulted in this research. The theory offers an intergenerational perspective up to the third and fourth generation. The theory will be examined and applied as the researcher looks at the whole network of relationships comprising the “family”. Concepts of togetherness, connectedness, triangles and individuality in Western understanding will be explored and juxtaposed against an African understanding of similar concepts (Bowen, 1978: 16-17).

- Theory of change and intervention (contextual therapy)

This theory is based on a Western context. In it, Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy posits that trustworthiness is the basis of human and family life (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991). The theorist calls for a movement towards trustworthiness, relatedness and “rejunction” (i.e. unification) and away from untrustworthiness and dysfunctionality. According to Böszörményi-Nagy, the breakdown of trustworthiness in relationships leads to a lack of accountability and caring. This sets the stage for the development of symptoms. The symptoms are

often precipitated by various incidences like the death of a family member, or constitutional factors like identification with a parent or relative. The goal of a person attempting to bring healing is to work with the family in distress to bring about rejunction (Böszörményi-Nagy, 1987).

There are brilliant contextual contributions on the subject of marriage and family from North American scholars such as John Gottman<sup>10</sup>, Norman Wright, Larry Hof (1981) and Lisa Cahill (2000). John Gottman and his wife Julie Gottman have laid the foundations of the Gottman Relationship Institute, which helps people to learn gentle, practical research-based skills to create long-lasting marital and familial relationships. John Gottman is convinced that couples enter marriage with a 50% chance of failure and many seek and need a scientifically sound approach to help them understand and strengthen their weakness in the partnership.

- Pastoral family therapy

Authors such as J. C. Wynn (1991) offer a useful theoretical framework for training and helping clergy dealing with marriage and families. Although Wynn's (1991) case histories illustrate basic procedures and techniques from the Western context, the researcher could adopt these to address the Zulu context.

Sue Walrond-Skinner (1988) offers a useful warning to ministers in her book, suggesting that when the minister is involved in marriage and family therapy, he or she should not draw too much from the secular disciplines like social work, psychology, clinical psychology etc. This, she feels, could lead to a loss of pastoral identity (1985: ix). Whilst such a warning cannot be ignored, ministers

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<sup>10</sup>Information about the North American scholars was accessed on 12 October 2011 from <http://www.gottman.com>. This website reflects that Dr John Gottman and Mrs Julie Gottman have facilitated workshops in Seattle in North America for more than 20 years. In one workshop, Professor John Gottman echoes one of Böszörményi-Nagy's crucial elements in his contextual approach to family therapy, namely the element of trust. When John Gottman leads a seminar session on trust, he emphatically states that we are living under a global catastrophe of mistrust. Gottman postulates that this is evident in governments, economic systems, banks as well as in the mistrust characterizing relationships, particularly marital and romantic relationships. The Gottman couple developed the Gottman Relationship Institute in Seattle in North America.

cannot avoid taking an interdisciplinary approach. This is the only way in which the local church can offer a holistic approach in healing marriages and families.

- Communication theory

According to Clinebell, communication theory reopens blocked communication lines, which are vital for a stable family. Virginia Satir (1983) echoes this sentiment and stresses that communication can be blocked, displaced or damaged. It is crucial to resuscitate the lines of communication when restoring relationships. *Ukuxhumana*, a Zulu word for communication, is a vital concept when enquiring about a relationship. *Kukhona ukuxhumana?* Is there communication? This is the first question that is asked when there is discord in a marriage or family in Zulu communities.

- Crisis theory

Switzer (1986) suggests that Anton Boisen developed the notion of a “crisis” in approximately 1923 whilst he was working with grieved families. Switzer believes it may be relevant as a model of intervention as a minister upgrades his or her quality of counselling. Boisen’s idea evolved from his own experience of inner conflict. He argues that a person experiencing a tension between inner conflicts needs to gain better insight into him/herself and reach a higher level of development for healing to take place (Switzer, 1986: 29-30). The researcher feels this is an important concept in helping people to heal their marriages and family.

- Contextual theology

Contextual theology includes concepts of liberation, women’s and feminist theology as well as African theology. Intervention techniques align with the relevant ideology and context. For instance, in African theology, the perspective of the African continent is taken into consideration, especially sub-Saharan Africa. The African people are understood to perceive issues and respond to them with their “Africanness”. This helps them to cope with the adverse conditions in their lives. Setiloane, Oduyoye, Mbiti, Masamba, Kalu and others elaborate on this.

In an attempt to retain a contextual approach, this study will specifically focus on the African Zulu-speaking communities. In addition to consulting Zulu-speaking people

in the area of research, particularly the elders, the researcher intends to consult authors such as Eileen Krige, who offers useful information about the social system of the Zulus. Reference will also be made to a historical resource by Magera Fuze (1979) called *The Black People and Whence They Came: A Zulu View*. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (1950) also present useful data on Zulu social life in their book, *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

Referencing Zulu historical resources is by no means an attempt to reintroduce Zulu cultural practices, but is an attempt to glean potentially helpful information for individuals and couples. This information may assist people to reconnect with their families-of-origin and thereby assist them in their journey towards wholeness.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology**

### **1.6.1 Design**

This research is qualitative and quantitative.

The fieldwork involved interviews with twenty couples in the peri-urban and township communities of KwaNdengezi. A structured and systematic questionnaire was used to get to know their crucial needs as well as expectations of the programme to be offered by the church in enrichment, growth and healing. The guidelines for the crucial needs of married couples include ten issues. Verbatim reports from five couples are examined. The structured questionnaire is included as Appendix 2. The results of this empirical study are presented in a graph in Figure 3.

Appendix 3 is a questionnaire about the needs and expectations of the single-parent family units within the local church. The results are included in a “pie chart” graph and the responses have been included as verbatim reports. The researcher interviewed more than sixty single parents in the local church. Responses from about twenty single parents are discussed in the thesis. Demographic forms were designed to capture information about participants’ age, family members, income and extended family; such particulars were then put into a table. The empirical study results of the needs of single parents are presented in Table 4.

## 1.6.2 Methodology

The data collection method required fieldwork. The researcher engaged a female research assistant to help with interviews. The male research assistant was engaged for the purpose of providing security in the semi-rural areas.

- Oral sources

The oral sources refer to information gathered from “informants”, which consisted of elderly people from the local church and the community. These sources provided information about traditional Zulu practices concerning marriage and family. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder.

- Questionnaires

These questionnaires were used to collect information in verbatim reports as well as to record particulars about the people interviewed. The questions were structured and systematic. They were in Zulu, which is the language spoken by the people of the area. False names were used to protect the identities of those interviewed.

- Secondary sources

Books from the library were consulted. These included dictionaries, Bibles, journals, periodicals. Internet searches were also conducted.

- Samples

A team of twenty-four people at leadership level in the local church were trained in a twelve-module basic Christian counselling course<sup>11</sup>. These people will contribute to the counselling work done in the various societies in our circuit. To have skilled people around is a great asset for any minister aiming to extend the kingdom of God as well as affirm the priesthood of all believers.

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<sup>11</sup>The basic Christian counselling course was offered following a visit by a family therapist, Dr Leon Klein from the Bryanston Methodist Church in Johannesburg. The course was adapted for the context of the research. The researcher offered twelve modules. The participants wrote one assignment and were given a certificate approved by the superintendent of the circuit. The contents of the course included locating the identity of the counsellor as an instrument of healing as well as the identity of the client; and developing essential ingredients for effective counselling (e.g. listening, attending, formulating an integrated understanding of problems and increasing problem-solving skills, being a role model etc.). The lay training in basic counselling is presented in chapter six of this thesis.

The resulting programme was tested in a marriage and family camp<sup>12</sup>.

- Evaluation form

An evaluation form for the trainee laity is presented as one of the appendices. The appendix comprises the evaluation form for the “marriage and family sessions” as well as the “single parent sessions”.

- Observation

The researcher attended an Alpha group conducting “The Marriage Course” and got to meet Nicky and Sila Lee, the creators of the course materials, from the Holy Trinity Church in Brompton, England<sup>13</sup>. This course uses audiovisual materials by Nicky and Sila Lee from the Holy Trinity Church in Brompton, England. The course was mainly attended by ministers from various church denominations in South Africa. Valuable facts were learnt. However, the course was based on a Western perspective.

- Cultural hermeneutics as part of the methodology

Cultural hermeneutics are a crucial part of the methodology used in this thesis. As Louw (2000) states, hermeneutics have to do with explanation, speech and the interpretation of scripture in a particular context. Hermeneutics illuminate the biblical text. Louw emphasizes that the people in a specific context should understand what God is saying to them (Louw, 2000: 102-103). In this thesis, the context is the Zulu culture in KwaNdengezi and it is important that the researcher and participants have the same understanding of a particular text in order to enhance their lives and promote healing and transformation.

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<sup>12</sup>A weekend marriage and family camp was arranged and was offered to the local congregation. Guest speakers were invited to do presentations on various topics. The themes of the camp are captured in a logo, which is included as an appendix. The programme will hopefully be printed as a manual for future family camps, seminars and workshops on marriage and family wholeness.

<sup>13</sup>Nicky and Sila Lee have authored various books on marriage, family and parenting. In *The Marriage Course*, they stress the importance of empowering older couples to support younger couples. This echoes the importance of elders in African traditional culture as sources of wisdom on marriage and family matters. *Inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili* is an Nguni proverb that emphasizes this concept. It means: When looking for a deer, ask those who are ahead of you.

The writer observes that cultural hermeneutics make the ancestral line of Jesus Christ tabled in the first chapter of St Matthew's gospel important in the African context. It addresses the importance of respecting ancestors in African as well as Zulu traditional cultures. Such scriptures need to be noted and used to support and encourage kinship in households and thus promote stability in relationships.

### **1.7 Limitations**

The writer is the female Methodist minister within the community of research. Participant observation in the context of research was therefore a problem. This is because the minister is constantly engaged with the people in ministry and cannot avoid being subjective.

Being a Christian, the researcher did experience a great conflict between the Christian teaching of the church and, for instance, issues such as the emphasis on ancestors.

African traditional culture in general does exclude women decision-making issues concerning bereavement, initiation and some rites. One had to tread carefully and not disturb the dignity of the people. This was one of the reasons for engaging a male research assistant during fieldwork.

### **1.8 Research ethics**

The researcher has given the people involved in interviews the rights of privacy and confidentiality. All informants were assigned false names. No cameras were used. However, a tape recorder was used to record data. Confidentiality was emphasised in the whole process of fieldwork.

As suggested in the manual for postgraduate academic work, vulnerable people like children and mentally challenged people have not been subjected to the research.

Interviews were always short, drinks were provided and no work was done telephonically.

Plagiarism has been avoided and proper referencing of all information from library books, periodicals, journals and the internet have been acknowledged.

## **1.9 The thesis outline**

The first chapter constitutes the introduction, which includes the motivation of the study, exploration of the preliminary literature, the research problem, theoretical framework, design and methodology, limitations and research ethics.

The second chapter explores the historical evolution of the family systems theory. This exploration is preceded by some definitions and the universally changing concept of “marriage and family”. An exploration of Böszörményi-Nagy’s contextual family therapy is included. Various relevant concepts and terminology are also discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter engages with family processes in Zulu families. This includes exploring normal and abnormal situations in marriage and family life. The chapter explores roles, rites of passage as well as problems that the people in their community encounter as they attempt to survive in a changing family dynamic. The problems include issues of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, polygamy, divorce, teenage pregnancies, “fatherlessness” and single parenthood.

The fourth chapter looks at the church as a growth, enrichment and healing centre. The role of a minister, congregation and small groups are discussed. It explores networking of the church with other disciplines in an attempt to offer a healing centre through pastoral care and counselling.



The fifth chapter proceeds to outline a training programme for lay leadership on basic Christian counselling<sup>14</sup>. The course empowers laymen and women who have a passion to help people who come forward for counselling. This does not ignore the cultural needs of the people. This is the beginning of an emerging programme that empowers laity or ordinary people to develop skills to counsel people in need of growth, enrichment and healing in their family relationships. The course includes how to empower couples with pastoral care giving and pastoral counselling skills.

The sixth chapter focuses on fieldwork and includes case studies of marriage and family life in the context of the research. The case studies encompass married couples and single parents. The chapter explores the needs of the participants and engages in a theological reflection on how such needs can be addressed so as to lead the people into growth, enrichment and healing in marriage and family life.

The seventh chapter specifically looks at single parenthood as part of the family enrichment, growth and healing programme. Predisposing factors that bring about single parenthood in African communities at large are explored. Engagement with single parents in interviews and case studies in the context of the research produce six needs. These are assessed through theological reflection on how they can be addressed.

The eighth and last chapter of the study includes a seminar programme aiming to address the needs of married couples, families and single parents. The seminar programme, which resulted in a designed logo, will be printed in a separate booklet later. The booklet or manual will be recommended as a guide for seminars on marriage, family or single parenthood. Suggestions for presenting a “family retreat seminar” are offered. The chapter discusses the importance of the concept of

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<sup>14</sup>The basic Christian counselling course empowers laity in pastoral counselling skills. This is further explained under the methodology section.

“partnership”. Partnership with local service providers encourages the much-needed interdisciplinary approach, which is important for enrichment, growth and healing. An evaluation form is included in the appendices

The conclusion briefly offers a number of theological pointers that have evolved in this study. The pointers are ecclesiological, missiological and ministerial, pastoral theological and psychotherapeutic. Emphasis is reflected on the dialogical interaction between Western and African Scholarship. Both contexts are commended by the researcher for laying foundations as valuable resources for healing and wholeness in their different contexts.

### **1.10 The people in their new land**

The map in appendices one and two shows the area of research. KwaNdengezi lies about fifty kilometres on the southern side of the city of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. It is about twenty kilometres outside of Pinetown, which is mainly industrial. Most of the people at KwaNdengezi work in the Pinetown area whilst a number are employed in Durban. The area consists of a township and a semi-rural area towards the Umlazi River. The area sprawls over the southern side of Mariannahill, which is a Roman Catholic Monastery that encompasses a hospital and schools. The position of the area is clearly shown in the map.

The map shows the main area where the research work was done. The Methodist people in the KwaNdengezi region have worship places at KwaNdengezi, Thornwood, Dassenhoek, Ekuphileni (Oaklands), Mthandazo (Zwelibomvu) and there is a small society called Gezengane across the Umlazi River. As the map displays, the main township is KwaNdengezi. The centre of the township is called *ePitoli*, or is known as Pretoria in English. The township was named during the apartheid years. The area is surrounded by informal areas along the Umlazi River. Community

services include a court, police station, municipal office, community hall, shopping centre and municipal clinic. Nearby places received Namibian and Angolan names during the apartheid struggle. The maps were offered by the local library to support the research work.

An elderly church steward informed the writer that the Methodist Church at KwaNdengezi started at the local Ntee High School in 1978. The worship place was built in 1984. Many members came from Richmond, Greytown, Matatiele and as far as the Eastern Cape during the apartheid wars. Many settled in the area because of its hilliness and they found it easy to build behind the hills for safety reasons. Many families left their original families and settled in the area for work purposes.

As has been explained above, the community at KwaNdengezi is newly established. The community needs to be helped to grow, be enriched and to be healed physically, emotionally and spiritually. The programme intends to contribute to pastoral care and counselling that will be useful for the old and new generations, especially those that were uprooted from their original families and communities to settle at KwaNdengezi.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY – HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY

#### Introduction

In discussing the various stages in married life, Gary Chapman (2000) clearly states that conclusive ethnography by various anthropologists shows that marriage between a man and woman is the central social building block in every human society, without exception. It is also accepted as a universal cultural norm that marriage has always been a monogamous and lifelong relationship (Chapman, 2000: 3). Although many people deviate from this practice and take up polygamy<sup>15</sup>, serial monogamy<sup>16</sup> and other forms of marriage, these exceptions do not erase the cultural norm of lifetime monogamy for the human psyche.

In assimilating what Chapman (2000) says, the researcher also observes that scriptures emphasize this universal truth, right from the beginning of creation. In the Old Testament creation story in Genesis 1: 27-28, God creates man and woman and He determines that they will live together in the Garden of Eden. It is noted that this first marriage was instituted between one man and one woman: Adam and Eve. At the initial inception at creation, marriage was monogamous.

A biblical scholar, Walter Wegner (1970), provides convincing evidence to support his contention that throughout the history of the first nation of faith, Israel, the ideal

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<sup>15</sup>According to *The Collins English Dictionary*, polygamy is the practice of having more than one wife or husband at the same time. It is derived from the Greek word *polus*, which means many. *Gamos* is also a Greek word and it means marriage.

<sup>16</sup>Serial monogamy is where a man or woman marry in intervals, marrying one man or one woman at a time.

marriage was monogamy. He concludes his argument by pointing out the prototype monogamous marriage of Adam and Eve.

The main purpose of this God-designed institution was mainly procreation as well as companionship. God said to the first couple, Adam and Eve:

Be fruitful and multiply.<sup>17</sup>

God was evidently giving a mandate to the first human couple to go ahead and form a one-husband and one-wife pattern of marriage, even though the first nation of Israel did not always practise God's plan.

The researcher is also aware that Old Testament scholars such as Gerhard von Rad (von Rad, 1973: 85) contended that polygamy was the norm in the nation of Israel until the time of Exile.

As much as the researcher is inclined towards the views of Chapman (2000), Walter Wegner (1970) as well as the scriptures about the original monogamous marriage institution, one cannot deny the fact that monogamy is being challenged in many ways in modern society. For various reasons, some communities, including the Zulu communities in the area of research, tend to view polygamy as a cultural norm. However, the researcher is aware of the plight and abuse of women who are in a polygamous marriage. Furthermore, polygamy has become distasteful, especially to the modern woman. This has been caused by the belief that the high scourge of HIV and AIDS in South Africa, especially in KwaZulu-Natal, is attributed to sexual promiscuity. There is a general understanding that multiple partners in polygamous relationships facilitate this scourge.

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<sup>17</sup>The New King James Version Bible: Genesis 1: 28.

One further observation is the associated results of not complementing one's partner and the lack of intimacy in the marriage relationship. This convinces the researcher that it is therefore impossible to explore the notion of family outside of the context of the marriage relationship.

Before exploring the historical overview of family systems theory, the researcher feels it is useful to examine relevant definitions. The definitions will attempt to highlight an understanding of the concepts from various perspectives. Having explored the concepts, the thesis then explores the historical evolution of systems theory into family systems theory.

## **2 Definitions – an exploration**

### **2.1 Marriage – a definition**

Waruta and Kinoti (2000) declare that the institution of family is founded on marriage, in African society and in most other societies. *Marriage* is defined as the union of a man and woman for the purpose of procreation, rearing children and mutual assistance (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 102).

In the above definition, the main purpose of the union between a man and woman is to bear children, form a family as well as support each other. However, Harriet Ngubane (1977) offers a definition that resonates with the researcher's understanding of the context in KwaZulu-Natal. Ngubane postulates that marriage is understood in a Zulu context to be *ukwenda*. In the literal sense, *ukwenda* means to travel a long journey. Metaphorically used in the context of marriage, the journey involves cultural rituals that integrate a woman into her husband's family. It is commonly understood that a woman in a Zulu household does not just marry her husband, but marries into his family as well (Ngubane, 1977: 8). According to Ngubane and the researcher's observations, marriage in most African tribes is not merely between individuals but rather between a man, woman and their respective families.

Ngubane's definition focuses mainly on the "journey", or *ukwenda*, of the woman and does not say much about the husband's role in the journey. The husband is apparently on the receiving end in this "journey". The journey is apparently taken by the woman leaving her family or household and joining her husband's household or family.

The researcher notes that the Zulu understanding of marriage as a "journey" or *ukwenda* by Ngubane does present patriarchal tendencies in the Zulu marriage. Apparently, only the woman takes the "journey" to the household of the man. The man is not expected to take the journey as the woman does in a literal sense. In the post-modern era where contextual theologies condemn patriarchy as an oppressive tool, the concept of *ukwenda* can present problems, especially to the educated married couple.

According to Magma Fuze (1979), marriage, popularly known as *umshado* in the Zulu context, is *ukugana*. This situation involves a girl, usually about 20 years of age, who leaves her homestead to go to the would-be husband's homestead. She wears a leather skirt, which is called *isidwaba*, and is accompanied by a young girl. She arrives at the young man's homestead at dusk and enters the gate from the left side. She then advances to the house at the upper end of the homestead and squats in front of it on her haunches, with her hands on her knees. When the young man's family sees this happening, they begin shouting for joy. This is referred to as *ukukikizela* in Zulu traditional culture. The women perform *ukukikizela* as they celebrate the imminent addition to the family. (English-speaking people will equate the noises these women make with the word "ululating".) This celebratory mood, which spreads through the community, according to Zulu traditional culture, represents the beginning of the engagement, which will involve various rituals leading up to the wedding ceremony. The procedures to be followed prior to the wedding day fall to the relevant parents, elders in the family and community to organize (Fuze, 1979: 32-33).

The researcher observes that in the latter author's exploration of *ukugana*, he actually brings more clarity to Ngubane's (1977) concept of *ukwenda*. He clearly expresses that the woman leaves her homestead, not the man, according to Zulu traditional culture. The patriarchal nature of marriage in the Zulu traditional cultural context is therefore emphasized. In fact, it is this patriarchal element in the Zulu traditional culture that opens the door to the practice of polygamy, where a man can acquire more than one wife.

From the Western perspective, Richard Hunt<sup>18</sup> (1987) responds to the question "What is marriage?" in his essay "Marriage as Dramatizing Theology". He states that the Christian tradition holds that marriage is the union of a man and woman in holy matrimony as partners who promise and betroth themselves to each other as spouses in the Christian community. He states that marriage has symbolic models of sacrament, vocation and communion, which serve the ethical good of procreation and companionship.

Hunt's definition adds useful concepts to the classification of marriage. His concepts are of marriage being a holy matrimony, which is a Christian sacramental element of marriage. Covenant, on the other hand, is a term that binds two people in a partnership, alliance or contract in which the parties promise to be committed to each other. From the above definitions, it is evident that marriage is a union between one man and one woman, mainly for the purpose of procreation and creating a family unit, whether from an African, Zulu, biblical and/or Christian understanding.

However, the researcher notes slight differences. In African Zulu traditional culture, the marriage draws the two families of the husband and wife together. In Western culture, the families of the husband and wife are not as strongly included as in the African traditional cultural context. The dominant focus in the relationship is on the

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<sup>18</sup>Richard Hunt (1987) explores the topic of marriage in *The Journal of Pastoral Care*. Hunt sees marriage as a drama that expresses theology. He is convinced that the two spouses, consciously or unconsciously, shape the character, style and structure of their marriage. He believes that it is their fundamental task to learn to love one another in every situation arising during their marriage.



husband and wife. These differences between the Western and African cultures motivate the researcher to embark on researching an African/Zulu model so as to bring about more efficacy in growth, enrichment and healing in this context. The researcher notes that the inclusion of both families in the marriage of couples in the African/Zulu context brings forth a vital support system to the married couple and the family unit as it grows in a transforming world.

## **2.2 A contextual working definition**

Having engaged with the various perspectives or definitions of marriage, the researcher wishes to offer a contextual working definition and to state that:

Marriage is a journey of commitment, preferably between one man and one woman, with a purpose of procreation, companionship and nurturing a family unit with constructive values and principles from Christian and cultural roots, which help to meet the needs of the family unit, including the extended family.

Significant elements that emanate from the above contextual working definition are marriage as a *journey* (*umendo* and *ukugana*, words from the Zulu understanding); procreation, from a biblical perspective; and Christian values and principles, while at the same time not excluding cultural roots. The definition includes the extended family, which is a general African notion that involves both partners' families. The definition also leaves room for the possibility of marriage involving more than one wife i.e. polygamy, which as has been mentioned before as a common pattern in Zulu traditional culture. However, as has already been discussed, polygamy is not a crucial debate in this study but will be referred to when necessary later in the research work.

### 2.3 Family – a definition

#### What then is the definition of *family*?

Informants in the context of the research define family (known in African traditional Zulu culture as *umndeni*) as the lineage of people who can trace their descent from a common ancestor. Most families share the same clan name, or *isibongo*, from the grandparents to the third and subsequent generations. If the lineage belongs to the *Dlamini* clan name, they are *umndeni* or family. All members of the *umndeni* know of all celebrations such as childbirth, marriage and death in the Zulu context. *Umndeni* always come together to either celebrate or grieve.

In the Western context, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1980) define family as being far more than a collection of individuals occupying a physical and psychological space together. It is rather a natural social system with properties of its own, where a set of rules, roles, hierarchy, forms of communication, negotiation and problem-solving allow tasks and roles to be effectively performed in the family and society at large (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980: 3).

Contributing to the understanding of family from a North American perspective, Lisa Cahill (2000)<sup>19</sup> highlights the historical, theological and ethical thoughts on family in her book called *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*. She states that family can be understood as being an organized network of socio-economic and reproductive interdependence and support grounded in biological kinship and marriage. This author is convinced that family, regardless of culture, is defined in terms of kinship structures. Cahill (2000), Evangelical Protestants and conservative “pro-life” Roman Catholics focus on how the middle class family is being torn apart by new sexual practices, extramarital children as well as infidelity and divorce. On the other hand,

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<sup>19</sup>The information on Lisa Cahill was accessed on 12 October 2011 from [http://www.amazon.com/Family-Perspective-Lisa-Sowle-Cahill/dp/0800632524/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1319633795&sr=1-2](http://www.amazon.com/Family-Perspective-Lisa-Sowle-Cahill/dp/0800632524/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1319633795&sr=1-2). Valuable insights on family are reflected in her publication: Cahill, L.S. (2000). *Family: A Christian Social Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Liberal Protestants, especially feminist theologians, focus on families that are outside of or excluded from the social structures that protect the model family, where the male is the wage earner and the female provides domestic support. This group sees the middle class family as constraining and oppressive and seek to develop “non-traditional” patterns of family life (Cahill, 2000).

The researcher finds Cahill’s (2000) interpretation of Afro-Americans’ perceptions of family to be quite similar to that of African Zulus. Cahill postulates that Afro-American authors support and encourage two-parent families within an extended network. In other words, the Afro-Americans claim that family life achieves strength in black kinship patterns outside the nuclear model.

Exploring further the concept of family, the *New Bible Dictionary* states that no word in the Old Testament corresponds with the modern English word for family. The closest word is the Hebrew word *bayit*, which means a house in which a group of people dwell. Thousands of years ago, when Israel was a prominent nation, the Hebrew word for family was *mispaha*, which had connotations of a clan rather than a small family.

The researcher observes that the clan family found in Old Israel has a similar make-up to that of the African/Zulu communities. These communities define family with the clan name. Similarly, the Old Testament nation of Israel had the clans or tribes of Dan, Jacob, Benjamin, Levi, Zebulun, Gad, Asher and Jeshurum, as listed in Deuteronomy 33: 1-29. The father’s name was passed down to the next generation as a clan or tribe name. The similarities to the Zulu *umndeni* are evident.

## **2.4 A contextual working definition**

Having explored the various definitions from African/Zulu, Western/North American and Christian perspectives, the following working definition for family could be useful:

Family is a group of people who come from a common ancestral descent, share the same clan name, dwell together in the same household and follow a set of rules, roles, structures and forms of communication that are used to unite the family as well as promote interdependence.

Significant themes in the definition include the general African, Western as well as Christian and biblical understanding of the common ancestral clan name in the household. The importance of the roles, rules, hierarchy, interdependence and communication forms that keep the family united and enable it to solve problems when they occur, is emphasized in the definition.

From the above definitions and brief discussions on the meaning of *marriage* and *family*, it is clear that within the two concepts there is always more than one person involved in the relationship. Marriage and family systems have existed for many generations in all cultures, but have experienced many changes due to a changing world. In the next section, the researcher further explores the patterns of family systems theory. Without doing this exercise it will be impossible to understand and address marriage and family complexities.

## **2.5. The family systems theory**

### **2.5.1 System – a definition**

In order to look at problems in marriage and family and be able to develop some guidelines for healing or intervention, it is imperative to understand marriage and family systems. In an analogy of the medical field, for the doctor to be able to make a perfect diagnosis and decide on a correct prescription, it is imperative to have a precise understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the body. Furthermore, specific language is used in the medical field. Similarly, family systems theory seeks to understand the “anatomy and physiology” of the family system. The discipline also offers terminology appropriate for understanding the theory.

#### **What then is *system*?**

In defining a system, Larry Kent Graham (Louw, 2000) states:

System<sup>20</sup> is a structure in process: that is, a pattern of elements undergoing patterned events. The human person is a set of elements undergoing multiple processes in cyclical patterns as a coherent system. This system is a structure of elements related by various processes that are interrelated as well as interdependent (Louw, 2000: 73).

Graham (Louw, 2000) expands on this definition and postulates that two factors are important in understanding human problems. There has to be an understanding that problems are embedded in cultural contexts in which attitudes, values, customs and rituals play a vital role. Secondly, the problems may correlate with the position and status that people adopt and hold within the network of relationships.

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<sup>20</sup>When one speaks of a system in the Zulu context, one refers to something that follows a set pattern or arrangement, as is normally the reality in marriage and family. In the Zulu language, this is referred to as *uhlelo noma isimo*.

Expanding on what the above author states, thinking in terms of systems takes into account the linkage between elements in the system. The links make the relationship healthy. The interactions between the elements involved are balanced by communication, negotiation and the awareness of boundaries. A person therefore cannot exist in isolation. He or she is connected to his or her partner, parents, children and other relatives. If anything goes wrong between a husband and wife, the dysfunction affects the children, parents, relatives, friends and even pets in the household. In the systems approach, the linkage in the family can be likened to the different parts of a body. If a person injures a foot in an accident, the whole body is affected. What needs to happen is that the body parts have to connect with each other and compensate for the malfunctioning member.

Marriage and family apparently function in a similar way. When something goes wrong with one of the members, it is no use engaging with this person in isolation. The whole family needs to be part of the solution.

## **2.6 Examining the evolution of family systems theory**

### **2.6.1 The evolution**

Looking at the historical origins of family systems theory, Olsen (1993) states that this theory owes much to Gregory Bateson (1972) and his associates in Palo Alto, California. In 1952, Bateson apparently began studying communication patterns in families. In 1954, he put the communication theory into practice. He and his colleagues used their hypothesis with schizophrenics, people with a mental disease. In their application, they involved members of the family in giving feedback. Bateson and his colleagues realized that a family achieves stability when receiving feedback from family members. When the family seemed to be threatened, externally or internally, the family found a way to get back to equilibrium (Olsen, 1993: 16).

Bateson emphasizes and states that double-binding was the beginning of the discovery of interconnectedness that exists in a family system. General credit goes to Bateson and his associates for laying the foundations in the study of family systems theory. Later on, in 1959, Don Jackson founded the Mental Research Institute. Bateson's work was expanded on by leaders in family therapy, such as Virginia Satir, Jay Haley and John Weakland, who were all trained at this Institute.

A number of theorists were trained to become influential family therapists in North America. Prominent examples include Nathan Ackermann, Murray Bowen, Salvador Minuchin, Virginia Satir, Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy and J.C. Wynn. Subsequent to the evolution of the family systems theory, these theorists developed problem-solving therapy skills or paradigms. For example, Minuchin developed structural family therapy, in which the family is examined according to three subsystems i.e. parental, marital and sibling. Murray Bowen developed the multigenerational theory. This focuses on how families transmit themes and patterns over the generations. These may be patterns of alcoholism, divorce or suicidal tendencies.

Expanding more on the family systems theory (Balswick, J. & Balswick, K., 1989) indicate that there is a revolution in the clinical profession, which manifests as a shift of focus from the individual to the family system and beyond. These authors define family systems theory as a holistic approach that seeks to understand every part of family life in terms of the family as a whole. The above authors emphasize that to understand any system, one has to understand every level of the system. Beginning with an individual and imagining circles around the person, one could envisage the individual as the core; the following circle represents the nuclear family he or she lives with; and the next circle represents the extended family, namely grandparents, relatives and significant others. The following circle would encompass, for instance, the individual's school, work, religious, cultural, ethnic and racial context. These authors perceive that all of these systems, or circles within circles, are interrelated and they influence each other simultaneously. In between the circles, there are boundaries that separate the various systems or circles (Balswick, J. & Balswick, K., 1989: 38).

The researcher identifies with the above authors' model and analogy about a system comprising various circles in an individual life that bring about interconnectedness in the family unit. The approach offers a simple model for understanding what the family system is all about.

However, this particular study seeks to focus mainly on the work of Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy. The reason for this is that Böszörményi-Nagy's work with families was contextual in Hungary. His contextual cultural approach is relevant to this research because he focused on disadvantaged families in Hungary with a desire to preserve their cultural heritage. This appeals to the researcher because this research is amongst the disadvantaged. Similarly, the work seeks to preserve cultural elements in the context of KwaNdengezi in KwaZulu-Natal. The reason for this is that the researcher believes that most indigenous people in the African continent are presently struggling to regain their cultural identity following the end of colonial rule.

Before the thesis explores Böszörményi-Nagy's cultural contextual work, some significant and functional elements that evolved with the discovery of the family systems theory will be addressed. This is necessary because, as in every discipline, specific terminology is used to express certain concepts.

## **2.6.2 Significant elements**

### **2.6.2.1 The element of homeostasis**

One of the most frequently used terms in systems thinking is homeostasis. Switzer (1986) indicates that the analogy of a human body with its different organs working together to bring stability is helpful in bringing understanding to the family system. This author postulates that the compensation by other organs for a malfunctioning human physiological body system is an attempt to stabilize the physio-chemical balance of the body. When this is achieved, it is referred to as homeostasis.



Homeostasis is a sense of equilibrium or stable functioning. When homeostasis is affected in a human body, the body functions well. Whenever trouble erupts in a body, a physician has to be approached to bring back homeostasis or normality (Switzer, 1986: 117).

In a marriage or family system, the same kind of process happens. Self-image or ways of relating to each other are key in a relationship. If the links between these elements are disturbed because of one member who malfunctions, homeostasis is disturbed in the marriage or family system; the other members should work hard to restore the equilibrium or stability. This malfunction may not necessarily concern misbehaviour. If a family loses a father through an accident, there may be confusion about who takes over his responsibilities. If the family members do not come to a consensus, the whole family is disrupted.

#### **2.6.2.2 The supra-system element**

Walrond-Skinner (1988) adds more light on the systems theory and states that every system exists in an environment. She refers to the environment as a supra-system. The environment or premise within which the body exists includes the household itself. This could include all that is material or non-material. The ecological environment, from the doorstep to the garden and the neighbourhood, consists of the supra-system for the family. The people a person interacts with, including those in social, economic and political organizations, are a supra-system for a married couple or family unit (Walrond-Skinner, 1988: 170).

As mentioned, Graham (Louw, 2000) refers to the environment as the cultural context of the system. This is an important concept to understand in this thesis because the cultural context has to do with issues like the worldview of the people concerned, their values, moral standards and customs.

The Department of Home Affairs could be a supra-system for a married couple. For a grandmother, the same department is her supra-system as she collects her pension. It is an important supra-system as it improves the economy of the whole family system. When it is time for the children in the household to be baptized, the parents approach the minister about conducting the ceremony. This becomes a spiritual supra-system for the family. All of these contexts or supra-systems can have either a negative or a positive influence on a married couple or family system.

### **2.6.2.3 The element of boundaries**

Walrond-Skinner (1988) discusses the element of boundaries, an important concept in systems thinking. Boundaries have to do with space and time. They provide an interface between the system and its context or environment. It can be an interface between one family and other families, or even between a married couple and their children (Walrond-Skinner, 1988: 28).

According to the informants, in a Zulu traditional context, children eat after the older people have eaten. Children have their own eating utensils. The children may not answer back to elderly people. Children grow up with these boundaries and maintain them into adulthood.

Walrond Skinner (1988) offers the following explanation about the various boundaries in a family system. If a family boundary is rigid and the family is isolated from friends and neighbours, this is referred to as an “enmeshed” family. Such families’ relationships are known to be under strain because the family members spend their energy only on themselves. They cannot draw strength from others. On the other hand, families that are too open to their environment, family or friends lack privacy and are referred to as “disengaged families” (Walrond-Skinner, 1988: 28).

The researcher observes that for homeostasis to be achieved, family boundaries need to be balanced – they must not be too rigid or too open. If the family is too enmeshed or disengaged, there is bound to be family dysfunction.

It seems that the enmeshed concept could pertain to Western families, which generally keep to themselves. The disengaged concept suits African families, which are all inclusive, communal and always testing ways of relating to one another, even outside of the family unit. This tool is useful in determining what kind of family one is dealing with and what to expect.

#### **2.6.2.4 The sub-system element**

In Tseng and Xu's (1991) publication on family and culture from a Chinese perspective, they state that family systems have sub-systems operating within them. The mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in almost all communities have always been the most difficult sub-systems. Typically, a mother who whole-heartedly accepts children-in-law has always been a good mother to her own children. A selfish, possessive mother very often becomes a difficult mother-in-law. In a traditional home in which a young wife comes to live in her husband's home with her mother-in-law, the marriage often experiences great strain because of the sub-systems. Sisters-in-law are another difficult sub-system. This sub-system frequently introduces competition, intrusion, meddling and possessiveness in a marriage relationship (Tseng & Xu, 1991: 71).

The above authors have also observed that the grandparent sub-system varies in different societies. Grandparents can function as a useful sub-system as they act as authority figures in the upbringing of their grandchildren. However, they remain an important sub-system in an extended family. The children grow up knowing how to deal with greater power due to the grandparent sub-system (Tseng & Xu, 1991: 72).

In light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in KwaZulu-Natal, the grandparent sub-system has become very important, as the grandparent often becomes the substitute parent when a parent dies of the illness. This mainly pertains to the death of the biological mother.

## **2.7 The main family systems theorist in the thesis – Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy**

### **2.7.1 Böszörményi-Nagy's general background as a family systems theorist**

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1980) identify Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy as a psychiatrist who emigrated from Hungary to the United States in 1948. He apparently worked alongside Geraldine Spark, a psychiatric social worker with extensive experience in child guidance clinics. In the 1950s, they worked together with a wide range of troubled families from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Together, they set up techniques seeking to uncover family *obligations, debts, legacies and loyalties*. All of these terms express the need for family members to meet certain expectations and responsibilities toward each other (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980: 137).

Böszörményi-Nagy is best known for developing the contextual approach to family therapy. This approach emphasizes the ethical dimension of family development. Based on the psychodynamic model, contextual therapy accentuates the need for ethical principles to be an integral part of the therapeutic process. Böszörményi-Nagy believes that trust, loyalty and mutual support are the key elements that underlie family relationships and hold families together. Dysfunction develops when there is lack of caring and liability. This results in a breakdown of trust in relationships. The therapist's role is to work through emotional conflicts and to develop a sense of fairness among family members.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>This information about Böszörményi-Nagy's background was downloaded from <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/contextualtherapy>.

### **2.7.2 Böszörményi-Nagy's own family and cultural background**

Böszörményi-Nagy's writings show a characteristic individual with a familial, cultural and national heritage. Böszörményi-Nagy grew up in Hungary. In his formative years, the small nation of Hungary was conquered by two totalitarian powers: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia.

This wave of conquests had a great impact on Hungary. Hungary survived by preserving its own unique cultural heritage whilst still being open to foreign cultural influences. The Hungarian cultural preservation was made possible by strong group loyalty. This cultural heritage influenced Böszörményi-Nagy's concern for the underdog. Böszörményi-Nagy always showed great compassion for the disadvantaged child in a family, a disadvantaged sub-culture or a disadvantaged nation in a community of nations. Böszörményi-Nagy constantly asked:

Who will defend the interests of those religions? Cultural or national minorities that have no voice or forums like the United Nations to obtain justice? (Hestenes, 1995: 8).

Looking into Böszörményi-Nagy's family background, it is evident that his own familial genealogy includes several generations of judges. Apparently, some of these family members held high positions in the Supreme Court in Hungary. This heritage accounts for his terminology and sensitivity to issues of accountability, loyalty, justice and fairness in human relationships (Hestenes, 1995: 9).

Böszörményi-Nagy's compassion stirs the researcher because it echoes her own sentiments towards the people in the context of the research, who are recovering from the effects of the apartheid regime. Böszörményi-Nagy's passion for preserving the Hungarian cultural heritage whilst being open to foreign culture grips the researcher in a similar way. Whilst the indigenous people of South Africa are open to the many foreign cultures that surround them, they have a persistent yearning to revive and preserve their own ethnic heritage.

### **2.7.3 Contextual family systems therapy evolves**

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1980), in the 1950s when Bateson and his associates laid the foundation for family systems theory by discovering the famous double-bind concept, concern increased about the future of the discipline of psychotherapy. This concern encompassed the limitations of treating a person as an individual. There was a general desire to shift from treating a person individually to treating a person in conjunction with the other family members. Stemming from this concern, another research project evolved in which Böszörményi-Nagy and his colleagues studied psychotics at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Philadelphia. The motive behind the research was to look at communication and behaviour patterns of the patients when other members of the family were there to visit them. As the work continued, it became clear (in the 60s) that the focus should shift from the nuclear family to multigenerational links. This heralded the evolution of the contextual approach to family therapy. Family therapy began looking more closely at nuclear families and their interaction with the supra-systems and sub-systems.

Contextual family therapy began looking at the extended family intergenerationally, up to the third generation of the nuclear family. This applied irrespective of whether the researched families were dead or alive. The contextual focus regarded therapy through the eyes of specific dimensions (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980: 138).

In their chapter on contextual family therapy in the *Handbook of Family Therapy*, Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum and Ulrich (1991) clearly explore four specific dimensions of the contextual approach. The four interlocking dimensions are the *factual*, *psychological*, *transactional* and *ethical*, or *relational*, dimensions (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 159).

#### **2.7.3.1 The facts dimension**

Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum and Ulrich (1991) are convinced that the first dimension in a comprehensive approach to assessment and treatment planning when dealing with family has to do with facts. For example, the ethnic identity of one's roots, gender, illness, survivorship and religious identity are all given facts. It is

impossible to change or control one's identity (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 159).

Facts play a vitally important role in the ethnic identity of an African indigenous person. Mbiti (1969) states that indigenous African people have lived in clusters or units for hundreds of years. These units are referred to as tribes. Each tribe has its own distinct language and a common culture and distinct social and political organization. The family structure, age groups, status of people in society (like elders) and marriage customs may be different in the different tribes. It is also a fact that the different tribes in Africa have different religious systems. A person is in most cases born into a religious system of his or her own tribe. The religious system influences the deep sense of kinship in African traditional life. Kinship is determined through blood and betrothal i.e. engagement and marriage. This kinship controls the marital customs and regulations. This sense of kinship binds the tribe together in communal life and presents some boundaries. The boundaries in the kinship system in African life prevent those who are blood relatives from marrying each other. This prevents issues such as incest from occurring (Mbiti, 1969: 98-103).

The researcher identifies with Mbiti's conviction about facts that generally pertain to different tribes in Africa. The fact that a person is born in a specific tribe cannot be changed. This will to an extent influence how this person perceives issues and this in turn influences his or her behaviour. Fundamental concepts in all cultures include the name of God. The researcher believes that it is indisputable that all nationalities bring forth their understanding of their belief system through their language. The African Nguni tribes (i.e. Xhosa and Zulu) have specific names for God, the creator of heaven and earth, which express their belief system. In the Xhosa tribe, God is called *Thixo*, *Qamata* or *Mvelinqagi*. The Xhosa connotation expresses the idea that God came first. The Zulu tribe knows God as *Nkulunkulu*. The Zulu connotation is that God is enormously great. These differences across tribes carry facts about a transcendent being that needs to be respected and looked to for sustenance. In other words, these are identity issues to do with ethnic roots and survivorship concepts. These facts about each tribe are important in assessment and intervention in marriage and family. The

researcher believes that an understanding of the facts about God's ability to sustain, provide and offer dignity to a relationship is crucial in ensuring enrichment, growth and healing in family units.

### **2.7.3.2 The psychological dimension**

Böszörményi-Nagy (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991) also proposes that the psychological dimension is vital in planning for and assessing dysfunctional marriages or families. This pertains to the affected person or persons' response to dysfunction in a marriage or family. It has to do with what goes on inside the affected person's psyche and how this affects his or her behaviour. When parents split, there are bound to be behavioural changes in family members. These manifest in the partners themselves and, later, the symptoms manifest in the child. The psychological strengths or weaknesses of the parents or of the child can be identified. The psychological changes can include anger, bitterness and a change in attitude. The parents or the child can also develop emotional or physical problems (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991).

#### **An illustration of psychological change**

Sipho and Nomusa have been married for eight years. Sipho begins coming home late in the evenings. When he comes home, he is drunk and violent towards his wife. The relationship worsens and one day, their seven-year-old child, Mbali, wakes up, hears the violent behaviour and comes to her parents' bedroom. From that day on, Mbali resumes wetting her bed. She also does not want to go to school any more and complains of stomach aches. The situation worsens and Mbali wants to go back to sleeping in her parents' bedroom in an effort to prevent further attacks on her mother.

What is important in the illustration above is that it is vital to establish how the psychological problem began and developed when assessing a situation. In this case, the psychological effects of a lack of homeostasis in the family began with a violent,



drinking father; this affected the child. The child internalized the experiences and began developing symptoms: She started wetting her bed and she would not go to school because of stomach aches. In this case, the psychological behaviour develops as an ordinary response to a psychosomatic condition. Further analysis would reveal some psychological responses from the wife, Nomusa, as well. Obviously, it is important to initiate intervention strategies before the psychological symptoms become severe and cause family dysfunction.

### **2.7.3.3 Transactional or power alignment dimension**

According to Böszörményi-Nagy and his associates (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991), the transactional or power alignments have to do with how the family contexts relate to each other in terms of power alignment, or what we call structures. This involves how family members are excluded or included in the family. It is important to establish who is listened to when speaking and, in the same vein, who is not listened to. This has to do with the power struggles in the family (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 160).

An example is when children cease to be children and want to tell the parents what to do, for instance about a dietary decision for the family or where to go on holidays. The children give instructions and the parents do as they are told. When the parents do not assert their structural position that they are in charge, the family slowly becomes dysfunctional. Identifiable triangles develop in the family.

### **A case illustration**

The Zikode couple live with their father and mother who have come from rural areas to live with their children because of old age and ill health. The Zikodes have a fifteen-year-old boy and a twelve-year-old girl. There is often fighting when the household chores have to be done. The young couple wants the children to take turns washing the dishes and cleaning. No homes in the township have chores for different sexes. Everybody does all types of work. They did not have a problem with this

arrangement until the grandparents came to live with them. The grandparents insist that a boy should not wash dishes; they feel that this is a girl's chore. There is disagreement in the family because the younger couple thinks differently to the old couple. The boy takes advantage of the situation and confronts his parents about their making him wash dishes, something girls do. Thereafter, the boy grows to defy his parents and prefers to obey his grandparents instead. The girl chooses to listen to her parents more than to the grandparents. There are now "triangles" in the family. This affects communication in the Zikode family and slowly builds up to a lack of homeostasis and family dysfunction. Power alignments have been disturbed in this family, hence the dysfunction

#### **2.7.3.4 The ethical dimension**

Böszörményi-Nagy (1987) perceives that the ethical dimension is concerned with relational ethics. This is the cornerstone of contextual therapy. The author stresses that the principle of multilateral impartiality is essential for healthy relationships as well as an important principle in therapy (1987: 160).

Böszörményi-Nagy gives an example of a family that gives every child in the family the same type of present for Christmas, for instance, bicycles or soccer balls. There is no consideration of what each child, whether a boy or girl, would have preferred. For Böszörményi-Nagy, every person is entitled to his or her own welfare interests. The interests of each member of the family need to be considered and met. This cornerstone is important even in the process of healing. Each family member's preference has to be taken into consideration. This makes it possible to guard against the intrusion of the therapist's values in the family dynamic (Böszörményi-Nagy, 1987: 160).

Exploring the relational ethics element further, Böszörményi-Nagy (1987) considers that this element is fundamental in holding the family and the society relationships together. The multigenerational framework of reference used by Böszörményi-Nagy

has to include the third and fourth generation. Whether the grandparents are dead or alive, Böszörményi-Nagy states that their influence in the family continues to affect the relationships in the family. An ethical dimension exists in all relationships. A deeper source of relational ethics stems from intergenerational rootedness. Family members are linked to each other by coinciding interests that deeply affect them (Böszörményi-Nagy, 1987: 163). From what Böszörményi-Nagy says concerning relational ethics, family cannot be placed within the present context. He postulates that the present context is tied to the past generations. This thinking resonates with the general African/Zulu thinking. Mbiti (1969) echoes Böszörményi-Nagy's sentiments as he mentions that the family includes the departed in African philosophy. The departed are the immediate pillars or roots of the family. This concept includes even those who are yet to be born. This means the family exists within the present, past and future (Mbiti, 1969: 104-105).

### **Case illustration**

The Bible offers an illustration of patterns that emerge and continue through the generations in one family. In the book of Genesis (chapter 16 to chapter 50), Abraham has a problem conceiving children. His son, Isaac, also has the same experience. The Bible states:

Isaac was forty years when he took Rebecca as wife the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife because she was barren (Genesis 25: 20-21).

In Genesis 30: 1, Jacob, the son of Isaac, marries Rachel and he too cannot conceive children.

One observes that “barrenness” continues in the family for three generations. The barrenness in the family created many issues, such as triangles, intense sibling conflict

and a lack of homeostasis in the affected family units. The concepts of intergenerational and multigenerational relatedness give rise to many other concepts that are useful when exploring family problems.

As has already been explained, Böszörményi-Nagy descended from a family of judges presiding over the Supreme Court in Hungary. Significantly, most of the key words and terminology used to explain some conditions in contextual family therapy carry undertones of the legal profession. These include terms like *legacy*, *entitlement*, *indebtedness*, *split loyalty*, *invisible loyalty*, *revolving slate*, *exploitation*, *substitutive blaming (scapegoating)* and *stagnation*.

## **2.8 Some key terminology used in contextual family therapy**

### **2.8.1 Legacy and the ledger of merit and indebtedness**

Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum and Ulrich (1991) postulate that legacy denotes an arrangement of expectations that originate from rootedness and impinge on the offspring. In other words, the roots of an individual's existence become the source of systemic legacies that affect his or her personal obligations and indebtedness. The origins may be multigenerational. In other words, they may be passed from one generation to another (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 162).

Contextual therapists explore something called the legacy concept. In the contextual approach, a legacy goes hand in hand with what is known as the *ledger* of merit and indebtedness. A ledger is used to record monies owed and is a term commonly used in bookkeeping. Contextual therapists interpret the word ledger to mean the accumulation of accounts that may not have been paid back (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 162).

To illustrate these concepts, the researcher presents a situation in which there are two siblings. One sibling prospers in life whilst the brother is unsuccessful. In this specific

family, the legacy of the successful son entitles him to approval from the family. On the other hand, the unsuccessful son has a legacy of disapproval from the family. According to contextual therapists, the two sons have to accommodate or live according to their legacies.

The informants state that in Zulu traditional life, the first-born son needs to learn and internalize the customs used in the rites of passage in his family unit. He has to be trained by his father in various family values and principles. This prepares the first-born son to take over when his father dies. The son has to know and be familiar with his extended family members and all of his relatives. This is the first-born son's legacy. If the son does not succeed in life and finds it hard to attend to the welfare of the family on his father's death, the family will cease to look to him for survival. The son has not been able to produce from his ledger of indebtedness, which he inherited from his father. According to contextual therapy approaches, his legacy has been violated and he remains indebted to the family. This situation affects the merit of the first-born son and may result in him losing his self-worth as he lives with the disapproval and mistrust of the family.

### **2.8.2 Split loyalty and the revolving slate**

Most English dictionaries translate loyalty as having to do with being faithful to others and one's country. In this work, it would then mean being faithful to one's family.

According to contextual therapy analysis, *split loyalty* happens where a child is closer and more loyal or faithful to one parent than another. There may not even be a split between the parents per se. For instance, a son may be drawn into a vindictive relationship with his father as his father constantly talks to him about his mother. The parents may be lacking sexual contact and the son may become his mother's emotional substitute for the emotionally detached father. The child is in a state of split

loyalty. In other words, his loyalty is split between his parents because he loves them both (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 165).

According to contextual family therapists, the *revolving slate* involves the repetition of the above-mentioned patterns in one family. For instance, the son mentioned above could marry and then find that his children exhibit “split loyalty” between himself and his wife, with one son leaning on him more than on his mother.

Böszörményi-Nagy mentions that the “revolving slate” is one of the major causes of marital and family dysfunction. Specific patterns or themes of behaviour are transferred from generation to generation. Split loyalty and the revolving slate have to be detected and addressed early; otherwise, they tend to create legacies and ledgers of indebtedness through the generations and cause damage to marriage and family relationships (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 166).

These concepts are evident in Zulu culture. The informants declare that there is a similar concept called *ufuzo*. *Ufuzo*, or inheritance, can manifest in a positive or negative kind of behaviour in a family member. For instance, Mondli’s father was an alcoholic and he therefore raises his son in an environment with easy access to alcohol. After Mondli reaches the age of eighteen, he slowly becomes an alcoholic and drug addict. Nothing is done to address this and comments from his family and the community include *uMondli ufuze ubaba wakhe*. Mondli has taken after his father and nothing much can be done about this because the weakness is perceived to be in his blood (*isegazini*). These legacies and ledgers of indebtedness can be addressed through contextual family therapy when they are identified early.

### **2.8.3 Scapegoating**

According to Böszörményi-Nagy, *scapegoating*, sometimes referred to as substitutive blaming, happens where the parents associate something “bad” in the family with one

child. A son may, while protecting his mother from his angry father, become victim to his father's anger as the father identifies something in his son that makes him angry. In this process, the mother escapes the father's wrath and the son instead suffers at the hands of the father. Related issues include projection, relational unfairness and exploitation (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 168).

Exploring scapegoating further, Wynn states that the family scapegoat is often referred to as the "identified patient" (I.P.). The identified patient carries the guilt of the whole family. The family members all see the identified patient as the one who should change, yet they have also contributed to the family dysfunction in some form (Wynn, 1991: 37). Scapegoating is an Old Testament concept. The book of Leviticus 16: 10 reads:

But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness (Leviticus 16: 10).

The above scripture explains how one of two goats was chosen by the priest to be a sacrifice to the Lord for the sins of the children of Israel.

In the same fashion, the child who becomes the scapegoat in a family carries the guilt of the family. The same concept applies when Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world. Hebrews states:

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many (Hebrews 9: 28).

In other words, Jesus Christ was chosen by the High Priests to be the scapegoat for the sins of humankind and He carried all of the sin, shame and guilt of the world to bring about forgiveness for all.

When a child becomes the family scapegoat, it is a very heavy burden. The therapist, minister or psychologist needs to help the family to open new lines of communication to bring about homeostasis.

## **2.9 Summary**

The intention of this chapter was to lay down the foundations of this work. Before looking at the concept of family systems theory, the researcher made it clear that it is not possible to explore family outside of marriage. Most communities see marriage as the foundation for the formation of families. The definition of family as well as its understanding in various contexts has also been discussed. The focus is mainly on Christian and African/Zulu perspectives.

Definitions have been explored from various perspectives, including biblical, Christian, African, Western and African/Zulu. The thesis has explored the similarities and differences between the various perspectives.

The chapter addressed the evolution of family systems theory by exploring the definition and understanding of the term “system”. It examined the historical background to family systems theory, touching on theorists such as George Bateson, Minuchin, Murray Bowen, Kemper, Virginia Satir and others.

Terms that are significant to the thesis were explored, including the elements of homeostasis, supra-systems, boundaries and sub-systems.

The researcher then introduced the main theorist consulted in the research, namely Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy. With his associates, he developed contextual family therapy. According to Hendrika van de Kemp (1987), contextual family therapy approaches human existence in the context of human relationships, emphasizing covenantal relationships based on receiving and reciprocating. The approach apparently is rooted



in the Judeo-Christian tradition and it seeks to integrate family theory and biblical theologies of both the Old and New Testament (van de Kemp, 1987: 290).

The chapter explored Bösörményi-Nagy's general and family background. It addressed the four dimensions Bösörményi-Nagy developed to look at family dynamics. The first dimension is facts. This includes issues of destiny, ethnic identity, adoption, survivorship, sex, illness as well as religious identity. The second dimension of psychology was then explained. The internal state of the person affected by a family problem produces certain behavioural patterns in the person. The third dimension involves power alignments, especially structural issues. This has to do with who is listened to and not listened to in the family. The fourth dimension takes into account relational ethics where the basic preferences of family members are not ignored.

The thesis then looked into some significant or key terms used in contextual family therapy. These include legal terms like split loyalty, the revolving slate, legacies, the ledger of merit and indebtedness as well as the concept of scapegoating.

### **The main goal in contextual family therapy**

Having summarized this chapter, the researcher feels it is necessary to explain why the contextual approach seems appropriate for this research, before moving on to chapter three.

The researcher is well aware of the fact that most of the primary sources on pastoral care and counselling come from the Western context. Obviously, the cultural context of the West dominates the material. However, there are valuable insights from the West that can be made to engage effectively with the local African/Zulu context. This thesis describes the process of adapting the Western concepts used by Bösörményi-Nagy for the African/Zulu context. Although the context of research is mainly Christian, the cultural thinking of the people in the area will not be ignored. Just as

Böszörményi-Nagy did not neglect the cultural thinking of the Hungarian nation, the researcher wishes to follow this trend with people in an African/Zulu context.

Böszörményi-Nagy (1981) is convinced that an hour spent identifying basic ways to promote relational trustworthiness can be more useful than hours spent uncovering symptomatic difficulties in a family unit. The main goal of contextual family therapy is therefore to enable couples and families to take rejunctive action. A therapist or minister leads the affected family members to take self-motivated relational paths. The involved parties are encouraged to work on their own relational commitments and balances of fairness (1981: 173).

How is this done? According to contextual family therapists, a minister or therapist assesses a troubled couple or family, focusing on the original context or history of the family's roots. The relational roots and ethical balances must always guide the therapeutic strategy and course of action (1981: 173). This approach is appealing to the researcher, who is dealing with families who have been uprooted from their original rural contexts during the struggle. Böszörményi-Nagy's wisdom and thinking should be able to offer valuable insights on how to meet the needs in the area of research.

The following chapter then proceeds to present an overview of the Zulu nation and discusses family processes from the perspective of Zulu traditional culture specific to the area of research.

## CHAPTER 3

### EXAMINING THE ZULU FAMILY ORIGINAL OR NORMAL FAMILY PROCESSES AND PROBLEMATIC FAMILY PROCESSES IN A CHANGING WORLD

The intention of this chapter is to examine the original or normal processes in a Zulu family or chapter attempted to highlight family systems theory, as investigated by various Western family systems theorists, with specific emphasis on Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy's contextual approach.

According to Walsh (1985), family processes take the family systems theory further. Whilst grounded in family systems development, family processes look at those processes that characterize the functioning of that particular family. This includes issues like structural and socio-cultural variables<sup>22</sup>. Exploring family processes further, this author also states that in addition to the rules by which the family members interact with each other, there are also roles assigned to each family member and rituals that are performed to keep the family united (Walsh, 1985: xvi).

The researcher believes it is important to examine and understand the family processes in the context of the research. It is only when one understands what is normal or original in terms of structure and social fibre that the abnormal can be identified. Knowing how Zulu family members relate to each other when all is going

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<sup>22</sup>According to Walsh, structural and socio-cultural variables include how the family interacts with each other, how they administer their rules as well as how the rules are transmitted from the parents to the children. Power distribution is also determined in family processes. In African/Zulu culture, a child does not address an elderly person by name. If addressing an elderly woman, the child calls her *mame* and calls an elderly man *baba*. A child will address an older young girl as *sisi Nandipha* and an older young man as *bhuti Siphoh*. These patterns form part of respectful family processes in Zulu traditional culture. According to contextual family theorist Böszörményi-Nagy (1981: 160), this is what he interprets as the power alignment dimension.

well will facilitate the diagnosis of family dysfunction and hence lead to enrichment, growth and healing. Because of modernity, families in the context of the research are influenced by the surrounding Western as well as Eastern cultures; hence, there is evidence of marriage and family dysfunction.

Although secondary sources are consulted in this chapter, most of the material has been gleaned from informants through conversation and structured questions. The questionnaire shall be included as one of the appendices at the end of the thesis. However, prior to this, a brief historical, cultural encounter with the Zulu people in their wider context is presented.

### **3.1 Encountering the Zulu nation in their land**

Thorpe (1991) states that the most recent history of the Zulu people in Natal begins with their leader Senzangakhona and his son Shaka. Apparently, in Senzangakhona's day, the Zulu tribe numbered no more than 1,500. They were scattered over the rolling green hillside of Natal. There were other Nguni-speaking tribes around the area, such as the Mthethwas, and smaller tribes, such as the Elangeni. The Zulu nation occupies the coastal strip from the Pongola River to central Natal, and inland from the coast as far as the Drakensberg range. This territory is known as Zululand (Thorpe, 1991: 32).

Strengthening what Thorpe says about the history of the Zulu nation, Krige (1950) confirms that Senzangakhona was the ruler of the Zulu clan and that he was a direct descendant of Malandela through Jama, his son. Senzangakhona had a number of wives, the most famous being Nandi, Shaka's mother. When Shaka took over the reigns after his father died, he engaged in many wars. Many of the tribes in Natal were scattered all over Natal during Shaka's wars. There are variations in customs in the different Zulu tribes because they were scattered and they mingled with other tribes like the Sotho, Pondo, Xhosa and others. The tribes that remained in Zululand have greater uniformity (Krige, 1950: 21-22).

Based on what Thorpe and Krige say about the origins of the Zulu nation, it is clear that it is made up of various tribes or clans with more or less similar customs. The Zulu nation's constant involvement in wars suggests that this nation has always been engaged in conflict, as families and as a nation. However, Krige (1950) emphasizes that the idea of kinship and family play a very important role in Zulu society. The bonds of kinship are very strong in Zulu culture and knit the people into a cohesive group (Krige, 1950: 9-12).

Taking the kinship concept further, the informants indicate that in most African tribes, if people share the same clan surname, for instance, Dlamini, Gumede, Khumalo or Mthethwa, they are related in a manner different to that in Western family culture. The clan name is often accompanied by what is called *isithakazelo*. *Isithakazelo* is something more than the clan name or *isibongo*. Two Zulu people can have the same *isibongo* (e.g. Dlamini) but have a different *isithakazelo*. When this happens, the Dlamini families may be related but come from a different family lineage and thus see each other as distant relatives. If the *isithakazelo* is the same, the relationship between the Dlamini families is closer and deeper. In other words, the relatedness amongst the clans is mainly revealed by *the isithakazelo*. The *izibongo* and *izithakazelo* help to identify the family lineage. Clan names, or *izibongo*, and family names, or *isithakazelo*, continue to exist in the Zulu nation, which means a sense of relatedness prevails strongly in the territory.

Culturally, according to Thorpe (1991), the present day Zulu people have moved beyond the borders of Zululand and they have become urbanized to a large extent. Though not living in the rural areas, modern Zulus are proud of their cultural heritage and have attempted to keep it through socio-political structures and still attempt to continue to live the traditional lifestyle (Thorpe, 1991: 33).

Ngubane (1977) also confirms that Zulus have always lived in clans or tribes and stresses that they owe their allegiance to the Zulu king. The clans are divided into lineages or a common birth, called *uzalo* in Zulu. Almost all lineages have a common ancestor (Ngubane, 1977: 13).

## **3.2 Normal family processes in Zulu culture**

As has been stated in the introduction of this chapter, the elements that influence the interaction of Zulu family members involve rules, roles, hierarchy, rituals, and one's religious identity or worldview. These concepts are presented separately, although they influence and overlap each other in various ways.

### **3.2.1 Roles in a traditional Zulu family**

A group of ten elderly men and women agreed to be interviewed by the researcher and her research assistant. The venue at which the interviews were conducted was beyond the Umlazi River, in an area called Gezangane. The informants explained how the people around the region of KwaNdengezi came to settle in the area. They explained that people originally came from different areas in KwaZulu-Natal, including Nkandla, Vryheid, Nokweja, Umkomaas, Greytown, Escourt etc. Some people came from as far as the borders of Natal and the Umzimkhulu River in the Eastern Cape. All of the people had been born and brought up in rural areas in their original regions. They came to KwaNdengezi looking for work and security during the apartheid struggle and in response to the political and socio-economic changes in the 1980s and 1990s.

The conversations with the informants gave rise to the following information about the roles in a traditional Zulu family.

### 3.2.2 The role of the father in a traditional Zulu family

The informants agreed that the father in the Zulu context is known as *ubaba*; he is well respected and, to an extent, feared by the young. The expression of fear is a way of showing respect or *ukuhlonipha*. The young respect all father figures in the community.

The dignity the father is afforded in the household aligns with the number of cattle, goats, sheep and other livestock that he possesses. These provide dairy products and meat and are also used as a dowry, or *ilobolo*, when his son gets married. *Ubaba*, as in most communities, is the provider of food, clothing, health and all welfare in the *umndeni* or family. In Zulu traditional communities, polygamy is practised. The informants explained that this practice occurs when a wife does not conceive children. The practice was therefore initially introduced as a remedy to barrenness and thus to preserve the immortality of the family unit. According to the informants, practising polygamy decreased when Christianity increased in Zululand. Christianity promotes monogamy.

*Ubaba* assigns to the young male children relevant chores like milking the cows, tending the livestock and working in the fields. The father is a protector, provider and sustainer of the family, which includes relatives who form the extended family.

The father extends his care to the elderly, the needy in the family and community and to his brothers and sisters. He is uncle to all of his brothers' and sisters' children and is expected to support them materially if needed as well as provide a support system when there are rituals to be done. In other words, the sub-system is very important in the family system in the Zulu household. The concept of *ubuntu*, or humanity, prevails in Zulu traditional culture, as it does in most African communities.

Pertaining to tasks, the father in Zulu traditional culture teaches young boys life skills so that they can protect themselves from enemies. Historically, the Zulu nation is well known for providing security to the nation and to families when kings such as Shaka, Dingaan and Cetshwayo reigned. Skills such as making stools, or *izigqiki*, meat trays and sticks, pottery and bone crafts are common pastimes whilst taking care of the livestock. Leatherwork includes making Zulu attire called *amabheshu* as well as *amahawu*, or shields.

Before a son takes a wife, the young boy must go through a ritual that enables him to pass from being a boy into a man. The informants agreed that this is done when the boy experiences wet dreams. The boy then takes all of the cattle out and goes to stay in the mountain. This is called *ukwemuka kwezinkomo*, or the departing of the cattle. The father then arranges for the boy to come back with the cows and other boys who are his age. A ritual ceremony is organized. There is a period of isolation followed by celebration and feasting. The ceremony takes the form of a strengthening ceremony in which Zulu medicine is used and the father declares to the family and community that his son is now an adult.

According to the informants, it is the responsibility of the father to see to it that his sons get wives when the time comes. They stated that even if the son is disabled, he must marry. The father helps the son to pay the *lobola*, even if the son is working. His assistance extends to helping build a household for the son. It is the legacy of the first-born son to take over looking after the family and relatives when the father becomes too old to do so and ultimately to take over the responsibility when the father dies. This is the son's entitlement in the family.

### **3.2.3 The role of the father in the transforming Zulu family**

Having discussed the role and tasks of *ubaba* in a Zulu traditional household, the researcher now addresses whether such concepts are still applicable in the transforming Zulu household, especially in the peri-urban environment.



The informants stated that single parents own quite a number of homes in the area of research. This phenomenon did not exist in past generations. Extramarital experimentation with sex has given rise to teenage pregnancy. The single-parented homes lack the protection and sustenance provided by the father. The young have no father figure to submit to or to respect (*hlonipha*). When issues of discipline arise, male relatives are invited to intervene. These include uncles, who are the *umalume*, *ubaba omncane* or *ubabamkhulu* from the family of origin. They help bring the family unit back to homeostasis. However, the temporary nature of their visits leads to the repetition of conflicts in the family units.

In Krige's (1950) book, *The Social Systems of the Zulu*, she affirms that the substitution of the father with the mother's uncle or brother means that they often take on the father figure role in the children's' lives. On a positive note, the children are given an opportunity to see a male role model in the family (Krige, 1950: 26).

The informants emphasized that no young man reaches adulthood and stays unmarried in normal African/Zulu traditional culture. This also averts indulgence in same-sex or homosexual relationships. The informants are convinced that this is an enormously important responsibility of the father figure. This phenomenon is sadly missing in this transforming era, especially in the peri-urban environment. The upcoming generation in the single parent household have no one to teach them about the importance of the marriage institution when they reach adulthood. The result is that extramarital sex and weird and unhealthy sexual behaviours are seen as a norm.

Where there is no father in the household, the responsibilities of providing bread for the family, training the boys and young men into adulthood, providing security in the home and matters of social, economic and religious life suffer. The father figures represented by the relatives of the single mothers need to take the missing father's

place and to train the upcoming male generation about what it takes to be a father in one's family.

The researcher feels the presence of a father figure is crucial in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is snuffing away a generation in KwaZulu-Natal. Education in abstinence, faithfulness and sexuality is critical. Before the church contributes, the home should play its role in educating boys and the young about life skills necessary in the changing world. This should bring about healthy enrichment and growth.

#### **3.2.4 The role of the mother in a Zulu traditional family**

The informants unanimously agreed that in Zulu traditional culture, the mother, who is called *umame*, was never expected to work. She had to be at home with the children. Having been provided with food by the father, she made the meals with her daughters and provided food, even to the needy in the neighbourhood. This happened if there was an abundance of food, especially at harvest time and when the cows provided milk. At an early age, the mother taught the young girls household chores. Both young girls and boys were taught good manners. Such manners included being respectful towards the elderly, not talking whilst chewing and not eating whilst walking or standing. When eating, everyone was expected to sit down. The mother also instilled thankfulness in her growing children. This is expressed by extending both hands to receive something and by saying the clan's *isibongo* or surname, for example Jama, Zizi or Sjadu; this made the children aware that the father, mother as well as ancestors provided the food. No food would be thrown away.

The informants stated that the behaviour of young girls was the mother's responsibility. A girl is taught what to wear, how to sit, about honesty and not to befriend anybody inappropriate, especially boys. The children grow up to respect their elders, do not answer back when scolded and are seen and not heard.

Girls are involved in the economy of the home in a similar manner to that of the boys in the household. The mother teaches the girls to do beadwork (*ubuhlalu*), make clay pots (*izitsha zodongwe*) as well as how to thatch a roof. The products are sold to tourists and are also used in the home, especially during celebrations.

Concerning moral behaviour, the informants postulate that in Zulu traditional culture, girls are closely watched by the mother. When a girl achieves menstruation, she may no longer go to the shops or river alone. An older girl, called *iqhikiza*, is responsible for watching over the younger girls. In Zulu culture, the girls are regularly examined so that they do not lose their virginity. This is preserved for one's husband. No premarital activities are tolerated.

As does the father, the mother has specific responsibilities. As already mentioned, she provides food for the family, stays at home to take care of the children, trains the girls in household chores as well as general cleanliness and hygiene, protects the children and teaches them handiwork that can contribute to the economy of the household. The mother's educating of the growing girls is of utmost importance. This includes preparation for marriage when the girl comes of suitable age. This task is important in growth and enrichment.

### **3.2.5 The role of the mother in a transforming Zulu family**

Women have departed the rural areas and taken up living in the peri-urban areas, mainly due to socio-economic changes, and as such, it is not possible for the mother to stay at home and look after her children, especially the girls. Because the father figure has disappeared in many households, the mother has had to take over his responsibilities and has become the provider, protector, trainer and educator to her children. The watchful eye of the mother has lessened, as she has to earn a living, often by working in a factory, sewing at a market or selling fruit and vegetables in the street. For many single mothers in the area of research, boarding school is an

unaffordable option. Young children are left in the care of older children, who still need care and protection themselves.

Consequently, there has been an increase in teenage pregnancy, child abuse, rape and having to take responsibility for caring for younger siblings at an early age. The death of many parents due to HIV/AIDS has caused an increase in child-headed households in the area. Not having a mother at home has precipitated the existence of what we call the “street child”. This street child begs and often uses the money earned to buy drugs rather than food. No mother is available to her child the difference between right and wrong. The child’s educators are peers he or she meets in the street. Recent developments are that the children are also exposed to the danger of human trafficking, especially young girls.

The researcher has noted that in KwaZulu-Natal there is an attempt to rediscover the *umhlanga* ceremony. This annual event involves the Zulu king calling together all young girls. At the event, the girls take a vow that they will keep their virginity until they get married. This is a national attempt to re-instil moral values in the growing young girls and to contribute to teaching the girls to abstain in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

As with an absent father, a girl’s female relatives can take over the responsibility of educating her where there is no mother, which is often the case due to an AIDS-related death. Whilst the church can offer a lot in terms of caring, education and counselling, it needs to work with the family so that there is continuity. What happens at the household will always guide the church in its task of bringing about moral regeneration. Moreover, what the church initiates should continue at home.

### 3.2.6 The role of grandparents in the Zulu traditional family

Conversing with elderly informants about their roles in the Zulu traditional context, it became evident that the father's father is called *ubabamkhulu* or *mkhulu*. This essentially means "grandfather" in English. The female parents to a mother or father are referred to as *makhulu* and *ugogo*. The grandparents are shown great respect and have to be obeyed. They are looked up to as the future ancestors. They are traditionally known to embody the family's customs, beliefs and rules. *Mkhulu* passes on his wisdom to the household through stories, which are commonly told at night. A common myth is that when stories are told during the day, the person telling them will grow horns on his or her forehead much like those of a bull. The informants state that *gogo* tells the best stories. *Mkhulu* will always talk about wars, which are not well received by the growing children. The most important aspect of the grandfather is that he embodies the genealogy of the family. He knows who was born to whom as well as the patterns that often manifest in the family. There may be a pattern of alcoholism in the family and *mkhulu* might say, "*Lengane ifuze umfowethu wayenjena*" ("This child behaves exactly like my brother"). The grandfather can also observe patterns of wealth in the family and may mention that one's father's father always had many livestock. The son always notes such patterns and passes them on to his son; they are learnt and passed on from generation to generation.

The conversation also revealed that one of the most important tasks performed by *mkhulu* is the burning of the incense, better known in Zulu traditional culture as *impepho*. He is the one who communicates with the ancestors. According to the informants, *mkhulu* burns the incense to report every occasion in the family to the ancestors. The occasions could be births, marriages, deaths, conflicts or giving thanks for protection against enemies. When the grandfather dies, the grandmother *ugogo* burns the incense. She can later give the responsibility to the first-born son, who will eventually pass it on to his own first-born son. Grandmother or *gogo* enjoys respect just like that afforded the grandfather or *mkhulu*. Womenfolk look up to her for advice about family upbringing.

### **3.2.7 The role of grandparents in the transforming Zulu family**

As revealed in the interviews, grandparents embody story telling. The stories are heaped with information that can help transform families in the midst of challenges that introduce conflicts and problems in the family. Biblical stories also carry many moral and ethical truths that can form a heritage for the new generation. The fact that the grandparents shared fables and folklore stories at bedtime means that they can be alternated with biblical stories at prayer time in the evening. This will help bring about enrichment and growth in the growing children.

Bible stories such as the story of Dinah found in the Old Testament (Genesis 34: 1-4) can be used to address the moral issue of woman and child abuse. Dinah, Jacob's daughter, visits other girls at Shechem. Whilst she is there, she is raped and defiled by a young man. Jacob's sons subsequently attacked all of the males in Shechem. In this story, one sees the importance of not allowing girls to visit others without some kind of protection. She lands up in the wrong hands. In response, her brothers retaliate against the people concerned. This story offers a good lesson regarding the responsibility that a girl's brothers should take in caring for their sister.

The support system that exists between the boys and the girls in Jacob's household is a good example. The brothers should not abuse their sister and practise incest. They should also protect their sisters from sexual abuse in the neighbourhood.

Story telling is a valid source of enrichment and growth. The researcher is convinced that the story of the birth, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can help to bring hope, certainty and stability to family units.

### **3.3 The rites of passage in a Zulu traditional family**

Having examined the original family processes in Zulu traditional culture and seeing how the changing world has produced problems in families, the researcher now seeks

to explore important rites of passage. These include the developmental stages of marriage, birth and child naming, initiation and death.

### **3.3.1 Marriage in Zulu traditional culture**

As observed by Mbiti (1969) and other African scholars, marriage is the foundation of African society. Marriage is the focus of existence and represents a context in which to meet the living, the departed and those who are yet to be born. Marriage is a drama in which human life is renewed, repeated and revitalized (Mbiti, 1969: 130).

Having assimilated, and in support of, Mbiti's statement about the importance of marriage as the central rite of passage in African life, the researcher seeks to highlight the informants' voices and thoughts. Interviewees stated that marriage, or *umshado* develops from a boy courting a girl, for a period of up to two years. Once a young man falls in love with someone he intends to marry, he will put up a white cloth on a pole in the kraal. This is to inform the community about the pending marriage ceremony. Through an older girl (*iqhikiza*), the girl will inform her parents. Out of respect for them, she cannot inform them herself. Once the parents are happy that the young man's family meets their expectations, the girl's friends create gifts, which are sent to the young man's sisters. Once this happens, the pole is taken down and the community knows a ceremony is imminent. The girl is known at this stage as *ingoduso*. Negotiations between the two families follow and, at this time, the young girl is taken care of by the older girls.

The informants stated that the negotiations between the two families happen through a process of *ilobolo*. Despite urbanization, the system of *ilobolo* has not been discarded in rural and urban areas. The system involves the bridegroom bringing either money or livestock to the bride's family. Whilst the *lobolo* is happening, the two families strengthen their relationship. The system encourages mutual support between the two families and promotes a sense of economic, social and even spiritual bonding.

### **3.3.2 The wedding ceremony in Zulu traditional culture**

When all of the customs have been attended to in both households, the marriage is announced and the community becomes caught up in the excitement of the coming occasion. There will be sounds of *ukukikizela*. This refers to ululating in a joyful manner. The event normally begins in the bride's home and ends in the bridegroom's home. African traditional culture expresses joy and sadness through song and dance. A wedding is a period of feasting. Gifts from family and friends, such as livestock, blankets, grass mats or *amacansi*, beadwork, beer etc., are the order of the day. The best part of the wedding ceremony is when the bridegroom and bride walk in the courtyards of both homes. This is known as *ukunyathela inkundla*. This is important because it is believed that the ancestors are unseen guests in the courtyard. When the couple is seated, there is enough time for the elders to give advice to the newlywed couple. The procedure is called *ukuyala*. This is very important for the couple. When things go wrong in a marriage, people often ask if *ukuyala* was done and by whom. The community always knows which people are gifted in giving counsel in a marriage ceremony. The couple is advised to persevere, respect each other and everybody else, to be faithful and to love one another. The bride and groom are now deemed to have been born into full manhood and full womanhood.

The climax of the ceremony is when the bride's family give their gifts to the bridegroom's family. This normally happens at the bridegroom's family home. This is called *ukwembesa*. According to the informants, the gifts are an opportunity for the bride to get to know close family members. This happens again once or twice a year. The bride's family brings groceries, beer and clothing to their daughter's new home. This is called *umbondo*. This gesture strengthens the relationship between the two families and between the couple. This mutual support is an ongoing process.

### **3.3.3 Polygamy in Zulu traditional culture**

The informants state that polygamy is still happening. This is where a man has more than one wife. The feeling is that this arrangement was seen to promote a measure of



faithfulness from the man; he would take one wife to the city whilst leaving the other one behind to take care of the home. However, in the context of the research, which examines a peri-urban area, there was consensus on that Christianity has increased monogamous marriage i.e. one man, one wife. That said, it seems that cohabitation and extramarital relationships have increased, particularly when a man has left his wife at home in a rural area.

The researcher observes that in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is so rife in the area of research and the rest of KwaZulu-Natal, polygamy could be risky. Multiple partners apparently precipitate the spread of the virus. Educators engaged in creating AIDS awareness stress the acronym ABC, which stands for Abstain, Be faithful to one partner and, if under pressure, Condomize.

#### **3.3.4 Birth and childhood in Zulu family tradition**

The informants explained that pregnancy is an important period for the couple. The pregnant woman is taken care of by her husband, family and even neighbours. When the baby is about to be born, a separate room is prepared. Well-known elderly “midwives” help with the delivery of the baby. Men are not allowed in the vicinity during childbirth. In Zulu culture, disabled babies and one twin were not allowed to live and the “midwives” would deal with these “issues”. When the newborn baby’s umbilical cord dries up and falls off, it is buried in a specific place in the homestead. This is an important ritual. When people enquire about each other’s origin, they often ask, *Ilaphi inkaba yakho?* (Where is your umbilical cord buried?). The answer may be *Inkaba yami iphesheya koMfolozi eMazizini!* (My umbilical cord is that side of the Umfolozi River in the Dlamini household). A common myth is that if one is ill, frequent visits to where the *inkaba* is buried will bring back good health.

The informants declared that a goat is slaughtered when the *inkaba* is buried to inform the ancestors about the new member of the family. The skin of the goat is shaped into a baby carrier, or *imbeleko*. The ritual itself is called *imbeleko*. The wider family and

community celebrate and give gifts to the baby. The giving of gifts is called *ukukhunga*.

In Zulu traditional culture, the people who need to perform *ukukhunga* generally comprise the family members of the baby's mother. It is common knowledge in African tribes that a child will be spoiled by its mother's relatives. When the young man visits his uncle's homestead, he will be served *ilunda*. Apparently, *ilunda* is the best cut of meat of the slaughtered animal. When a young man or young woman visit his or her uncle and aunt's household, respectively, it signals that he or she will get spoiled.

The interviews also revealed that customs differ in various families. When a woman falls pregnant for the first time, she goes home to deliver and remains in her original home for some time. This apparently helps the baby to grow strong. There is a belief that if sexual intercourse occurs whilst the baby is breastfeeding, it makes the baby weak and prone to illness. The baby needs to be breastfed for two years. If the child is with its mother-in-law (*mamezala*), she guides the daughter-in-law (*makoti*) on what to do and not do to protect the infant.

The child is eventually weaned off breastfeeding. The elderly women know the remedies to help wean the baby. Slowly, the child is introduced to solid foods, which help it to grow and get stronger. The child is taken care of by all members of the family and its protection is everybody's responsibility.

### **3.3.5 Naming the child in Zulu family tradition**

The informants at Gezangane agreed that the father gives a child its name. The name giver discusses the name with the family, giving reasons for the proposed name, and eventually a consensus is reached by the family. The name may express a historical event in the family or remind the family of a deceased member, especially if the

person remembered was a good person during her or his lifetime or there is a resemblance. The family may be thankful for what God and the ancestors have done and may call the girl *Nandipha* (you blessed me). If it is a boy, it could be *Ndiphiwe*. A common belief in Zulu culture is that a child conforms to his or her name. If a child is called *Mfundo* (education), that child will be highly educated. If the child is called *Zwelinzima* (tough world), things will be tough for him.

### **3.3.6 Initiation and puberty rites of passage in Zulu family tradition**

According to the informants, when a boy comes of age and reaches puberty, he goes through the *ukwemuka kwezinkomo* (the departing of the cows) ritual. The details of the ritual have already been explored under the sub-heading of “The role of the father in Zulu traditional family” in this chapter.

The ceremony is a communal event in which the family and community take part. An announcement is made that the boy is no longer a boy but a young man, or *umfana*. The young man is given gifts, the most important of which is the blanket from his father that symbolizes his new status as a man. After the ceremony, the *umfana* is known as *insizwa* or *ibhungu*.

The interviewees revealed that circumcision (*ukusoka*) was performed on pubescent boys during the reign of King Shaka. When wars became commonplace during his reign, the king discouraged the ceremony because he maintained that the boys took too long to heal after circumcision.

According to the informants, a girl comes of age when she commences menstruation. When this happens, she goes to hide at a neighbour's house. The other girls in the family and neighbourhood report the matter to her grandmother, if *gogo* is still alive. If not, *mame*, or the mother, handles the situation. Either *gogo* or *mame* explain to the young girl what has happened to her. She is made aware that if she sleeps with a boy,

she will have a baby. The aunts and elder women, who rejoice with her for entering womanhood, offer sexuality education to her. The father is informed and he sends boys to collect wood in preparation for her ceremony. She is fetched by other girls, who cover her in a blanket in an isolated hut. She is assigned a friend to look after her. This friend is referred to as *impelesi* (a companion).

An older girl (*iqhikiza*) in the community takes care of the girl and also educates her about issues of life and sexuality. The responsibilities, expectations, values and changes in her body following her experience are explained carefully.

The ceremony is arranged by the men and this is called *umhlonyane*. The goat is slaughtered and *impepho* is burnt to introduce the girl to the ancestors. In the midst of a lot of dancing and singing, the girl initiate goes to the river to wash herself. The transitional ceremonies of the boy and girl are similar as they enter a new level in their lives. The young person leaves behind childhood behaviour and learns to behave like an adult.

According to the informants, the girl has to go through one stage before she can get married. This stage is called *umemulo*. The elderly women guide and prepare her for this stage. The father slaughters a cow for his daughter when the time comes. The evening before the slaughtering, the young woman takes her grass mat (*ucansi*) from kraal to kraal with her *impelesi* and tells the people of her *umemulo* ceremony.

The people in the community give her presents and then come to her home to celebrate with singing and dancing. When the suet or *umhlwehlwe* of the cow has dried up, the girl wears it on her shoulders like a shawl for some time. Once this happens, marriage is imminent.

### **3.3.7 Death and burial in Zulu family tradition**

The informants explained that death in Zulu traditional culture always brings the family and community together. When it occurs, the people sit down on their grass mats to mourn. When the burial time arrives, the body is wrapped up in a slaughtered animal's skin and is then transferred to the community of the ancestors.

A week after the burial, there is a cleansing ceremony at which all of the instruments used to dig the hole are washed in the river. These include the spades, digging irons, shovels etc. A goat is normally slaughtered and people are made to accept the loss of the loved one and thus can move ahead toward healing.

The informants described how the ceremony of *ukubuyisa* is performed in the following years. *Ukubuyisa* means to bring back the deceased as an invisible member of the family. The Zulu people believe that the ceremony brings blessings to the whole lineage. The ceremony is seen as an opportunity to heal those who are still deeply hurt by the departure of the family member.

## **3.4 The religious orientation of the Zulu people**

Many authors have offered a consistent contribution about the religious worldview of the Zulu people in general.

### **3.4.1 The traditional cultural perspective**

Thorpe (1991) indicates that one observation of early travellers, explorers and missionaries to Natal was the acknowledgement of the Zulu belief in a Supreme Being who is responsible for all of creation. Based on personal interviews with the

Zulu people and information taken from Fynn et al., Shooter (Thorpe, 1991: 159) writes:

The Kaffirs [sic] of Natal and the Zulu country have preserved the tradition of a being whom they call the Great-Great and the First Appeared or Existed. He is presented as having made all things – men, cattle, water, fire, the mountains, and whatever else is seen.

According to Thorpe (1991), Shooter used the word “Great-Great” as a translation of *uNkulunkulu*. Other names include *uMvelinqangi*, which Shooter translated as “the First Exister and First Appearer” (Thorpe, 1991: 34).

Confirming what Thorpe says, the researcher also observes that the belief and knowledge of God as creator of all things is an old legacy in the Zulu nation. Informants agree that prayer has always been one of the survival weapons used by the Zulu nation. It is well known that the people of Zululand have *iziguqo* (places of kneeling) on the mountains even to this day. These places are used to communicate with God when there is no rain or to appease God due to a family mishap like barrenness. Testimonies about prayers being answered are a familiar phenomenon in Zulu traditional culture.

Berglund (1976) confirms that when families come together in a ritual celebration in Zulu tradition, the names *uNkulunkulu*, *abakithi* and *iNkosi* are constantly mentioned (Berglund, 1976: 18).

The researcher has noted that the Zulu people, in general and in the context of the research, venerate the ancestors and see them as part of the extended family. Reverence and worship go to *Nkulunkulu*, the maker of heaven and earth and the provider of life to all nations and all of creation.

### **3.4.2 The Methodist Christian perspective**

According to Rev. Simangaliso Kumalo (2009), Rev. James Archbell, the father of Methodism in Natal, paid a visit to the British Colony of Natal in 1841 with a view to working with Zulu people. In May 1842, Rev. Archbell arrived with his family. The first church building was erected with the help of local people in 1843. Rev. Archbell and his family commenced missionary work from the church and the manse. Christianity also spread to Indian people through Methodism. Other ministers later joined Rev. Archbell to strengthen the gospel in what was then called Port Natal i.e. Durban. Kumalo (2009) states that the first black Methodist convert in Natal was King Shaka's uncle, Bantwana Mtetwa. He met Rev. Holden and William Kongo at the Umgeni River. He had run away from the royal house and its wars and had found refuge just outside Pinetown, where Clermont Township is situated. He was baptized and his soul was washed in the blood of the saviour (Kumalo, 2009: 103-107).

Evidently, Christianity arrived in the Durban and Pinetown areas in the middle of the nineteenth century. From then on, the Zulu people and their children have been enriched by and grown in their Christian faith, within their cultural context.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter has explored the family processes in Zulu traditional family life. The reason for this is that it would be impossible to offer enrichment, growth and healing to these marriages and families without being enlightened about the state of these institutions under normal conditions. The enquiry initially explored the origins of the Zulu nation and it touched upon the areas from which most of the people living around the KwaNdengezi region came from.

The different roles of family members in most rural areas were explored. The exercise was precipitated by engaging with elderly men and women in Gezangane. Gezangane lies beyond the Umlazi River and is in the region of KwaNdengezi. The interview was comprised of structured questions. However, the researcher sometimes allowed

participants to speak freely. The initial interview was on the roles of the father and mother in a Zulu traditional household. Having explored this topic, it became necessary to look into these roles in the transforming Zulu household, as the modern world has greatly influenced family dynamics. What came out strongly in the interviews were the rules of the family, which are conveyed by the parents educating and training their children in life skills, moral values and principles.

The issues that challenge transforming Zulu homes were discussed in the interviews. These include teenage pregnancy, an increase in single parenthood, alcohol and drug abuse, woman and child abuse, cohabitation commonly known in the Zulu context as *ukuhlalisana*. *Ukuhlalisana* happens where unwedded couples live together, an increase in the divorce rate, unemployment and its influence on poverty and crime, the devastation of HIV/AIDS and other challenges.

The role of grandparents was also extensively explored. Grandparents are known as a sub-system in family systems theory. They offer a very useful alternative where there is an absent father or mother figure. They feature strongly in single-parented homes, which are increasing in the area of research. The grandparents offer their wisdom and counsel, which they have gleaned from their experiences. They offer a useful support system to young couples and growing children. However, they need to stick to boundaries so that they do not interfere too much with the growing couples and their children. Nevertheless, interviewees expressed that there is no doubt that they contribute to enrichment and growth in transforming families. The discussion of the roles of parents and grandparents exposed how Böszörményi-Nagy's (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991) concept of power alignments<sup>23</sup> works in a family.

It is apparent that the issue of roles automatically lends itself to exploring the family rules. There is an unavoidable overlap between roles and rules in the family system. Having exhausted the topic of roles, the chapter looked into the rites of passage in

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<sup>23</sup>Power alignments and transactions are discussed in chapter one. Böszörményi-Nagy and his associates developed contextual family therapy and stressed the importance of how family members relate to each other in the family context.



Zulu traditional families. Marriage and the wedding ceremony were explored intensively. The concept of a young man and woman's readiness for marriage is seen as a necessary element before they embark on having a family. The participation of the parents and community at large offers guidelines and education, which is much needed in this era. Involving the families of the couple in the wedding ceremony and the life of the new family unit means a support system is available, which is vital for the growth, enrichment and possible healing needed by the couple.

The researcher observed that Christianity has significantly contributed to keeping marriage monogamous, especially in the area of research and the peri-urban areas in KwaZulu-Natal. .

The chapter then looked at childbirth and childhood in Zulu traditional culture. Again, the involvement of the parents, grandparents and the community at large provides protection, training and the notion of taking responsibility, which is vital in bringing up a child in a changing world.

Naming a child was seen as an important responsibility for the parents. Even scriptures emphasize the importance of naming a child. Matthew 1: 23 states:

Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bear a son and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us.

One observes that Christ became Immanuel ("God with us") to many generations following his death and resurrection. Similarly, in a Zulu traditional family, naming a child is not taken lightly. The child should draw a sense of self-worth from his or her name, as the chosen name is believed to reflect characteristics of that child.

The chapter offered interviewees' insights into puberty rites. These transitional periods clearly define the stages of growth for both boys and girls in Zulu traditional

culture. There are periods of isolation and periods of aggregation, during which the pubescent boys and girls gain clarity about the new status they have achieved. There is no confusion about the growth stages in Zulu traditional culture. The ceremonies of *umhlonyane* and *umemulo* lead the girl to readiness for marriage. In the same vein, the ceremony of *ukwemuka kwezinkomo* makes a boy ready for adult life and, later on, marriage.

The informants revealed that death and burial have a healing effect in that the community comes together to mourn for the loss in the family. Prayers and singing comfort the bereaved family. Digging the hole becomes a community activity done by the men and provides assistance to those who are mourning and are in need of such support at a time like this. In the process of communal assistance, the bereaved family is comforted and helped on the road to healing.

The ceremony of *ukubuyisa*, which is performed a year after the death of a loved one, provides an opportunity to remember this person and, in the process, healing occurs as the family finally accepts that the departed family member will not return to this world. The family accepts that the deceased has joined their ancestors and will be an unseen guest in the household, providing protection and blessings. In other words, ancestors in Zulu traditional culture are an extension of the extended family. They are not worshipped. They are remembered and venerated. God is worshipped and He receives respect and reverence from all humankind.

The chapter ended by exploring the religious orientation of most Zulu people. Secondary sources like Berglund (1976), Thorpe (1991), Krige (1950), Mbiti (1969) and others clearly highlight that the Zulu nation has always worshipped God, the creator of heaven and earth. The informants also confirmed that the Zulu names for God, *Nkulunkulu*, *Mvelinqagi*, *Mdala wezinsuku* and *Mdali*, refer to the “one who is first to exist”, “the creator”, “the provider of life” and “the source of all existence to all nations and to all creation”.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, family processes in Zulu traditional life have been clarified using the concept of systems theory. Beyond doubt, the family processes reveal the interconnectedness of the “family” system through roles, rules and rituals. This chapter has examined Zulu people from the perspective that all is well in the original rural context. At the same time, it has looked at the current situation in transforming Zulu families with respect to changing roles, rules and rituals. In fact, the people in the context of the research are wrestling with how to adjust to a changing world. The families being researched are Christian, as has been mentioned several times. However, they are still proud of their Zulu heritage. The researcher observed that there is a sense that most families feel that some of the answers to their marriage and family problems could come from their traditional roots. The following chapter looks at how the Church can also help to provide answers and offer enrichment, growth and healing to Zulu Christian marriage and family systems within their cultural context.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CHURCH AS A CENTRE FOR ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING FOR MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

#### Introduction

The initial chapter of this thesis offers seven points that motivated the researcher to choose the topic: *A Pastoral Marriage and Family Wholeness Programme*. One of the points indicates that the researcher is seeking to create an ecclesiological study that is theologically acceptable to the Methodist Church of South Africa. Responding to the socio-economic and political problems affecting families, the Roman Catholic and Anglican denominations have published some resources on marriage and family. The Roman Catholic Church has a programme called *Marriage Encounter*, while the Anglican Church offers through Alpha Publications *The Marriage Course* (Lee, N. & Lee, S., 2000) and *The Marriage Preparation Course* (Lee, N. & Lee, S., 2009). In the same vein, the Evangelical Lutheran church also encourages its members to participate in a course, namely *5 Steps to Building a Christian Marriage*.

The researcher is convinced that it is important and imperative for the MCSA to develop or increase its ecclesiastic resources to address marriage and family dysfunction in different contexts.

In line with this conviction, Dr Ezra Chitando<sup>24</sup> (2007) postulates in *A new man for a new era* that Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches have borrowed ideas from active men's fellowship groups from mainline churches and are instilling high standards of sexual purity with new values and principles in response to the HIV era. This author emphasizes that Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe are developing trusting and caring

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<sup>24</sup>Dr Ezra Chitando is affiliated with the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa and the World Council of Churches. In his journal article, he focuses on the developments achieved by Pentecostalism in Zimbabwe. In light of issues such as domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, divorce, gender injustice and other issues relating to marriage and family, Chitando seeks to bring liberating paradigms to masculinity.

relationships amongst married couples, focusing on re-socializing men to be more sober, emotionally accessible and loving towards their wives and families. The “new man” in Pentecostal ideology is characterized by being loving and considerate towards his wife and children (Chitando, 2007: 117-119).

In response to what Chitando states as being “stolen” from the mainline church, the researcher intends to explore how the present vision and mission strategy of the MCSA, which is a member of the mainline church family, can also bring renewal to marriage and families.

Along the same line of thought, Philemon Mwaura (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000) challenges the church in *Healing as a Pastoral Concern* regarding its role as “shepherd of God’s flock” to administer healing that will resolve disharmony in the lives of individuals, the community and the environment. Mwaura is convinced that the pastoral work of the church should be in terms of healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling the people of God (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 85-86).

Mwaura borrows ideas from Western, or North American, authors such as William Clebsch and Charles Jaeckle (1964), who developed the four pastoral functions of healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling. According to these Western authors, the four pastoral themes have risen to prominence amidst the changing cultural, psychological, intellectual and religious circumstances of men and women throughout the Christian era. According to them, each of the four pastoral functions have been crucial in the history of Christian pastoral care and using one mode can give rise to using many methods (1964: 10, 32).

The researcher seeks to reconcile the Western and African contexts and begins by defining significant words used in the title of this chapter. A brief historical background on the contribution of the Christian church in KwaZulu-Natal will set the stage for further exploration. The discussion then looks at three vital elements that

make the church relevant in terms of enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and families:

1. The “church” structure, purpose, goals and mission in general, mainly focusing on the Methodist Church of South Africa.
2. The role of the minister or pastor as a facilitator of growth, enrichment and healing in marriage and family in the context of the local church.
3. The role of the congregation in addressing family dysfunction under the leadership and empowerment provided by the minister.

#### **4.1 Important basic descriptive definitions**

##### **4.1.1 Growth – a descriptive definition**

According to Clinebell (1992), growth in the context of pastoral care and counselling has to do with ministry people’s use of one-to-one or small group relationships to enable healing, empowerment and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships. In other words, whilst individuals, couples and families handle their problems and crises, they experience healing of their brokenness. In many instances when people experience problems, they incur stunted growth in their life cycle (Clinebell, 1992: 26).

Elaborating on the growth model, Bousma (Louw, 2000: 182) argues that the Christian life is conceived to entail indefinite growth. Growth takes place within the realities of struggle and pain. The reason for this, according to Bousma, is that Christian adulthood is a voyage into the unknown (Louw, 2000: 182).

Elderly informants in the context of the research refer to increased growth through pain and struggles as *ukukhuliswa noma ukwena*.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>The meaning in the syntax of *ukwena* as well as *ukukhuliswa* alludes to plants and weeds, which grow profusely, especially after rainfall. In the marriage and family context, struggles and pain are metaphors

#### **4.1.2 Enrichment – a descriptive definition**

Sell (1995) explains enrichment from the perspective of marriage and family. He states that marriage and family enrichment seeks to impart basic truths and skills. Within the Christian context, the basic truths and skills will be those that the scriptures propound about marriage and family (Sell, 1995: 226).

The researcher accepts this line of thinking and seeks to add that enrichment goes hand in hand with education. Education implies that something constructive and previously unknown is learnt. When the original Zulu traditional basic truths and skills, as explored in the family processes section, are highlighted for individuals, couples and families through seminars or workshops, such people are enriched.

The Zulu understanding gleaned from elderly informants as well as English/Zulu scholars highlight the words *ukunothisa* and *ukuvundisa*<sup>26</sup> as words that impart a deeper meaning to enrichment.

#### **4.1.3 Healing – a descriptive definition**

The *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*<sup>27</sup> offers a relevant definition of healing for this study. It declares that the process of healing is a process of being restored to bodily wholeness, emotional well-being, mental functioning and spiritual aliveness. Christian modes of healing have always distinguished themselves by achieving spiritual advancement in conjunction with the healing process. Healing may also refer to a process of reconciling broken human relationships and to the

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for rain, as they arrive in the lives of the persons involved in the relationship and bring about growth. The well-known English idiom that “it never rains but pours” applies.

<sup>26</sup>*Ukunothisa* and *ukuvundisa* relate to the concept of applying the right fertilizer to plants to bring about growth so that there will be a good harvest. This syntax or metaphor can be applied to the seminars and workshops about marriage and family enrichment as the facilitators aim to add “fertilizer” to the participants’ relationships and to improve their coping skills.

<sup>27</sup>Hunt, R. (Ed.). (1990). *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

development of a just social and political order among races and nations. In recent times, healing and wholeness have become metaphors for religious views of salvation.

The above definition highlights very important concepts about healing. The fact that healing is a process and cannot happen overnight implies that enough time is needed by the caregiver or pastoral counsellor to impart wholeness to a hurting person or relationship. The definition is adequate for the purpose of this study as it indicates that healing may also refer to a process of reconciling broken relationships and to the development of a just social and political order among races and nations. The researcher believes that the races and nations are comprised of families. It therefore becomes imperative to engage in healing processes with individuals, couples and families in response to modern life challenges through various disciplines, including pastoral care giving and pastoral counselling.

The above-mentioned resource also offers the following scriptural history about the concept of healing. Healing can be traced to the Old Testament, at which time healing, health and holiness were positively related and gave rise to peace and righteousness, instilling wholeness to one's body, mind, spirit, society as well as the world. In the New Testament, the ministry of Jesus Christ was vitally concerned with healing the physical, moral and mental diseases of persons and He commanded His followers to do the same. In the early church, healing was central to the worship and mission of the apostolic church. During the Reformation, there was an emphasis on the welfare of the soul, although the well-known reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin did not necessarily believe in miraculous healings.

In Charles Yringoyen's (1996) book *John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life*, he provides valuable information about John Wesley, one of the eighteenth century reformers and author of Methodism. Yringoyen states that Wesley was concerned about the spiritual welfare and physical well-being of the people. When he heard that many of the sick in London society were neglected because the leaders of their society did not have time to minister to their needs, he organized "Visitors of the Sick" to



tend to them. He chose forty-six men and women to do this work and they visited each district to care for those who were ill. He also sought to prevent illness and read profoundly about health and medicine (Yringoyen, 1996: 60-67).

From the above author's information, it is evident that John Wesley had a passion for wholeness, healing and holiness. Although he had passion for spiritual healing, the researcher observes that he also relied on knowledge of how to heal a person physically.

When Daniel Louw (2000) talks about healing in the context of pastoral care and counselling, he indicates that *cura animarum* (a Greek word meaning "cure of souls") remains the essential function of pastoral care. Louw notes the rise of psychology in curing human souls versus the influence of the church. He further challenges the church to re-evaluate its pastoral ministry in terms of its processes and purposes. Louw further postulates that the church needs to develop a model that not only takes the healing ministry of Jesus Christ seriously but also interprets human existence within relevant contexts and relationships (Louw, 2000: 1).

Whilst the researcher agrees with Louw, pastoral ministry needs to work hand in hand with psychology. Psychologists scientifically understand what is going on inside a person or persons. Böszörményi-Nagy (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991) explains this in his four dimensions of contextual family therapy. He postulates that psychology addresses what is happening in the soul of a person and thus affirms psychic development i.e. how much a person has grown, their inner experiences and object relations (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991). The researcher has observed the importance of this in family assessments.

Exploring the concept of healing from the African/Zulu perspective, Ngubane (1977) indicates that Zulu notions of problems and disease are surrounded by a system of ideas, beliefs and practices that balance the relationship between a person and his or

her environment. When this balance is disturbed, there is dysfunction and treatment is given to bring about healing (1977: ix).

According to Ngubane, this equilibrium is often restored through rituals like ancestor veneration and praying to God (*Nkulunkulu*). When the relevant resources are approached, healing takes place. This is referred to as *ukwelapha*, *ukupholiswa* or *ukuphiliswa*.

The researcher believes it is important to realize that ancestor veneration is not about worshipping them. It involves the belief that those who have passed on are near to *uNkulunkulu* or *Mvelinqagi*, who is God, the creator of heaven and earth. It is a matter of *ukuhlonipha*, or giving respect to the past family-of-origin within the kinship ancestral line.

## **4.2 Identifying the church's structure, goals and mission**

### **4.2.1 The church as *kyriakos oikia***

The term church is identified by the *New Bible Dictionary* as having been derived from the Greek adjective *kyriakos*. It is often used in the phrases *kyriakos doma* or *kyriakos oikia*, which mean “the Lord’s house”. From the classical explanation, it emerges that the church is God’s or the Lord’s household. A family lives in a household and such family need to live according to the values and norms of the owner. According to Mercy Amba Oduyoye (2001) in *Introducing African Women’s Theology*, the church is expected “to lift people out of the sighs and the groaning and put their feet on the route to the promised peace of God”. This author further states that Denise Ackermann, who writes about a quest for healing, emphasizes that the church and all those associated with it are called to take part in “healing actions” (Oduyoye, 2001: 87). Thus, it is a priority for the church to be involved in healing programmes in God’s household.

#### 4.2.2 The church as *ekklesia*

The New Bible Dictionary further states that in the New Testament, the Greek word often used for “church” is *ekklesia*, which designates a “local congregation of Christians”. The local congregation of the early church comprised people summoned from outside Judea, where the gospel of Jesus Christ was first planted (NIV Acts 19: 39). *Ekklesia* also pertains to the congregation of Israel, which, according to the Old Testament, comprised people who assembled before Yahweh at Mount Sinai. These people later assembled for annual feasts as representatives of God’s people.

From the above analysis, it is evident that the church (God’s household or local congregation) involves learning about all that is moral, ethical and spiritual about its leader, who, according to Pauline theology, is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. In the Ephesians narrative, Paul addresses the importance of the roles of husbands and wives as he teaches the Ephesian congregation about the moral and ethical values of people who enter a marriage relationship and ultimately form a family. The writer agrees with Paul in that she sees the local congregation as a relevant foundation for family wholeness.

Elaborating on the work of the church as *ekklesia*, David Bosch (1986) describes the church as “the community of believers, gathered by divine election, calling, new birth, and conversion, which lives in communion with the Triune God, is granted forgiveness of sins, and is sent to serve the world in solidarity with all mankind”. If the community of believers has to experience forgiveness of sins so as to journey with the Triune God, it therefore means that, having experienced forgiveness, the community is in a position to learn and teach how to forgive others (Nicholls, 1986: 164). The researcher believes that the communality of believers should be able to facilitate wholeness for people at all levels i.e. emotionally, physically and spiritually. When this happens, the believing community acts as an agent for change in the community within which it exists.

### 4.2.3 The church as *sanctorum communio*

In Professor Neville Richardson's (2007) journal article, he yearns for the church to be *sanctorum communio* (the Communion of Saints) and for it to be a theological pointer for reconstruction in South Africa after twelve years of democracy.

Richardson (2007) quotes Boenhoeffer and states:

Community with God exists only through Christ, but Christ is present only in his Church – community, and therefore community with God, exists only in the church. Every individualistic concept of the church breaks down because of this fact.

The church is community based and nurtured by the Holy Spirit. Richardson (2007) further envisages that even amongst Africans there exists a sense of individualism that seems to swamp the communality of African traditional life. He postulates that this tendency has crept into South Africa with the wave of urbanization.

Louw (2000) takes the emphasis on communality in God's household further. He postulates that the dimension of *sanctorum communio*, in which people are there for one another, concretizes the comforting and healing message of salvation. The "for one another principle" means pastoral counselling takes place within a congregation that is in communion with Christ and each other. This author emphasizes that scripture, prayer, sacraments and confession within *sanctorum communio* are therapeutic dimensions that need to be researched in a new way in the theological dimension of pastoral care. All of these, when used wisely, should be effective ways of bringing about healing in family conflicts. Concurring with Louw, the researcher acknowledges that the above-mentioned resources are mainly available in the congregational context.

The researcher perceives the concept of *sanctorum communio* in the Body of Christ as being similar to the communal theme emphasized in African contexts. This concept

needs to be maintained and revived, even when people settle around urban areas. As already discussed, the concept is a useful premise for enrichment, growth and healing.

### **4.3 The Methodist Church of South Africa<sup>28</sup> and its relevance for enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and family**

The church in general has been looked at as an institution that can bring about growth, enrichment and healing to the community. The writer will continually refer to the three concepts that identify the church's potential for healing (i.e. the church as *kyriakos oikia* or "the Lord's house"; the church as *ekklesia* or "local congregation of Christians"; and the church as *sanctorum communio* or "the Church community in Christ") in explaining the structure, purpose and mission of the Methodist Church of South Africa.

#### **4.3.1 The structure of the MCSA**

Below is a brief description of the historical background of the MCSA. Examining the history will help to identify the reasons behind the structural formation of the MCSA as a church that is relevant in bringing about family wholeness. An outline of its working structure follows.

#### **4.3.2 The historical background of the MCSA**

According to the MCSA's Laws and Discipline (2007)<sup>29</sup>, Methodism was born from the great work that God performed through John and Charles Wesley and associates in reviving religion in the eighteenth century by means of preaching, worship and apostolic labour. These founders of Methodism met the spiritual needs of multitudes of Christ's shepherdless sheep that were emerging from the wilderness seeking care.

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<sup>28</sup>The Methodist Church of South Africa will constantly be abbreviated to MCSA in this study.

<sup>29</sup>*Laws and Discipline of the Methodist Church of South Africa* is the Constitution of this denomination. The latest edition is the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, which was published in 2007.

In their work, they applied principles from the New Testament and gradually developed early Methodist societies into a distinctive Christian Church.

### **4.3.3 The family foundation of Methodism**

Methodism rose from within what family systems theorist Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy calls a “legacy” of family. As previously explained, Böszörményi-Nagy believes the concept of a “legacy” denotes the configuration of expectations that originate from rootedness and impinge on the offspring (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 162).

John and Charles Wesley were brothers born from the family unit of Samuel and Sussanna Wesley. According to Leonard Hulley (1994), John Benjamin Wesley was born in England on June 17, 1703, son of the Rev. Samuel Wesley and wife Sussanna (née Annsley). Rev. Samuel Wesley was a rector at Epworth under the Church of England, to which the family belonged. The Wesley family was a large family of about fifteen children. Apparently, Rev. Samuel Wesley’s father and grandfather were also clergy. The clerical “legacy” was carried down to about the third generation in the Wesley family. Sussanna Wesley’s parents were also of clerical descent. John Wesley and all of his brothers and sisters were educated by their mother at the Epworth rectory. As soon as the children could talk, they were taught the Lord’s Prayer and later, they studied scriptures and prayers and embarked on catechism (Hulley, 1994: 1).

### **4.3.4. The spiritual formation of the Wesley Brothers**

According to Cyril Davey (1985), John Wesley went to study at Oxford at the age of seventeen. Around 1729, the Anglican religion was cold and worship was dull. The situation was such that there would perhaps only be a morning prayer and communion would be once a quarter. The clergy were scarce in those days and the congregation was not well nurtured. Around this time, John Wesley was called back to Oxford University to teach Greek, Philosophy and Logic. By now, Charles, John’s brother,

was studying at Christ Church. There, Charles created a Bible study group. Hulley (1994) states that the group experimented with various names i.e. Followers of Perfection, Sacramentarians, Saints' Club, Holy Company, Biblists Enthusiasts, Holy Club, Bible Moths and Methodists. The name that stuck was Methodists, because the members did things methodically, systematically and according to rules. George Whitefield, one of the group members, influenced John Wesley to "serve" God by visiting poor families in the city, caring for the sick and visiting prisoners in jail whilst taking care of their families back home. He even stayed beside criminals before they were hanged. This work grew and many lives were healed and transformed in the process (Hulley, 1994: 8).

John Wesley and his brother Charles went on an evangelistic outreach mission to Georgia in 1737. Their exposure to Red Indians and Moravians was not very pleasant but they persisted with their calling. It was through their exposure to the Moravians that they learnt the importance of small, intimate group meetings and found the "joy and assurance of salvation" in the midst of turmoil (Hulley, 1994: 10-11). The Wesleys' use of small groups, called class meetings in Methodism today, was actually inherited from the Moravians in Georgia.

#### **4.3.5 John Wesley's conversion experience**

One could say that Methodism was, in the literary sense, born through John Wesley's conversion. *The Journal of John Wesley*<sup>30</sup> states that on the evening of 24 May 1738, Wesley went unwillingly to a society at Aldersgate Street where someone read Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans* during the prayer meeting. At about a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change that God works in one's heart through one's faith in Christ, he felt his heart become strangely warm. Wesley knew then that he could trust Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation and he experienced an intense feeling about the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. He began to pray with

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<sup>30</sup>The abridged *Journal of John Wesley* offers a selection of Wesley's accounts of his life and travels. The journal explores Wesley's early years, his work between 1735 and 1790 as well as his last days. Idle, C. (1986). *The Journal of John Wesley*. Michigan: Lion Publishing Corporation.

all his might, especially for those who had despicably persecuted him. Wesley's journal mentions that after his conversion experience, he was filled with such a sense of peace every morning and all he would say was "Jesus, Master" (Idle, 1986: 46).

John Wesley shared the experience with his brother Charles, who was recovering from pleurisy. Together they sang a song that Charles had just composed. Apparently, Charles had had a similar experience to that of John at the Aldersgate prayer meeting. Ultimately, Charles wrote extensively on the topic of Christian principles and John Wesley would preach the Word.

The religious revival supported by the Wesley brothers saved England from the moral depreciation of the Industrial Revolution. The movement grew year after year. The Wesleys began to oppose the Church of England and ultimately went their own way, whereafter "the world [became] their parish!" (Idle, 1986: 46).

#### **4.3.6 The organogram or structure introduced**

It is important to grasp the original structure of the MCSA because this will provide a clear picture of the premise of the church's mission, before dealing with the notion of family wholeness.

Cyril Davey (1985) remarks that John Wesley was good at organizing. He experimented with meeting emerging needs using both logical and practical models. This has made the basic structure of MCSA consistent throughout its history.



#### 4.3.7 The organogram (researcher's emphasis on existing MCSA polity model)

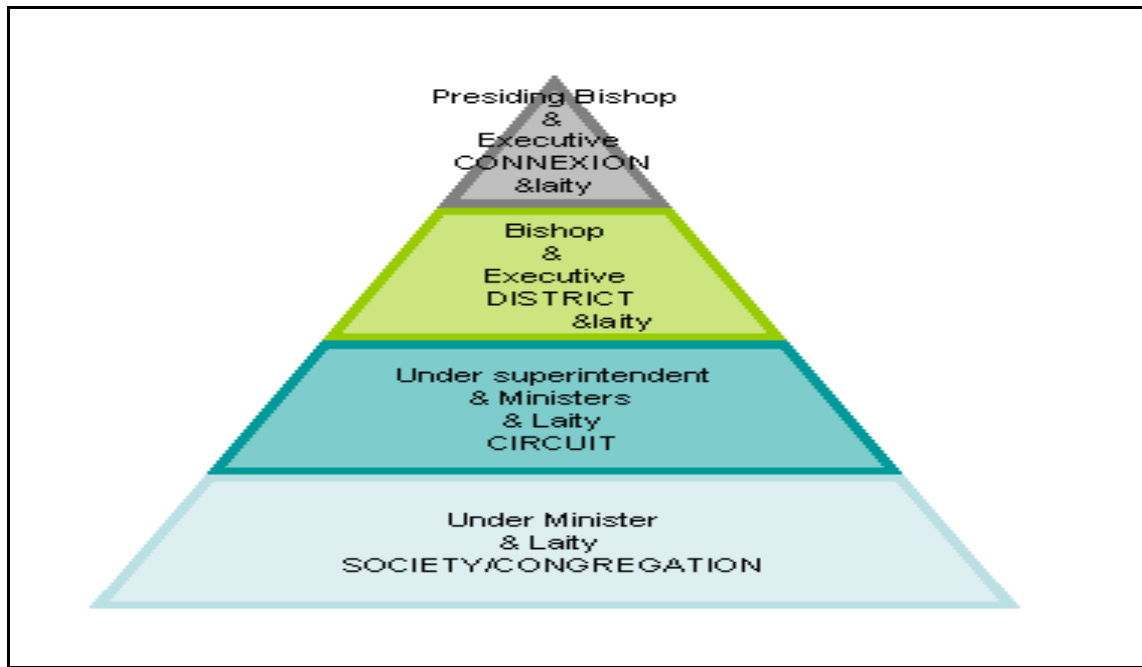


Figure 1: The organogram

#### Analysis of the organogram

- The foundation of the structure of the Methodist Church is, and has been from early Methodism, the society, which is known as the congregation in other denominations. The congregation is made up of members.
- These members form class members that meet weekly outside of the Sunday service. The class system or small group model is important in the structure of the MCSA. The society is the *ekklesia* or local congregation, whose main work is to nurture the members spiritually. This is where the *sanctorum communio* mainly happens. Through Christ, the members are there for each other, in times of joy and pain. Led by a mature class leader, the class explores holiness in life, which has two aspects: inward and outward (respectively, personal and social) holiness. The class leaders work with the minister or clergy in charge of the society, stewards comprising the executive committee and mission groups. The spirit of Christ guides the team in its mission within the community.

- The society then grows to become a *Kyriakos oikia* (the “Lord’s household”). At this level, the society is taught about the values and norms of God’s household. Charles Yringoyen (1999) explains the means of keeping the society holy: Bible study, prayer, fasting, fellowship, Christian conferences, the Lord’s Supper and public worship. Other theologians often refer to these concepts as the Means of Grace (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 43-49).

In 1.8 of the Laws and Discipline of the MCSA, the main goal of Methodism is described, namely to spread scriptural holiness. The Means of Grace is a “legacy” in the Methodist Church that was put together by John Wesley solely for this purpose.

- Hulley (1994) confirms that as far back as the 1750s and 1770s, the work done by Methodists grew tremendously and societies multiplied into circuits. Lay preachers were trained to continue to serve in the circuits. Later, the circuits grew into districts, which comprised a number of circuits in the same area with boundaries clearly demarcated (Hulley, 1994: 46).
- According to conference documents of the Methodist Church, the districts were administered by a chairperson or president; this person later became known as a bishop as structural terminology changed over the years. The districts also grew in number and together formed what is called a connexion. A connexion is under the leadership of the Presiding Bishop. This is the highest post in the Methodist Church and the associated office organizes an annual conference to monitor the mission work of the Methodist Church.

#### **4.4. The mission of the MCSA**

Having addressed how the Methodist Church came into being as well as how it was and is structured as God’s household, the researcher will now discuss the MCSA’s strategy and goals.

Ross Olivier (1996) postulates in his book *The Next Step – The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land*<sup>31</sup> that the main challenge of the MCSA is to rediscover the mission of the church in a rapidly changing world. Olivier emphasizes that the changing world has eroded traditional values and family systems have collapsed. The church needs to stand up as a beacon of light, love and truth. This move needs to cross international, denominational and cultural boundaries (Olivier, 1996: 7).

Olivier proposes that it is imperative to understand what the current mission of the church is. He also stresses that the local congregation has to move from being passive to being active in missionary work. This author believes the institutional structures are collapsing and, if missionary work is to be successful, new structures are necessary and a new vision has to be developed. However, Olivier is still convinced that the goal of Methodism is to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land, but in new ways (1996: 7-8).

In line with Olivier's plea for a clear vision and new understanding of strategies for missionary work, the MCSA is presently developing a new vision and new imperatives, or pillars, to precipitate healing and transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. The researcher feels that what is critical at this moment is implementation.

#### **4.4.1 The vision of the MCSA in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Solomon, the author of the Book of Proverbs, correctly states, "where there is no vision people perish!" (KJV Proverbs 29: 18a). Going on what Olivier stated, the MCSA needed to develop a new vision to address the disempowering effects of South Africa's past regime. However, the vision needed to continue John Wesley's original vision of spreading scriptural holiness in the land.

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<sup>31</sup>Rev. Dr Ross Olivier published *The Next Step – The Continuing Story of a Church in a New Land* in response to a yearning for transformation in the structures and the denomination called the Methodist Church of South Africa. Bishop Peter Storey declares in the introduction to the book that *The Next Step* is designed as a tool to inform Methodists about renewal and it has to be used to heal and transform congregations of the Methodist family so that they do what God wants them to do in the years ahead.

Carol Cartmill and Yvonne Gentile (2006) explain that a vision statement paints a picture of a hopeful state of being and provides direction on where one is heading. Essentially, the vision also serves as a decision-making tool (Cartmill & Gentile, 2006: 46).

The present vision of the MCSA<sup>32</sup> is based on the mission statement of the church and reads as follows:

### **The Mission Statement**

**God calls the Methodist people to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for healing and transformation**

### **The Vision**

**A Christ-healed Africa for the healing of nations**

### **The Calls for Transformation**

We believe the church is called to:

- A deepening spirituality
- A resolve to be guided by mission
- A rediscovery of every member ministry or the priesthood of all believers
- A commitment to be one so that the world may believe
- A re-emphasis of servant-leadership and discernment as our model ministry
- A redefinition and authentication of the vocation of the clergy in our church

### **The Four Imperatives of Mission**

- Evangelism and church growth
- Spirituality
- Justice and service and reconciliation
- Human and economic development and empowerment

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<sup>32</sup>The vision and mission strategies of the MCSA are contained in the Yearbook and Directory. These are used as conference resources and are published annually.

Abrahams, I. (2010). *Yearbook: The Methodist Church of South Africa*. Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House. p. 2.

The vision, mission statement and the four imperatives of mission give direction to almost all the missionary work done by the MCSA. The main goal is to achieve healing and transformation and to promote wholeness in the Methodist Church at all levels. The tools are used at society, circuit, district and connexional levels. Providing education on the MCSA's mission tools is an ongoing process.

#### **4.4.2 The relevance of the mission pillars for enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and family**

Perhaps the question one should ask is: Are these tools relevant for the purpose of this thesis? The answer is emphatically yes. The vision itself of a "Christ-healed" church suits the purpose of this thesis. The four pillars of mission work actually lead to each other. The researcher feels that if the spirituality of the people of God is nurtured, there will be an increase in evangelism and the church will grow numerically and spiritually. Having achieved these things, the economy and development of the community should be affected, directly or indirectly. Development and economic empowerment promote projects that encourage self-sufficiency of the individual. In the process of development, the congregation is re-humanized and justice is fulfilled. The result of the process is reconciliation amongst individuals and all "isms" are addressed. At the end of the day, the congregation and community get various services from the church.

The mission strategy of the MCSA as it aims to achieve its vision flows through the various structures of the church as they fulfil their roles. The main channels that bring about enrichment, growth and healing in the MCSA are ministers, congregations, the Manyano organizations, women's and men's fellowship groups and all the lay orders such as the local preachers, evangelical and deacon orders.

## **4.5 The role of the minister or pastor in enrichment, growth and healing**

As discussed in the introductory chapters, the minister or clergy is constantly engaged in the developmental transitions of family life, from birth until death. The minister performs all of the relevant rituals, namely baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funeral rites. Some of these rituals may be celebratory, but complications can turn them from being joyous to being sad if certain issues are not addressed during the preparation stage. In the process of preparation, the minister is plunged into the complexities of family systems and has to be skilled in addressing these when they emerge. To be able to address family problems, the minister has to be confident and know his or her role in the jigsaw puzzle.

### **4.5.1 The symbolic power of the minister**

Switzer (1986) postulates that there is uniqueness to the *ordained datum* of the minister. This has a great impact on the minister's relationships, as the congregation perceives him or her as a symbol. Expanding on this concept, Tillich (Switzer, 1986) lists a number of characteristics of a symbol. He states that a symbol will always point to something else that it represents. Thus, the "thing" and what it represents are inseparable. Furthermore, a symbol opens up realities that are otherwise closed off from ordinary life. Finally, a symbol unlocks dimensions in people's inner being that correspond to elements of reality. In other words, the minister is a symbol that has the ability to bring about a meaningful reality to a person during a crisis. The minister therefore brings to the congregation the meaningfulness of the Christian faith or of God, whom he or she represents (Switzer, 1986: 15).

The researcher identifies with Tillich's ideas. In all of the rituals that a minister performs (i.e. baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals), the people seem to realize that God is in their midst. This becomes an awesome reality for the minister. The minister not only symbolizes the Christian faith, but also the tradition of the particular denomination he or she represents. This symbolism strengthens the people

of God and brings healing during times of joy or distress, whilst simultaneously inspiring the minister's confidence.

Stressing the symbolic nature of the minister, Wayne Oates (1982) states that the minister represents God the Father (or Mother), reminds people of Jesus Christ and follows the lead of the Holy Spirit. The minister also becomes an emissary of a specific church and applies the caricatures of the Christian faith to suspicious, hostile and detached people in the community. According to Oates, this symbolic power emphasizes the importance of this unique structure. The specific techniques of pastoral care and personal and family counselling are put into proper perspective (Oates, 1982: 65).

It would be useful at this stage to unpack what Oates is conveying about the symbolic image of a minister.

#### **4.5.2 The pastor as a representative of God**

According to Oates (1982), people seek out Christian pastors when they are in need of friendship, encouragement and reconciliation. People seek out the pastor because of his or her moral integrity. The pastor is seen as an apostle of redemption and reconciliation. As God's representative, the minister reminds people of all the parental training they received on the right ways of living in childhood. These remain incorporated in the psychic levels of the human being (Oates, 1982: 89).

In support of Oates' ideas, the writer has experienced the yearning of patients in hospital to see a minister. Not long ago, the researcher visited a congregant in hospital and, on departure, a Hindu patient with 50% burns asked for prayer. This confirms the representation of God, our universal parent. The minister even appeals to those who are not of the Christian faith. This concept should then have an impact on a family unit in which the wife is devout whilst the husband is not. The non-Christian

husband should respond to the minister because of what the pastor symbolizes. As Oates states, the minister is a representative of God and also becomes a visible embodiment of *conscience*.

However, Wimberly (1979) points out that there is a danger to the minister's symbolism in that he or she can easily misuse his or her symbolic authority and treat people like children. This, Wimberly implies, sometimes occurs when the minister is a mature person (Wimberly, 1979: 49).

#### **4.5.3 The pastor as a reminder of Jesus Christ**

The symbolic nature of the clergy or minister is taken further by Oates (1982) as he quotes Corinthians: "God has shone in our hearts to give light of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6). The people of God are reminded of Jesus Christ when they see the pastor. Oates adds that the Christological way of thinking in pastoral care has taken the upper hand in the theological discussions of pastoral care. Jesus Christ is the one who addresses individual and corporate sin, confronts people's deeds, separates human beings from sin and creates right relationships with God and with each other (Oates, 1982: 65).

Almost all of the themes that are associated with Jesus Christ (i.e. Christ as shepherd, pastor, high priest, minister etc.) embody the concept of healing and transformation. This provides a relevant context for pastoral care or counselling when a dysfunctional family is assisted on the road to wholeness.

#### **4.5.4 The pastor as a follower of the leading Holy Spirit**

According to Oates, the following biblical excerpt about an event on the road to Emmaus, "while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them" (NIV: Luke 24: 15), supports the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit as a pastor engages in pastoral care or counselling. The Holy Spirit



bestows the skills upon pastors to do ministry work within the Body of Christ. Many themes are attached to the Holy Spirit in the work of bringing about redemption. These themes denote the pastor as comforter, judge, healer, reminder etc. All of these themes emerge in pastoral counselling sessions as the involved people are assisted towards wholeness.

#### **4.5.5 The pastoral initiative of the minister**

Switzer (1986) elaborates on another important dimension of the minister's role as a wholeness enabler. This author indicates that the minister possesses established pre-counselling relationships. He already has an entrée into people's homes, possibly because he or she has been involved with the family during bereavement, illness or any of the developmental stages in the family i.e. birth, baptism, confirmation, marriage or death. The trust that develops between the minister and the parishioners should not be underestimated (Switzer, 1986: 15).

Pruyser (1976) responds to the question, "Why do problem-laden people turn to their pastors in looking for help?" in the following useful manner. In rural areas, pastors are often the only accessible source of help. The pastor plays many roles in rural areas. He or she is the social worker, psychologist, doctor and even home finder for the homeless, amongst other things. The pastor is forced to play all of these different roles, which are arranged differently in the urban areas. The pastors in rural areas also render these services free of charge or for a very low cost. They are also trusted as referral channels (Pruyser, 1976: 44-45).

The researcher has observed that what happens in the rural areas is not vastly different to what happens in the townships and peri-urban settlements.

The following illustration confirms what the above authors say about pastoral symbolism and the initiative of the pastor.

At the area of research, after an elderly parent in the Mda family died (not the family's real surname), the surviving family would not talk to each other as they did not see eye to eye about certain matters. The family was invited to meet in the minister's study. The family had no problem with this because they had seen the minister at the funeral.

Having dealt with one another over three sessions, the family members were willing to be led to forgiveness and reconciliation. About six months after the incident, the son, Mfundo (not his real name), came to the pastor because he wanted to get married. The pastor had premarital counselling sessions with the couple and a year after the marriage, the same minister baptized the couple's daughter. This emphasizes the importance of pastoral initiative and the relationship of trust that develops when a minister gains entrée in the lives of congregants or parishioners. The pastor plays different roles as he or she shepherds the congregation through the course of their lives.

#### **4.6 The role of the congregation in enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and family**

Amongst the continuing calls for transformation in the Methodist Church of South Africa, as discussed in 4.3.1, is the "rediscovery of every member ministry or the priesthood of all believers". This aligns with the fact that the church was identified as *sanctorum communio*, as mentioned when this chapter grappled with the identity of the church or community of faith. However, for the congregation to be effective as carers and counsellors, the minister or pastor has to be engaged in teaching them skills to use in leading others to wholeness.

#### **4.6.1 The congregation as a group caring resource in counselling**

George Webber (Clinebell, 1992) postulates that any congregation that conducts missionary work makes provision for its members to meet in small groups. It is in these small groups that each member experiences a sense of belonging and being nurtured. They also provide an effective teaching and caring ministry. The small church group offers a rich opportunity for developing interpersonal skills, spiritual depth, leadership abilities and intellectual discipline. The small group becomes an asset in fulfilling the ministry of growth, healing, service, reconciliation and development of healthy relationships. The small group frequently engages in prayer, Bible study, mutual caring and service to the community (Clinebell, 1992: 349-351).

What George Webber is saying resonates with what happens in the class meetings in many Methodist churches. John and Charles Wesley introduced the small group legacy in eighteenth century England. The detail of the class system of the Methodist Church has been broadly explained in 4.3.7 (see organogram).

#### **4.6.2 The class system as a small group caring model in the MCSA**

Leonard Hulley (1994) postulates that when the Wesleys started classes, they were initially aimed at collecting weekly contributions to use in building worship places for the newly established Methodist Church in England. However, the classes were later used to fulfil three functions. These were to collect monetary contributions from the class members, to care for the members pastorally and for the members to meet regularly with the stewards.

Each class consisted of a minimum of twelve members and a maximum of fifteen members and the class was led by a class leader. In each town, Wesley would summon the leaders to find out about the class members' spiritual states. In this way, Wesley kept his finger on the pulse of the work of every society in the Methodist connexion. The class system provided the first level of pastoral care for Methodists, saw to their immediate needs and monitored their spiritual growth (Hulley, 1994: 25).

The structure of the class system has existed in the Methodist Church since its inception by the founders. Laws and Discipline, the Constitution of the Methodist Church of South Africa, emphasizes this structure as follows:

### **CLASS MEETINGS**

As membership in the church also involves Christian community it is the duty of all members of the Church to cultivate this in every possible way. The weekly Class meeting, which includes Home Bible Study and Fellowship Groups, has from the beginning proved to be the most effective way of maintaining true communion in Christian experience. It is intended to provide Christian community and instruction (Laws and Discipline: 2009:7).

As extracted from the existing constitution of the Methodist Church of South Africa, the class system is a small group therapy resource available to the members of the congregation when problems emerge in their family units.

#### **4.6.3 The relevance of the class system as a caring and counselling model in the MCSA from an African perspective**

The context of the research centres on the Zulu-speaking people of KwaNdengezi. The class system brings a group of people together and becomes a relevant scenario for the communally conscious African people.

Mbiti (1969) explains that an individual cannot exist alone in traditional life. In an African traditional setting, people exist collectively. A person owes his or her existence to other people, as well as past generations. The individual very much depends on the collective group for survival. The newborn child goes through certain rites of incorporation; these make him or her part of the family and society. These rites continue up until adulthood and beyond, culminating in the final stage, death. Death signifies that an individual has been incorporated into the wider family of the dead and the living (Mbiti, 1969: 14-107).

Oduyoye (2001) further emphasizes the importance of community in African traditional life. This author states that, despite modernization, the sense of community

prevails in Africa and moves people to care for children, the aged, sick, disabled, widows and all those deemed to be vulnerable.

This communal element is useful to the African people in their search for wholeness. Oduyoye believes that this caring and collective existence influences women theologians to focus strongly on marriage, family life and children's well-being (2001: 34).

Having discussed Mbiti and Oduyoye's thoughts on communality from an African perspective, the researcher feels comfortable that a lot of therapeutic work can be done within the small group model of the class system within the congregation in the Methodist Church. Good potential for healing and transformation exists within this model. What is critical is to educate and empower lay leaders with regard to basic caring and counselling skills. This is noted in the Methodist class book.

#### **4.6.4 The relevance of the Manyano<sup>33</sup> organizations as a congregational caring tool in the MCSA**

It is a reality that the MCSA emphasizes unity. However, the constituency of the Methodist denomination is diverse, racially and culturally. The management of the church is aware of this diversity and thus offers various ministries to address contextual needs. The Manyano organizations are a powerful model for missionary work and offer enrichment and growth to men, women, young girls, youth and teenagers. These organizations are mainly in the black African section of the church.

All of the Manyano groups are caring resources within the church and in the community. These groups emphasize loyalty to the teachings of Jesus Christ, Bible

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<sup>33</sup>*Manyano* is a Zulu word meaning "unity". The various Manyano organizations target different age groups in the black African section of the MCSA. The men's groups are called the Young Men's Guild (YMG). The most commonly used indigenous phrase for this group is *Amadodana aseWesile*. The women's groups are called the Women's Manyano (WM). The YWM is the organization for young women and mainly single parents. The YWG is the Youth Wesley Guild, which is mainly for the fellowship of young adults. Teenagers fall under an organization called *Themba Nothemba*. Sunday School nurtures all children spiritually and is not seen as an organization by the MCSA. The organizations do valuable caring and missionary work in the MCSA. All members of these organizations are full members and belong to a class in the congregation. Some are in leadership positions.

study and prayer and the promotion of solid family values. The young look up to the elders in the organization as their role models. The organizations are relevant as congregational caring tools that supplement the class meetings. The researcher believes that it is crucial to educate this valuable mission group in pastoral caring and counselling skills. When those in leadership positions are passionate about helping people with their brokenness, this will assist in bringing about wholeness to families in the various congregations.

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter has responded to the challenge from various authors to produce a model for enrichment, growth and healing in an effort to fulfil the calling of Jesus Christ to “shepherd God’s flock”. Whilst psychology as a discipline attends to problems in marriage and family, the consensus seems to be that the local church offers a more suitable environment to undertake this task in conjunction with available psychotherapists or family therapists.

The initial aim of the chapter was to present descriptive definitions of growth, enrichment and healing in the context of pastoral care and counselling. This presentation explored the reasons why the church can be a relevant and effective centre for enrichment, growth and healing. The exploration focused on three crucial aspects that make the church a suitable institution for addressing the problems and complexities of marriage and family. The three elements are the church organogram, mission and goals. The church was further examined in terms of its position in the community as *kyriokos oikia* or “the Lord’s house”; as *ekklesia* or “the local congregation of Christians”; and as *sanctorum communio*, which means “the communion of Christians in Christ”. The analysis of the three elements put across how the church is in a position to engage in enrichment, growth and healing, from both Western and African perspectives.

In the process of examining the church’s potential as an effective institution for enrichment, growth and healing, the researcher focused on the denomination being

researched, namely the Methodist Church of South Africa. Various denominations use various approaches to engage in missionary work. The researcher then examined the Wesley brothers, focusing on their historical background and spiritual formation as well as the structures they proposed for the Methodist Church and how these assist with missionary work within this denomination. The mission of the MCSA is expressed through a vision that has been created to be relevant in light of the social ills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The strategy for instituting the vision comes through four mission pillars and six calls for transformation.

The chapter then examined the role of the minister in the church, the role of the congregation as well as the role of group caring systems such as the class system in the MCSA. The chapter then explored the different mission organizations, predominantly those that function in the area of research at KwaNdengezi. The relevance and importance of the Manyano organizations as a caring and enrichment tool in the context of the church and community was briefly explained. The organizations are a resource for talented lay people who do great work to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ within the church and the community at large.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that the church is an ecclesiological institution that is a relevant centre to promote enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and families. For this to happen, it is crucial to train lay leaders in pastoral care giving and pastoral counselling skills. In fact, most of the work in the class systems and organizations involves care-giving work. Pastoral counselling is a skill that needs to be learnt. Pastoral counselling also takes a great deal of time as well as energy. The minister cannot do missionary work in isolation. He or she needs to empower lay leaders with counselling skills so that there can be team ministry to address the marital and family problems of God's flock as well as other social ills. The following chapter will thus address the training of lay leadership in caring skills, specifically with respect to pastoral or Christian counselling skills.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **TRAINING LAY LEADERS IN BASIC pastoral CARE giving AND COUNSELLING: FIELDWORK**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter intends to engage in fieldwork. The fieldwork was launched in the local church context of research at KwaNdengezi. The intention was to begin training the leadership in basic pastoral care giving and counselling skills. The researcher believes that although the focus of this thesis is on enrichment, growth and healing in marriage and family, the journey in training the clergy or laity needs to begin with pastoral care giving and counselling in general. The basic skills needed are relevant for more or less all socio-economic and political counselling issues. The training of the lay leaders is presented in this chapter in three lay training programmes. Lay Training Programme I is a foundational seminar (or input) conducted by a consultant family therapist. The programme offered by the family therapist was a one-day basic counselling development course that was open to all those interested in and passionate about helping individuals, families and communities through their pain and brokenness in a changing world. Lay Training Programme 2 is a follow-up basic pastoral counselling course for those who attended the foundational counselling development course. The researcher, together with three other circuit ministers, facilitated Lay Training Programme 2. The researcher also presented Lay Training Programme 3. The focus of the third training programme is to recruit a “Marriage and Family Wholeness Team” from the group that attended the two training programmes. In all of the programmes, there is emphasis on dialogue between Western pastoral counselling models and African/Zulu counselling practices.

Clinebell (1992) encourages the need for training laity by citing a report from the second assembly of the World Council of Churches:

Any emphasis on the ministry of the laity means not only training but a special kind of pastoral care. Laymen and laywomen should be encouraged to use the pastoral gifts that many of them possess. Mutual care of members by each other as well as by



the clergy is needed in the Church. Christians have many natural opportunities for the pastoral care of neighbours, workmates and others (1992: 394).

## **5.1. Some explanatory definitions**

For clarity, the researcher feels it is necessary to offer some explanatory definitions before the training programmes are presented. There is a need to provide clarity on who the “laity” is and why they need to be trained in pastoral care and counselling. A brief explanation of the terms “pastoral care” and “pastoral counselling” is also important in this presentation. The researcher wishes to state that “pastoral care” and “pastoral giving” will be used interchangeably in this study. Both terms more or less mean the same thing.

### **5.1.1. Laity – an explanatory definition**

Clinebell (1992) states that laity comes from the Greek word *laos*, which refers to Christians. Other phrases used to express the New Testament understanding of Christians are “the people of God”, “the Body of Christ” and “the community of the Holy Spirit”. In recent years, there has been a rediscovery that all Christians have a ministry, hence the phrase “priesthood of all believers”. In other words, whether Christians are ordained or not, they are “priests”. The above-mentioned author sees the role of the clergy being mainly to empower, train, guide and coach Christians. He is convinced that the clergy are “pastors of pastors” and “counsellors of counsellors” (Clinebell, 1992: 394-5).

As much as the researcher agrees with Clinebell’s thinking about the laity, the MCSA stands on a slightly different platform. The organogram (Figure 1) presented in chapter four reflects how the laymen and laywomen are part of the ministry. From the top down, this structure comprises the Presiding Bishop, who has an office in the connexion, then the Bishop’s office in the district, followed by the superintendent and circuit stewards in the circuit, then the minister, class leaders and society stewards in the society level. All the levels in the organogram have a relevant lay leader in place. The clergy and the laity contribute to mission and ministry in their different roles.

There are additional lay orders in the MCSA. These are the Evangelists, Bible women and local preachers. The deacons and deaconesses are ordained into a different ministry: that of the Word and service. The lay orders all do great missionary work but do not belong to the “ordained ministry”<sup>34</sup>. To be a minister, the layperson or Christian seeking to be ordained in the ministry in the MCSA has to undergo training, which sometimes exceeds five years, depending on what the probationary minister’s category is. When the probationary minister completes his or her training, he or she is ordained for the “ministry of the Word and sacraments”<sup>35</sup>. The different denominations will certainly understand this subject differently because of different doctrinal issues. In other words, the ordained ministry and lay ministry, whilst working hand in hand in the MCSA, do mission work from different platforms.

### **5.1.2. Pastoral care – an explanatory definition**

The *New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies* defines pastoral care as encompassing those activities of the church that are directed toward restoring wholeness to individuals and communities in the context of God’s redemptive purposes for creation.

For the researcher, the definition is relevant to the study. Wholeness that is positively related to healing is one of the key concepts in this study. Restoration of peace in marriage and family is also crucial in the agenda of this work. Whilst restoration focuses on relationships, the people in the relationship are unique and have different needs. The context of healing and restoration is also expressed as happening within God’s redemptive purposes for creation. The researcher sees a congregation as a relevant premise for God’s redemptive purposes.

As a minister in the congregation, the researcher believes that pastoral care includes visiting hospitals to see and pray with the sick, visiting prisons to pray with the prisoners, visiting orphanages and all places of care where souls are cared for. This

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<sup>34</sup>The church policy of the MCSA offers information about “ordained ministry” in the Methodist Church in chapter 4 of *Laws and Discipline* (2007).

<sup>35</sup>The details of the training of ministers in the MCSA are found in the church polity or *Laws and Discipline* (2007). 11<sup>th</sup> edition. pp. 29-54.

includes caring for the family during times of bereavement. This visitation work is always done by the mission groups like the Manyano, women's associations, fellowships and classes in the MCSA and presumably by similar groups in all other denominations. It is useful to note that Manyano organizations in the black African context extend their pastoral care giving to the bereaved family by taking turns to visit the family going through the pain of losing a loved one, sometimes even sleeping over to support the bereaved family. The suggested relevant Zulu word by the contextual informants to express this gesture in caring is *ukunakekela* or *ukukhathalela*. These are both synonyms for care giving.

### **5.1.3. Pastoral counselling – an explanatory definition**

*The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies* states that pastoral counselling is an essential part of total ministry of pastoral care. Uniqueness in pastoral counselling comes from training the pastors and equips them with integrative insights from contemporary psychosocial sciences. In this discipline, combining psychotherapeutic methods with healing resources from the Jewish and Christian heritages is emphasized.

The above definition stresses a very important element in pastoral counselling i.e. training. Training involves empowerment, education and even discipline in the discipline of pastoral counselling.

The *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counselling*<sup>36</sup> emphasizes that in its evolution in modern times, the discipline of pastoral counselling has had dialogue primarily with the psychologies of Freud, Rogers, Erickson, Satir, Ackerman, Bowen, Minuchin and others. This dialogue has allowed pastoral care and counselling to recapture a classical understanding of body, mind and spirit.

Childs (1990) notes two important elements in the uniqueness of pastoral counselling. He states that pastoral counselling seeks to enable persons to help themselves. Furthermore, this author stresses that pastoral counselling ensures that the counselling

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<sup>36</sup>The *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling* is a resource edited by Rodney Hunt (1990) that throws light on various definitions of the discipline of pastoral care and counselling.

experience delivers a resource for a fuller and richer theological understanding of human nature. Its healing goal entails diagnostic, social and rehabilitative complexities. Theology is applied to pastoral counselling (Childs, 1990: 21-23).

The researcher identifies with several important concepts from Childs' (1990) explanation of pastoral counselling. One concept is the enabling of an individual. This is important for preventing the possibility of the counselee becoming dependent on the counsellor. Another useful concept is that of seeing pastoral counselling as applied theology. The pastoral counsellor's awareness of being a theologian helps the pastor to avoid leaning too much on psychosocial disciplines and consequently losing his or her identity.

Further to the above, Waruta and Kinoti (2000) emphasize that pastoral counselling has to be in dialogue with spiritual and cultural factors to be effective (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 7).

The researcher has observed that the black elders within the context of the church and community also offer good insights into care giving and counselling people in the daily challenges of life. The elders are often referred to as *abeluleki*, as they bring counsel to struggling couples and families. Training, however, is crucial in this discipline.

Concerning pastoral care giving, the researcher is aware of quite a number of brilliant and well-researched resources in pastoral care giving skills in the North American context. According to many authors, a pastoral caregiver sometimes helps families restructure their relationships in such a way that the conditions improve in terms of healing processes within religious dimensions. A lot can be borrowed from relevant ministries for the purpose of training laity for basic pastoral care giving. One of these is the Stephen ministries<sup>37</sup>. In fact, the researcher notes some similarities in the

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<sup>37</sup>The Stephen Ministries is a well-developed Christian ministry based in St. Louis in the United States of America. This ministry was developed to equip laypeople to provide quality Christian care to hurting people on a one-to-one basis. The lay care givers work in and around the congregation to support the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, separated, divorced, unemployed and those facing

Stephen Ministries approach and that of the MCSA Manyano organizations, particularly in the way the members are equipped for pastoral care giving. However, the purpose of this study is to develop a resource that gives the laity both basic pastoral caring/care giving and pastoral counselling skills. Moreover, the training seeks to make the resource speak to the people in their own local cultural context.

## **5.2. Implementation of Lay Programme 1**

### **5.2.1. Preparation for seminar with a consultant family therapist**

Having consulted the family therapist, the relevant leadership of the circuit gave the researcher permission to embark on the pastoral counselling programme. The invitation was extended to the lay leaders of the societies of our circuit, which consists of the circuit stewards, society stewards and class leaders of the Methodist Church at KwaNdengezi. The invitations were distributed at the minister's staff meeting. Local service providers in the vicinity, like schools, the police, the crisis centre, social workers, psychologists as well as all those passionate about counselling within the church and community were also invited.

### **5.2.2 The one-day basic care and counselling development seminar**

#### **5.2.2.1 Setting the scene**

At the registration table, participants were offered files, writing paper and a pen. After a warm welcoming tea from the task team, the seminar commenced with praise and worship followed by opening devotions. Formal introductions happened in the form of an icebreaker conducted by one of the social workers in the task team.

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many other crises or life challenges. During half-day workshops, those who want to discover, cultivate and use their God-given spiritual gifts to be active in ministry and mission in their congregation can learn care-giving skills. The Stephen Ministries do not focus much on pastoral counselling; it focuses mainly on caring. Apparently, different congregations (e.g. Presbyterian and Lutheran congregations in St. Louis) have used this resource successfully. This ministry stresses *confidentiality* as a priority in its caring.

This information was accessed from <http://www.stephenministries.org> on 15 October 2011.

### 5.2.2.2 The seminar input

Dr Rev. Leon Klein (2009)<sup>38</sup>, the invited consultant family therapist, introduced himself as a married and family man. He shared his passion, personal calling and experiences in the healing ministry. He stressed the importance of a “vision conversation”. For Klein, a vision conversation involves prayers about the vision, interaction with those passionate about healing and conversation with potential partners. Klein described how the vision provides energy and fuel for the success of the ministry. He emphasized that his vision was to see local churches being intentional about reaching the many emotionally, socially and physically broken, hurting individuals and families in our communities. His prayer is always that laypeople become instruments through whom the vision is realized and through whom communities may become healed and transformed (Klein, 2009: 5-8).

The participants were divided into groups of four to discuss what pain and brokenness they see in their contexts and what their vision statement would be like in their attempt to address brokenness through pastoral counselling. There were 50 participants in the seminar, excluding the circuit ministers and the presenter.

Klein stressed that it was important to create our own vision mission statement for the circuit as a way forward. He stressed that the vision keeps the visionary and the ministry focused. A vision statement acts like a radar for a ship in the ocean. It constantly guides and leads the ministry.

The groups produced challenging vision statements that focused on specific contexts. These were shared in the plenary session. The researcher also noted that the speaker shared a similar vision with her. The main difference is that the researcher’s focus is

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<sup>38</sup>Dr Leon Klein (2009) is a family therapist and an ordained Methodist minister in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has experience in the fields of theology, family therapy and education. Dr Klein specializes in interdenominational counselling ministry practices, management and consultation. The researcher invited him specifically because of his familiarity with the South African context and also because he is a colleague in the MCSA. He has recently published a book *Equipping Local Churches to be Centres of Healing – Basic Steps to Develop a Self-sustainable Counselling Ministry*. This author is general in his approach to counselling, whereas the researcher seeks to be specific in addressing marriage and family. However, the researcher is in the process of commencing a partnership-based, supportive and consultative relationship with this useful resource.

on marriage and family whilst the speaker is more general and rather Western in his approach. The participants also had different focuses e.g. one group was concerned with alcohol and drug abuse whereas another group focussed on child and woman abuse as an issue that needed attention. One group was concerned with the effects of unemployment and subsequent poverty in the communities. Another group saw crime as an issue that needed to be addressed. Merely discussing the brokenness in our land gave all involved hope that the foundations for an important ministry were about to be laid.

### **5.2.2.3 Important steps to follow**

Klein shared the steps to follow, as explained in his publication. This, he stressed was crucial in producing an effective counselling ministry. The researcher and the group found some steps to be more important and useful than others. One of the important steps that received much attention was the importance of finding a ministry “champion” amongst the laity. This person would wholeheartedly commit to the vision and be available to work closely with the minister. This had to be a mature person who was aware of his or her spiritual gifts and committed to the counselling ministry.

The next important step was to establish the core ministry team. Klein emphasized that the core ministry team had to have three qualities: character, competence and chemistry. Character and competence are self-explanatory. Chemistry metaphorically pertains to the values of love, understanding, respect and warmth. Klein is convinced that arrogance, envy and anger are not helpful where healing has to take place (Klein, 2009: 51-56).

After lunch, the participants were asked to form groups to discuss the above-mentioned essential qualities. The group sessions ended with praying for each other.

The presenter continued the seminar after lunch and offered further important steps to follow in the development of a local church-based counselling ministry. He stressed

the importance of developing ministry partnerships. This would encourage an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to the task of counselling. This is known as networking. The disciplines would depend on the context but would include the medical field, psychologists, social workers, crisis centres, the South African Police Service, schools and other available service providers. Time was given to identify the service providers in the context. In the seminar, there were participants from the neighbouring schools, police, social workers, a psychologist and a person from the local crisis centre. The consultant emphasized the importance of developing a database for the partners. The conversation that happened with service providers in the groups was beneficial to the participants.

Further important steps included defining a clear ministry strategy. A clear strategy outlines the goals of the ministry, the resources available to get it started and marketing the ministry in the church and community. In conclusion, the presenter advised that those passionate about counselling should be trained further on basic skills and later become affiliated with the Southern African Association for Pastoral Work (SAAP). Klein stressed that training courses would need to be continuous and affiliation to SAAP offers that opportunity. SAAP offers credibility to the registered clientele. It is also affiliated to the African Association for Pastoral Studies as well as the International Congress of Pastoral Care and Counselling. According to the speaker, the main aim of SAAP is to associate, affiliate and represent people who are interested in the study and training in pastoral work in Southern Africa. SAAP assists pastoral counsellors and therapists active in the field to contribute effectively to the healing of our country by applying standards and holding members to a strict ethical code. All of the above information is available in the speaker's new book. Accountability of counsellors is important, Klein emphasized (2009: 172-174).

The most important benefit of Lay Programme 1 was the opportunity for the participants to engage with the author of the resource on the counselling topic. As the author is South African and a Methodist minister, this presents the opportunity to develop an ecclesial, contextual and theologically relevant resource for the MCSA.



Klein suggested some material to equip those who felt led to be part of a care and counselling ministry in their church. The material was handed over to the organizer of the seminar i.e. the researcher. The seminar was a success and the need to go ahead was identified by the participants. A commitment form was signed by all those who were passionate about going ahead with the training in the circuit.

#### 5.2.2.4 The commitment form

### **MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708 – COMMITMENT FORM**

#### **KWANDENGEZI METHODIST CHURCH**

**One-day Counselling Development Seminar: Rev. Dr Leon Klein**

**Organizer: Rev. A.L. Sigaba**

*Siza ugcwalise unikeze umgqugquzeleli ekugcineni komcimbi/Please fill in the form and leave with the organizer at the end of the seminar.*

*Phawula loko okufanele wean/Tick what is applicable to you.*

1. *Kukhona isidingo sokweluleka kwi-society yakho noma emphakathini okuwona?/*

*Do you see a need for counselling in the community you live in?*

**Yes/Yebo** \_\_\_\_\_

**No/Cha** \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Uyathanda ukuqhubeka ngofundela umsebenzi wokusiza abantu bakaNkulunkulu ngokweluleka?/Would you like to be trained for pastoral counselling so that you can help God?*

**Yes/Yebo** \_\_\_\_\_

**No/Cha** \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Uzokwazi ukuza kwizifundo ezizoqalwa ezinezinhlelo ezingu -12?/Would you be able to attend the 12-module course to begin soon?*

**Yes/Yebo** \_\_\_\_\_

**No/Cha** \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU FOR COMING TO THIS SEMINAR.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature/*Sayina* \_\_\_\_\_ Date/*Usuku* \_\_\_\_\_

Those who wished to proceed with Lay Training Programme 2 filled in the commitment form.

The closing ceremonies ended with giving thanks to the visiting family therapist, Dr Rev. Leon Klein, for his willingness to be in partnership with the local effort to develop pastoral counsellors.

### **5.3. Implementation of Lay Programme 2**

#### **5.3.1 Preparation of the training programme by the researcher**

The positive attendance at the seminar and the responses of the participants to Dr Klein's input were shared in the following staff meeting. After going through the suggested material at the staff meeting, three other ministers volunteered to be part of the training programme. This reflected the passion and the need to develop the programme of enrichment, growth and healing by colleagues in the different societies. The consensus was that the researcher and the ministerial volunteers should go ahead with the training of the laity in our circuit. Progress was expected to be reported at the quarterly executive and circuit meetings. This gave the programme accountability, which is important, as well as support from the leadership of the circuit. Both accountability and support are crucial for the stability of the emerging pastoral care and counselling programme. The training was launched in February 2010. The suggested basic Christian counselling course consists of 12 modules and a certificate is given to the trainees at the end of the course.

During consultation, the four ministers, including the researcher, sat down to plan the launching of the training course. Having gone through the suggested material, the training team decided to adapt the suggested model where necessary, without altering the content of the material, to suit the cultural context.

The suggested model is an unpublished paper on "Basic Christian Counselling Course" by a South African lay Christian counsellor, Marge Stathakis, based at Bryanston Methodist Church in Johannesburg.<sup>39</sup> The decision taken was that whilst referring to this model, other models would also be introduced to the trainee lay team

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<sup>39</sup>The researcher is happy to adapt and use the unpublished material by Marge Stathakis. The title of the paper is "Basic Christian Counselling Course". Because of its South African origin, the training course is ideal for the context of the research and contributes much to the main thrust of this research work.

regarding processes to empower this ministry. Planning also involved setting dates, venues and the times. A decision was reached about how to share the work. The consensus was that the first meeting would be at KwaNdengezi Methodist Church where the vision was born. The subsequent venues were to be decided with the participants. Different tasks were shared and the course material was photocopied in preparation for the registration day. What was exciting about this work was the team spirit, which was ignited amongst the ministerial facilitators.

The following invitation was sent to the societies through the ministers and staff of the circuit:

### 5.3.2 Invitation layout

#### **An invitation to a basic Christian counselling course” (BCCC):**

**WHO is invited:** - : lay leadership and all those passionate about pastoral counselling in our church and communities.

**WHY:** - To develop skills in counselling to help address pain and brokenness around us.

**WHEN:** - 20 February 2010

**WHERE:** - KwaNdengezi Methodist Church

**WHAT TIME:** - 14h00

A donation of R50 for tea will be much appreciated.

**Please contact our office for further information at 031 704 5336.**

**Invitation to the Lay Training Programme 2 (mainly the Lay Training Programme 1 participants)**

The following format was prepared for the first day of the training programme.

**5.3.3 The first day training format**

**THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708 – Basic Christian Counselling Course (BCCC)**

*AN INTRODUCTION AND REGISTRATION*

<b>14h00-14h30.....</b>	Tea and Registration
<b>14h35-14h45.....</b>	Opening Devotions
<b>15h00-15h10.....</b>	Ice Breaker and Introductions
<b>15h10-15h40.....</b>	Course Introduction, Outline and Vision Statement
<b>15h45-16h25.....</b>	Question and Answer Time
<b>16h30-17h00.....</b>	Finalizing Days, Time, Dates and Venues
<b>17h05-17h15.....</b>	Winding up and Closing Devotion

## **Lay Training Programme 2**

### **5.3.4 The launching of the training programme**

#### **5.3.4.1 Room arrangement**

As arranged in the foundational training seminar, a task team was delegated to attend to the details of the venue. As Nicky and Sila (2000) note in their marriage conferences, the environment is crucial for the success of any seminar or workshop. This expresses that the participants are of high value (Lee, N. & Lee, S., 2000: 4).<sup>40</sup> The sanctuary in which the initial training was done was arranged by putting the chairs in a horseshoe shape. This allowed participants to see each other as well as the facilitator to see the participants at a glance. At the registration table, there were files, free pens and pencils, sweets, nametags, tea, drinks and biscuits.

#### **5.3.4.2 The programme presentation**

One of the facilitators led the opening devotions by conducting praise and worship, reading a scripture and praying. An icebreaker followed and introductions set the atmosphere of friendliness and willingness to listen to each other as the participants shared what their name means and why they are at the workshop.

Another facilitator spent time in the introduction to the course giving out the outline and going through the outline with the participants. The proposed vision statement was shared. Clarity was given on that the creation of the vision for the pastoral care and counselling ministry in the circuit would be an ongoing attempt and could not be finalized in one day. However, the discussion about the vision produced significant proposals. The consensus was that the vision statement would constantly be revisited

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<sup>40</sup>Having attended an Alpha “marriage conference” personally hosted by Nicky and Sila Lee at the Kloof Anglican Church in South Africa in November 2009, the researcher noted and learnt about the importance of a well-prepared venue for a seminar or workshop. Details need to be attended to. These include having a registration table with free files, writing paper, pens, pencils and even chocolates or sweets. Nametags are also given to the participants so that they can identify each other easily. It is also important for the facilitator to know every participant by name. Warmth at the venue creates the feeling that the course being offered is important and that the participants are also very important. The task team has to be briefed about these issues beforehand.

until the final version is produced. The participants were to work on the vision statement task individually.

After a productive question and answer time, the days, venue and dates were finalized. The participants decided the venue needed to be centralized and moved to the Methodist Church in Pinetown, which was easily accessible to most people. The course meetings were to be every Saturday afternoon at 14h00. The day wound up with prayer, benediction, and the anticipation of growth, enrichment and even healing of the participants as they become empowered in the ministry of pastoral care and counselling.

The total attendance on the launch day was 20 people. All the participants in this workshop were people who had attended the one-day counselling development seminar. The constituency included a cross-cultural representation from the circuit.

#### **5.3.4.3 Demographics of the participants**

The constituency of participants were from nine societies in our circuit and included two social workers who are members of the local church. The demographics reflect the sex, race, age, marital status, career and applicable church responsibilities of members. False names have been used to protect their identities.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Career</b>	<b>Church Portfolio</b>
1	Nceba	M	38	SA	Married	Self-employed	YMG executive member
2	Nonceba	F	34	SA	Married to Nonceba	Bank teller	Choir member
3	Buhle	M	40	SA	Married	Driver	YMG vice president



4	Nobuhle	F	32	SA	Married to Buhle	Nurse	Women's Manyano member
5	Sicelo	M	37	SA	Single parent	Driver	Society steward and YMG member
6	Sipho	M	36	SA	Married	Lawyer	Local preacher and YMG executive member
7	Thando	M	34	SA	Married	School teacher	YMG executive member
8	Anna	F	58	SA	Married	Seamstress	Women's Manyano member and class leader
9	Mercy	F	48	SA	Single Parent	Typist	Local preacher
10	Nosipho	F	45	SA	Married	School teacher	Candidate for ordained ministry
11	Ningi	F	55	SA	Married	Nurse	Local preacher
12	Mbali	F	30	SA	Single parent	Social worker	Full member
13	Nomntu	F	27	SA	Single parent	Social worker	Youth executive member
14	Nathini	F	40	SA	Single parent	Librarian	Local preacher
15	Daisy	F	41	SA	Married	Lay ministry	Deaconess on trial
16	Dorcas	F	40	SA	Single	School teacher	Class leader
17	Mary	F	45	SA	Married	Secretary	Church receptionist
18	Dolly	F	50	SA	Married	Housewife	Pastoral assistant
19	David	M	55	SA	Married to Dolly	CEO	Circuit steward
20	Abel	M	46	SA	Married	Bank teller	YMG executive member

**Figure 1: Demographics of the participants**

#### **5.3.4.4 Sample analysis**

As presented, the constituency of the emerging team is as follows:

All of the participants are middle aged, which brings to bear their vast experience and maturity. Of the 20 participants, eight are male and 12 are female. In the group, there are four married couples, who will hopefully be part of the marriage and family wholeness team. Alternatively, they can be involved in pastoral care and counselling in general. They will also be useful as “support couples”<sup>41</sup>. There are six single parents; they should grow to be useful in journeying with other single parents as well as be part of the marriage and family wholeness team. There is one unmarried and childless single person. The occupations of the participants vary: some are homemakers, teachers, Justice Department personnel, social workers and candidates for the ordained ministry and deaconess order. In the group there are five English-speaking white participants and the rest are Zulu-speaking people, all of which are from KwaZulu-Natal. The whole group are in lay leadership in various societies of our cross-cultural circuit. They all bring with them experience from their professions and as mature people in the local church and community.

#### **5.3.5 The topics of Lay Training Programme 2**

The suggested unpublished material for lay training consists of 12 modules. There is one assignment and a certificate is awarded at the end of the course.

##### **5.3.5.1 Identity of the counsellor as an instrument of healing**

The participants were guided through exercises to find themselves as pastoral or Christian counsellors. The initial exercise began by referring to scripture to see what the Bible conveys about counselling (Stathakis, 1995: 1-5).

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<sup>41</sup>Nicky and Sila Lee suggest the notion of “support couples” in their marriage conferences. As stated before, the researcher attended one in Kloof. They observe that even if people are not trained as pastoral counsellors, older couples can support younger couples when they undergo stress in their relationships because of their experience.

Proverbs 11: 14 states that, “When there is no guidance a people fall, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety”.

The Zulu Bible cites the same verse as follows:

*Lapho kungekho izeluleko, abantu bayawa  
Kepha lapho kukhona abeluleki abaningi  
Kukhona ukuphumelela (Proverbs 11: 14).*

The group noted the difference in emphasis in the two languages. Whilst the verses express the same thing, the Zulu Bible emphasizes that in the absence of counsellors, people fall. When there are many counsellors, there is prosperity. In discussion, the various forms of “falls” (e.g. social, emotional and economic problems) were identified and noted. The promise of prosperity in levels of economy, spirituality, emotion and social contexts due to there being many counsellors encouraged the participants to move forward with the training.

Other references included Isaiah 61: 1-3 and Galatians 6: 2. These both challenge counsellors to bear one another’s burdens, as Jesus Christ did for His fellow man. The verses promise fulfilment in ministry when people imitate Jesus Christ.

In groups of three, participants spent time being introspective about achievements, failures, likes and dislikes as well as their views of themselves. The exercise mainly sought to develop self-awareness as part of personal growth, learning to accept oneself and then moving on to love others. In the plenary, the participants shared how they have discovered themselves.

As the researcher facilitated proceedings, she explained to the participants that before a counsellor can help others grow, he or she must discover himself or herself and grow. In Zulu culture, the older child takes the younger child by the hand and says “*cathu!*”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>*Cathu* is a Zulu word that means “take your first step”. *Cathu* is a word of commandment or encouragement. When an older child holds a younger child and helps him or her to walk, this is called *ukucathulisa*. Before the older child teaches the young child to take his or her first step, he or she must

### 5.3.5.2 Identity of the client

The facilitator led the participants to a level of forgetting themselves and focusing on the client. This is offered in session two of the lay training material (Stathakis, 1995: 10-19).

According to the material, the client is the “neighbour”. This is called *umakhelwane* in Zulu. Scripture readings that reflect who a neighbour is include John 3: 16, Joshua 24: 14-15, Romans 14: 12 and James 2: 1-9. The scriptures all encourage unconditional acceptance of one’s neighbour. The participants were encouraged to pray for each other and to learn to accept each other unconditionally. The facilitator explained how every one of us sees a prostitute, homosexual, drunkard, drug addict and other people engaging in social ills every day. These people are all our neighbours and should not be labelled and judged. They should be unconditionally accepted.

The second session expresses *ubuntu* or humanity. In *ubuntu*, every person is seen as having been created in the image of God<sup>43</sup>, regardless of his or her condition. Shutte (2001) sees *ubuntu* as a concept that embodies an understanding of what it is to be human and what a human being needs to grow and find fulfilment. For Shutte, *ubuntu* is rooted in the history of Africa and is at the centre of the culture of most South Africans (2001: 2).

The facilitator spent time identifying actions of *ubuntu* in the South African Zulu context. Together, the group realized the need to accept all neighbours unconditionally. Examples of *Ubuntu* include when people come to sleep over in a bereaved home, parenting an HIV/AIDS orphan, giving food to the hungry, visiting

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be confident walking. This is a metaphor for the need for the counsellor to be confident of his or her skill in counselling before he or she can help others take their first steps and so deal with their problems.

<sup>43</sup>Genesis 1: 26 states that God created human beings in His image. The Greek word for the “image of God” is *imago dei*. The concept expresses the dignity of how human beings were created, implying that they need to be treated with the same kind of dignity, regardless of their weaknesses.

the sick, giving clothes to those who do not have and being a friend to the unwanted in the community. The group discussed the notion of the neighbour as identified by Jesus Christ in Matthew 25: 35-45. Verse 45 states clearly that if we do not do things for the least amongst us, we do not do them for Him. In other words, when we attend to those who need counselling, we are attending to Jesus Christ. This puts value and urgency into the task of pastoral care and counselling.

### **5.3.5.3            Developing the essential ingredients for counselling to facilitate communication**

Having identified the qualities of a counsellor and the need to accept the client (perceived to be a neighbour) unconditionally, the input moves on to look at the essential ingredients for counselling so as to facilitate communication between the counsellor and the client. This happens in the following session.

This session explains to the participants that counselling is *not* giving advice. It has to do with encouraging clients to solve problems themselves. The counsellor has to have three very important ingredients; these are warmth, congruence and empathy. In the discussion, it became evident that different cultures showed warmth differently. For instance, the Zulu community is not a ‘hugging’ community. Warmth and welcoming are shown with a handshake or *ukuxhawula*. This is not perceived as being distant but has to do with the moral and ethical values of this community. Richard Dayringer<sup>44</sup> states that, in the Western context, a handshake has always been perceived as a sign of a healthy personality who expresses genuine friendliness and interest in the other person.

The participants understood congruence to be the genuineness of a person. The group noted that sometimes people are artificial and they will smile, even when they are not genuinely conveying warmth. This is called grinning, which is referred to as

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<sup>44</sup>Richard Dayringer encourages the handshake as a symbol of union between two people. Dayringer, R. (1998). *The Heart of Pastoral Counselling: Healing through Relationships*. London: Howarth Pastoral Press.

*ukusineka*<sup>45</sup> in the Zulu language. The counsellor should be careful not to grin but give a genuine smile.

The session then discussed the third ingredient, empathy. This has to do with deeply understanding another person's thoughts and feelings. In other words, the counsellor makes the counselee's problem his or her own problem.<sup>46</sup>

The participants engaged in group exercises on how to increase warmth, congruence and empathy.

The session also taught participants the skill of being attentive. This commenced with what the suggested material referred to as the "helping process". In the helping process, the session begins with prayer followed by three stages. The stages are: relationship building or building rapport, where the counsellor gives the client full attention; verbal communication; and non-verbal communication. According to Martin Buber (Pembroke, 2002), this is what is called *I and Thou* relationship building<sup>47</sup>, where the relationship is entered into with "the whole of one's being". The relationship is characterized by immediacy and directness (2002: 41).

The three ingredients of warmth, congruence and empathy are constantly included in the *I and Thou* environment. The counsellor helps the client to look at the problem from many angles, so bringing about integrative understanding. An example of integrative understanding is highlighted in a verbatim report below.

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<sup>45</sup>*Ukusineka*, sometimes called *ukuhlina* by other Nguni clans and tribes, is not warm. It carries a sense of caution and distance. A warm, genuine smile is recognizable and draws a person closer rather than repels him or her. *Ukusineka nokuhlina* repels people and thus rapport cannot be established. The group realized this has to be prayed for during counselling. Without rapport, counselling cannot be effective.

<sup>46</sup>Making one's problem your own is called *uyithatha uyenze eyakho* in Zulu. In other words, the counsellor does something about the issue. This highlights the difference between sympathy and empathy. Sympathy takes no line of action but entails feeling sorry for the person. Empathy implies taking action to journey with the person in his or her experience with the problem.

<sup>47</sup>In *The Art of Listening*, Neil Pembroke (2002) discusses how Martin Buber, a psychoanalyst, investigated the issue of the encounter between "I" and "you". In his investigation, Buber states that a relationship begins at a distance, in the "I and You" dimension. When the distance has dissipated, the relationship progresses to a state of "I and Thou" (2002: 37). This concept is very important for effective pastoral counselling.

**Counsellor:** Good morning, Nomsa. (*Gives the client a warm handshake.*)

**Nomsa:** Good morning, Mfundisi.

**Counsellor:** Are you well, Nomsa?

**Nomsa:** I am not so well. I just feel tired.

**Counsellor:** Since when have you felt like this, Nomsa?

**Nomsa:** I started feeling like this three days ago.

**Counsellor:** Did you see the doctor?

**Nomsa:** No, I thought I should come and see you about something. We work so hard at work. We work for long hours. I could do it before; I do not know what on earth the matter with me is now.

**Counsellor:** You had a heavy bereavement<sup>48</sup>; it is not easy to lose a husband.

**Nomsa:** But that was three months ago already. I should be all right.

*(Tears stream down Nomsa's face. The counsellor offers her tissues.)*

**Counsellor:** The effect of losing a loved one takes time to heal, Nomsa, and that can make you feel exhausted.

**Nomsa:** Can I have some water to drink?

*(Nomsa is given a drink. There is silence in the room.)*

In this conversation, the counsellor has assisted the client to look at her tiredness from a different angle. Nomsa may not have been aware that her tiredness could be from bereavement and not be work related. This is an example of integrative understanding and helps the client to gain more self-understanding.

During the stages of forming rapport and integrative understanding and facilitating what action needs to be followed, the group was led through the skill of being attentive.

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<sup>48</sup>Bereavement in Zulu cultural tradition is associated with much stress. The funeral can only occur after a week of sitting on the floor and having people visit to mourn with the family every day. There is not much rest for the bereaved family. Very often, the family are fatigued afterwards and need some form of medical attention. Sitting on the floor is sometimes overlooked as a source of fatigue. Yet, when it is accompanied by emotional stress, it can be a very tiring period for the family.

#### 5.3.5.4. Developing the skill of attendance

In this session, the facilitator emphasized that postures, gestures, tones of voice and facial expressions are important when the counsellor attends to a client.

The SOLER acronym was practised in this session. S stands for space; O stands for open posture; L stands for leaning towards the client now and again; E represents good eye contact and R denotes relaxed, meaning the counsellor must reflect a relaxed confidence to help the client to relax in the session (Stathakis, 1995: 23).

As the facilitator took the class through attendance skills, some significant issues were observed and discussed. The group agreed that, if possible, there should not be a desk between the client and the counsellor. They should sit on chairs a good distance from each other and at an angle so they are not face-to-face. The group noted that eye contact in Zulu tradition does create some problems. The group explained that in Zulu cultural tradition, a woman is not allowed to look directly at a man. Her eyes should look at his from a side angle. This has to do with the *ukuhlonipha* or respect custom. The group decided that where possible, eye contact should be maintained but without staring. The participants came to a consensus that each counsellor is unique and could grow in his her own interpersonal counselling style. Suggestions of having tissues, not looking at one's watch, making notes after the client has left and switching off one's cell phone were shared constructively. The group agreed that where possible, counselling should happen where there is no telephone and one can have privacy. A glass of water should always be available because counselling involves a lot of talking. At the same time, silence should be allowed because it is part of the communication process.

An extra useful acronym was used introduced by the researcher in addition to the one offered in the module. The extra acronym for rapport building was borrowed from James Sharp in Howard Stone<sup>49</sup>. The acronym is SOFTEN. S stands for smile, O

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<sup>49</sup>James Sharp (Stone, 2001) declares that effective care giving and counselling necessitate an ongoing exchange between the parishioner and the pastoral counsellor or care giver. This is where mutual respect, willingness to foster problem solving as well as Böszörményi-Nagy's trust element develop. Good rapport always gives rise to positive results.



stands for open posture, F stands for forward lean, T stands for touch, E stands for eye contact, N stands for nod. This acronym adds smiling, touching and nodding as important elements for building rapport between the counsellor and the counselee. James Sharp is convinced that rapport building is a very important vehicle for drawing the counselee from the problem toward solutions.

### **5.3.5.5 Developing the skill of listening**

The facilitator led the participants through the two sessions of listening skills development suggested in the training material.

The session began with important scriptural references that encourage listening. These include James 1: 19 and 20 and James 3: 1-12. Both scriptures emphasize the need to listen rather than talk. The first reference reads:

Therefore, my beloved brethren; let every man (woman) be swift to hear and slow to speak, slow to wrath.

In other words, there is a possibility of increasing a client's anger where there is more talking than listening. In the same vein, the second reference reflects on how the tongue, while being such a small part of the body, can destroy relationships. The group was granted enough time to reflect on the two scriptures as part of developing the skill of listening as counsellors.

Susan Hedahl (2001)<sup>50</sup> describes listening as “active listening” and stresses four main areas: listening to and understanding non-verbal behaviour; verbal messages; clients in context; and tough-minded listening, which is defined as “detecting the gaps, distortions and dissonance that are part of the client's experienced reality” (Hedahl, 2001: 84).

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Howard Stone, editor of *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*, offers input from eleven contributors in his book. Such strategies are useful in this research work.

Stone, H. (2001). *Strategies for Brief Pastoral Counseling*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

<sup>50</sup>Hedahl explains what “active listening” involves. Active listening involves empathetically listening with one's whole being – listening with one's ears, eyes, mind, heart and spirit.

As a form of practising “active listening”, the facilitator led the participants through a listening exercise. The group was divided into groups of three, with one person as counsellor, one as the client and the third person as an observer. The exercise involved practising being attentive and accurate empathy by listening to thoughts and feelings and reflecting on these. The participants were warned by the facilitator not to try to solve a problem but rather to only *listen*. Roles were changed and feedback was given in the plenary session.

Important key points regarding listening were discussed. These are clarifying, restating, reflecting, being neutral and summarizing what has been heard. Again, the facilitator divided the participants into pairs. The pairs were to listen to each other using these techniques with different examples.

The sessions ended with emphasis on listening with one’s ears, eyes, heart and spirit. In other words, the counsellor listens with his or her whole being. Coupled with this is the need to ask open-ended questions rather than merely using questions. Open-ended questions begin with why, what, where, why and how. Open-ended questions encourage the client to continue talking whilst the counsellor listens.

The participants found the listening sessions very interesting. At this stage, the participants stated that they were experiencing growth in the training process. Homework involved practising empathetic active listening for the whole week in one’s workplace.

#### **5.3.5.6 Learning about integrative understanding**

This presentation consists of three sessions in the training material. Integrative understanding has to do with helping the client to look at a problem from various angles in an attempt to solve the problem. Concepts like the developmental stages, the personality style, context, physiological base, critical events, behaviour patterns, spiritual life, coping skills and chemical dependence all help toward integrative

understanding of the problem to be solved. A few of these issues will be referred to i.e. the developmental stages, behavioural characteristics, the genogram and coping skills. The participants were given homework to read about the other issues and to make notes for discussion for the following session. During this course, the participants were encouraged to read books relevant to the course to increase their understanding of pastoral counselling.

#### **5.3.5.7 Learning about the developmental stages**

The facilitator referred to the following scriptural references: 1 Corinthians 13: 11 and Ecclesiastes 3: 1. Both references emphasize the importance of the developmental stages. The participants were put into pairs and had to identify their own and the other person's current developmental stage. Time was spent going through Erickson's developmental stages from birth to adulthood. Milton Erickson (Louw, 2000)<sup>51</sup> presents the eight stages of development. The training material adapts the stages and refers to them as infancy and early childhood, middle and late childhood, adolescence, post-adolescence, newly married couple, family with young children, family with adolescents and family in later life. This was seen as very important for the assessment of the client. For instance, the "newly married stage" involves adjusting to new roles and learning to realign with the extended family and friends.

#### **5.3.5.8 Learning about behavioural characteristics**

The training material mentions that there are good or bad behaviour patterns that are repeated in families. These patterns have to be identified so that coping skills can be learnt. The participants were encouraged to recognize their own behaviour patterns. Behavioural patterns can, for example, involve being warm, open and people-orientated. Some people are quiet and trusting and get hurt easily. On the other hand, a person can be hostile and closed. These people are quick to say no and are prone to being judgemental and critical.

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<sup>51</sup>Erickson's epigenetic model in Louw's (2000) book, *Pastoral Hermeneutics of Care and Encounter*, gives insight into personal identity, which is important to consider in pastoral counselling.

Other people can be dominant and like to be in charge and run the show. These are natural leaders. Those who are submissive and rather listen than talk do not want to face difficult situations. There are also directors who assume control in stressful situations. The relator, on the other hand, avoids confrontation. The thinker detaches himself or herself from stressful situations and, lastly, the expresser get angry quickly and attacks. The participants had to identify their behavioural styles so that they can learn to recognize them in their clients.

The thrust of the training material is in line with the main reference point of the thesis, Böszörményi-Nagy (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991). This author postulates that the psychological dimension interprets what is going on in the mind of a client. This is expressed through the client's reactive behaviour to a physically or emotionally charged situation (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 160).

#### **5.3.5.9 Learning about the genogram**

The training material stresses the importance of learning about the genogram, specifically when doing pastoral counselling.

A genogram is a method of exploring the families of origin. Olsen (1993) stresses that Murray Bowen (1978), the author of multigenerational theory in family therapy, states that a genogram reveals significant triangles, cut-offs and multigenerational themes and patterns. The family context from which a couple comes can be traced through a genogram. The process traces the names, ages, personalities, relationships between members, idiosyncrasies, illnesses, problems and achievements in the family. A thread can be woven through a generation in the family, for example regarding alcoholism, disability, divorce, twins, abortion and other commonalities (Olsen, 1993: 31).

In Zulu cultural tradition, this thread woven through generations in the family is referred to as *ufuzo*<sup>52</sup>.

The facilitator led the participants through an exercise of plotting their own genograms using the symbols used in the training material. The genograms reflected their family history and culture. The discussion in the plenary provided useful insights as well as highlighted the importance of the genogram for assessment in the process of counselling.

#### **5.3.5.10 Learning about coping skills**

The facilitator took the participants through a coping skills assessment exercise. It was clarified that every person has his or her own different way of coping with stressful situations. It is important to know when a person can cope and when he or she is struggling. The group had to do the following exercise and report back in the plenary session:

Look at a critical event in your life and answer the following questions. A critical event could be the death of a loved one, divorce, an accident etc.

1. How well did you cope?
2. What inner coping mechanisms helped you?
3. Which people stood next to you?
4. How did your belief in God or faith help you?

The responses reflected coping skills and support systems in past traumas. The counsellors have to recognize the coping skills and support systems that help their clients survive.

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<sup>52</sup>*Ufuzo* is inherited from the thread that is woven through the generations in the family. This can be good or bad. Contextual family therapist Böszörményi-Nagy (1987) refers to this as a *legacy* in the family. What is important in such situations, especially if the legacy is negative, is for the counsellor to teach coping skills. An example of *ufuzo* in the scriptures is the story of repeated barrenness in the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in Genesis, chapters 15-35.

The group observed that the African/Zulu context offers useful support systems through the extended family.

#### **5.3.5.11 Learning how to attend to the soul**

The training material presents two sessions on the work of the soul. Counsellors need to be constantly aware that a person comprises a body, mind and soul. The medical field attends to the ailments of the body. Psychology attends to the wellness of the mind. Religion (Christianity in this model) is the domain of the soul's well-being. However, all three aspects are interrelated and influence each other. When there are blocks in a person's life journey, these can be addressed through counselling (Stathakis, 1995: 81).

The facilitator led the participants through the scriptures, which explain how the soul hungers for God the Creator. The material declares that there is a constant need for commitment, re-commitment and spiritual growth. The class went through a reflection on the references in John 3: 1-21, Jeremiah 8: 5, 14: 7, 1 Corinthians 13: 11 and Hebrews 5: 11-14. Through reflection, the references revealed helpful insights.

The second section of attending to the soul focused on guilt and forgiveness. The material states that if the issues of guilt and forgiveness could be earnestly dealt with, quite a lot of people could be discharged from mental hospitals. The researcher has observed that issues of guilt and forgiveness are escalating, especially in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Forgiveness from God makes it possible to forgive others and oneself. The group discussed the following scriptures.

- Forgiveness from God: 2 Chronicles 7: 14, Ps 51: 6, 1 John 1: 8 and 9, James 5: 16.
- Forgiving others: Matthew 6: 12, Mark 11: 25, Matthew 18: 21-35, Romans 12: 19 and 20.

The participants were given enough time to list people who had wronged them. Quietly, they were led to forgiveness. If there was a blockage and they found it hard to forgive, they needed to spend time with one of the facilitators to get help. The session ended with prayers for healing painful past memories.

The researcher observes that the healing of painful hurts through Jesus Christ is the key to growth. The counsellor then grows into what Henri Nouwen<sup>53</sup> (2003: 82) calls the *wounded healer*. Through the wounds in their lives, counsellors can heal other people's wounds just as Jesus Christ does through his wounds. The Zulu Methodist Hymnal No. 65 confirms this fact:

*Sixolelwa siphiliswa ngezontuingu zakho*<sup>54</sup>  
*Siyahlanjwa ezonweni ngelogazi lakho!*

#### **5.3.5.12 The problem-solving model**

In this session, the facilitator went through the following questions to develop a problem-solving technique that is easily remembered:

1. Relationship building: Can we work together?
2. Explore problems: What are the issues?
3. Identify core issues: What needs attention now?
4. Discuss what has already been tried: What solutions have been tried?
5. Brainstorm possible solutions: Which is the best solution?

With the above questions in mind, the participants went into groups of three and, through role-playing, they were encouraged to develop their skills in counselling.

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<sup>53</sup>In his book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nouwen (2003) reflects on the story of Jesus Christ's broken body on the cross as the source of health and liberation into new life. Christ then calls us not only to care for our wounds but for the wounds of others. Our own hurtful experiences in life metaphorically become wounds and become a source of healing, like Christ's wounds, which exude healing power.

<sup>54</sup>The Xhosa verse means that we are healed through the wounds or pain Jesus Christ experienced on the cross. We are all cleansed by His blood, which was spilled at Calvary.

Awareness was gained about the client always needing to be allowed to make his or her own choices about solving the problem. Assurance about constant prayer is given to the client. Where necessary, the counsellor refers the client to a relevant person but keeps on with the caring contact.

The session ended with report writing on the interview forms provided. The interview form needs to be filled in at the first interview. The session concluded with deep prayer and the client is left in God's Hands.

#### **5.4 Winding up Lay Training Programme 2**

The facilitator ended the course with an outline about the lay counselling systems. Emphasis was on their need to operate constantly under the umbrella of the local church. The counsellors need to be under supervision monthly and be willing to come together once a quarter for in-service training. The ethical code or "ten commandments" were read together with commitment. The Ethical Principles Of counsellors read included the following elements:

- The respect to the dignity and worth of the individual for protection of human rights
- On-going monthly training and supervision and increasing knowledge of human behaviour and situations
- Being willing to receive counselling as counsellor
- Keeping high moral and legal standards in obedience to Jesus Christ
- Always operating under the supervision and authority of the steering committee which includes the clergy and professional therapists
- Loyalty to God, Christ the Holy Spirit and fellow workers
- Maintain *confidentiality* of the counselee and careful storage of notes taken.
- Respect of religious affiliation of counselee
- Being reliable and not making false promises
- To remain humble to the calling of God to share in the suffering and journey of His people.



The researcher showed the participants a handout on local systems for referral. All referral was to go through the steering committee. These systems as well as course evaluation forms appear in the appendices of this thesis. The assignments were given back to participants, who affirmed their commitment to their new journey as lay pastoral counsellors. The Commissioning Service was arranged with the Superintendent and executive of the Circuit for a date in November 2010.

## **5.5 Implementation of Lay Programme 3**

### **5.5.1 Input from assignments submitted**

The researcher observed that the assignments submitted by the students helped to give insight into the topics that are of interest to the lay counsellors. This consequently gave guidance as to the way forward. Although the focus of the research is marriage and family, it is evident that information on distressful human conditions is needed for pastoral care and counselling to be effective.

The written assignment from the training material introduced the trainees to the various distressful conditions. The topic choices for the essay included grief, retrenchment, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, marriage problems, divorce, depression, homosexuality and trauma. They needed to define the topic choice, possible causes and possible effects on the individual's behaviour, emotions, relationships, career, health and spirituality. The students offered possible solutions and treatment from the perspective of a counsellor. The assignment ensured participants read up on the chosen topic and raised their awareness about the issue of brokenness.

The results of the written assignment showed the following areas of interest:

- 50% of the trainee counsellors wrote about the abuse of women and children as well as rape;

- 30% wrote about marriage problems especially domestic violence, infidelity and the escalating divorce rate; and
- 20% wrote about HIV/AIDS and grief.

It was interesting to observe that although no one wrote about alcohol and substance abuse, this constantly appeared as one of the predisposing factors to many of the topics, especially with women and child abuse.

The third training programme was arranged with the participants at the end of the second lay training programme. This was to be the first in-service training session. The main thrust of the in-service training was marriage and family enrichment, growth and healing. Continuity is important in order to ensure the commitment and support of the counsellors in the various societies. The presenter of this training was the researcher.

### **5.5.2 Preparation for Lay Training Programme 3**

The intention of the training is to prepare the team for the marriage and family retreat to be launched over a weekend in the year. Basic information was prepared for the counsellors so that they could be part of the retreat and be delegated various tasks. The lay counsellors would also be helpful in helping the participants with answering questions.

The venue and the dates were set with the trained team. The material prepared was shared between 09h00 and 16h00 .The task team attended to logistics such as registration and the seating of the participants.

### **5.5.3. Presenting the topic of the seminar: Marriage and Family Wholeness.**

#### **The Programme**

##### **THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA CLERPINE CIRCUIT**

**Marriage and family enrichment, growth and healing seminar:  
22 May 2010**

<b>9h00-9h30</b>	<b>Registration and tea</b>
<b>9h35-9h4500</b>	<b>Praise and worship and devotions</b>
<b>9h50-10h00</b>	<b>Formal introductions and icebreaker</b>
<b>10h00-11h00</b>	<b>Basic input on family systems theory</b>
<b>11h05-11h30</b>	<b>Question and answer time</b>
<b>11h35-12h00</b>	<b>Group work on scriptural references</b>
<b>12h05-12h35</b>	<b>Report-back plenary session</b>
<b>12h40-13h00</b>	<b>Question and answer time</b>
<b>13h00</b>	<b>Lunchtime</b>
<b>13h30-14h00</b>	<b>Input on valuable Zulu traditional practices</b>
<b>14h05-14h15</b>	<b>Participants respond</b>
<b>14h20-15h00</b>	<b>The IRM model</b>
<b>15h05-15h20</b>	<b>Tea</b>
<b>15h25-15h45</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>16h00</b>	<b>Evaluation and closure</b>

#### **5.5.3.1 Basic input on family systems theory**

The researcher explained the importance of understanding that marriage and family exist within family systems theory. Various systems were identified in the session. These include the digestive system in a body, the radio system, the mental system and the governmental system. All of the systems show that there are elements that work

together in various systems to bring about harmony. When one of the elements is not functioning, this affects the whole system. Marriage and family consist of various elements. When one element is not working, problems begin happening. Emphasis was placed on the importance of communication between the elements in the system. When communication is lacking in relationships, problems develop.

The participants were also introduced to Böszörményi-Nagy's thinking (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991). This includes facts that cannot be changed, and the psychology dimension, which explains a person's behaviour when there is a problem in relationships. The importance of structural alignment in the family is important: parents should be parents and children should be children. It is important to be aware of people's preferences (the ethical dimension); otherwise, as counsellors, we easily intrude on the interests of the clients (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 160-163).

Discussion showed how modernity has eroded important values in the context of the research. These include respect (*ukuhlonipha*), humility (*ukuzithoba*) and humanity (*ubuntu*). Interesting insights were given on how to resuscitate these values in the context. The main solution was seen to be workshops where people could be educated about family matters.

### **5.5.3.2 Scriptural references for marriage and family**

Time was spent looking at the understanding of God as *uNkulunkulu* in the Zulu context. Discussing His various names and meanings brought about useful insights. Scriptural references were emphasized as a good resource for growth, enrichment and healing in marriage and family. For instance, the creation story in Genesis 1: 26-28 was discussed in groups. In this story, God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, mainly for procreation. Time was spent looking at the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph as family men in Genesis. Their problems with family rivalry, barrenness and other issues were seen to be relevant sources of growth, enrichment and healing for families in this present age.

#### **5.5.3.4. Zulu traditional cultural practices**

The facilitator went through the original or normal family processes in the Zulu cultural context. The group went through what is expected in the roles of grandparents, parents, boys and girls. The various developmental stages with the various rites of passage, from birth to death, were discussed. Parallels were drawn with the events of baptism, confirmation, marriage and death in the Christian context. The issue of initiation of boys and girls in Zulu traditional culture was also discussed.

#### **5.5.3.5 Introduction of the IRM method (Intentional Relationship Method)**

Clinebell (1992) suggests a communication paradigm that can be used effectively to bring healing and wholeness to a family's marriages or broken friendships. This is the Intentional Relationship Method (IRM) (Clinebell, 1992: 255-256).

The researcher introduced this model to the participants. It appeals to the researcher because it offers a practical premise with which couples or family members can be offered pen and paper and have a quiet time to work through the stages. As the above author postulates, this exercise involves a communication paradigm that can be used with many relationships e.g. friendship, family or staff relationships. It addresses conflict by opening a communication line in an attempt to achieve healing in a broken relationship.

The exercise follows the following steps:

- **Step 1: Identify strengths in the relationship**

This can be done by giving a couple or family unit an assignment that begins with positive sentences such as:

- I appreciate how you continue to provide food for the family.
- I appreciate how you quickly forgive.

- I appreciate how you love our children.

The counselees are given enough time to jot down what they see as positive in each other. They can write up to twelve points.

Finding strengths in each other when there is a dispute is not very easy. The assignment can be conducted over a week and the outcomes can be presented in the following session. This is a very effective way of affirming each other. The record can be kept on file for future reference.

- **Step 2: Identify the growing side in the relationship**

The researcher notes that Clinebell (1992) does not clarify what he means by “identifying the weaknesses in each other”. However, this exercise is aimed at avoiding condemning each other. Growth comes out of identifying one’s weakness and then saying, “I need to still grow in a certain area in *my* relationship”. The best sentences to use are, for instance:

- I need more of your affection when you leave and come home.
- I need your help in caring for the children.
- I need more time with you.

This involves growing in one’s expectations of changing behaviour so as to bring about harmony in the relationship. This can also be done over a period of a week and can be like an assignment for the concerned parties.

- **Step 3: Intentionally nurturing love by addressing needs**

This, as Clinebell puts it, follows after the parties have read each other’s assignments (1992: 255). For the researcher, writing is a very effective way of pouring out what is in one’s heart. Sometimes it is not easy to verbalize some issues in a session. The parties concerned are given time to make a concrete plan and set deadlines for meeting each other’s needs. This encourages the involved people to be intentional about their relationship.

- **Step 4: Implementation of the change plan**

Implementing the change plan involves focussing on what the needs are in the assignments presented by the parties in conflict. The idea is to be intentional in satisfying each other's needs. The parties have to keep on going back to Step 1 and to attempt to identify what is positive and has improved in the other party.

Trainees can use this exercise as a tool to improve communication, especially between married people or even family units. By embarking on these assignments, it should be possible to unblock poor communication lines, which are often the major problem in dysfunctional families or marriages.

#### **5.5.3.6 Winding up and closure**

Again, the group discussed the model as well as how it can be adapted to suit different contexts. It was a day of enrichment, growth and, to an extent, healing for the group as they put this model into practice with their own needs. Evaluation forms were filled in and were mostly positive about the programme.

### **5.6 Summary**

This chapter has presented fieldwork involving the implementation of three lay training programmes in pastoral care and counselling with a focus on the development of counselling skills. The researcher organized lay Training Programme 1. The invited consultant family therapist, Dr Leon Klein, offered this foundational seminar. Through his support and partnership, a way forward evolved for the researcher for Lay Training Programme 2. The second training session identified a team who were passionate about being empowered for pastoral counselling. Dr Klein offered relevant training material. The skills covered included communication, being attentive, listening, using genograms, coping skills and integrative understanding. Lay Counselling Programme 3 took the team further to learn about skills pertaining to

marriage and family growth, enrichment and healing. Further refresher courses will be arranged for the team to learn about other social ills in the research context. In the process, Western models are encouraged to engage with Zulu traditional counselling practices to produce an effective contextual application.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The implementation of the lay training programme led to an enquiry about the needs of the people in the context of the research. The zeal and commitment of the participants in the lay training programme reflected that there is an urgent need for training people in pastoral care and pastoral counselling so that the hurting needs of the people in and around the congregation can be addressed. It was also helpful to identify contextual needs with the group other than marriage and family needs. This will be useful for future research work. The methodology for identifying the needs involved examining case studies in the context of the research. Interviews were conducted through questionnaires. In the following chapter, verbatim reports provide the data collected in the process.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CASE STUDIES OF PRESENT MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE ZULU PERI-URBAN COMMUNITIES AT KWANDENGEZI – fieldwork, case studies and interviews**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter offers interviews of case studies.

The interviews focus on three areas that normally present problems in Zulu families, which are discussed in chapter three. The areas are marriage relationships, family units and single parenthood. The initial interviews were with married couples. The purpose of the interviews was to establish and identify the main needs of the people in the area of research.

Single parents were also interviewed because the researcher has observed that single parenthood is becoming a prevalent family lifestyle in many communities, including those in the area of the research. Many single parents are also grandparents. One could say up to 60% of the church membership in the study context is comprised of single parents. The researcher feels the needs of single parents should therefore be explored. Exploring their needs will make it possible for the researcher to create an inclusive programme. The programme should not only enrich and make them grow in issues of life; it should also offer healing where necessary. This is not meant to encourage single parenthood at the expense of the traditional marriage institution. The research programme seeks to be inclusive or holistic and to include single parents as well as give attention to all of the members of the congregation.

The interview is in the form of structured questionnaires<sup>55</sup> with verbatim responses. The questions have been structured in such a way that it should be possible to identify the needs of the people from the verbatim responses. After analysis through theological reflection and personal observation of the needs, the researcher intends to offer a pastorally appropriate response. This should work towards creating relevant intervention programmes to bring about enrichment, growth and healing.

### **6.1 Engagement and interviews with married couples**

Following a planning meeting with the lay leaders of the Methodist Church at KwaNdengezi at the beginning of the year, a mission plan for the year was drawn up. The decision taken after the planning meeting was as follows:

So as to address the family breakdown issues that seem to be escalating and have made some members frequently seek help from the minister, society stewards, class leaders and Manyano leaders (support groups for men, women and the youth), our church wants to respond to the crises by being intentional about one of the MCSA pillars of mission work. The relevant mission pillar for working with marriages, families and single parents is that of “justice, service and reconciliation”. The intention of this mission pillar in the MCSA has been discussed in this research paper. Issues about marriage and family conflicts are matters of justice as well as matters of reconciliation. When given attention, a lot of ground can be covered in fulfilling the vision of our church, which is contained in the MCSA Yearbook and is about healing and transformation (Abraham, 2010: 2).

To move forward, the minister (researcher) sent out notices to all six societies in the research context. The notice described that up to thirty married couples could come to an interview on marriage, enrichment and growth. The notice explained that the

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<sup>55</sup>A structured questionnaire was sampled from: Contemporary Couples Study Interview Guide. (March 2009). *Family Process Journal*, 48(1): 8. However, the questionnaire was remodelled to suit the research context. The structured questionnaire will be included in the appendices.

motive was to develop local, contextual material to strengthen marriages and families in response to the socio-political changes that have come with modernity.<sup>56</sup>

The notice explained that if one was in a relationship in crisis, the material would help bring about healing or the couple would be referred to people that could help.

The interviews with twenty-three couples from the KwaNdengezi Methodist Church took place at different times in the months of May and June in 2009. The interviews were conducted in the church office. The responses from five couples shall be offered as samples in this chapter. This is because the needs from the rest of the interviews more or less repeat those expressed by these five couples<sup>57</sup>.

The needs of the couples that emanated from the interviews are tabulated and a discussion of the needs is included in the chapter as a means of introducing the proposed programme presented in the following chapter. The structured questions used are found in Appendix 1.

### **6.1.1 Case study 1: The Khumalo couple**

#### **6.1.1.2 Profile of the Khumalo couple**

The Khumalo couple have been married for two years. Both husband and wife are employed in different workplaces in Durban. Although the couple has been married for two years, there are no children yet from this marriage. However, there are children from outside marriage for both of them. The couple were born and brought

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<sup>56</sup>In his book *Towards a Theology of Enculturation*, Shorter Aylward (1988) explains what modernity is. He states that modernity is a process concerned with technological and scientific changes. This has repercussions on one's social, political and economic life. As such, human relationships, institutions, values and ideals are greatly affected. Belief systems are undermined and sensitivity to having faith in God and sin is replaced by materialism. The researcher sees Shorter's definition as relevant to the present situation in the modern age, in which communities, including the Zulu society, are living. One observes the replacement of human values, traditional institutions such as marriage and family as well as faith in the salvation of humankind by God through Jesus Christ with a high rate of consumerism.

<sup>57</sup>As part of the academic ethical requirements, false names have been used for the couples interviewed.

up in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. Apparently, they met in Durban and decided to marry and settle at KwaNdengezi. The couple continues to have links with the rural areas. The wife is a regular member of the congregation in our church and is in a leadership position in the church. She is also a member of the Women's Manyano. The husband is also a member and he has left his church to follow his wife but is not a regular worshipper.

## **Identities**

**Couple: Mr Thulani Khumalo and Mrs Sbongile Khumalo**

**Researcher: Minister**

### **6.1.1.3 Verbatim report (all of the subsequent verbatim reports have been translated from Zulu)**

**Minister:** Good morning and thank you for responding to come to the interview. The intention, as was mentioned in the notices, is to create local material to help strengthen as well as heal and transform marriage and family relationships in our church when necessary. I promise I shall not spend more than an hour with you. I know you have lot of things to do as family people. You are both allowed to answer the questions as you feel led to do so. Just be relaxed. Your names will not appear anywhere in this exercise. Can we start then?

*(The response was in the affirmative.)*

**Minister:** Do you think we need a marriage and family enrichment programme in our church? It will be good if you support your answer with reasons.

**Mrs Khumalo:** I want to answer first because I am happy about the invitation. Never has there been a time when there is a need to have somewhere to go concerning marriages. When we have questions or problems arise in our relationship, we sometimes do not have time to go back to our rural home to our elderly relatives for advice. This is because we are working and it is not easy to take leave just to go home to address a certain issue concerning our relationship. If our church can offer us a safe place where we can have a dialogue about the problems we encounter in our marriage

journey, that would be most helpful. We also need the programme desperately to help us grow in a good marriage relationship. This should help our children grow in a stable atmosphere.

**Mr Khumalo:** I was also excited to hear about the intention to help marriages and families. I agree with what my wife has said. I just want to add that we are struggling to have children. Maybe the programme could also help us in this regard.

**Minister:** Thanks for sharing your needs so openly. I am making a note of your needs and we shall see how we can help you with your concerns. Do allow me to move on, however, to the second question.

You have already stated some of your needs, which I appreciate very much. I appreciate your openness. Tell me, what would you like to hear about in the programme? What are your needs? These can pertain to your relationship, can be social, economic, spiritual, mental or relating to any other needs you can think of.

**Mr Khumalo:** If we can be helped with improving our communication and preventing conflicts, it would help us a lot. It would be good to make decisions together because sometimes this does not happen.

**Minister:** Would you like to include anything else, Mrs Khumalo?

**Mrs Khumalo:** My husband is correct. We need to talk to each other more about our differences. My husband needs to understand that gone are the days when we earn a living from agriculture and women had to stay at home and look after the children. As women, we also have to put bread on the table. My husband does not seem to acknowledge and appreciate that we live in different times to those of our parents.

**Mr Khumalo:** I remain the head of the household even if my wife also puts bread on the table.

**Minister:** Those are exactly the issues we need to learn to talk about together. We are willing as the church to help you understand the social changes we are living with and help you adjust or understand how they affect your relationship as a family or couple. You seem uncomfortable, Mr Khumalo. Do you want to say something?

**Mr Khumalo:** My wife must respect me.

*(The atmosphere tends to be tense.)*

**Mrs Khumalo:** I think my husband should say that we need to respect one another.

*(Mrs Khumalo's voice falters as tears well in her eyes.)*

**Minister:** Well *(offering a tissue to the wife)*, we need to talk more about respect and respecting one another.

**Mr Khumalo:** *Ukuhlonipha*<sup>58</sup> *kusemqoka empilweni yomshado!* (Respecting each other is important in married life.) *(Mr Khumalo is obviously uncomfortable about this topic.)* If my wife respects me, I can give her everything.

**Minister:** I do sense there is a problem in your relationship and I want to assure you, you are going to receive help. I am willing to listen to you both and see how I can be of assistance to you.

**Mr Khumalo:** We also feel we are in the correct place. I actually feel comfortable that I opened my heart to you. I needed to do that. We desperately need to have such an opportunity in our church.

*(Silence in the room.)*

**Minister:** You are welcome to come and have a chat again when you get time. I am always available but make sure to make an appointment so that I can arrange to have enough time with you. I do want to talk more about what you said at the beginning about having a child. I feel we should make time to talk more about this.

**Mrs Khumalo:** We are thankful for this offer; we need it. It is long overdue. We did not know where to go to talk about this matter and many others. We just keep on blaming each other and it is not good for our relationship.

**Minister:** You are most welcome. It is my duty to offer help where I can.

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<sup>58</sup>Nyembezi and Nxumalo (1989) discuss the value of *ukuhlonipha* in their book *Inqolobane yesizwe: The Storehouse of the Nation: A Survey of the Main Divisions of Zulu Culture*. They state that respect (*ukuhlonipha*) is a way of life in the Zulu cultural tradition. *Ukuhlonipha*, which is a Zulu and Xhosa word, expresses a very important value system in most contexts in the African continent. It has to do with respecting oneself, respecting other people, children respecting the elderly and all people literally holding others in higher regard than themselves. It highlights connotations of humanity or *ubuntu*. In African tribes, respect also portrays an attitude of reverence. There are different ways of expressing reverence. In Xhosa households, newlyweds use symbols such as head coverings and shawls to express reverence to their in-laws. In Zulu culture, a newlywed woman expresses *ukuhlonipha* by kneeling as she passes food to her husband, in-laws or an elderly visitor. This body language is known as *ukukhothama*. Not calling someone older than oneself by name is part of this value system. The addressee will call an older man, older woman, older young man or older young woman *baba*, *mama*, *bhuti* or *sisi*, respectively.

**Minister:** Now this is the last question I wish to ask you. When the marriage programme is set, how often would you wish to come? Once a month? Once in three months? Once a year?

For the Khumalo couple, the consensus was that they would like the programme to be once every quarter so that there could be enough time to reflect and perhaps put into practice what they had learnt in the session. If there is material to read, there should also be enough time to prepare for the coming session.

Their commitment to the proposed programme was unmistakable. In the interview, the couple stated that their needs were hardly addressed in a normal Sunday service or Manyano gathering.

As the couple departed, they expressed a desire to know how soon the programme would begin. Their needs needed to be met immediately. There was a definite need here, not just for enrichment, but also for some form of crisis intervention.

#### **6.1.1.4 Analysis of the needs of the Khumalo family**

- The couple needs to learn communication skills.
- Both needed to understand what *ukuhlonipha* and *ukuhloniphana* (respect and mutual respect) entail in married and family life.
- This couple was in desperate need of dialogue about marriage issues.
- The couple wants to be involved in a programme four times a year.
- Perhaps there would be a need to attend to a medical/health problem.
- The couple needs to prepare for parenting again.
- Perhaps links with the families of origin need to be strengthened.
- The couple seems not to have enough time together because of work.
- Understanding their roles in their marriage needs to be discussed.

- There was no need to ask if they ever disagree. It surfaced during the interview.

## **6.2 Case Study 2: The Mhlongo couple**

### **6.2.1 Profile of the Mhlongo couple**

The Mhlongo couple are both members of our church. They have been married for three years and have a two-year-old daughter from their marriage. They are both schoolteachers at the same high school near the church. The husband is a member of the YMG (or the Men's Manyano) in our church. The wife is a member of the Women's Manyano. The couple is committed to the MCSA and have recently baptized their little daughter.

### **6.2.2 Identities**

**Mr Jabulani Mhlongo**

**Mrs Phumla Mhlongo**

**Researcher: Minister**

### **6.2.3 Verbatim report**

**Minister:** Good afternoon to you both. I appreciate your response to the notices. Are you keen on the marriage and family enrichment programme we wish to start in our church? Please do not panic. Your contribution to the interview will not reveal your names anywhere. It is confidential.

**Mr Mhlongo:** *Mfundisi*, when we got married we were aware that we had entered a very important chapter in our lives. We could not wait to hear what this interview involves because we need guidance in our relationship.

**Mrs Mhlongo:** As my husband says, we need to know how to improve our marriage relationship as well as to create a stable home for the growth of our children. We are keen to know what the Bible says about marriage. We do understand from our friends



that sometimes people marry for the wrong reasons. We need to have a clear explanation of why people marry.

**Minister:** Why did you marry your husband, if I may ask, Mrs Mhlongo?

**Mrs Mhlongo:** Mainly because I love him and also to have children. However, I feel we need to unpack everything that needs to be known about marriage as a social institution. It will be helpful to have the information.

**Minister:** What else would you like to hear?

**Mrs Mhlongo:** If we could be given information about our sexual life, it would be useful. For instance, when I had a baby I was told by one of our friends that one has to abstain from sex for a while in our culture until the child is at least two years old. Those things need to be explained by someone older than us. I do not have parents. They both died when I was still young and I was the only child. My aunt reared me and is not always with me.

**Minister:** I am sorry to hear that you lost your parents. Phumla, don't you have a dialogue with your mother-in-law then?

**Mrs Mhlongo:** When I got married my mother-in-law also had already passed away. My husband also has only his younger sister as a relative. We are both not connected to any elderly relationship in the family. My husband has been born and brought up in the township and is not different to myself. My aunt and I were living in Lamontville. We do not really have elderly people around us much.

**Minister:** There is a lot to learn to help you gain stability in your relationship. We shall do our best to expose you to discussions on African Zulu expectations about childbirth in this context. I am sure you will learn a lot that will help you feel you are doing the right thing in your marriage. Jabulani, you have not said much. What do you need to hear in the coming programme?

**Mr Mhlongo:** All the issues my wife has talked about are things we need to learn about in our relationship. In fact, we talk about these issues and we do not have the answers. Sometimes we end up quarrelling and we do not talk to each other for some time. We need to learn to communicate well as well. She gets angry and this takes

away all the joy from our relationship. We cannot afford to fight. We love each other. That is why we got married in the first place.

**Minister:** How do you resolve your conflict when it happens, Mr Mhlongo, if I may ask?

**Mr Mhlongo:** Sometimes we talk about it, send an “sms” to each other and if I can afford it, buy her a present and we forgive each other. Sometimes it takes a long time to be sorted out, depending on what the disagreement is about. At other times, we just let it go but it remains in our lives and we keep on referring back to the incident. We just need to have a dialogue about reconciliation, I feel. We need the programme. I am sure it will help us grow.

**Mrs Mhlongo:** Whilst my husband is talking about disagreements, one of the issues I want to learn about is how to develop trust. We just need to learn to trust each other.

**Minister:** Yes, Phumla. Trust is a very crucial issue in marriage.

**Mr Mhlongo:** Yes, I look forward to learning about that. We both need to grow in that area.

**Minister:** Well, all these concepts need to be put on the table and we can begin learning together. Thanks for your honesty about your relationship. I just want to assure you of my prayer support and promise that, through your support, we shall work out a programme that will help give answers to many of your questions. This should make your marriage stronger. You need that for your own sakes and for your little daughter. Again, many thanks for coming. We shall keep in touch. You are welcome to phone me. We can sit and have a chat.

**Mrs Mhlongo:** I actually feel some relief already now that you have listened to us. Sometimes I feel we just need a mature person to listen to us and we should be all right. We appreciate the time you have spent with us. Actually, I think this was more than an interview. It helped us open our hearts. What do you think, *baba*?

**Mr Mhlongo:** I actually would like to come for an interview again. It is an eye-opener. Can we come again?

*(The couple laughs heartily.)*

**Minister:** It may not be an interview next time; it may be a session. We can arrange something for you. Give me a tinkle! Go well you two and continue smiling!

**Minister:** By the way, when the programme starts running, how often would you like it to be? Once a month? Once a quarter? Once a year?

Again, this couple felt once a month may be too frequent and once a year would not be very fruitful. Once a quarter seemed to be best for them. In the conversation, the couple also stated that their needs were partially addressed in the Sunday service and Manyano prayer meetings. In these meetings, the focus was mainly on preaching and prayer.

#### **6.2.4 Analysis of the needs of the Mhlongo family**

- The couple yearns for a stable family unit.
- It is crucial for them to grow and become good parents to their children.
- They want to hear what the Bible says about marriage.
- They need to hear about the legacy of Zulu expectations in marriage to fill up the vacuum they have about not having a link with their elders in their families of origin.
- They want to develop trust in their relationship.
- They want to be able to resolve conflict.
- The couple wants to learn to forgive and reconcile when they disagree about issues.

### **6.3 Case study 3: The Ngubane couple**

#### **6.3.1 Profile of the Ngubane couple**

Mr and Mrs Ngubane are both committed members of our church. They have been married for 22 years. They both are in leadership positions in the congregation but do not belong to the Manyano prayer groups. The couple are both employed in different

places in the city and have four children, two boys and two girls aged seventeen, fifteen, thirteen and nine.

### **6.3.2 Identities**

**Mrs Lindiwe Ngubane**

**Mr Joseph Ngubane**

**Minister: Researcher**

### **6.3.3 Verbatim report**

**Minister:** Come in and good day to you both. Sit down and make yourselves comfortable.

**Mr Ngubane:** Thank you and good day and thank you very much for the invitation.

**Minister:** You are welcome. Are you keen to hear about the interview?

**Mrs Ngubane:** Yes, we could not wait.

**Minister:** Lindiwe, you sound keen on the programme we want to develop to help couples and families in our church.

**Mrs Ngubane:** Oh! Please ask us anything; we will answer.

**Minister:** Well, as it was said in the notices, we have decided to pursue a vision in our church. In light of the breakdown in various family relationships, we seek to develop a marriage and family enrichment programme suitable for our community. This will hopefully help families grow in their relationships and be healed if there are problems. Obviously, we cannot do this on our own. We need you to answer a few questions. We will not reveal your names in the material at all. What is your response to this proposal?

**Mr Ngubane:** We have waited so long for something of this nature. We really need it.

**Mrs Ngubane:** Joseph and I have never known where to go when things did not go right between the two of us in the last 22 years of our relationship... We feel uncomfortable with travelling home to Kwa Nongoma just to take our problems to our parents. We just want to share good things with them when we are there.

**Minister:** What are your needs then? What would you like to hear about?

**Mr Ngubane:** We need a safe place where we can share our difficulties in the marriage. We want to develop a support system so that we can learn from other couples. We need to hear how others address their conflicts. We do also have differences now and again.

**Minister:** Thank you for that, Mr Ngubane. What else would you like to hear about, Mrs Ngubane?

**Mrs Ngubane:** As my husband has said, it is good to listen to other people talk about their different ways of solving problems. We want to learn from others. Just to add to what my husband has said, we need to have clarity about our roles in marriage. When men hear they are the heads of the household, they hold on to that and do not want to give us women a chance to make decisions. Surely, we can contribute to the running of the home.

**Mr Ngubane:** We cannot contradict the Bible. The woman must submit. *Umfazi makathobele indoda ezintweni zonke.* (The Bible says the woman must submit to the husband in everything.)

**Minister:** We need to learn more about these things, step by step, together.

**Mrs Ngubane:** We honestly need to know how far we should submit as women.

**Mr Ngubane:** Well, we are willing to be taught. There is a saying that says we learn until we die!

**Minister:** I thank you for your willingness to learn, Mr Ngubane. This will be offered in the programme. What else do you need to hear about?

**Mrs Ngubane:** When we prepared for our wedding, our minister taught us about the importance of communication. I think that now that we have children we need to have sessions in the programmes where we can be with our children. Our children do not communicate well with us as parents. They need to learn to communicate.

**Mr Ngubane:** The boys are the worst. They will not listen to us. They will do things without permission. They listen to their friends more than to us.

**Minister:** Do they listen at school?

**Mrs Ngubane:** The teachers are complaining as well. This generation has a problem with listening to elderly people.

**Minister:** So you feel they should sometimes be in the sessions?

**Mr Ngubane:** Yes. I am sure they will learn a lot and it will help bring harmony to the family.

**Minister:** Do you think they will come? In African culture, children do not want to be adults for long, especially teenagers.

**Mr Ngubane:** We shall make them come. They have to learn. If they do not learn to communicate now, they will carry the habit into their family units and they will have problems.

**Minister:** I am glad you think along the same lines as I do. Is there anything else you need to hear about?

**Mrs Ngubane:** I do hope that we can hear something about how to relate to our in-laws. This has also been one of our problems. They just do not know their limits.

**Mr Ngubane:** Well, I hope this refers to both sides.

**Mrs Ngubane:** Of course, I refer to both sides.

**Mr Ngubane:** We sometimes battle to understand how our Zulu customs fit into Christianity. It will be helpful to look at this because there is sometimes a clash in understanding.

(The mothers in both families are still alive and live in the rural areas. Now and again, they come to visit their children in the township and to see their grandchildren. The couple has not lost links with their parents. When they visit, they raise the need to perform some Zulu rituals with the children.)

**Minister:** There needs to be time for us to see together how Christ incarnates culture and supersedes culture. Of course, this needs discussion and time.

**Mr Ngubane:** Actually, it will be good when the programme begins to hear what others have to share about the issue of the in-laws as well. It can sometimes bring about a lot of misunderstanding in the family.

**Minister:** We need to talk about all these issues and it should help to ease any ill feelings. Tell me, how often would you like the sessions to be?

(This couple differed on this. The husband felt it would be good if there were sessions monthly and the wife felt quarterly sessions would be good and insisted the inclusion of the children in one of the sessions.)

**Mr Ngubane:** Just talking about these things and having someone listening and knowing a programme is in the pipeline brings some relief. We shall be waiting to hear when the programme begins. Thank you very much for your time.

**Mr Ngubane:** We shall be looking forward to the programme. Goodbye.

**Minister:** Go well.

This couple is a much more mature couple than the Khumalo and Mhlongo couples. There was no tenseness in the interview session. Even when issues of ill feelings did come up during the interview, they did not allow them to bring about any tension. They have learnt to deal with their issues and have survived. However, they are willing to learn and sustain their marriage. Their emphasis is on the inclusion of their children in the sessions.

#### **6.3.4 Analysis of the needs of the Ngubane family**

- This couple wants to belong to a support system.
- For this couple, good parenting is important.
- The issue of roles in marriage is crucial for them, especially the headship of the man and the submission of the wife.
- Communication is important for this family.
- The inclusion of the children in learning about communication is important for this family.
- This family needs healing of their relationships.
- This couple wants to learn to interact with their in-laws.
- The couple wants to be informed about family and marriage from a scriptural perspective.

- They want to hear how Zulu customs fit in a Christian family.

## **6.4 Case study 4: The Zikode couple**

### **6.4.1 Profile of the Zikode couple**

Mr and Mrs Zikode belong to our church and are also members of the YMG and Women's Manyano, respectively. Mr Zikode unfortunately lost his job in the manufacturing industry due to retrenchment within the global economic recession. The Zikode family has two teenage children, a boy and a girl. The couple has been married for 20 years. At the moment, only the wife is able to put bread on the table. They own a house in the upmarket, subsidized area of Mariannridge, not far from KwaNdengezi Township.

### **6.4.2 Identities**

**Mrs Sizakele Zikode**

**Mr Wiseman Zikode**

**Minister: Researcher**

### **6.4.3 Verbatim report**

**Minister:** Hi, both of you. It is so good to see you. Come in and sit down.

**Mr Zikode:** We are also happy to be able to make time for the interview.

**Mrs Zikode:** We heard the good news when the steward read the notices. We want to know what this involves.

**Minister:** Well, do you feel we need a marriage and family programme in our church?

**Mrs Zikode:** We desperately need to strengthen our relationships in our families.



**Mr Zikode:** As my wife says, we actually need this a lot. We recently lost a friend. He committed suicide because their marriage was very much under stress. This affected his work situation and the children as well. We felt if they had received some kind of counselling, which they did not receive, this could have been avoided.

**Minister:** I am sorry to hear such news. When did this happen?

**Mr Zikode:** Three months ago. I think the wife and the two teenage boys do need some kind of attention.

**Minister:** From your friend's experience, what are your needs in your own family unit?

**Mr Zikode:** I think it is crucial to interact with other couples and develop a support group so that when we are bereaved or experience anything like that, we could have people who can stand beside our children and us.

**Minister:** Why do you think you need that? Don't you have family back home that can come and be with you?

**Mrs Zikode:** *(Slowly)* Since we live near the city because of work, we are losing our links with our families of origin. We need to develop new extended families in the church and in the community.

**Mr Zikode:** Our friend's wife and children seemed to be so isolated during the time of the tragedy.

**Minister:** I understand this need. What else do you need to attend to in your family?

**Mr Zikode:** We need to have more time together as a couple. Perhaps the church could organize something and we can pay. In fact, we need to be with our children as well so that we can learn and grow in our communication. Our children need to know what is involved in teenage pregnancy, abuse, substance abuse and other challenges faced by young people today.

**Minister:** Can't you do this on your own at home?

**Mrs Zikode:** We thought we would not say this, but we were invited by our Catholic neighbours to what they call a marriage encounter camp. We went with our children. What a wonderful experience. It has made us grow spiritually. The children say they

need to go again. We need this in the Methodist Church as well. There would be less marriage and family strife.

**Minister:** Do you think so? Actually, I am concerned with the failure to meet the needs of the congregants, to the extent that they seek help elsewhere.

**Mr Zikode:** My wife is correct. We need this attention so that our family life can remain strong.

**Mrs Zikode:** We also need to learn ways to talk to our husbands. Men can sometimes get so aggressive. In Zulu tradition, men are known to be the heads of the household and we just need to learn about these things.

**Minister:** Yes. St Paul in the Bible also talks about the man as the head of the household. This of course does not mean the wife is a nobody.

**Mrs Zikode:** Sometimes I feel like a nobody when my husband does not want to hear what I am saying.

**Mr Zikode:** We need to be taught how we should relate to each other as husband and wife.

**Minister:** Good! Now tell me, if we were to begin the programme, how often would you attend? Once a month? Once in three months? Once a year?

For this couple, once a quarter would be just adequate.

#### **6.4.4 Analysis of the needs of the Zikode family**

- This couple wants to strengthen their marriage relationship.
- For this couple, a support group is crucial because of their friend's life ending tragically.
- The couple wants to improve the communication between themselves and their children.
- The couple's desperation to grow made them visit another denomination where a "couples' fellowship" exists. They felt they could go and meet their

marriage and family needs in another denomination because such a resource was not available in their own denomination. (This made the researcher a bit uncomfortable.)

- They want to learn about their roles as husband, wife and parents.
- They want to be good parents and teach their children good values.
- Their concern about keeping their teenage children close to them shows how anxious they are about their children's possible exposure to teenage pregnancy and substance abuse, both of which are rife in their neighbourhood.

## **6.5 Case study 5: The Jozi couple**

### **6.5.1 Profile of the Jozi couple**

This couple works in the city. The wife is a teacher and the husband works with computers and owns a catering company. They have lived together for 15 years and have two children, a boy and girl, aged 11 and 7, respectively. They decided to get married two years ago. Both have strong links with their families-of-origin in KwaZulu-Natal. They visit them now and again. The wife's parents are divorced. The husband's father recently lost his wife. They are committed members of the Methodist Church and are actively involved in the relevant Manyanos.

### **6.5.2 Identities**

**Mrs Sbongile Jozi**

**Mr Justice Jozi**

**Minister: Researcher**

### **6.5.3 Verbatim report**

**Minister:** Mr and Mrs Jozi, good morning and what a pleasure to see you. How is life treating you?

**Mr Jozi:** We are well and how are you?

**Minister:** I am also well, thank you. Have you come for an interview?

**Mrs Jozi:** Yes. We responded because we thought that was an important notice that was read in our society on Sunday.

**Minister:** What would you like to hear about?

**Mr Jozi:** We actually wondered where we could go to get informed about the marriage institution.

**Minister:** What would you like to be informed about? What is crucial for your own relationship?

**Mr Jozi:** We need to grow in our relationship. We also need to know who can listen to us when we face difficulties. Sometimes the difficulties relate to finances since we are new in the business world.

**Mrs Jozi:** Yes, I support my husband. We need a programme where we can share our experiences with other married couples and exchange views about marriage issues. In any situation, a support group is always useful.

**Minister:** All that you have said is important.

**Mr Jozi:** We need to learn to humble ourselves to each other and learn maturity in our relationship. In our generation, we have no patience with one other. We also lack perseverance, which our parents had for each other. Hence, many of our friends are separated. In fact, the programme begun in our church could spread to other denominations because everybody has a need.

**Mrs Jozi:** There is an increase in unfaithfulness to one other. We need to learn to be honest and to communicate well with each other.

**Minister:** Is there anything that you saw at home at Ingwavuma which you feel can be of use to your own marriage?

**Mr Jozi:** I always pray that the peace, faithfulness and respect I saw in my parents' relationship will be passed on to us as well.

**Mrs Jozi:** I am actually in a different lane. My parents finally divorced. I hope the fighting that I saw at home when my father was still living with us will never come to my home. *(Tears well up in Mrs Jozi's eyes.)*

**Minister:** I am listening to you.

*(A tissue is offered and appreciated. Silence is allowed as Mrs Jozi goes through a cathartic release.)*

**Minister:** I am sorry to remind you about your parents' experiences.

**Mrs Jozi:** It is all right. It is a relief when we talk about these things.

**Minister:** How do you feel? Do you think we should continue the interview?

**Mrs Jozi:** Yes. The more we talk, the better I feel. We really need a safe place where we can tell our stories. It is helpful.

**Mr Jozi:** My wife's health has been affected by her childhood experience. When we begin talking about the experience, her ulcers bother her.

**Minister:** How sad. Are you on medication for the ulcers, Mrs Jozi?

**Mrs Jozi:** Yes, I do take medication.

**Mr Jozi:** I feel it will also be useful if we can be made to understand what equality means from a political view. Politicians continue to talk about equality and it worries me. I think some people will misinterpret this and think men and women are equal.

**Minister:** Well, let us talk biblically. Men and women are equal in the eyes of the Lord.

**Mr Jozi:** We need to talk more about these issues because they cause many disagreements amongst us married people.

**Minister:** I am glad you are both willing to learn. We are going to have that opportunity in the proposed programme. When it is up and running, how often would you come? Once a month? Once in three months? Once a year?

**Mrs Jozi:** We would need to come once in three months. This needs to be a programme like the Manyano fellowships we have every three months as a circuit. We always come back from the fellowship inspired. It is like having an "injection". Meeting with others brings healing. We look forward to this programme in our church.

**Mrs Jozi:** We are so thankful for what is coming. It already brings relief to know that something is being planned to meet our needs. Thank you very much.

**Minister:** God bless you both and go well.

#### **6.5.4 Analysis of the needs of the Jozi family**

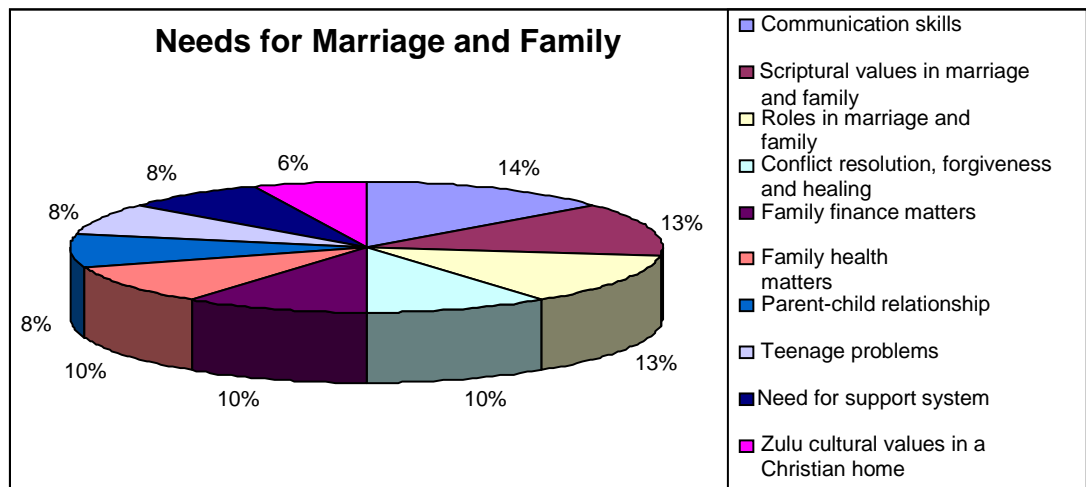
- This couple wants to discuss issues about marriage raised in the scriptures.
- A support group is crucial for them so that they can share their experiences.
- They want to grow to be a healthy family unit.
- Mrs Jozi needs healing from her childhood experience with her parents, who are divorced.
- Mrs Jozi also needs medical advice.
- They want clarity on their roles as husband and wife.
- Mr Jozi appreciates the legacy of a peaceful marriage from his parents.
- The couple needs pastoral care and counselling.
- Being involved in a new catering project, they want to consult someone about financial issues and budgeting.

#### **6.6 Summary of the crucial needs for married couples**

Twenty-three couples were interviewed in the months of May and June 2010 in the Methodist Church at KwaNdengezi on different days. Amongst the people were four mothers whose married children were undergoing a lot of strain in their marriage relationships. The mothers came to express the need for the proposed programme. Their interviews revealed that the programme should include issues such as domestic violence, often instigated by financial strain, infidelity and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has increased the level of mistrust in the homes of their married children. It became urgent to move forward with preparing the programme. The total number of people who came for the interview was 50, including the four elderly mothers who came to the interview on behalf of their married children. This research work gives the verbatim reports of five couples. The five couples represent a sample of the needs of the rest of the people who came to the interviews.

The needs of the couples and families are presented in percentages in Table 1 below.

<b>Needs for Marriage and Family</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Communication skills	14%
Roles in marriage and family	13%
Scriptural values in marriage and family	13%
Conflict resolution, forgiveness and healing	10%
Family finance matters	10%
Family health matters	10%
Parent-child relationship	8%
Teenage problems	8%
Need for support system	8%
Zulu cultural values in a Christian home	6%



**Figure 2: Needs for marriages and families at KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

The diagram in Figure 3 reflects the percentages in a circular measuring scale called a pie chart. On observation, 14% of the people interviewed needed to learn to communicate better with each other and with their family members. Following communication are scriptural values in marriage and family as well as clarity on roles.

Both needs are relevant to 13% of the people who were interviewed. Three needs were at 10% each, making up a total of 30%. These were family health matters, family finance matters, conflict resolution, forgiveness and healing. The next three needs (at 8%) were the need for a support system, the parent-child relationship and teenage problems. These needs make up a total of 24%. The lowest prioritized need was people wanting input on how Zulu cultural values can engage in Christian life. This category was at 6%. The sequence of the importance of needs expressed in this research is not necessarily binding.

### **6.6.1 Theological reflection on the 10 crucial needs of the married couples: Why engage in theological reflection?**

Edward Farley suggests in John Patton's<sup>59</sup> *From Ministry to Theology: Pastoral Action and Reflection* that theological reflection, which is really "ecclesial reflection", not only penetrates and opens up matters for discussion, but attempts to discover the world of the people in their community. This reflection, according to Farley, opens up the "meaning-full" events in the lives of the people, highlighting their social, cultural world of expectations and values (Patton, 1990).

Furthermore, such reflection does not begin with contemplating God but by considering the people's needs, then calling on God, whose attributes can be used to care for human beings (Patton, 1995).

In agreement with Farley's conviction, the researcher feels that the theological reflection on the needs actually involves an assessment of the needs of the people of

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<sup>59</sup>Edward Farley (Patton, 1990) stresses the need to engage in theological reflection on the needs of the people of God when doing ministry with communities. This, he says, should make it possible to design relevant pastoral intervention programmes.

Patton, J. (1995). *From Ministry to Theology: Pastoral Action and Reflection*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press. Chapter three: Action and Interpretation, p. 95-96.



God within their Christian community. This should then make it possible to formulate a pastoral programme to address such needs.

Doing theological reflection on the needs gives birth to a pastoral theology that in turn produces relevant methods of pastoral care and counselling to be used in the process of marriage and family crisis intervention. This is the reason for engaging in theological reflection.

Gerald Hawkes<sup>60</sup> (Masamba & Nwachuku, 1991) correctly states that:

Pastoral theology is the study of contemporary experiences and activities of Christians and the church in relation to God's will and purpose for them, with a view to enhancing ministry both to and by them.

What Hawkes means is that dialogue involves a critical dialogue between theology and practice and it seeks to enhance the lives of Christian families through pastoral care and counselling. Whilst agreeing with Hawkes, the researcher does however feel it is necessary to unpack the needs of the people of God in the context of intervention before engaging in a critical dialogue between theology and practice.

The researcher observes that to support the process of engagement in this task, one can draw parallels with a medical practitioner and a patient in the medical field. Before offering treatment, doctors have to consult with the patient. Consultations involve the doctor actively listening to the patient and looking for signs and symptoms. Sometimes the doctor decides to subject the patient to certain tests to confirm his or her diagnosis. From consultations and tests, a diagnosis is established. When the diagnosis has been decided, it is possible to prescribe treatment so that the patient can be healed.

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<sup>60</sup>Published paper by Gerald Hawkes: *The Relationship between Theology and Practice in South African Pastoral Theology*. In *Pastoral Care and Counselling in Africa Today*. Mpolo Masamba and Nwachuku Daisy (Eds.)(1991). Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press.

Emphasizing the importance of “diagnosing” in the field of pastoral care, Pruyser (1976) states that to diagnose someone means having to grasp things as they really are so as to do the right thing. Hence, medical diagnosis entails aetiology, for a penetrating view arrives at causes and deals with patterns of cause-and-effect in the course of illness (Pruyser, 1976: 30).

In this thesis, the “identified patient” who goes through the process of diagnosis can be an individual, married couple or the family. Disharmony and dysfunction in couples or the family represent the sickness or disease in a marriage relationship or family unit.

Having done interviews or consultations with the married couples using active listening, some tests have to be performed so that a proper “diagnosis” can be established. The tests normally need to be performed with specific tools.

John Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999)<sup>61</sup> offers four tools to diagnose, test or embark on theological reflection to assist in pastoral ministry. These tools, often referred to as “quadrilateral tools”, are scripture, tradition, reason or rational thinking and experience. According to John Wesley, these hermeneutical or interpretative tools are meant to make Christians know how things should be and how to make them happen (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 25-28).

Authors who also express the vitality of performing theological reflection for practical ministry are James and Evelyn Whitehead<sup>62</sup> (Patton, 1990). They offer three sources

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<sup>61</sup>In *John Wesley: Holiness of Heart and Life*, Yringoyen (1999) describes important tools for theological reflection in an attempt to promote holiness in the hearts and lives of Christians.

<sup>62</sup>The Whiteheads offer different tools to those of John Wesley for use in theological reflection. However, the purpose thereof is the same.

or tools to assess collected data of a community of faith. These are Christian tradition, the experience of the community of faith and the cultural resources.

The Whiteheads (Patton, 1990) suggest that when using these three sources, one needs to be conscious of the three following aspects:

1. Attending: seeking information of pastoral concern;
2. Assertion: challenging in order to deepen religious insight; and
3. Decisions: moving from insight to concrete pastoral action.

Both sources or tools advocated by Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999) and Whitehead (Patton, 1990) appeal to the researcher as a way forward to disentangling the collective needs of the people of God. However, because there are some similarities in these tools, the writer prefers to use Wesley's tools. The reason is that the researcher is more familiar with John Wesley's tools in everyday ministerial practice. They are relevant for the context of the research, namely Methodism.

### **6.6.2 Unpacking John Wesley's quadrilateral tools for theological reflection on the needs of the people interviewed**

- Scripture

For John Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999), every Christian who takes his or her faith seriously has to immerse himself or herself in the narrative stories, themes, images and language of the Bible. Wesley believes the Bible has been inspired by God and should be prayerfully read with the assistance of the Holy Spirit (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 25).

Msomi (2008) echoes the importance of the authority of scripture in his unpublished paper in Masamba and Nwachuku (1991) and states that we need to:

Focus concretely on our people's needs and questions if our pastoral studies are to be relevant. The questions and needs must of course be addressed by the Word of God (Msomi, 2008: 66).

The researcher confirms John Wesley's (Yringoyen Jr, 1999) views as well as Msomi's (Masamba & Nwachuku, 1991) emphasis on the relevance of the authority of scripture, which is pertinent in this research. The reason is that most of the people who were interviewed are members of the Methodist Church. For them, scripture is, as for all other believers, like "spiritual food". It brings nourishment and even cures or heals the soul.

- Tradition

When we speak about tradition in this presentation, it is about the Wesley Christian tradition embodied in the hymns, the constitution, prayers and liturgy of the MCSA. Yringoyen Jr (1999) states that Wesley admired the history of the church. He found the early Christian writers to be faithful to the interpretation of scripture (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 26).

To affirm the above conviction, the researcher has noted through experience that it is in the traditions of the Methodist Church that its members find meaning and healing, for instance, in the hymns and liturgy. It is a well-known fact in Methodism that Methodists do not simply say their prayers, they sing them. Methodist songs are prayerful songs. For all African people, song and rhythm are part of life; they are internalized. A Methodist in KwaZulu-Natal does not have to look constantly at his or her hymnbook when worshipping. The hymns and liturgy have already been internalized from childhood; consequently, in Zulu we say *isegazini* (the songs are in the blood).

According to John Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999), there are five routes to nurture a Christian towards holiness. These are sometimes referred to as the Means of Grace. The routes are searching the scriptures, prayers, fasting, partaking of the Lord's Supper, attending Christian conferences or class meetings, which comprise the backbone of Methodism, as well as engaging in public worship (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 41-52). These routes belong to the tradition of Methodism.

For the purpose of enriching, growing and healing marriages and families, the Methodist tradition has relevant tools that can be useful in addressing the needs of the people of God in the communities.

- Reason or rational thinking

According to John Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999), the eighteenth century was the Age of Reason or Deism. The truth had to be found through scientific experiments and observation. The Deists rejected revelations and were sceptical about the authority of scripture and the tradition of the church. Miracles were not accepted in Deism. Wesley challenged this, proclaiming that faith and reason were not adversaries but could work together and find the truths in scripture (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 27).

- Experience

John Wesley (Yringoyen Jr, 1999) emphasizes the importance of outward and inward experience in Christianity. We have to experience God in His creation and in the lives of other people but must experience Him working within us as well. For Wesley, it is this inward experience that assures us that we are God's children and transforms us into the image of His son, Jesus Christ. Wesley believes that only through this inward experience can we begin to understand justice, mercy and truth. We then possess an inner consciousness of peace, love and joy. When this experience is authentic, the

believer's behaviour and actions change. This religious experience does not have to be fanatical or emotional. It has to be disciplined constantly by scripture, tradition and reason (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 29).

For the purpose of this research, where the couples and families wish to see reconciliation and healing in their relationships, both the outward experience with others and the inward one in which they can find love, peace and joy through God are crucial.

Having explored the convictions of the various authors about the importance of theological reflection, the researcher sought to reflect on each need. Following this task, a personal response or observation was formulated about each need. This was done to help the writer to create a programme that would fit into the contextual pastoral premise of the research.

## **6.7 Assessing the needs**

### **6.7.1 Communication skills**

About 14% of the couples were keen to learn communication skills. Communication, known as *ukuxhumana*<sup>63</sup> in Zulu, is crucial in marriage and family relationships. This was actually the highest vocalized need in the interviews. When communication is lacking in any relationship, there is bound to be dysfunction. At the interview session, the researcher observed that the Zikode couple was desperate to learn to communicate with each other and with their teenage children. The tragedy of losing a friend to suicide because of family disagreements was not a pleasant experience for them or

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<sup>63</sup>*Ukuxhumana* means communication or to be linked. One could use a metaphor for communication by considering it to be a chain. If a certain form of pressure breaks one link, the chain cannot perform its duty well. The chain is incomplete without the missing link in the chain. The same applies with a lack of communication. The parties involved lose their linkage due to various reasons. When they cannot be linked to each other through words, actions or touch, there is dysfunction between the parties concerned. The researcher believes the Zulu expression will help better clarify the concept of the lack of communication to the people in the research area.

their children. In desperation, they even took part in a marriage encounter session hosted by the Catholic Church to find solace.

Satir (1983) states that the word “communicate” is generally understood to refer to verbal or non-verbal behaviour within a social context. In other words, communication includes symbols and clues that people use to give and receive meaning. If taken in this sense, the communication techniques that people use indicate their interpersonal functioning. Communication involves many levels e.g. gestures, body language, tone of voice and posture, all of which express verbal and non-verbal messages between two or more people.

In marriage and families, communication can become blocked, displaced or damaged because of conflict, disagreement and family problems (Satir, 1983: 79).

The important concepts related to effective communication, which have been explored in chapter five on the training of laity, will be consulted when dealing with communication blockages in couples and families. These include being attentive, active listening, responding, reflecting as well as allowing silence.

It is, however, important to observe that, in Zulu traditional culture, the concept of maintaining eye contact, which was emphasized as part of being attentive and actively listening, is understood to be a Western ideal. Zulu women and children keep their eyes down when speaking to their husbands or elders, respectively. The Zulu term for keeping one’s eyes lowered is *ukukhophoza*. *Ukukhophoza* is more pronounced in newlywed women. These cultural rules and expectations will need to be discussed in the sessions and accommodated where necessary.

Most of the people who came for an interview requested to learn to communicate about two aspects that sometimes bring about discord in their marriage or family functioning. The matters in question are:

- Sexual matters

God gave sex to married people as a gift, for procreation as well as for the couple to communicate their affection for each other with this intense form of communication.

The issue of sex in African communities, including the Zulu society, is often not discussed openly. It is known to be a very confidential matter. The researcher feels this confidentiality about sex has actually contributed to the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In fact, even the stigma that continues to prevail concerning the pandemic could also arise from the fact that it is taboo to discuss sexual issues openly. As a minister in active ministry, the researcher finds it difficult to preach a sermon about sexuality. The researcher has observed that women are most often victims because they have no right to talk about sexual matters to a man. In the process, women have been exposed to unprotected sex because of the culture of silence around the subject.

The marriage and family programme will definitely open lines of communication about the topic of sex. The marriage and family programmes will provide a safe place where men and women will openly communicate about sexuality issues.

The sessions could also help the couples to learn about ways of expressing love for each other, for example through kind words, having enough time for each other, using the gift of touch, remembering anniversaries or birthdays and giving each other presents. They will also emphasize the importance of tenderness, loving, expressive gestures, calling each other by endearing names e.g. honey, love, *sthandwa* (beloved one) etc.



Whilst looking at the subject of sex and sexuality, it is useful to mention what Mbiti (1969) observes. This author states that in most African societies, including the Zulu-speaking societies, once a woman becomes pregnant, sex has to stop until after childbirth. The women in some societies have to abstain from having sex for up to two years, or as long as she is breastfeeding the baby. This practice apparently worked well in polygamous marriages (Mbiti, 1969: 108).

Informants echoed the above author's observation and confirmed that breastfeeding women in Zulu traditional culture are expected to abstain from sex until the child is at least eighteen months old. However, the informants noted that now that Christian marriages are monogamous, this brings about infidelity on the husband's part whilst the wife is breastfeeding.

The researcher has observed that the above-mentioned concept of abstaining from sex during breastfeeding addresses what Mr and Mrs Mhlongo said in their interview. Discussions around this topic in the sessions will be good for newly married couples such as the Mhlongos. From experience, the researcher knows that abstinence prevents frequent births. Frequent births do affect the health of the growing children. Elderly women who counsel younger women discourage frequent births, known as *ukungxulela* in African Nguni traditional culture.

The informants also stated that the breastfeeding woman has to adjust her diet during breastfeeding to help her to avoid having sex. Foods that are taboo for a breastfeeding woman in traditional Zulu culture are eggs, nuts and dairy products. The researcher feels this is subject to debate because these products have protein, which is necessary for the growth of the baby.

The writer feels that communication about pregnancy dietary requirements will be helpful for those who are newly married. These family expectations and rules

concerning sexual issues are crucial. Discussing and sharing around the topic of sex should contribute to opening lines of communication between married partners.

- The issue of the in-laws

For the people who came for an interview, the issue of how to relate to the parents-in-law and the new wider family was also crucial. The women seemed to find it difficult to bring the topic up for discussion with their husbands. Many found this to be a matter that needed attention because it often contributed to disagreements and unhappiness in their family units. Communication about the subject is crucial in the sessions.

Scriptures will be consulted and the matters in question will be reasoned out in light of the modern era. Again, it is a question of accommodating Zulu cultural practices within the context of Christianity. In fact, the researcher feels it is sometimes necessary to invite the elders of the church to sessions and listen to their thinking about the above two matters. Through experience working with married couples, the researcher has realized that the issues of sex and the in-laws contribute a lot to a communication breakdown in couples and families.

### **6.7.2 Scriptural values in marriage and family**

Thirteen percent of the people from the local congregation who came to an interview felt it was crucial for married couples and families to put God at the centre of their lives. For them, He is the creator of the whole universe. As Christians, they can look to the scriptures for a good foundation on how to behave in their marriages and families. The Bible should also be able to answer many of the questions they have about marriage and family. The programme therefore intends to create a format that will use scripture as a foundation of the programme. This is in line with the class meetings that form the core of Methodism. In fact, the writer is convinced that the programme adds another dimension to the class system of the MCSA. With this research in progress, it is becoming evident that the class system model needs to

expand from being a membership model only to being used as a growth model for marriage and family systems as well.

Scripture, one of the sources of theological tools of reflection advocated by John Wesley, will be consulted constantly in the marriage and family programmes. Scriptural authority is so crucial for a believer that Wesley writes:

I will not, I dare not vary from this book either in great things or small. I have no power to dispense with one jot or tittle what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Christian, not almost but altogether (*Sermon: Cause of the inefficacy of Christianity* in Yringoyen Jr, 1999).

As mentioned, John Wesley's statement reflects his belief that every Christian needs to immerse himself or herself in the language, stories, images and themes of the Bible so as to grow. The stories of the Bible need to be interpreted prayerfully to bring meaning to the lives of those who are Christians (Yringoyen Jr, 1999: 25).

Like John Wesley, the researcher feels very strongly that scripture is a fertile resource for addressing marriage and family issues. There are many relevant stories that can help couples and families to grow in their interpersonal relationships.

Louw (2000) supports the richness of Bible stories as well as testimonies. He postulates that the narrative approach or story telling is a useful format in pastoral ministry. Louw states that Bible stories can offer very important and helpful links with the congregant's own story and, in the process, healing may take place. This author is convinced that the Bible can also be useful for diagnostic purposes in pastoral care. Scripture may provide insights into the deeper levels of a parishioner's experiential world. In other words, the minister can discover how the congregant identifies with the Bible story and draw useful insights. Furthermore, this author emphasizes that using scripture as the main communicative medium in pastoral care offers a therapeutic dimension that makes it evident that salvation has a therapeutic impact on human behaviour (Louw, 2000: 369).

This thesis has discussed informants' views on the role of grandparents in a Zulu family. They explained that folktales, myths and fables are often told to the grandchildren by the grandmother. These folktales or stories have a heritage of moral and ethical wisdom that have been passed down through the generations, usually through the oral tradition. These folktales can be used in conjunction with Bible stories to implant good moral and ethical ways of life in families. The writer feels that it is going to be vital to allow participants to use their Zulu Bibles in sessions. A deeper understanding of the text will be arrived at when reading scriptures written in a person's native language.

The people who came for an interview wanted clarity about three crucial values and wanted to know what scripture says about these values. The values were trust, faithfulness and respect.

- Trust

The researcher is convinced that trust and loyalty are interlinked. They both express reliability in a relationship. Without trust and loyalty, the researcher believes, based on her own personal experience, that marriage and family undergo a lack of homeostasis.

On observation, the couples in the case studies have a problem with trusting each other. With the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, there is no reliability or confidence in most family members. In the context of the research, and perhaps in the pandemic-stricken African communities, it seems that the men have multiple partners, especially because of the Zulu traditional cultural inclination toward polygamy.

The women in the interviews constantly expressed the problem of not being able to trust their husbands, which reinforces the above assertion.

Böszörményi-Nagy states very clearly that the breakdown of trustworthiness in a relationship through the disengagement from multilateral caring and accountability sets the stage for developing symptoms of dysfunction. By multilateral, the author refers to the fact that there are two or more sides involved in a relationship. In a family, the relationship is normally between a husband and wife and, in most cases, involves a child. This is a multilateral relationship. When mistrust is multilateral, it can involve three sides. This brings discord to the family relationship (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991).

Böszörményi-Nagy explains that one of the signs and symptoms of a dysfunctional relationship, in a marriage or family, is mistrust (Böszörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991). As soon as it is identified, it needs to be addressed. The researcher has observed that the main source of breakdown in many families is mistrust.

- Faithfulness

A working definition from various dictionaries states that being faithful is maintaining sexual loyalty to one's lover or spouse. There is an overlap between trust and faith. If the two words are translated into Zulu, the difference becomes clearer. Trust is *ukuthemba* and faithfulness is *ukuthembeka*. In the envisaged programme, the concepts could be unpacked further by exploring the Zulu language and this would give the participants clarity about the meaning and importance of the two terms in marriage and family life.

Looking at the concepts using the language of the participants makes a great contribution to pastoral ministry.

It is also worth noting that Mark Hestenes' (1995: 13) lecture notes on Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy stress that balancing loyalty plays a very important role in alleviating marital and family problems. Hestenes reiterates Böszörményi-Nagy's views and states that if conflicting loyalties are allowed to happen repeatedly in families, they repeat over generations and this gives rise to what is called a "revolving slate". It is therefore useful to address issues of unfaithfulness and issues of mistrust in marriages and families by opening relevant lines of communication early.

- Respect

The researcher observed that the men mainly brought up the issue of respect during the interviews. The Khumalo family seemed to have been greatly affected by the issue. Mrs Khumalo was actually in tears when Mr Khumalo demanded respect from her in the interview session. In fact, it is clear that the men in the Zulu context expect to be respected by their wives and children. If they do not see this happening, they are very uncomfortable.

What is important to note is that the Bible places a man and a woman on an equal plane. Men and women are both created in the image of God. Respect therefore needs to be reciprocal, not one-sided, in the Christian context. Respect (*ukuhlonipha*) in the Zulu context actually needs to become reciprocal. If perceived from the perspective of mutuality, *ukuhlonipha* changes and becomes *ukuhloniphana*.

### **6.7.3 Marriage and family roles**

The issue of roles in marriage and family was a crucial issue amongst the people who came for the interview. Almost 13% of the people felt it is necessary to be clear about roles in a relationship.

On observation, the political framework of the country (the Constitution) that came into being when South Africa attained democracy stresses gender equity. This has not

been well received by many men within the context of the African culture, which includes Zulu communities. Most of the men in African traditional culture grew up knowing that a woman is expected to submit to a man. What is needed here is to look at the typical gender roles in Zulu tradition. In other words, it is helpful to understand the expectations of a man and the expectations of a woman. A dialogue about these issues amongst married couples should help them grow and cope.

Chapter three of this research looks at and discusses family processes in a Zulu context in a changing world. There is a need to understand that, in general, gone are the days when only the male was the sole provider for the family. The women also put bread on the table, hence the equality between males and females. This has developed because of the modern world we all live in. Modernity has replaced the traditional inequity in many African communities, including the Zulu society. The concept of gender equality needs to be explained well to all parties. This does not strip the man of his manhood or the woman of her womanhood. An understanding has to come forth of the fact that the two roles complement each other. Where one partner is weak, the other must be strong and whoever is strongest must help the family to survive.

Scripturally, the creation stories in the book of Genesis in the Old Testament help one to wrestle with the issue of roles in marriage. In the New Testament, Paul discusses the roles of headship and submission in the book of Ephesians.

Hermeneutic tools help to show that these roles are reciprocal and put no one at a disadvantage. The different gifts God has given men and women help them to learn from each other and, in their diversity, they unite to make one unified and stable unit in the society and family.

On observation, if the roles of the couple are well set and the couple understands what society and the family expect from them, there is harmony. When the parents honour and submit to each other, the children automatically know that they have to honour

their parents and submit to them. The parents become role models to their children. Both boys and girls know their roles as the parents guide them in moral and ethical issues of life in a peaceful home.

#### **6.7.4 Zulu traditional cultural values in a Christian household**

About 6% of the people who came for an interview wanted to hear about the dialogue between Zulu cultural values in the context of the church. The fact that so few people wanted to learn about this indicated that either they already understood the conflict or felt it was better to remain silent about the subject.

Informants stated that in Zulu cultural tradition, respect (*ukuhlonipha*) forms the basic value central to a marriage relationship. This concept has already been explored in the section on the second highest prioritized need, namely roles in marriage and family. Further points about this important concept will be explained at this juncture.

The informants stated that *ukuhlonipha* is expressed in Zulu cultural tradition through body language, refraining from calling elderly people by name and also through one's dress code. Body language is key when a Zulu woman or girl passes food to people in the house or to the elders as well as strangers. She kneels or bends her knees as she hands over the food as a sign of respect.

However, the intention of this study is not to revive age-old and oppressive gestures amongst couples; the main issue is to enrich participants through learning from Zulu traditional culture what is constructive and will enable them to express their respect for each other.

The husband and in-laws are called by the clan name in most cases. Instead of saying "Sipho", for instance, the wife will use the clan name and say "Dlamini". Wearing head coverings and dressing modestly are also symbolic of respecting others, the



elderly as well as the family ancestors. However, most women in the peri-urban areas will change their dress code to suit their workplace requirements during the day. This needs to be openly communicated and accepted by both parties in the relationship.

The researcher has observed that the notion of respect in Zulu tradition is not as one-sided as it appears. Whilst the wife does not call her husband by name, she is also called by her clan name. Using the example of Siphoh being the first-born child, a wife will be called either *MaNkomo* or *makaSiphoh* (Siphoh's mother). In return, the wife will refer to her husband as *uBaba kaSiphoh* (Siphoh's father).

One could therefore say that respect is mutual in most Zulu families. It is just a matter of making people aware of it. The awareness will come about through discussions in the programme. One could say that mutual respect does exist in Zulu households; this is known as *ukuhloniphana* (respecting one another).

The researcher has observed that the concept of *ukuhlonipha* has been passed on in the dress code of the Women's and Young Women's Manyano organizations in the MCSA. Head coverings are included with the red uniforms and men and women sit on separate sides of the church during the church service. The traditional cultural values are extended by the church. However, some families have become more liberated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ than others have. Households differ in terms of their growth in and away from the concepts of tradition or culture. As a priest from the Catholic Church said, "If the cultural traditions help people to understand the Gospel they should be allowed. Some people need stepping stones to get to God more than others" (Interview with Father Jili at KwaNdengezi; this is included in chapter eight).

If anything, the marriage and family renewal programme should contribute to setting people free from cultural traditions that delay growth in knowing Christ as a liberator. Some traditional cultural customs are worth keeping but some could be discarded in

this modern era. When the programme starts running, it will be interesting to discuss the various participants' thoughts about these matters.

### **6.7.5 Parent-child relationship**

About 8% of the people who came for an interview wanted to learn about bringing up their children according to the will of God.

The book of Genesis states clearly in 1: 28 that God said to Adam and Eve that they should “be fruitful and multiply”. In other words, apart from companionship, one of the most important purposes of marriage is procreation. The parent-child relationship is as God-ordained as the marriage relationship. God seeks to see parents have good relationships with their children. It is the parents' responsibility to teach good values to their growing child. Children always look up to their parents as their role models.

Scripture offers many stories that highlight certain positive and negative values in parenting. In the story of Jacob and his family in Genesis 37, it reflects the negative value of “favouritism” in Jacob's family. Jacob favoured his son Joseph more than he favoured the others. This gave rise to rivalry and triangles in the family and Joseph's siblings decided to punish Joseph, with disastrous consequences.

Jacob's family inherited the concept of family rivalry from his parents, Isaac and Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah inherited the same family problem from their parents, Abraham and Sarah. This shows how sibling rivalry can be transmitted to the second and third generations.

Parents could consult such Bible stories during Bible study sessions with their children.

Böszörményi-Nagy refers to the multigenerational transmission of triangulation as a “revolving slate”<sup>64</sup>. If these revolving slates are not addressed, they continue to destabilize families.

From experience, children need good communication between themselves and their parents. They need enough time with their parents, time for play and time for spiritual matters. Proverbs 22: 6 states: “Train up your child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Households need to factor in prayer time in the evening to help the children grow spiritually. The good values of love, honesty, loyalty, diligence and forgiveness should be taught.

The fifth commandment in Exodus 2: 12, “Honour thy father and mother”, is particularly pertinent. It ensures that children will live with the assurance of God’s hand of protection.

Apart from being parents, parents should be priests in their homes. According to Leonard Hulley (1994), Sussanna Wesley, mother to the founders of Methodism, John and Charles Wesley, taught her children the Lord’s Prayer as soon as they began to speak. They then learnt other prayers, catechism and portions of scripture (Hulley, 1994: 6).

From experience, the researcher has observed that most Methodist homes have inherited Sussanna Wesley’s emphasis on nurturing children’s spirituality. This continues after baptism at Sunday School, through children’s ministries and youth ministries. Where these disciplines have disappeared, they need to be revived, while

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<sup>64</sup>The revolving slate is a term also used in family therapy by theorists such as Böszörményi-Nagy. This pertains to conflict patterns that are repeatedly passed on through generations in a family e.g. Abraham and Sarah passed on their conflicts to Isaac and Rebekah and later, Jacob and his family experienced the same kind of conflict but with different kinds of triangulation (von Rad, 1973: 166). This revolving slate can come in the form of, for instance, divorce or alcoholism, or involve any other concept that promotes dysfunction in a family. If the issues are not addressed through pastoral counselling or any other therapy, they continue to destabilize families.

the children are young, for the sake of enriching and bringing up these children in the ways of the Lord.

It is good for the children to maintain links with their traditional homes of origin, namely with the rules, customs, norms and expectations of the family, extended family and community. From the writer's experience, exposure to cultural tradition brings about a sense of belonging in a child, particularly in one who is growing up in a township or peri-urban environment. When the links are maintained, we also see fewer abandoned children, orphans and street children. Everyone, including children, learn the value of family life and of belonging.

The writer intends to create a programme that will accommodate parents and children being in the same session. This will promote communication and sharing about challenges that the parents and children face in this modern age. Many children nowadays are confronted by poverty, child abuse, peer pressure and many other challenges.

The programme should link to child psychologists, social workers and clinical psychologists, to whom the children can be referred for counselling if necessary. The elders of the church should also be consulted regarding addressing parent-child problems. When parents share their stories confidentially with others, they should be able to restore their relationships to good health. The support provided needs to be at all levels i.e. spiritually, physically and emotionally.

#### **6.7.6 Family financial matters**

Only Mr and Mrs Jozi, who had just started a catering company, voiced their desire to be taught about budgeting. The other couples spoke about a lack of communication. This need to learn means of effective communication was expressed by 10% of the participants. Communication could include learning to talk about money matters.

Edward Farley emphasized that theological reflection is not merely thinking about the needs of the people but is an attempt “to penetrate and open matters which are present but hidden” (Patton, 1990: 96).

The researcher observed that most of the couples emphasized “communication” as one of their crucial needs. When the writer probed a bit about the matter of communication, she discovered it had to do with respect and respect was often related to the use of money in the household. The “culture of silence” sometimes makes women avoid talking about serious issues. The lack of communication often promotes domestic violence. This very often goes hand in hand with infidelity and the husband sometimes has to support children born outside of the marriage. This is destabilizing many families in the area.

Having reflected on the issue of financial need, the writer intends to educate families on what the Bible conveys about finances. Participants should increase tithing and giving, which is a form of worship in the Christian tradition.

Sell (1995) correctly suggests that Christians need wisdom to analyze their spending habits and should attempt to discover the basic psychological problem behind their failure to handle money (Sell, 1995: 237). Exercises on budgeting need to be included in sessions to help participants grow in handling their finances.

It will also be useful to invite a qualified financial advisor to not only teach families how to budget, but also how to invest and save, as well as share their money with those in need in the neighbourhood. The issue of wisely handling money is important in making families stable.

The researcher has observed that changing roles in Zulu families, particularly where the father figure is no longer the sole provider for the family, have caused disputes in

families about monetary affairs. More communication lines need to be opened about this matter. When women bring bread to the table, instead of it being appreciated, it often becomes a source of dispute. The man of the house becomes threatened.

#### **6.7.7 Family health matters**

Reflecting on health is also very important in developing an effective programme. Only two couples stated that they had medical needs. Mrs Khumalo explained that she was unable to conceive with her husband. Another couple, Mr and Mrs Jozi, shared that Mrs Jozi had come with a lot of baggage into the marriage. Mrs Jozi was so affected by her parents' divorce that she has developed ulcers and high blood pressure. She shared that every time her parents fought before divorcing, she would end up in hospital.

The need for medical assistance was expressed by 13% of the participants. Thus, there is a need to address family health in the programme.

Although the couples were not particularly vocal about health matters, the issue of HIV/AIDS has caused much family dysfunction. Because the pandemic is associated with stigmatization, fear, secrecy, ignorance and the abuse of children and women in many communities, including the area of research, the researcher intends to make the programme a safe place where a guest speaker can address the families on health matters. Issues of safe sex, voluntary testing and counselling are crucial for all families. Danniella Gennrich (2004) correctly states that the target groups in the congregation are families, women, children, youth, young adults and even the aged. She also correctly emphasizes that the various ministries, class meetings, meetings and all gatherings of the church are great opportunities for addressing HIV/AIDS (2004: 164).

The programme will not only focus on the AIDS pandemic, in case this repels the participants. General health issues will be addressed e.g. cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, children's disabilities and other common ailments. The programme will be arranged in such a way that the whole family attends.

The ministry of Jesus Christ focused a lot on health matters. The church could follow His example and promote healing. The earlier the conditions are discovered, the greater the chances of surviving and/or coping.

### **6.7.8 Teenage problems**

Quite a number of the parents who came for an interview expressed concern about their teenage children. These couples have been married for over 20 years. In percentage terms, this equates to about 10%. Teenagers in this modern world are caught up in peer pressure.

Collins (2007) correctly states that the Bible condemns alcohol abuse, drug abuse and all uncontrolled lust. The growth in access to video games, the internet and hedonistic lifestyles have exposed our teenagers to substance abuse. Collins lists the causes of addiction as follows:

- Expensive marketing by manufacturers of alcoholic drinks and addictive products;
- Abusive adults who expose young people to addictive substances; and
- Troubled families where alcohol is abused, drugs are used and relationships are strained (Collins, 2007: 684).

These predisposing factors to substance abuse are prevalent in the context of the research.

The local AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) based in Durban, South Africa, offers good seminars about substance abuse. They could be invited to address the young people. When needed, a support group could be developed. This can be further dealt with in the class meetings.

Teenage pregnancy is a pertinent issue. The Bible condemns sex outside of marriage. However, this is addressed by repentance. Very often, when a young girl falls pregnant outside of marriage, the effects are denial, guilt, fear, shame and even a sense of regret; these need to be addressed. If they are not attended to, they may damage the future of a growing young woman or even young man.

The researcher has observed that teenage pregnancy is one of the most controversial issues the church has to address. It is one of the main causes behind the escalation in the number of single parents. Issues of unemployment, sexual experimentation and many other social ills contribute to this situation.

The researcher feels that sessions will have to include young people so that they can have an opportunity to receive sexual education, which does not come easily from the pulpit.

#### **6.7.9 Resolving conflict, reconciliation and healing**

Four elderly mothers as well as a few of the couples were vocal about the issue of domestic violence. As with HIV/AIDS, there is a culture of silence about this issue, yet it happens in many homes. The women are often victims of abuse and domestic violence and cannot easily reveal this to the researcher in the presence of their husbands. Most of the couples expressed a need to address conflict when it arises. However, the topic made them uncomfortable, suggesting they have things that they are ashamed to talk about. Tears and body language conveyed that a lot was left unsaid in the interviews. This need is at 8% in Table 1.



The researcher envisages that this issue could be addressed in the last session, possibly with the whole family present. Families could be given enough time to open up to each other and could learn to listen to each other. The intention is to end the session with participants being led to forgive each other. The Bible states in 2 Corinthians 5: 20 that as ambassadors for Christ, we have been called to “the ministry of reconciliation”. Never has there been a time when forgiveness is so needed in marriages and families. Having achieved this, one would see peace and tranquillity in our communities.

#### **6.7.10 The need for a support system or group<sup>65</sup>**

In the interviews, about 8% felt that having a marriage and family enrichment and healing programme was a good premise upon which to develop a new support system/group in the local church as well as in the surrounding community.

Most of the people who came to an interview are members of the Manyano groups in the local church. They already understand the positive effects of being part of these prayer groups. However, the groups separate men and women. They feel that the same-sex support system they enjoy in the prayer groups could be done differently.

The marriage and family enrichment and healing programme would get husbands and wives as well as parents and children to come together. The result would be a more inclusive kind of a support system. They see this as a necessary alternative for growth and sharing as well as for in times of need.

#### **What does a support system or group involve?**

In response to this question, Collins (2007) quotes God’s words when He created the human race: “It is not good for the man to be alone”. God then gave Adam a partner.

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<sup>65</sup>The terms support group or support system will be used interchangeably in this research.

From then on, human beings have looked to each other for support, love, help and encouragement. For some people, their individualism makes them shun any offer of help. However, without the help of God and the help of other people, individualists often succumb to the stresses of this world. Most churches develop support groups. There are support systems for people living with HIV/AIDS, people with diabetes, cancer support groups, support groups for children with disabilities etc. Collins notes that all of these support groups offer encouragement, reassurance, useful survival information and love to the participants. This makes the members cope better with their stress and equips them to avoid future problems (Collins, 2007: 584).

The researcher identifies with what Collins says about support groups. One of the best support groups that scripture offers as an ideal is comprised of Jesus Christ and his twelve disciples. The writer further observes that many support groups, for example the class system in the MCSA, have followed this “group’s” model. Perhaps one could tabulate the objectives of a support group or system thus:

- Support systems or groups offer accountability to the participants.
- The members encourage each other in the common journey of life.
- The members reassure each other in times of stress.
- Useful information is shared in the support group.
- The group members equip each other to deal with present stress and future problems.
- The participants give each other emotional, spiritual and even material support when necessary, especially where there is a need therefor.
- In times of need (e.g. grief), the members are there for each other. (Mr and Mrs Zikode, who shared how their friend had become isolated after her spouse committed suicide because of a family dispute, noted the importance of this type of support.)

As a member of the Women’s Manyano, the researcher can confirm that a support group or system is a necessity for meeting the many specific needs of the Christian

community. The marriage and family programme should be able to grow into a relevant support group for couples and families in the MCSA and the surrounding community.

## **6.8 Summary**

The fieldwork involved engaging with twenty-three couples. They were interviewed and the verbatim reports of five married couples were presented because they collectively depict the generic needs expressed by other interviewees. The researcher used structured questions during the interviews. Ten crucial needs were identified in the process. These appeared in Figure 2 and are: scriptural values in marriage and family; marriage and family roles; Zulu traditional cultural values in a Christian marriage; communication skills; the need for a support system; the parent-child relationship; family finances; family health; teenage problems; resolving conflict and moving toward reconciliation and healing. The researcher engaged in theological reflection using the needs as a diagnostic tool to assess what the best pastoral intervention methods would be to bring about enrichment, growth and healing. The chapter offered a pie chart of the needs of the married couples.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

The researcher observes that the conversations with couples and families seemed to reveal their expectations that the journey to reconciliation and healing had already begun. This makes it crucial for the researcher to listen carefully in interviews and to be willing to offer some form of counselling or referral where the need arises. The experience also reflects that the exercise has to be revisited to see where the interviewed people are in their relationship so as to improve the programme. The following chapter presents similar fieldwork but with single parents who form part of the family of the local church. As already mentioned, the intention of the programme is to be inclusive.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SINGLE PARENTHOOD AS PART OF FAMILY ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING – fieldwork, case studies and interviews**

#### **Introduction**

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, the researcher is convinced that it is necessary to include single parents in the programme of enrichment, growth and healing. Statistically, single parents make up quite a high percentage in membership of the MCSA. They also are involved in leadership positions in our church. As mentioned, including a programme for single parents will make the marriage and family enrichment and healing programme inclusive of the church family.

Before the interviews are presented, the researcher feels it would be a worthwhile exercise to discuss the causes of single parenthood, especially in the context of the research. The information is based on the writer's observations as a minister who has practised in the area for seven years. Information from informants living in the area also highlights how single parenthood has developed in the area. Relevant observations from authors who have written about various tribes in the African continent will also be consulted.

#### **7.1 Predisposing factors to single parenthood in African communities**

As a matter of laying down a foundation to the issue of single parenthood, the researcher feels it is useful to explore the predisposing factors to single parenthood in the African Continent especially the Sub-Saharan Region. This should make it possible to see how the neighbouring communities have responded to the social, political, economic and spiritual challenges of the modern era. The rationale and observations of other theologians writing about African communities are important

for the researcher. One seeks to learn and build on what others have to say about their contextual needs and their responses to them. No researcher can rely solely on his or her own insights because gender plays a role in such insights. Oduyoye correctly states:

In doing theology women adopt a perspective approach rather than analysis and critique of existing works. They grant that there are unique insights that come from individuals from contexts other than one's own and that there is something to be appreciated from that which is different (Oduyoye, 2001: 11).

The researcher is convinced that unique insights will arise from interviews with single parents from KwaNdengezi. This should make it possible to contribute fresh input to the discipline of pastoral theology.

Exploring the challenges to the institution of marriage and family in the African Christian context in general, Waruta and Kinoti (2000) emphasize that the institution of the family in African society is based on marriage, as is the case in all societies globally. To support this statement, these authors give a definition of marriage:

Marriage is an approved social pattern whereby two persons establish a family (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 102).

Looking at marriage and procreation in Africa, the above authors echo Mbiti, who refers to marriage as a central *rite de passage* (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 103).

Mbiti (1969) further postulates that failure to get married under normal circumstances in African tribes means that a person concerned has rejected society and the society in return rejects him or her. For this author, marriage in the African context is a duty, a requirement and part of the collective rhythm of life in which everybody needs to take part. African communities are united in the belief that for procreation to take place, people need to get married (Mbiti, 1969: 130-131).

The researcher observes that it is actually this perception of being rejected by society that puts a single person in the African context in a rather stigmatized position in the church family and the community. Further, mature single people and single parents in the context of this research face the assumption that they have somehow failed the society. Yet it should not be so. In many cases, certain unforeseen circumstances have caused the person to be single. They are not to blame for their single status. This has to do with what contextual family therapist Bösörményi-Nagy calls the “factual dimension”. This dimension of contextual family therapy has to do with facts that a person has no control over e.g. one’s ethnic identity, one’s skin colour, having been adopted or one’s single status. Not much can be done to change the situation. The facts pertaining to the person are provided by destiny (Bösörményi-Nagy, Grunebaum & Ulrich, 1991: 159).

There is no doubt that the marriage/family rhythm has been extremely disrupted in most African societies. This includes Zulu communities. Quite frequently, the researcher sees many single parents preparing for baptisms, confirmation and other pastoral needs.

Many single parents have to be mothers in their families as well as grandmothers. Various reasons cause people to become single parents or to live a single lifestyle. What are the main causes of single parenthood and “singleness” in Zulu communities? The various causes are explored hereunder.

### **7.1.1 Bereavement**

One of the fastest growing causes of single parenthood in KwaZulu-Natal is bereavement or widowhood. The reason for this is that the province is the hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and related diseases.

Daniela Gennrich (2004) stresses that South Africa's apartheid legacy led to a break-up of many homes due to the need for migrant labour. There was also a need for young activists to "go underground" and many died due to political violence. The latter was very prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal. This break-up of the family structure increased the number of single parents. What happened during this period was that many men became alienated from their families. The young men then took on responsibilities beyond their maturity and grew up without positive role models in their homes. The family system suffered tremendously because of the deaths of male family members during the struggle. Fatherlessness in the home became the norm and opened a door to experimentation with pre-marital sex. There was a lack of guidance for children and a breakdown in traditional values. Very soon after the struggle and the deaths attributed to political violence in the early 90s, HIV/AIDS crept in. This took a great toll on the family structure and led to the increase in single parenthood (Gennrich, 2004: 11).

Based on the researcher's observations and information from informants, many women lose their husbands or partners due to the pandemic and women who are infected live longer than males, possibly because men are more likely to have more than one partner.

On further observation, singlehood caused by bereavement (through natural death, political violence, HIV/AIDS and other reasons) creates a huge population of traumatized people within the church family. These people in reality do need some form of continuous pastoral after-care for them to recover from the traumatic experience of losing their loved ones. This is supported by an interview the writer conducted with Thandi (an alias) in our Christian bookshop.

## **A workplace single parent interview**

### **Identities**

**Thandi:** Thandi

**Minister:** Researcher

**Minister:** I have come to buy a class book. Good morning, Thandi.

**Thandi:** Good morning to you. It is good to see you, *Mfundisi*. You will not see me again.

**Minister:** Why Thandi?

**Thandi:** I am taking my retirement at the end of the month and I am leaving the shop.

**Minister:** Oh! That is sad. We shall miss you in this shop.

**Thandi:** I know, but I have to go. I am worried though because as a single person it is going to be hard to meet all my needs.

**Minister:** Are you a single parent, Thandi? You always talk about your sons.

The conversation continued with Thandi explaining that she had been single for 38 years. She lost her husband through a motorcar accident. She shared how she has been lonely ever since; how she had to put up with the aftermath of taking care of her two boys single-handedly; the agony of learning to pay for their education alone; the desire to have the church family embrace her after the funeral; how the people thought she was all right because she was smiling; the pain of people seeming to avoid talking to her in her church; and how she yearned for a support group comprised of widows in her church, which does not exist.

**Thandi:** I have postponed my operation on my brain tumour until now when I go on retirement. Only God knows how I shall cope with my boys and myself after the operation.



This conversation was very painful to listen to. Here was a single person who was a widow due to bereavement, who had been longing for support from her church family for 38 years. The writer wondered how many Thandis there are out there yearning for attention, support and emotional healing.

Very clearly, Thandi missed out on aftercare from her church. She was lonely. She was panicking about her future as a retired person. She was worried about the operation. She was not sure about sustaining herself and the boys after the operation.

Thandi's story is a common one. Bereaved single parents need pastoral care, a support group, a sense of belonging to the church family and an assurance that the people of God will always be there for them.

### **7.1.2 Separation or divorce**

Informants confirmed that in Zulu traditional society, the words divorce or separation are unfamiliar words. They declared that the only time one would hear of separation or divorce in Zulu communities was if a woman could not conceive or bear children. (This was in fact one of the reasons for polygamous marriages. When a man realized his wife could not have children, he was allowed to have more than one wife so that if he did not get children with one wife, he could have children with another wife. This would then prevent the barren wife from being sent home.)

Universally, the Christian tradition only encourages monogamous marriages. This is a basic biblical principle from the creation story in the book of Genesis. Monogamous marriages avoid family disharmony, divisions, jealousy, envy and all the unpleasantness that prevails amongst the wives in a polygamous marriage. In the era of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, monogamous marriages are critical, the researcher observes.

In modern family life in the peri-urban areas, the divorce rate is escalating. Families are under great strain due to issues like infidelity, financial strain, disagreements with in-laws, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has affected trust amongst couples, as well as domestic violence. Some couples may have got married for the wrong reasons and never understood what marriage is all about. Sometimes a couple may have married for financial reasons.

The researcher notes that temporary and permanent separations are becoming common in modern family life. These are mainly caused by constant tensions that could include domestic violence, unresolved conflicts, infidelity and the misunderstanding of roles in marriage. The disputes may become so frequent that the separation periods change from being temporary to being permanent, finally ending up in divorce. The incidences that the couples go through cause a lot of pain and bitterness. The couple then decides to end the relationship. In normal cases, the mother is given custody of the children; hence her status as a single parent.

The researcher has observed those who are separated or in the process of getting divorced and has noted the effects, namely anger, feeling rejected, guilty and lonely. Observing affected people in the context of the research who have gone through divorce, they seem to have a feeling of having failed in life and a sense of stigmatization. To be called a “divorcé/e” is not pleasant. The stigmatization also seems to be carried over to the children.

### **7.1.3 Teenage pregnancy**

The researcher has observed that the social, economic, and political framework of the newly democratic South Africa has unfortunately seen a rise in the number of young teenage mothers, who have unfortunately experimented with sex outside of marriage. According to informants, this happens whilst the parent or single mother is at work, away from home the whole day in an effort to put bread on the table. The ailing grandparent is not able to keep the young person under her watchful eye during the

day. The period between the child coming back from school and the tired mother coming home from work is the most vulnerable period.

Within the context of the church, there is disharmony between what the law advocates (the right to make decisions about one's body) and what the church advocates (the need to abstain from sex outside of marriage). Ex-communication is practised in some churches. However, the researcher feels ex-communication of pregnant teenagers does not solve the problem of teenage pregnancy.

The Zulu traditional practice of the young girl being frequently inspected by her grandmother<sup>66</sup> or an elderly aunt to safeguard her virginity is seen to be a form of child abuse and is controversial in the modernized community. The constitutional framework of South Africa has increased people's consciousness about gender equity and children's rights. People therefore question things and want to know why the boys are not inspected. The customs then seem to belong to the rural areas and not to the community in the township. Perhaps families could individually revive these protective customs to save their girls from early pregnancy (researcher's observation).

In line with this observation, Waruta and Kinoti emphasize that the breakdown of traditional values, rise in romance and exposure to erotic material in magazines and the media has caused an escalation in teenage pregnancy and single motherhood (and fatherhood) in the African continent, including in the Zulu communities (Waruta & Kinoti, 2000: 113).

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<sup>66</sup>The Zulu custom of inspecting the virginity of young girls (*ukuhlolwa*) is done as a protective measure to guard girls against early sexual experimentation (according to informants). This exercise is the responsibility of the grandmother (*ugogo*) in the Zulu household. This often prevented the girls from falling pregnant in their teens. In the modern world, this is slowly disappearing from the Zulu household, especially in the peri-urban areas and townships. Informants explained that the families travel to their home of origin in the rural areas to expose their young ones to this discipline, especially if the *ugogo nomkhulu* (grandparents) are still alive.

The researcher notes that the breakdown in the kinship system has also caused new lifestyles of cohabitation. In an attempt to save their children from these dangers, informants allege that some families take their young sons and daughters to their original families to expose them to the old traditional values, such as initiation rites. When the young boys and girls go back to the communities of origin, the elders give them advice about the ways of life. This is known as *ukululekwa*. Chapter three explores the family processes in Zulu traditional households. Discussions have been offered on *umemulo* (the girls' puberty rite) and *ukwemuka kwezinkomo* (the boys' initiation school or puberty rite).

The families who continue their links with their households of origin have fewer problems with teenage pregnancies and the many challenges that young people experience as they grow up. Once they go to initiation schools, they are willing to listen to the elders and often know the difference between right and wrong behaviour.

#### **7.1.4 Single parenthood and singleness as an alternative lifestyle**

The researcher has observed that many single parents are not keen to get married but they want to have a family. These single people have neither divorced nor lost a mate. They just prefer to be independent and to raise children on their own. Some are quite elderly persons. They may have had relationships before and got hurt and do not want to be hurt again. Some people are born with a lack of interpersonal skills and they find it hard to communicate or socialize with other people. As a result, they decide not to make a lifelong commitment.

The researcher has observed that in light of marriage breakdowns and family dysfunction in the research context, the young adult is nowadays reluctant to make a commitment and to get married.

Further observation by the researcher is that one of the most threatening issues to marriage in this modern era is an educated woman. This repels many men, who find

themselves having to share their authoritative roles with an enlightened wife. An educated man or woman sometimes then decides to buy his or her own home and to live alone in the city. In the researcher's opinion, this is dangerous because people begin adopting foreign, unfamiliar kinds of relationships. This kind of alternative single lifestyle seems to be increasing around the cities.

Single parents and single people without children form an important group of people who need to be affirmed and appreciated. They need to be given relevant pastoral care that can enrich and bring healing to them.

## **7.2 Engagement with single parenthood in the context of the research (Zulu communities at KwaNdengezi)**

Interviews were organized with single parents. The announcement was included in the church bulletin. It was arranged with the stewards that the interviews would happen in the church building after the Sunday service. The interviews occurred in the months of May and June in 2009.

### **7.2.1 Questionnaire for single parent interviews (Appendix 3)**

#### **7.2.2 Demographics of the case studies**

Sixty-three single parents responded to the bulletin. Unlike the married couples, the single parents were not interviewed orally but were given demographic forms to fill in their particulars. The researcher then assisted the participants with responding to the structured questions. Sixty females and three males filled out the form.

The form sought to establish the following:

1. Name
2. Sex

3. Age
4. Cause of being a single parent
5. Number of children
6. Occupation
7. Level of education
8. Contact number

(Demographic form remodelled from: Family Process, Volume 48, Number 1, March 2009, p. 29)

### **7.2.3 Summary of the needs of the single parents**

The responses from the single parents showed that all of them had children. They also all had extended families and looked after their brother or sister's children because their sibling/s were either deceased or could not afford to take care of their children. The fact that so few men attended the interview suggests that single parenthood is perceived to be a female "problem". The main causes of single parenthood in the context of the research were assessed and these are listed according to prevalence: death of a partner, teenage pregnancy, divorce, separation and other causes. In fact, the "other" factor described people who said they did not want to be married because of the stress they see in married people.

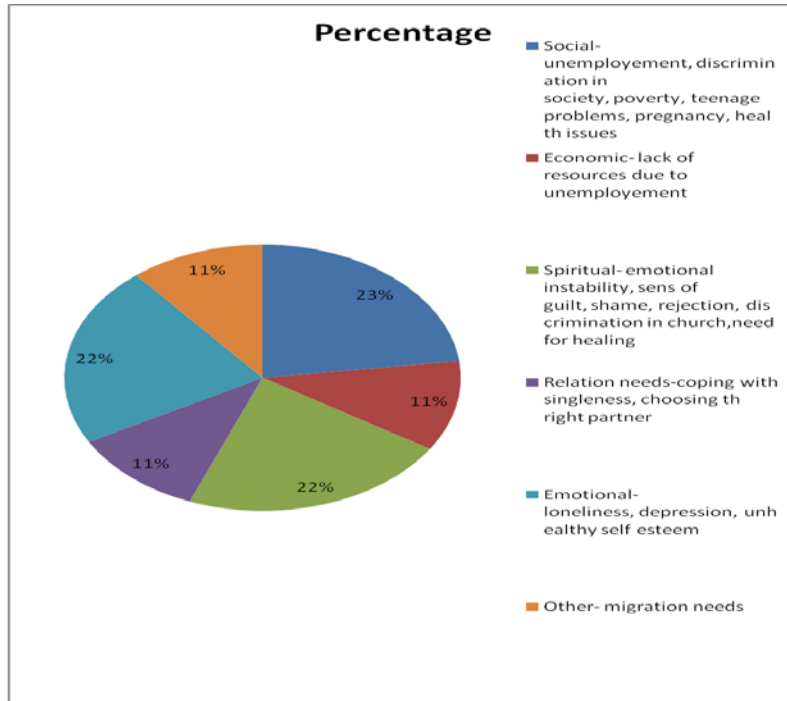
The participants that selected "other" causes come from the neighbouring states of Zimbabwe and Lesotho and they are living in the area due to unfavourable socio-political climates in their countries of origin. The two highest causes of being a single parent are death of a mate and teenage pregnancy.

The established needs of the participants are summarized as follows:

- Social needs: homelessness, unemployment, discrimination in society, difficult parenting, teenage problems e.g. teenage pregnancy and substance abuse.
- Economic needs: a lack of resources for survival.

- Spiritual needs: emotional instability, feelings of shame and guilt, rejection, loneliness in the congregation, discrimination and a need for healing.
- Physical needs: the issue of sexuality and how to address this in the Christian context.
- Relational needs: coping with singleness and choosing the right partner.
- Other needs: migration needs and fear of dysfunctional marriage.

<b>Needs for Single Parents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Social</b> – unemployment, discrimination in society, poverty, teenage problems, pregnancy, health issues	23%
<b>Spiritual</b> – emotional instability, sense of guilt, shame, rejection, discrimination in church, need for healing	22%
<b>Emotional</b> – loneliness, depression, unhealthy self-esteem	22%
<b>Relational needs</b> – coping with singleness, choosing the right partner	11%
<b>Economic</b> – lack of resources due to unemployment	11%
<b>Other</b> – migration needs	11%



**Figure 3: Needs of single parents at KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

## 7.2.4 Theological reflection and assessment of single parents' needs

### 7.2.4.1 Social needs

Evidently, social needs were most needed by the single parents. These needs were at 23%. The area of research comprised predominantly impoverished and marginalized people, although there are affluent teachers, nurses or factory workers here and there. From the interviews, the researcher noted that most of the single parents in the area are people who do not own their homes. Because of the high rate of unemployment, most of them rent a room or two in other homes. Being single also makes it difficult to attain a home in the peri-urban area. Because of cultural norms, people will rather offer a house to a male head of a household than to a female. Female-headed households tend to suffer from social discrimination.



To take the issue of discrimination further, the research will now address the issue of teenage pregnancy. In Nyembezi and Nxumalo's (1989) book on Zulu customs and family issues, they state that a girl's virginity is a matter of pride. In the urban areas, when girls lose their virginity, the older women have a way of punishing them. Other girls also ill-treat those who have lost their virginity. Even if the partner wants to marry a girl after she has had a child, the *lobolo* or dowry will be decreased by one cow so as to discipline her. Further discipline of the young man involves him paying damages. This is referred to as *ukuhlawula*. It is and has always been the responsibility of the older women to take care of the girls and to prevent this kind of ill-treatment of the pregnant young girl (Nyembezi & Nxumalo, 1989: 116).

The researcher has noted that this type of discrimination against those who fall pregnant outside of marriage is evident and it emanates from Zulu cultural traditions. This cultural pattern continues to exist, even in the Christian congregation.

Mbiti (1969) also highlights the African sensitivity to sexual "offences". He states that any sexual offence upsets the smooth relationships in the community, which includes even those who have departed. African communities therefore deal strongly with issues like sex out of marriage, adultery, rape, same-sex relationships, intimacy between relatives, as well as children looking at adults' genitals (Mbiti, 1969: 144).

Much in line with this thinking, the writer seeks to make the grace of God available to all where Jesus Christ is Lord. Communication about all of these matters brings about a constructive dialogue and consequently, enrichment, growth and healing.

Further observation is that is in terms of homelessness. The issue of living in squashed accommodation precipitates bad health. The small homes are unsuitable for raising young children. The vicious cycle continues i.e. the young girls could become victims of teenage pregnancy whilst the boys are subject to alcohol and substance abuse. Taverns in the areas are rife and offer a source of making a living in the midst

of unemployment. This situation contributes highly to the spread of HIV/AIDS and exposes growing children to early experimentation with sex and substances.

The church can become an alternative home or household for the young boys and girls, offering good moral values and principles as the young people grow up. The Youth Manyano organizations for both boys and girls offer valuable opportunities for sex education in their programmes.

#### **7.2.4.2 Economic needs**

A lack of resources pushes the single parent to take any job. Economic needs are at 22% in this case study. One participant mentioned in the demographic form that she is a waitress in a tavern. There has to be a way to put bread on the table. Another participant is trying to open up her little home for a crèche in the area for those who go to work. She spends the day taking care of the children.

The interviews actually opened up an opportunity to get to know the congregants in a more personal way. In a sense, the interviews were quantitative and qualitative. The congregants in the area need pastoral care that is more extensive.

In the process of interview, the researcher became aware of the criticality of the need to develop self-sustaining to meet the congregants' economic needs. These could include gardening, sewing, beadwork and day care centre projects. Another relevant important resource would be exposure to employment bureaus.

#### **7.2.4.3 Spiritual needs**

Most of the participants who had fallen pregnant and become single parents shared how they lost their sense of self-worth and emotional stability. Spiritual needs were at 22% in the interviews. Feelings of guilt and shame tend to drive them to bouts of

depression. As they experience discrimination in church, they wanted an assurance of forgiveness by God and the congregation.

The participants who have experienced separation or divorce have gone through a lot of trauma and brokenness. Those who were used to sharing the responsibility of caring for the family with a mate were suddenly plunged into doing this single-handedly. This brought them a lot of anxiety and uncertainty and instilled a sense of vulnerability. One participant indicated that she would like to visit a financial advisor if it was possible because she is struggling to make ends meet in her household.

The bereaved single parents who suddenly found they have to raise children single-handedly also need counselling about their change in status. The scriptures state that God is a husband to widows and a parent to orphans. It is one of the most powerful statements for African communities, including Zulu societies, to address God and say in prayer:

*Wena uyindoda yabafelokazi!<sup>67</sup>  
Nobaba wezintandane!*

The issue of loneliness, which persists in those who are divorced, separated or bereaved, is well addressed in the class meetings and Manyano organizations. However, the researcher observes that there is a need for the participants to meet with those who have the same problems. This necessitates the creation of an adequate new support system just for single parents.

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<sup>67</sup>Translated from Zulu to English, this prayer states that God is a spouse to the widow and a parent to the fatherless.

#### **7.2.4.4 Relational needs**

Relational needs of single parents were at 11% in this interview. Coping with singleness and choosing the right partner (when the time comes) after a period of trauma is not easy for single parents.

Fred Hartley (McDowell & Hostetler, 1996) posits correctly that the Bible states that Jesus Christ, John the Baptist and Paul were not married but survived the pressures around them. 1 Corinthians 7: 8 also carries Paul's message on the advantages of not getting married. Paul declares that the advantage of not being married is that one has the opportunity to live a fulfilled Christian life whilst the married person has some limitations in achieving this. However, Paul also suggests that if a person cannot exercise self-control, that person should get married (McDowell & Hostetler, 1996).

The researcher perceives that statements like these are subject to debate and should be hermeneutically interpreted to address the needs of the single parents. The interpretation should be able to help the single parent cope with his or her single parenthood.

#### **7.2.4.5 Emotional needs**

The emotional needs were at 11% in this interview. The writer is convinced that it is important to realize that the single parent is a sexual being and needs to be assisted to survive without being subjected to suspicion and discrimination. What is important is for the church to journey with the single parents as they strive for meaning in their Christian journey. Their physical needs may not only be sexual. Their needs could also be health needs. Sometimes one's health needs are confidential. Such matters need to be referred to relevant disciplines.

Some participants expressed the fear of choosing the wrong partner when they eventually marry. From experience, the writer identifies with this fear. Knowing that marriage is God-ordained and families are God-ordained, the participants need to

have faith in God's divine plan as creator of the universe. Those interviewed need to come forward in fellowship with others so as to grow in their interpersonal skills as well as communication skills with God, other families as well as their children. As they interact with the family of God, they will experience growth, develop coping skills and heal past and present traumatic experiences through the support of the society and the church of Jesus Christ.

#### **7.2.4.6 Other needs**

The other needs (at 11%) included the needs of people from countries outside of South Africa, namely Zimbabwe and Lesotho who have immigrated to the area. Their needs include the assurance of their belongingness and safety from xenophobic attacks in the community. Their papers also need to be attended to so that they can find gainful employment and provide for their children's needs. This is an opportunity for the church to adopt these families and extend warmth, unconditional love and care as well as protection against xenophobic attacks. A single parents' fellowship would do a lot to meet their needs at physical, social, emotional as well as spiritual levels. The church of Jesus Christ is a home for all.

### **7.3 Summary**

In preparation for the creation of a programme of enrichment, growth and healing for single parents at KwaNdengezi, this chapter has offered a case study addressing the needs of single parents. The study involved a sampling process of single parents. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. The responses to the questions made it possible to identify single parents' needs.

The crucial needs were subjected to theological reflection to assess and identify the hidden meaning in the lives of the people in the community. Again, the assessment

used John Wesley's quadrilateral tools<sup>68</sup> of scripture, reason, tradition and experience to get in touch with how the people of God are journeying through life in the midst of their socio-political, economic and spiritual challenges.

All of the participants filled in a demographic form. The contextual interviews helped the researcher to work out predisposing contextual factors as well as the contextual needs of the people in the research area. The assessment of single parents' needs produced six crucial needs. These are recorded in Table 2 of this chapter. Theological reflection was again applied to the crucial needs.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

The interview process gave the writer an opportunity to find out how God's people think as well as an indication of the state of their family relationships. Such an opportunity is not possible from the pulpit. Allowing the people of God to be open about their cultural milieu also facilitated the creation of a safe place in which they could talk about things that the church might see as pagan. The researcher's openness about Zulu traditional issues caused the participants to get in touch with who they are in the Church of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was incarnated into and embraced by Jewish culture and there is no reason why He should not be embraced by African (and Zulu) culture. The writer believes the incarnation of Jesus Christ into a culture helps to liberate and transform the society into a new community: a community of faith.

The researcher concluded the fieldwork convinced that there is a readiness for the birth or development of an inclusive programme that can be used to bring about enrichment, growth and healing to single parents as well as married couples and families. Single parents and people are valuable members in the household of God.

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<sup>68</sup>Yringoyen (1999) discusses quadrilateral tools used in John Wesley's theology: scripture, tradition, reason and experience. The four tools have been consulted as was done for couples' needs in chapter 6. The researcher analyzed and assessed the needs of the single parents who came to the interview sessions.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **PRESENTATION OF THE EMERGING SEMINAR PROGRAMME DEVELOPED FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING**

#### **Introduction**

All of the research thus far has culminated in the programme offered in this chapter. This chapter offers a prepared programme for a marriage and family enrichment, growth and healing seminar or workshop. Having assessed and engaged in theological reflection on the needs of the people of God in the previous chapter, the programme has been designed to be used over four seminars in a year. As an annual event, the programme should produce positive and fruitful results in the ministry and missionary work of the congregation and its involvement in pastoral care and counselling. The programme can be run over a weekend or a Saturday, four times a year. Ten sessions have been designed in such a way that they allow the inclusion of children in the seminar. The first programme would be in March and is designed to accommodate the married couples only. The second seminar can be arranged for May, either as a one-day event (e.g. a Saturday) or over a weekend. This session can include the children of the participants present for the first session.

The third seminar, perhaps in July, can be set aside for the single parents only. The fourth seminar, which is the last one of the year, could be arranged for the last quarter as the climax of the programme. This seminar would include the married couples, single parents and families of the participants. The best venues for the sessions in the first two quarters (i.e. March, May and July) are the church premises, the hall or the sanctuary.

The last session in the last quarter, probably at the beginning of October, will not exceed 50 people and this can involve a family group or retreat, which ends with a forgiveness, reconciliation and healing service.

## **8.1 Preparation of the programme**

### **8.1.1 The goal of the programme (seminar)<sup>69</sup>**

The goal or aim of the programme, as offered in the motivation of this research, is to help build marriages and families enriched with coping and communication skills. This should enable the participants' relationships to grow into stable relationships able to withstand the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and economic challenges of modern times. As Hulme (1972) postulates, this task involves healing and restoration of harmony to marriage and families. The final goal is to empower individuals who participate to be new beings in Jesus Christ (Hulme, 1972: 77).

The researcher is also convinced that this programme is not just about strengthening marriages and families, but about strengthening the covenant the people have with God through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **8.1.2 Who needs to attend the programme?**

The material prepared in this programme is for married couples who have been married for 1-30 years. Those whose marriages exceed this can attempt to renew themselves but most have overcome the vulnerable years in marriage. The children of the participants are also expected to come to the second and last seminars because topics relevant to them will be included. This then brings the families together for the programme. The single parent seminar runs in the month of July. The last session intends to include the single parents.

### **8.1.3 Lay team preparation and training**

The researcher does realize that no minister or pastor can run the programme single-handedly. It is the responsibility of the minister or pastor to empower the laity. As

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<sup>69</sup>The word programme and seminar will be used interchangeably in this research.



already discussed in chapter four, the laity in the Methodist Church is already involved in leadership positions in the MCSA. It is very important to have their prayer support and wisdom about the birthing of the new programme. In the same chapter, the Manyano organizations were discussed and they were found to be relevant tools for congregational caring. However, the dominant focus in these organizations is prayer and preaching. This programme wants to go beyond caring through developing a care giving and counselling team. Chapter five presented the training of the lay team in pastoral care giving and counselling skills.

Clinebell (1992) emphasizes that a group caring and counselling method involves a deepening and broadening of a local church's ministry of healing and growth. This author is convinced that small groups in congregations can be a valuable resource for preventing personal problems by stimulating growth toward wholeness (Clinebell, 1992: 349).

This programme seeks to engage in such an effort. It wants to deepen and broaden growth and healing in the community and hopefully in all Christians and, if possible, later, in those who do not know Christ as their personal saviour. The above-mentioned author advocates the training of a number of groups in providing care and counselling. He suggests the formation of a "Marriage and Family Wholeness Committee" (1992: 287). The researcher, however, will replace "committee" with "team". The researcher has always observed that the word "committee" always brings across connotations of authority and being in charge. "Committee" in general is normally a group of appointed people. This programme does not wish to "appoint" people. The word "team" (like in a soccer team), on the other hand, conveys the desire to work together with team spirit and being coached to achieve a goal. Most of the time, a committee does not need training; it just needs a job description of the task given to it and it gets on with the task at hand. A team cannot do without training.

Chapter five explored the need for training laity in pastoral care and counselling. The training comprised a basic course in Christian counselling in partnership with Klein (2009), a consultant family therapist. The IRM or Intentional Relationship Method (Clinebell, 1992: 255) was also presented to the lay counselling team. This model can be used to empower the laity in the enrichment and healing of marriages, families and single parents. This Western model has been remodelled by the writer for premarital counselling and has been used frequently in conjunction with Zulu cultural counselling patterns.

The researcher suggests that when the annual programme is planned, the laity task force group should be in place before the year ends. The team should have about twelve people. As soon as the “marriage and family wholeness team” is in place, they should be interviewed and trained for the annual event to be launched.

The team should include a number of couples and preferably married couples. In preparation for the single parents, a couple of single parents could be in the team. The researcher observes through her experience in working with marriage preparation that the lay team involved should not be elected as is done with the class leaders in the society or congregation. People should be allowed to volunteer to be part of this work or have a sense of calling for the programme. The minister needs to give a clear explanation of the intention of the marriage and family wholeness ministry. People who feel led by the Holy Spirit to do the task need to pray about it, sign a prepared consent form and return it to the minister. These people should know their spiritual gifts and talents, should be creative and are preferably quite mature in their spiritual journey with the Lord Jesus Christ. These people should also have grown in their own experiences of marriage and family life. It will be helpful if these persons have experienced some brokenness in their family life and have survived. These are the type of people Henri Nouwen (2003) calls “wounded healers”. They are people who identify with the “wounded healer” and say,

The master is coming, not tomorrow but today, not next year but this year, not after all our misery is passed but in the middle of it, not in another place but right here where we are standing (Nouwen, 2003: 95).

A day should be set aside for the minister to interview potential team members. The minister needs to prepare an interview questionnaire for this purpose. The local minister has to train a team that has compassion and passion for the work and invest time and resources into training them to be the marriage and family wholeness team for the local church.

#### **8.1.4 Advertising the programme**

The notices in the context of this research programme are read every Sunday, as in most congregations. When there is a special programme, the special notice is normally put up on the notice board so that people can read up about it after the service. This strategy worked well with the interview sessions.

The notice would also be in the vernacular language and in the context of this research, the notice would be in Zulu.

African people, including those in the Zulu communities, have a strong oral tradition. Through word of mouth, the congregants will spread the advertisement to their localities. Using brochures is always useful if the resources are available. The research community is not yet into websites but communities who are more technologically developed can advertise through a website.

(First invitation format)

**MCSA: KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

Date: - January
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**INVITING MARRIED COUPLES:**

This year our church is offering a marriage, family and single parents' enrichment and healing programme. The theme is: **“Helping marriages and families to grow, cope and heal.”**

A team of twelve people has been trained in promoting coping and communication skills in marriage to help to resolve conflict and strengthen marriages and families based on what the Bible says. There are ten sessions to do this year. The first session will offer the following three topics:

- Scriptural values in marriage and family
- Roles in marriage and family
- Zulu traditional cultural values in a Christian home

The sessions will be led by: - **Rev. AL Sigaba and Mr SM Sigaba**  
**Marriage and family wholeness team**

Who is invited: Married couples who have been married for 1-30 years.

The programme caters for not more than 20 couples at a time.

Please register early to avoid disappointment.

The marriage and family wholeness team will assist you with registration.

**Drinks will be served on arrival and a light snack will be served for lunch.**

**DATE: March**

**VENUE: KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

**TIME: 10h00-17h00**

**Please bring your Bible, notebook and pen. Your registration fee will pay for your manual and food.**

(Single parent invitation format)

**MCSA: KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

Date:      March
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**INVITING SINGLE PARENTS:**

This year, as you know, our church is offering a marriage and single parents' enrichment, growth and healing programme. The theme for the single parents' seminar is: **“Helping Single Parents to grow, cope and heal.”**

A team of twelve people has been trained in promoting coping, support and survival skills in raising families based on the Bible. The first session will cover the following topics:

- Communication skills
- Parent-child relationship
- The need for a support system
- Family finance

The sessions will be led by: **Rev. AL Sigaba**

**Guest speaker for family finance**

**Guest speaker for single parenting**

Who is invited: Single parents.

The team will assist with registration.

**Drinks will be served on arrival and light snacks will be served for lunch.**

**DATE:          March**

**VENUE:        KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

**TIME:          10h00-17h00**

**Please bring your Bible, notebook and pen.**

(Second invitation format)

**MCSA: KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

Date:      March
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**INVITING MARRIED COUPLES**

As you know, this year our church is offering a programme to strengthen, help grow and heal marriages and families. The theme for the seminar is: **“Helping marriages and families to grow, cope and heal.”**

This time, married couples come with their children for the first session. The sessions offered will be:

- Communication skills
- Parent-child relationship
- The need for a support system
- Family finance

Sessions will be led by:      **Rev. AL Sigaba**  
   **Mr SM Sigaba**  
   **Guest speaker on family finance**  
   **Guest speaker on parenting**

Who is invited: Married couples.

**Drinks will be served on arrival and a light snack will be served for lunch.**

**DATE:            May**  
**VENUE:        KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**  
**TIME:           10h00-17h00**

**Please bring your Bible, manual, notebook and pen.**

(Third invitation format)

**MCSA: KwaNdengezi Methodist Church**

Date: July 2012
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**INVITING MARRIED COUPLES, SINGLE PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES:**

This is our last marriage, family and single parents' retreat this year. We hope you have been inspired by the sessions you attended in the year. This time, the seminar will be in a form of a **family retreat**. The retreat will commence on Friday evening and end on Sunday morning. Bring your children and teenage children along; they will be blessed. The sessions will be as follows:

- Family health matters
- Teenage problems
- Resolving conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation

Who will lead?           **Rev. AL Sigaba and Mr SM Sigaba**  
                                  **Guest speaker on family health**  
                                  **Guest speaker on teenage problems**

Who is invited: Married couples, single parents and their families.

The family retreat will end on Sunday morning with a healing service and Holy Communion.

The marriage and family wholeness team will help you with your registration and any clarity needed about the family retreat.

Games will be played and videos will be watched.

**DATE: First weekend of October**

**VENUE: To be announced**

**TIME: Leave Friday evening**



**What to bring: Warm clothes, tracksuit, takkies, toiletries, bedding, Bible, notebook and pen. See you there!**

## **8.2 Seminar presentation**

### **Introducing and explaining the logo**



**Figure 4: Proposed logo for the cover of the handbook for sessions**

#### **Analyzing the booklet's proposed logo in Figure 5<sup>70</sup>**

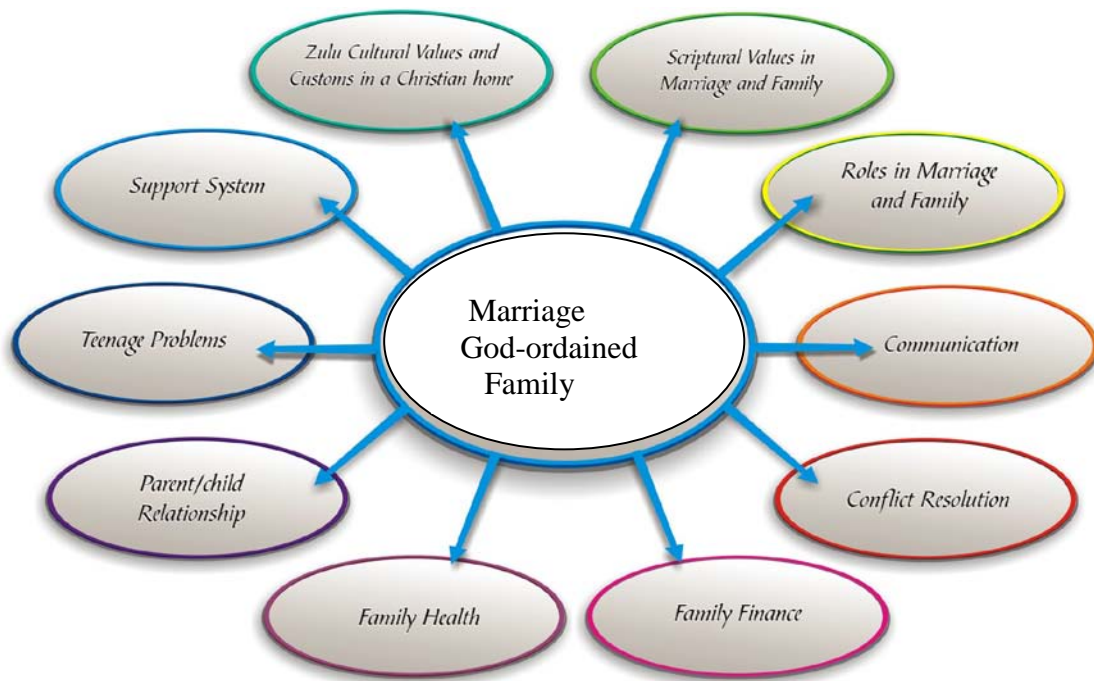
The above logo, which will most likely be used on the booklet or manual cover, shows the continent of Africa. In the centre of the map is a white cross, which symbolizes the hope for healing in the African continent. The two marriage rings are attached to the cross as a plea for the renewal of the marriage institution, which is the axis for all family units. The family units are represented by the family in front of the cross, from which they draw strength for survival. Splashed at the bottom of the cross

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<sup>70</sup>The logo denotes a nuclear family through showing parents and two children. The researcher is aware that in modern society, family comes in many forms e.g. single-parent families, families of unmarried adults and their children, couple families with no intention of having children and other forms. This logo specifically focuses on the nuclear family because most authors believe that this form is the functional unit of most modern industrial and agrarian societies. The original biblical family in the creation story in Genesis 1: 27 was one of the motivations for choosing the thesis topic as it begins with the nuclear family of Adam and Eve, who later have children.

is the blood of Jesus Christ, which is symbolic of the beginning of cleansing and healing in families as local churches embrace and engage in this programme. The book of Hebrews states:

And according to law almost all things are purged with blood and without blood and without shedding there is no remission.<sup>71</sup>



**Figure 5: Session logo that explains the themes**

### Analyzing the theme logo

The round or circular part of the logo<sup>72</sup> at the centre symbolizes the source of life, God Almighty in Trinity, who represents “wholeness”. The source of life ordained or designed the marriage institution as well as the family institution. From the source of life come “rays” of healing, much like the “rays” of the sun, bringing healing to the

<sup>71</sup>The researcher is convinced that the hope of renewal for families in the African continent, and maybe globally, is to be found in the story of the cross at Calvary. This is where the story of forgiveness, atonement and redemption was established by God, the creator of all humanity, through His son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour. The quotation is from Hebrews 9: 22 in the Open Bible, New King James: Expanded Edition.

<sup>72</sup>The *Collins English Dictionary* states that a logo refers to a trademark or symbol and it has been shortened from the phrase “logotype badge”.

various dysfunctional areas of family life. The relevant verse from scripture for this scenario is from Malachi 4: 2:

But to you who fear my Name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings. And you shall go out and grow fat like stall fed calves.

The statement by the Prophet Malachi convinces the researcher that it is in God's agenda to bring back wholeness and healing to marriage and family life. In His divine plan, God designed and ordained these institutions when He created humankind.

## Saturday, March

### 8.2.1 Session 1: Scriptural values in marriage

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh (Genesis 2: 24).*

TIME	SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT
9h00-9h30	Arrival, tea and registration: Team
9h30-10h00	Welcome, praise and prayer, icebreaker and introductions: Team
10h00-10h30	Couples share a short story with each other Couples share stories and lesson in story
10h30-11h00	The Bible story of marriage
Exercise 1.	Read in couple/pairs – make notes of key points Refs: Gen 1: 27-29, Gen 2: 21-25, Matt 19: 3-9
11h05-11h30	Participants share reflection on marriage story
11h35-12h30	Exercise 2.
	Read Bible refs on scriptural values: Love – <i>uthando</i> <sup>73</sup> 1 Corinthians 13 Respect – <i>ukuhlonipha</i> <sup>74</sup> Exodus 2: 1-7, Eph 5: 2 Fidelity – <i>ukwethembeka</i> <sup>75</sup> Titus 2: 10 Trust – <i>ukwethemba</i> <sup>76</sup> Psalms 125: 1 Cleave – <i>ukunamathela</i> <sup>77</sup> Genesis 2v24 Couples read together and make notes
12h30-13h05	Lunch

<sup>73</sup>*Uthando*: a Zulu word meaning love; it brings a deeper understanding of this important ingredient in marriage.

<sup>74</sup>*Ukuhlonipha* illuminates the meaning of respect, which includes body language, attire and the fact that this is mutually valued in both men and women, resulting in *ukuhloniphana* i.e. respecting each other.

<sup>75</sup>*Ukwethembeka* brings forth a deeper meaning of what it means to trust.

<sup>76</sup>*Ukwethemba* has to do with the concept of holding on or the ability to hold on to one's faith.

<sup>77</sup>*Ukunamathela*: this Zulu word means to "stick on" or something that is "glued together" and cannot be undone. If undone, the two items that have been glued together become bruised.

### **8.2.1.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 1**

**The setting of the room:** It is important to set the scene and tables for two, preferably in a horseshoe shape. Comfortable chairs for a daylong seminar are necessary. The chosen venue must have good ventilation, a good light, drinking water and restrooms close by. The presenter should be up front near a lectern, a chair and table. The team should be in various positions and be on hand to do their chores and to help couples where necessary.

**Arrival, tea, cool drink and registration:** The presenter and the team should arrive early to receive the participants, find their prepared file and name tag and offer the couples tea as they find a place at the tables. Punctuality is important for the presenter and the marriage and family wholeness team. Times for each session should be adhered to as much as possible.

**Welcome, praise, prayer, icebreaker and introductions:** A member of the team opens the session, offers a warm welcome and an icebreaker. Opening devotions should consist of praise, a Bible reading and prayer. The member introduces herself or himself and allows the audience to introduce themselves and share a short story about themselves.

**Sharing a story:** The presenter shares her brief life story and introduces the marriage seminar adequately. At this stage, the participants can be allowed to share a few old folklore stories and fables to create a jolly atmosphere whilst finding a lesson in the stories. This leads to the sharing of the Bible story on marriage, referring to the references in the set programme in the manual.

The couples are given enough time to reflect and make notes. Participants share their reflection with the rest of the audience.

**Sharing marriage values:** The couples read together again and reflect on the scriptural references. The presenter can assist the participants in a simple manner with tools e.g. Wesley's quadrilateral tools. This is followed by an open discussion on the reflection. It is important to allow the participants to share in their own language to bring forth the deeper meaning of the values.

**Meal times and stretching:** Teas and lunch are served punctually so that the programme is not rushed and enough time to stretch is given to the participants.

**Session outcomes:**

1. Participants learnt that stories bring wisdom and healing.
  2. They learnt that Bible stories teach about God-ordained marriage.
  3. They explored how marriage must be based on good values.
  4. They looked at marriage as a story of LOVE.
-

## 8.2.2 Session 2: Roles in marriage and family

“Role confusion. We live at a time when traditional male/female roles have undergone major revision” (Collins, 2007: 550).

TIME	SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT
15h15-17h00	
	<i>This session can commence after tea and last for an hour.</i>
	The presenter introduces the topic by explaining how the roles in marriage and family have changed due to socio-economic and political changes in the context and how this contributes to marriage and family dysfunction. The introduction can take about 10 minutes.
	Exercise 1: Brainstorming causes of changing roles, mainly in peri-urban areas rather than rural areas. These should include:
	Unemployment
	Urbanization
	Female-headed homes
	Child-headed homes
Input on normal traditional Zulu family:	Presenter
	Role of <i>ubaba</i> (father)
	Role of <i>umame</i> (mother)
	Role of <i>umkhulu nogogo</i> ( grandparents)
	Rest of the members of extended family
	Exercise 2. What can we do to restore the changed roles to normal roles? Buzz groups (4 groups in couples).
	<i>Give about 7 minutes to discuss and bring a report back from the groups.</i>
	Input on role of initiation schools in Zulu traditional culture.
	Exercise 3. Women form a group and sit together to discuss the meaning of <i>umhlanga/umemulo</i> (initiation school for girls).
	Men form a group and discuss <i>ukwemuka kwezinkomo</i> (initiation school for boys).
	Are these still relevant and happening? Back to seats and have open discussion.

### 8.2.2.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 2

Input on changing roles in Zulu marriages in context. Presenter summarizes socio-economic and political causes.

The presenter can give input on normal Zulu family processes, focusing on the roles of the husband or father and that of a wife or the mother.

Exercise 1: Together, participants cite the reasons they perceive for the changes in the peri-urban areas or township areas regarding the roles of a husband and wife. A comparison can be explored with how roles are dealt with in the rural areas.

Input on normal Zulu traditional family: by presenter

These roles should include those of the:

*Ubaba, umame, ugo, ubhuti, usisi, umalume, umalumekazi* (father, mother, grandparents, brother, sister, aunt, uncle).

Exercise 2: The exercise can be done in four mixed buzz groups. The discussion should include the ability to restore the normal traditional roles in an urbanized society. The input of the various groups is shared and discussed.

Input on the Zulu traditional initiation school for boys (*ukwemuka kwezinkomo*) and for girls (*umhlanga* and *umemulo*).

Exercise 3: The women come together and discuss the relevance of the initiation school for girls. Men come together and discuss the relevance of the initiation school for boys. An elder from the congregation can be invited in this session to answer questions on Zulu cultural patterns. Clarity should be given on what can be unlearned, learned or relearned to enrich marriage and family relationships in the context.



- Session outcomes:**
1. Participants learned that roles are important in marriage.
  2. The couple learnt how to identify their roles.
  3. They learned that family members must know about various roles.
  4. They explored constructive ideas in the group discussions about Zulu traditional initiation schools and discussed which elements can be relearned to rebuild moral values. Those cultural patterns that are not constructive to relationships can be unlearned.
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### 8.2.3 Session 3: Zulu cultural values and customs in a Christian household

*Who can find a virtuous woman [man]? (Proverbs 31: 10)*

<b>TIME:</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
17h05-17h00	
	<i>This session can last an hour and start after 5 minutes of stretching after session 2.</i>
	Input on values. What is a value system? A presentation on what a value system is can be done in 10 minutes.
	Exercise 1. Brainstorm in groups and ask what a value system is; discuss concepts like:
	Respect
	Good morals
	Danger of extramarital affairs
	Providing bread for the family
	Giving the family emotional, physical and spiritual Support
	Exercise 2. The value system in general is then explored by the whole group from a Zulu contextual perspective.
	Exercise 3. Explore in the four groups how these value systems fit in Christianity:
	Man respecting woman; woman respecting man. Respect comes in words, actions and attitude. Sometimes it is expressed through attire e.g. head covering by women, modest dressing, even body language. Revering each other. Those who are younger refrain from calling those who are older by name. There are relevant cultural words of respect:
	<i>Abaphansi, obabamkhulu, gogo, malume, malumekazi, bhuti, sisi</i> etc. (ancestors, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, brother, sister).

### 8.2.3.1 Summary suggestion notes for session 3

The presenter needs to entertain a dialogue between Zulu traditional values and customs in a Christian context. The culture of silence about these issues needs to be broken in this session. When things are discussed, growth occurs and possibly healing, especially in the emotional sense. In most cases, what is a custom in the cultural context has always been demonized. There has to be an attempt to revive cultural practices, unless they are destructive. In Zulu culture, certain rituals occur as children go through the developmental stages. For example, when a child is born, he/she is introduced to the ancestors in a ritual called *imbeleko*. This custom draws a parallel with baptism in the Christian tradition, where a child is introduced to God and a fellowship of believers through Christ.

Exercise 1: Brainstorm values in general as a moral expectation of a specific group of people. Find out what the Zulu community expects to qualify as moral values. The discussion needs to be around concepts like respect, no extramarital affairs, providing for the family, supporting family at all levels etc. Discuss the fact that when morals are not good, it reflects on the whole community.

Exercise 2: Open discussion by the whole group on respect. The issue of polygamy can be brought up for discussion. The topic needs to be sensitively explored because of the issues of multiple partners and HIV/AIDS.

Exercise 3: The group splits into four groups and they talk about the dialogue between value systems of the Zulu context and the Christian context. The Bible can be consulted to perceive what it has to say about the issues discussed above.

The presenter, who is a theologian, should help the group with hermeneutical tools. The Bible could be examined, looking at its authors, the various communities featured, prophets, disciples etc.

This rationale/thinking helps the participants to draw similarities between themselves and the biblical communities discussed.

Regarding the Methodist tradition, it is important to note what is being passed on in the Manyanos concerning respect, especially through the attire worn and the respect shown to elders.

The Methodist tradition has always encouraged monogamous marriages. This comes from the original biblical principle (in the creation story of Genesis in 1: 27-28) that God created man and woman for procreation. Envy, jealousy, quarrels and endless tension have always been known to result from polygamous marriages. The same patterns occur with extramarital affairs.

**Session outcomes:**

1. The participants learn that a value system has to do with moral expectations of individuals, groups and the community. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31: 10 represents moral excellence.
  2. The participants were encouraged to speak about the Zulu cultural value systems that have been passed down through the generations. They are not demonic.
  3. The group learnt to sift what is constructive from what is deconstructive to their marriages and families.
  4. The participants were made to understand how the Christian Methodist tradition has allowed Christ to transform cultural patterns.
-

#### 8.2.4 Session 4: Communication skills

*Therefore, my beloved, let everyone be swift to hear [listen], slow to speak* (James 1: 19).

**Theme:** Helping couples grow, cope and heal

**Date:** May

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
9h00-9h300	Arrival, tea and registration
9h35-10h00	Welcome praise, prayer and introduction
10h05-10h30	Basic input on communication: Presenter
Exercise 1.	What is communication? Define
	Each family makes own definition
	Bring examples of communication items e.g. cell phones, a chain, a hose
	What is involved? Sender-message-receiver
Exercise 2.	What happens when links are cut off?
	What happens in marriage and family?
	When there is no talking, message and listening?
	Parents and children sit together and discuss for ten minutes.
	Report backs for ten minutes.
10h40-11h00	Components of communication: Presenter
	Attending, listening, responding, silence
	Reflecting, gestures, posture, eye contact
	Cultural patterns in communication
11h35-12h30	
Exercise3.	Participants reflect in 2 groups: children; adults
	Parents and children in their families do a listening exercise: Team supervision
12h30-13h00	SNACK TIME

#### **8.2.4.1 Summary suggestion notes for session 4**

Setting of the room: This session begins with parents and children together. The set-up of the room should therefore be in such a way that each family unit sits together. This can be in a semi-circle, if the room allows. The presenter and the committee position themselves near the groups.

Arrival, tea and registration: The month of May is in winter; it will be good to be punctual, as the days seem shorter. Registration should include giving the children nametags as well. Tea should be served on arrival. Scones or biscuits should be included to make the children feel at home.

Welcome, praise, prayer and introductions: An icebreaker could involve a person giving his or her name as well as the meaning of the name e.g. my name is *Sijadu*. It is my clan name – it was my grandfather’s name; my name is *Mbalenhle*. My name means beautiful flower because I am my mother’s beautiful flower. The icebreaker sets the tone of the seminar.

Exercise 1: As the presenter teaches about what communication is, she will use illustrative examples to assist the children to learn. For example, blocked communication can be likened to a cell phone without a signal or network; a chain with a missing link; a blocked hosepipe that can’t water the plants – all of which highlight how poor communication causes dysfunction. Together, as families, this concept is explored and defined.

Exercise 2: Children will sit together and parents will sit together and discuss the answer to the question: “What happens when there is no communication?” They will have 7 minutes to do so. The group will then share what happens in the family when there is no talking, listening to each other or no messages being relayed. This is an opportunity to learn from each other.

Exercise 3: The presenter explains all of the concepts involved in communication. It is important to ensure the participants understand each concept. The presenter responds to questions to clarify things. Issues such as the things that disturb communication are also explored in the groups for 15 minutes.

The family unit sit together and engage in a listening exercise for another 15 minutes.

The issue of cultural patterns should be attended to.

The group should do the evaluation of the session together.

Families are encouraged to have a snack at their tables and to give each other time to listen and talk to each other. The exercise should continue at home, especially during mealtimes.

**Session 4: Communication skills (continued)**

TIME

SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT

13h05-13h45	With children in another room playing games, the parents assemble in the seminar room.
This time can be spent talking about the two crucial issues that contribute to communication breakdown in most marriages i.e. sex and the issue of in-laws.	
Sex matters:	Presenter gives input on sex-related matters Scriptural refs: Genesis 1: 27 about procreation
	Sex as an expression of love
	Sex and HIV/AIDS
	Diet for pregnant women
	Abstaining from sex after childbirth
Exercise 1.	Couple discussion on sex matters
	Respond to prepared questions:
	How do you express love to each other?
	Why is it important to have safe sex?
	Why is it important to have one partner?
	Why is it important for a woman to be aware of her diet during pregnancy?
	For how long is abstinence after childbirth?
A questionnaire can be used and it can be given to couples as they register.	
2. The issue of in-laws:	This session would do well with the input of an elder of the congregation.
Exercise 2.	The couples again can be given a questionnaire for homework and the IRM method is discussed (Clinebell, 1992: 255).



Step 1. I appreciate from my in-laws ...
Step 2. I need from my in-laws .....
Step 3. Choose one need and work on it e.g.
acceptance, support, respecting boundaries,
forgiveness, unconditional love, good
Relationships etc.
Step 4. Keep on working on more needs. Journal progress until next seminar.

#### **8.2.4.2 Summary suggestion notes on session 4 (Communication contd.)**

The two issues, sexual matters and the role of in-laws, have been included in the session on communication because these are crucial issues in marriage and family communication. Sex is one of the most intimate forms of communication in marriage. A lot depends on this communication. On the other hand, the issue of in-laws can either make or break communication in families. This matter also deserves continuous attention for communication to be healthy in a marriage and family relationship.

Exercise 1: The questionnaire given to the couples at registration has confidential questions; participants need to be allocated enough time to work on them (Appendix 2). The responses can be dealt with in the following seminar when the children are not in the seminar. The couple should be encouraged to work on the questions at home when they are relaxed and in their bedroom.

Exercise 2: This exercise deals with the in-law matters. Enough time should be given to the church elder to provide input on the subject, tapping on his or her experience. The couples are then given an opportunity to ask questions.

The IRM, or Intentional Relationship Method (Clinebell, 1992: 255), used for working on all kinds of relationships, is adequate as a tool that the couples can use continuously. The marriage and family wholeness team at the seminar can help the couples who need guidance on using this tool. The couples should be encouraged to keep journals so that they can work on their needs one by one and note their progress.

The experiences of the presenters and members of the team are vital in helping couples to grow, cope and heal in their relationships.

The session on communication addresses the needs of the couples, the needs of the children and the needs of the family system. It is important to continue using what has been learned at the seminar at home. There is an opportunity to learn new habits, unlearn bad habits and relearn some good habits from one another in the seminar.

### 8.2.5 Session 5: Parent-child relationship

*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of the youth (Psalm 127: 4).*

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
13h30-14h30	This session brings the children back from their indoor games to their parents. The seating is arranged to accommodate them.
	Brief input on scriptural references by presenter
	Refs: Gen 1: 28, Psalm 127, Psalm 128
	Proverbs 22: 7, Exodus 2: 12
Exercise 1.	The family units work on the following questions for 30 minutes.
	What do children expect from their parents?
	What do parents expect from their children?
	What values should children have? – 15 minutes
	The family units report back in the following 20 minutes and families share ideas.
Exercise 2.	The families leave their tables and read together, with the assistance of the team, the “story of the family of Jacob” (Gen. 27) – 15 minutes.
	Sharing – each family shares what they have learned from this biblical family.
	Close by praying together and encourage evening family prayers.
14h35-15h00	Teatime
15h15-17h00	Prepared brief talk on the need for support systems

	20 minutes – Questions and answers on topic
17h05-17h00	Input on family finance matters – 20 minutes Questions and answers on topic – 20 minutes
	Couples are given a budget form to take and use at home (Appendix 8).
	CLOSING DEVOTIONS: The presenter and team offer prayers for the families.

### **8.2.5.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 5**

This session gives the parents and children an opportunity to learn together. This is not common in the context. Parents and children generally do not attend organizations together. The writer has observed that if parents and children are deprived of time learning together, the children learn bad habits from their peers.

Exercise 1: It is important for parents and children to know what they expect of each other. For instance, issues expressed by children could include: “I did not know I had to be home by 5 pm!”; “I did not know I should not have sex with my girlfriend!”; or “I did not know I am not allowed to have sex before I get married!” Spelling out one’s expectations helps address the “I did not know”!

Exercise 2: The story of Jacob’s family touches on the rich tradition of story telling in African culture. African tales, folklore stories and fables often contain stories loaded with wisdom and moral training and this Bible story continues this heritage. It is important for the families to look at the characters together and to become aware of how mistakes are passed on through the generations if they are not addressed. They should look at the triangles in Jacob’s family and their own and discuss issues of sibling rivalry, scapegoating, parent-child conflict, parent-parent conflict and so on, using the story as a starting point.

The families should be encouraged to find other biblical stories to read and share in their evening prayers at home. This encourages spiritual growth in both parents and children.

The topic on the need for support systems should enlighten the participants on the importance of working together or communality, which is not foreign in the African context. The various Manyano groups in the Methodist Church echo that “when two or three are gathered in my Name I shall be in their midst” (Matthew 18: 20).

The family finance topic should help couples and families to grow in how they handle their finances. The best person to offer this input would be someone with a financial background who is also a Christian and understands what Wesley means when he says, “Gain all you can, save all you can and give all you can” (Yringoyen Jr, 1999). The budget form should be explained to the couple so that they can use it as they grow in financial matters (Appendix 8).

**Session outcomes:**

1. Participants learnt about finance management at home and the importance of giving through the local church.
  2. Mutual parent-child expectations were addressed.
  3. Awareness was raised regarding the importance of support systems in family life and other areas.
  4. They learnt how “triangles” are formed (e.g. in Jacob’s family) and about the need to deal with them early.
  5. Communication skills development in the family unit was emphasized.
-

## Family retreat seminar

The family retreat consists of multiple sessions. It will take place on the first weekend of October, on a Friday evening.

### 8.2.6 Session 6: Family health matters

*I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*  
(John 10: 10).

**Theme: Helping families grow, cope and heal**

TIME	SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT
17h00	Arrival, room allocation and supper
19h30-20h00	Welcome; an icebreaker game for introductions: Team
20h05-20h30	Praise, worship and opening prayer
20h35-21h00	Talk: Introduction to family health: Presenter
21h05-21h25	Exercise 1. In family buzz groups with Bible narratives
	Talk about healing. In O.T. and N.T.
	Answer the following questions:
	What were the common ailments of biblical times? What made them become healed?
	Give family buzz groups 20 minutes to discuss
	Report back and share the answers
	Talk: What are the most common ailments now?
21h30-21h45	Exercise 2. Adults get together and discuss; children do the same
	Open discussion together for 15 minutes
	The evening is summed up with an announcement about free voluntary testing and advice and counselling provided in the seminar about ailments like diabetes, high blood pressure, HIV/AIDS, cancer and arthritis. Relevant paramedics will be invited

to the seminar the following day.		
22h00	Exercise 3.	Families pray together and depart to rest.
They read together a Bible story and pray.		
A united benediction ends the day.		

### **8.2.6.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 6**

The church leadership is advised to look for sponsors for the family retreat during the year to alleviate costs, especially for families who cannot afford the outing but would like to attend. However, the families will be advised to pay something towards the costs involved.

The arrival time should be scheduled for well before supper. The team then has sufficient time before supper to organize the registration, distribution of nametags and manuals and the allocation of rooms. Most venues have family rooms available and each family can live together. The seminar room is always separate from the bedrooms.

The welcome and icebreaker introduction sets the tone of the family seminar. The ground rules contained in the registration files should be explained to the participants. A lively praise and worship session then leads into a Bible reading and opening prayer.

Exercise 1: The presenter gives an introduction about the importance of family health. The first exercise can be in question form. In their family groups, the participants can look for narratives about healing in the Bible. This is designed to make everybody realize that sickness is a phenomenon. Having shared in groups, the participants can learn from each other.

Exercise 2: The presenter addresses the topic of common ailments. At this stage, to break the monotony and to encourage the families to get to know each other well, adults form a buzz group and the children create another group. Very often in African culture, adults do not freely talk about their ailments in front young people.

The groups work out what common ailments exist today and together explore whether the ailments are different from those of biblical times.

The groups share their thoughts for 20 minutes and then report back to the other participants.

Exercise 3: This exercise involves grouping the family members together again. They share Bible stories and pray together. This is done to revive the culture of evening family prayers.

Before going to bed, the participants are informed that the next day there will be a room available in which they can receive voluntary testing, counselling and free advice on all ailments. No one is impelled to go but the participants are encouraged to use the facilities offered for their benefit.

- Session outcomes:**
1. The participants learned that all ailments date back many centuries.
  2. In biblical times, there were the same ailments as today e.g. leprosy, HIV/AIDS, strokes, blindness, deafness and disablement.
  3. They learned that faith in God heals.
  4. They learned that families must pray together.



**Saturday morning: Family retreat (continued)**

**8.2.7 Session 7: Teenage problems**

*Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established (Proverbs 15: 22).*

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
7h00-8h00	Breakfast
8h05-8h30	Morning devotions
8h30-9h00	Talk on alcohol and substance abuse: Presenter
Exercise 1.	Talk about the topic in family groups by answering questions like:
	1. Are the family teenagers affected?
	2. If so, what could be the cause? Friends?
	3. If affected, how can this be addressed?
	4. The family group talk and listen to each other.
9h05-9h30	Talk on teenage pregnancy/sex before marriage: Medical doctor
Exercise 2.	Talk about the topic in family groups. Respond to questions like:
	1. What spoke to you during the talk?
	2. Discuss the implications of HIV/AIDS.
	3. Discuss what the Bible says about sex before marriage.
9h45-10h00	Open discussion by participants – questions and answers
10h-10h30	Tea break

10h35-12h35	Family groups play indoor games together
12h40-12h55	Reflection on playing indoor games as a family
13h00-14h00	Lunch
12h00-15h00	Families play outdoor games together
Participants are welcome to visit counselling centre at this time.	
15h00-15h30	Tea break
15h35-17h35	Families assemble in seminar room for concluding information sessions.

### **8.2.7.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 7**

This occurs on a Saturday morning at the family retreat venue and families are encouraged to sit in their family groups. This session focuses mainly on teenage problems.

Exercise 1: The first presenter commences with a prepared talk on alcohol and substance abuse. The family groups can then respond to the talk by answering set questions. The questions seek to reflect on the parents' thoughts about the topic. It is important to engage with each other meaningfully, especially when the parents are talking and listening to the teenagers about their challenges. Opening the lines of communication should break the culture of silence that often prevails in family households. This silence is usually only broken when things go wrong.

The parents should tackle the issue of peer pressure by warning their teenage children about the wrong kind of friends.

Exercise 2: This exercise, again done in family groups, continues the dialogue between parents and their children. They respond to the talk on teenage pregnancy and sex before marriage by looking at what the Bible says about the issue of "fornication". The Zulu cultural views about the importance of virginity can also be

revisited. The issue of watching and reading pornographic materials should also be discouraged. This is an opportunity for the parents to talk amongst themselves and to their children about the implications of HIV/AIDS. Abstaining from sex is encouraged and when it is impossible to do so, safe sex should be an alternative. The exercise is mainly focused on sex education.

Exercise 3: The participants have been exposed to “play therapy” by playing indoor games together. Play therapy is a suitable form of communication to be used with children. The practice of parents playing with their children should be encouraged. This will promote quality “family time” together and diminish the time children spend with peers that have a negative influence on them.

The children should reflect on how it feels to play with their parents. While playing together may be a new experience for the participants, it can improve communication between parents and children.

- Session outcomes:**
1. Children and their parents engaged in discussion about teenage challenges.
  2. Participants discovered what the Bible says about sex before marriage.
  3. Zulu cultural practices regarding sex education were relearned.
  4. HIV/AIDS awareness increased.
  5. The importance of “play therapy” was emphasized.

**Saturday afternoon: Family retreat (continued)**

**8.2.8 Session 8: Resolving conflict**

*He [she] that is slow to anger is better than the mighty* (Proverbs 17: 32).

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
Room setting:	Participants sit together with the children
15h35	Praise and worship and reopen session with devotions team
15h55	Prepared talk on conflict: causes and stages
Exercise 1.	All participants respond to input by answering questions like:
	1. What causes conflict in your family?
	2. What happens when there is conflict /disagreement in the family?
	3. How do you resolve conflict when it happens?
	The participants can share with the group their answers to questions.
17h00-17h55	Prepared talk on “conflict styles” (Collins, 2007: 330) and principles of conflict resolution
Exercise 2.	Each participant has a “conflict style table” that is used to identify his or her conflict management style. The results can be shared and the best style identified.
17h00-17h15	Some biblical guidelines for interpersonal relationships. Table 18-2. Each participant can have one (Collins, 2007: 332).
17h00-17h40	Discussion about domestic violence (woman and child abuse)
	Questions and answers on the subject are allowed.

17h45-18h0	Exercise 3.	Couples practise the IRM model and all participants are encouraged to write letters of love and appreciation to each other to bring to the healing service in the morning.
In allocated rooms, families write up their “family tree”.		
18h00-19h00	Supper	
19h00-21h00	Watch family movie or DVD	

### **8.2.8.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 8**

All of the participants should attend the concluding informative sessions.

Exercise 1: The session opens with a prepared talk on resolving conflict. The content should include the common causes of conflict in families as well as the different stages of conflict. The family groups are then given time to reflect on the input and to identify their typical family conflicts. The groups are then given time to share their thoughts, focusing on how they resolve conflict. Sensitive issues, however, should not be shared. The purpose of the exercise is to learn from each other and to realize that many people face similar situations.

Exercise 2: The presenter gives all of the participants a table showing “conflict styles” (Collins, 2007: 330). Together they decide which the best style is. They also look at the “Biblical Guidelines on Interpersonal Relationships” by Collins (2007: 332). In this exercise, it is important to emphasize that conflict needs to be resolved and not “avoided” (otherwise, a “revolving slate” arises in the family). Communication is important in avoiding escalating conflict. Collins’ biblical guidelines are a useful resource of reference on this issue. The families should base their discussions on love and willingness to forgive and reconcile. This is a good time for families to sort out their differences.

The families are made aware that if conflict is not addressed, the climax is usually domestic violence (woman abuse and child abuse). No family needs this phenomenon. It does not come from God. This can be prevented by dealing with the conflict.

Exercise 3: This is a relevant time to do the IRM model (Intentional Relationship Model). (I appreciate from you .....; I need this from you ...). This is done by spouses and by children and their parents. At this stage, the spouses write love letters to each other and children and parents write to each other. The atmosphere could be set by playing peaceful music. When the letters have been handed to the relevant people, the session is closed with prayer and benediction.

**Session outcomes:**

1. Conflict is usually not spoken about in most African communities until “something critical” happens. The exercise breaks the culture of silence about conflict and encourages communication between parents and children and between husbands and wives.
2. The session creates an opportunity to learn from each other and journey together.
3. Biblical references offer a good resource for staying out of conflict.
4. The climax of letter writing helps participants to rediscover a very important interpersonal communication tool.

**Sunday morning service: Family retreat (continued)**

**8.2.9 Session 9: Forgiveness and healing**

*And forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us* (Luke 11: 4).

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
9h00-10h00	Praise and worship or <i>Umbhedesho wemini yeCawa</i>
Scripture readings are preserved for the young participants and should address forgiveness and healing.	
10h00-10h30	Sermon on forgiveness and healing
10h30-11h00	Intercessory prayers with the marriage and family wholeness team assisting. Participants are ministered to individually.
Specific prayers are offered to different groups in turn:	
	1. All married couples
	2. All single parents
	3. All children under twelve years of age
	4. All teenagers
	5. Other family members at home
Specific prayers are offered for those that request them.	
11h00-11h30	<b>HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE FOR GOD'S FAMILY IN UNITY AND THANKSGIVING</b>
11h35-13h00	Closing ceremonies and evaluation forms are completed (Appendix 7).
12h00-13h00	<b>LUNCH AND DEPARTURE</b>

### **8.2.9.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 9**

Praise and worship can be context specific. The African Zulu Methodist congregants enjoy their liturgy, *Umbhedesho wemini yeCawa*. For this context, worship is incomplete without “*Te Deum Laudamus*” or “*Siyakudumisa Thixo Siyakuvuma ukuba unguJehova*”. This worship Psalm has been passed on from generation to generation. The expression relevant to this legacy is “*uyincance ebeleni*”, which means that the liturgy has been sucked from a mother’s breast. It is a source of survival for most African communities, including the Zulu societies.

During the liturgy, scriptures are read. It is suggested that the young participants should do these. The young need to feel useful during the service so that they grow in their spirituality from a young age.

The parents can offer adoration, confessional and thanksgiving prayers. Those who want to take part in leading the service need to be informed prior to the service so that they are ready for their duties.

During intercessory prayers to the Holy Spirit, the minister and marriage and family wholeness team minister to all participants.

Further prayers are offered for specific groups: Married couples, single parents, teenagers, children under twelve years of age as well as those at home.

A specific prayer is offered for all the letters written and addressed to loved ones. These are handed over to the recipients at this time. This is expected to be a time of forgiveness and reconciliation for the families.

Holy Communion is then administered to family groups.

The closing ceremonies involve filling in and handing in the evaluation forms.



After lunch, the families pray for safe travel and the Benediction concludes the family retreat. Everyone goes **HOME RECONCILED TO GOD AND EACH OTHER!**

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**Saturday, July (to be offered during the year)**

**8.2.10 Session 10: Session for single parents**

**Theme: Helping single parents to grow, cope and heal!**

*But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them if they remain even as I am (1 Corinthians 7: 8).*

<b>TIME</b>	<b>SUGGESTED ENGAGEMENT</b>
9h00-9h30	Arrival, tea and registration
9h35-10h00	Welcome, opening devotions and introductions
10h05-11h30	Presentation on single parenthood and motives of the programme in our church
Exercise 1.	Participants divide into small groups and respond to the topic by asking questions. Together they look for scriptural references to single people and discuss (e.g. Jesus Christ, Paul). Spiritual needs are addressed here.
10h30-11h00	Presentation on the challenges of being a single parent. Brainstorming by participants.
Exercise 2.	Individually write down how the personal challenges are addressed e.g. stigmatization, strain. The group shares how challenges are addressed.
12h00-13h00	Presentation on parent-child relationship.
The children can join at this stage.	
Exercise 3.	What do children expect from their parents? Read biblical stories together e.g. Ephesians 7: 4.
	What do parents expect from their children? Read biblical stories related to family rules and values e.g.

	Exodus 20: 12, Ephesians 7: 1-2. Parents and children read and discuss together.
	Report back and share.
13h00-13h30	Lunch
13h30-14h00	Presentation on communication skills. Follow suggested material for married couples on page 14 of the manual i.e. what communication involves and its importance in the family. Relationship and social needs are addressed here.
14h05-15h0	Exercise 4. The parents sit with their children and do listening exercises together.
	The families can decide what topics to talk about.
14h35-15h00	Exercise 5. Brainstorming what we understand by support systems.
	Name support systems e.g. AA, Diabetes, HIV and AIDS, Cancer, Manyano groups in our church etc. Emotional needs are addressed here.
	Support systems help us to:
	1. Learn from each other
	2. Support one another when happy or unhappy
	3. Encourage each other
15h00-15h30	Teatime
15h35-17h00	Exercise 6. Presentation on family finance
	Importance of budgeting
	Single parents must remember that they have to provide for their family single-

handedly.	
Discuss self-help projects e.g. sewing, gardening, knitting, home educare centres and other possibilities. Economic needs are addressed here.	
17h00-17h30	Evaluation
17h35-17h00	Closing devotions

### **8.2.10.1 Summary suggestion notes on session 10**

The single parent session can be a separate session, possibly on a Saturday, for the whole day. The participants should be encouraged to come with their children to the day seminar. The children can leave the first session after prayer and play indoor games in a separate room.

Exercise 1: Input helps make single parents realize they are an important sector in the church of Jesus Christ. They are not “damaged goods” and should not feel as if they are in the wrong place. God is inclusive; Christ died for all and He forgives and allows us to start a new life by His grace. Collins (2007: 503) correctly states that “single people have a potential for developing a full, meaningful, Christ-centred lifestyle”. The researcher has witnessed this in the context of the research. However, this is not at the expense of the marriage institution, which shall always remain important in the eyes of God, who ordained it. This exercise addresses spiritual needs.

Exercise 2: The groups share their challenges of single parenthood. This will make each participant realize that he or she is not alone in his or her journey.

Exercise 3: The children join the parents to listen to input on the parent-child relationship. The children need a lot of affirmation, especially those who have been born out of wedlock or whose parents have divorced. Those children whose fathers

have died are also traumatized and the presenter has to be sensitive to the diverse situations in the different families.

Responding to the questions about expectations draws the families' attention to scriptural principles. The children need to explore these with their parents. Sharing the responses will promote learning from each other.

Zulu cultural and multi-generational expectations should also be part of the discussion.

Exercise 4: The importance of communication between parents and children should be stressed in a bid to undo strife in the families. A time for listening exercises should be allocated so as to improve communication skills. Relational needs are addressed in this exercise.

Exercise 5: The various common support systems are explored, including the Manyano groups in the church, secular systems like AA, diabetes groups, cancer groups etc. The participants should be made to understand the importance of the family support system. Emotional needs are addressed in this exercise e.g. loneliness, depression and low self-esteem.

Exercise 6: The talk on family finance can be followed by working on the budget form. This is crucial for single parents. This exercise addresses socio-economic needs.

The session is concluded with a closing benediction.

**Session outcomes:**

1. Single parenthood is an alternative lifestyle in the church of Jesus Christ and must be de-stigmatized.
2. The children of single parents are usually traumatized by circumstances around them and need affirmation (especially in cases of divorce).
3. Developing communication skills can help single parents and their children to grow in their interpersonal relationships.
4. Having a good support system will help nurture the growth of family members and prevent loneliness, low self-esteem and issues related to sexuality (e.g. unsafe sex and promiscuity).
5. Single parents need to learn to handle their money well.
6. Following biblical principles will help the single parents and their children to grow in their spirituality.
7. Cultural, multi-generational expectations from the families of origin have been addressed.
8. Social, economic, spiritual, relational, emotional and other issues are all addressed in the question and answer sessions.

**8.3 Creating a manual for the marriage and family wholeness programme**

The marriage and family wholeness programme consists of ten sessions and includes a single parent session. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the researcher is convinced that for the congregation to achieve its healing mission in the community, it has to be inclusive. Single parents also belong to the family of God.

The researcher intends to print and publish a manual that can be used as a suggested guide in the seminars. The manual could be helpful where there is little time to prepare a programme. Obviously, some sessions could be adapted to suit the context. The manual could be made available to the participants at registration.

### **8.3.1 Logo or symbol for the manual**

The proposed logo or symbol for the marriage and family wholeness programme is presented in Figure 5.

### **8.3.2 Programme evaluation**

At registration, the participant's file should include a nametag, manual and an evaluation form as well as suggested reading material. The evaluation form is filled in at the end of each session and handed in at the end of the seminar.

It is crucial for any programme or seminar to have an evaluation component. Through experience, the researcher has realized that evaluating a programme or seminar helps to improve the content of the following seminar. A critical analysis determines what works well, what can be discarded and what to expand on. The participants sometimes feel they have grown in the first session and want to hear something fresh in the next seminar. The evaluation allows the participants to add their thoughts on areas in which they need enrichment.

## **8.4 Partnership and the marriage and family wholeness programme**

### **8.4.1 A theological reflection on the partnership model**

Having undergone training for ordained ministry the researcher has learnt and understood that the main model of partnership in the Christian tradition is the Trinity. It is comprised of God the parent, God the son and God the Holy Spirit, who work together to create and sustain the universe using their different attributes. The model of Jesus Christ and His disciples also presents a model that can be imitated by the healing ministry with excellent results. The disciples also came with different gifts and talents. Scripture discusses the different gifts the disciples brought into ministry as followers of Jesus Christ in the Gospel narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Some were fishermen, while others were tax collectors. Together with Christ, a team was formed to address the needs of the people in their generation. This

partnership brought forth good and lasting results in the area of healing and transformation.

From a scriptural perspective, the first partnership God created was the family partnership through Adam and Eve. Genesis 2: 18 states: “and the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’”

There is power in partnership. Matthew 18: 20 states, “For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” When a partnership has been formed, Christ promises to honour it.

Generally, one sees successful partnership ventures in the secular world. We see ventures in the trade and industry sector, political organizations, healthcare organizations as well as legal parties. In all of these organizations, the parties involved bring different kinds of gifts as well as resources, thus producing a lucrative partnership. The goal of these partnerships is to deliver effective services to others.

The researcher has observed firsthand that partnerships in the Christian world are effective. The researcher is presently involved in a “church building” partnership with the United Methodist Church of America in Kansas City. The partner from the USA brings resources to help build churches in marginalized, impoverished communities, including the context of the research.

African tradition always thinks in terms of partnership. The African communities do not work in isolation as:

I am because we are; since we are, therefore I am (Mbiti, 1969: 107).



The concept of partnership then becomes valuable for this programme. Unfortunately, however, in ministry work the concept of partnership is often associated with suspicion, mistrust and the fear of being taken advantage of.

#### **8.4.2 Available local partners**

This programme needs partnership. Ministers need to understand that they cannot do everything alone.

The following partners are envisaged for this programme:

- Social welfare and social workers; these groups are normally willing to address the social needs of the people. Social workers are usually members of the local church and are always willing to help with social issues in the congregation. Attached to the Social Welfare Department Pinetown is an NGO called FAMSA<sup>78</sup>
- A clinical psychologist is necessary to meet the emotional needs of the people involved in the marriage and family wholeness programme.
- Gynaecologists and medical doctors would make good partners. One of the people who came for an interview wanted advice about conception. Medical doctors could also provide advice and care regarding ailments that are often overlooked or not addressed in families e.g. HIV/AIDS.
- Collaborating with the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) is crucial in addressing alcohol and substance abuse, a common problem in the context of the research.
- Working with a marriage counsellor is vital for this programme. This specialized service provider would be able to assist those people in very troubled relationships.

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<sup>78</sup>FAMSA is the Family and Marriage Association of South Africa. An organization known as the Marriage Guidance Council came into existence in London in 1938. The pioneers were Dr David Mace and his wife. They coordinated a conference aimed at promoting happy marriages and families. They believed that the family, as the nucleus of society, is important in bringing about stability in the entire community. Subsequent to this need and their efforts, FAMSA was established. The organization has over 26 affiliates nationwide. This information was accessed from <http://www.famsa.org.za> on 10 March 2011.

- A moral/ethics theologian would make a good partner.
- Collaborating with crisis centres (most often based at the police station) could be useful in cases of rape, domestic violence and abuse against children.
- Other local congregations – they could offer valuable assistance and advice.
- A financial accountant could help the people with economic issues and teach them how to successfully budget and invest their money.

The researcher intends to develop strong relationships with the above-mentioned groups. This will ensure that the attempt to address the needs of the people is multidisciplinary as well as interdenominational.

### **8.5 Verbatim report with Catholic priest**

The writer had a valuable conversation with a local Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Jili, at the St Kizito Parish at KwaNdengezi. The decision to talk with a local Catholic priest came about because of the need to establish how the neighbouring denominations are dealing with the issue of family breakdown. The following is a verbatim report of this conversation.

**Researcher:** Good morning, Father. Thanks for allowing me to come and see you.

**Father:** Good morning. It is always wonderful to have visitors, especially from other denominations. We can share ideas.

**Researcher:** Thank you for the warm welcome. Tell me, Father, what is the state of marriages and families in the Catholic Church nowadays?

**Father:** Well, we have many problems. There is no more respect for marriage in our church as we used to have. As you know, for Catholics marriage is one of our sacraments. Yet everyday we are addressing marriage and family problems.

**Researcher:** Well, can you tell me more about it, Father?

**Father:** Yes. In light of the spread of HIV and AIDS there has been evidence of mistrust in married couples and many family breakdowns. We have a programme running in the Catholic Church called Marriage Encounter. The programme has been there since 1952. It was started by a Spanish Catholic priest Father Gabriel Calvo. This priest wanted to develop an honest relationship between spouses and make them live in a sacramental relationship in service to the surrounding neighbourhood. Father Chuck Gallagher, later spread the Marriage Encounter Programme to the United States of America. The first meeting in South Africa was held at Mariannhill in 1978. However, we have noted that his material tends to be rather Western and some concepts do not apply in this part of the world.

As you speak to me, we continue to address the needs of the married couples but we need a programme that will address the needs of our Zulu communities.

**Researcher:** This is very interesting, Father, because this is what I am actually doing in my research programme.

**Father:** This is exciting. I am sure we are going to help each other because you and I have to do something about family breakdown in this part of the vineyard. I am offering to work with you anytime you need me.

**Researcher:** This is exciting. I promise we shall constantly keep in touch so that we can learn from each other and help the people of God as we help one another as ministers in the area.

**Father:** I actually am grateful you came. Please keep in touch. You have my contact number.

Father Jili's main field of interest is theological ethics. Combining his gifts and talents with those of the researcher, we can go a long way in addressing family breakdown in the community we serve.

The programme seeks to join hands with ministers and pastors from other denominations in the area because we all face the same challenges in the area of marriage and family in the context of KwaNdengezi.

## **8.6 Summary**

This chapter discussed the programme for marriage and family enrichment, growth and healing. The programme is a marriage and family wholeness programme. It can be held annually and consists of ten sessions designed to address the needs of married couples, families, single parents including the participants' children. The seminars could be offered once a quarter (once every three months). The first one would be for married couples only and may be offered at the beginning of the year, in March. The second seminar could be in May and it focus on married couples as well as their children. In June, there could be a seminar for single parents only. Their children would be allowed to join later in the day. The session is designed to address the needs of the children as well. All of these sessions could be held in the church hall or sanctuary. The climax of the programme is the family retreat, which would need to happen at a booked Retreat Centre. The retreat could be a sponsored to an extent, but families would need to contribute too.

The family retreat includes married couples, single parents and the participants' children. The weekend retreat could begin on Friday evening and end on Sunday at lunchtime.

Preparation for this programme involves training twelve lay team members who would be nominated by the minister. The minister would need to consider their spiritual maturity, spiritual gifts and talents, creativity and calling on the nominees. After a personal interview, the next step would be to expose the team to specific pastoral care giving and counselling models through a basic counselling training course.

The programme needs to be advertised through the usual notices at Sunday services or through oral tradition. It may be worthwhile printing some brochures. Invitations would be printed and read out timeously for the four different sessions.

The family retreat needs to end with a forgiveness, reconciliation and healing service for all of the participants where everybody renews their covenant with God and each other.

The researcher intends to produce a session manual. The designed logo on the cover page (included as Figure 4). The logo will display the ten sessions offered by the programme. The sessions cover the needs of married couples, families, single parents and their children. The needs are, amongst others, social, economic, spiritual, emotional and relational. The design of the logo reflects “wholeness”, which is symbolic of the wholeness we all achieve when God’s healing light shines upon us. The programme depicts that God, who ordained marriage and family, is willing to heal these institutions in all communities, including the communities at and around KwaNdengezi.

An evaluation form used at the end of the seminar will encourage improvements for the following year’s programme.

The programme addresses the importance of partnerships and indicates that partnerships are crucial for its success. The envisaged partners are social welfare agencies, social workers, clinical psychologists, marriage counsellors, gynaecologists, medical doctors, the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous), a qualified professional family therapist, local ministers from different denominations, and local crisis centres. A verbatim report of the researcher’s interview with a Catholic priest reflects the importance of working together in the communities.

William Abraham<sup>79</sup> (2005) claims that John Wesley argues

It is not enough to walk through the various stages of spiritual healing, we also need to find out what it is to be healed.

The researcher echoes Abraham's conviction that continuous finding out what needs healing in the context is crucial. The reason is that the needs may change as engagement with them continues. Therefore evaluation becomes important.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

The beginning of this study commenced with a mood of lamentation<sup>80</sup>, despondency and despair about the state of marriage and families within the Church of Jesus Christ as well as the communities around the context of research. The lamentation; as in Jeremiah the prophet of the Old Testament was like a deep prayer for a solution to this vast society predicament, which is challenging the very foundations of most of our communities.

The task concludes with three valuable theological pointers for engaging with the predicament of marriage and family dysfunction in our societies in this modern age. The pointers include ecclesiological, pastoral theological and missiological-ministerial trends. This research engaged with how to make the pointers work together to bring about healing and wholeness within the discipline of pastoral care and counselling. The contribution of each pointer will be highlighted in this conclusion.

- The ecclesiological pointer

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<sup>79</sup>For the success of this programme, evaluation has to be an ongoing process. As people are enriched and grow, they may not have the same marriage or family needs or problems in the following year. William Abraham (2005) confirms John Wesley's claim about the importance of revisiting the needs. This will make the programme constantly relevant.

<sup>80</sup>Jeremiah, an Old Testament prophet, wrote the book of Lamentations to express the sorrowful state of the nation of Israel when the Israelite families were in exile in Babylon in 587 BC. The lament expressed in chapter 5: 22 reads: "restore us to yourself Lord, that we may return; renew our days as old!" The researcher believes God wants to bring about renewal and restoration to all families through Jesus Christ.

Engagement and broadening the vision of the MCSA which emphasizes Healing and Transformation, identifying the church in general as *kyriakos doma* (the Lord's household), as *ekklesia* (the local congregation of Christians) and as *sanctorum communion* (the communion of saints) provides a therapeutic atmosphere and dimensions for families when trouble erupts. This challenges every denomination to be intentional about developing relevant programmes to address this crucial need of healing to families in our societies. This, as has been pointed out in this study, has already been developed by the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran and Anglican Denominations.

- Pastoral theological pointer

Pastoral theology sometimes referred to as practical theology has powerful concepts that help toward healing. In this research work, training of the pastors as well as laity in adequate skills in pastoral care giving and pastoral counselling opens doors of empowerment, which brings about a feeling of self-worth to the Body of Christ. As the laity is enabled to tap into their skills and spiritual gifts, everybody develops into a resourceful member of the congregation. At the same time the pastors gain more confidence as they facilitate the training and in the rest of their ministerial duties in general.

The engagement of pastoral theology with dimensions of psychotherapy as was done in this study brings forth a constructive interdisciplinary dialogue as the two disciplines work together towards a common purpose in achieving healing and wholeness.

The intercultural dialogue as was pursued between the various family therapists and specifically the Hungarian contextual family therapist Ivan Böszörményi-Nagy's concepts and African/Zulu caring and counselling practices encourages various cultures to learn from each other as they address the ailments of their respective communities. In other words, the West and Africa need to enter into a constant dialogue as justice-related issues are addressed. The authors in the West are commended by the researcher for laying valuable foundations in the discipline of

family therapy. However, the researcher has observed that some concepts from the West become inapplicable on their own in the African traditional cultural context.

The understanding of marriage and family as a system in the interrelated concepts of the identified patient, homeostasis, emotional triangles, the influence of suprasystems, intergenerational links, expectations of loyalty, trust, occurrence of revolving slates, psychological dimensions, ethical dimensions as well as power alignment all shed light to the interdependence and interrelationships in marriage and family. The shedding of the light by these dimensions precipitates the understanding of the behaviour of the dysfunctional parties. This leads to the application of relevant pastoral care giving and counselling resources to bring about healing and wholeness.

However, the researcher realises that there is a need to have a continuous distinctness of pastoral care giving, pastoral counselling and psychotherapy as they are applied in the healing process.

Further observations by the researcher include that the themes of enrichment, growth and healing surface with a meaningful meaning as the syntax forms of the contextual language are interpreted. This in this research work pertains to the Zulu language. According to Lesslie Newbiggin in Sanneh(1993),as has been mentioned before the language of the people expresses how they interpret their brokenness and also how they cope with resultant pain(1993:26).

Within this theological pointer , the researcher does not doubt that African Scholarship and data gathered from elderly informants in the African Zulu context offers well-researched arguments. The aforesaid arguments help in bringing forth the existence of African caring and counselling practices existing within the different African clans and tribes. The information offers a valuable contribution to the dialogical model with Western authors in terms of their intervention in marriage and family crises within the discipline of pastoral care and counselling.

- Missiological and ministerial pointer



In this study, the concept of the church of Jesus Christ as a church engaged in mission and ministry has been emphasised.

Clinebell (1992) stresses that when ministers do mission and ministry they are engaged in bringing growth and healing to troubled persons. As they perform their duties, they are walking in the footsteps of the young Jewish carpenter (Jesus Christ) who ministered to troubled people in the first century. The engagement of ministers in mission makes them also sense that they are part of a rich heritage such as John Chrystotom, Martin Luther, John Wesley and others (Clinebell, 1992: 38-40).

The researcher identifies with the above author's sentiments.

Finally, the above pointers help to address the lamentation about marriage and family dysfunction with its contribution to moral decay in our communities. The pointers do not cease to continue pointing to the cross of Jesus Christ as the ultimate source of redemption that comes with enrichment, growth and healing from God the Creator who ordained marriage, family and all relationships in communities, through the Holy Spirit.

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**APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1: Clergy questionnaire**

**DISCIPLINE:** PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING

**SUBJECT:** Pastoral family renewal, enrichment, growth and healing (therapy)

**AREAS OF RESEARCH:** Marriage, family and single parenthood

**QUESTIONS:**

1. As clergy, how do you see the state of marriages and families in the Catholic Church in the community of KwaNdengezi?

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2. What have you done to help family breakdowns in your church?

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3. What do you think are the causes of marriage and family problems within your congregation?

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4. The concept of the Catholic Church's "Marriage Encounter" – tell me about it:

- How big is the group? \_\_\_\_\_
- How often does it meet? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the results? \_\_\_\_\_
- What impact does this programme have on the rest of the family members i.e. children, relatives etc.?

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5. Do you think this is a valuable model in pastoral care and counselling in your church and community? Why?

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6. What have been your difficulties with the Marriage Encounter?

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7. How have you addressed the difficulties?

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8. Has it been necessary to blend Western models of pastoral care and counselling with Zulu cultural practices? If so, is it a useful exercise?

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9. What are your suggestions for launching a marriage and family programme in the Methodist Church?

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This questionnaire was used in an effort to understand the Marriage Encounter programme in the Catholic Church at KwaNdengezi. However, the priest who was interviewed stated that this was still on hold because of a lack of volunteers.



**Appendix 2: Interview: structured questions for married couples**

**MCSA. Clerpine Circuit 708**

**KwaNdengezi Region**

1. Do you think we need to have a marriage, growth and family enrichment and healing programme in the Methodist Church? Why?

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2. What needs do you have to address in your marriage relationship? These can be social, physical, economic, mental, relational or spiritual needs.

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3. What needs do you have to address in your family relationship? Again, these can be social, economic, spiritual or relational needs.

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4. Are these needs not addressed in the normal Sunday service or Manyano meetings?

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5. As an African living in KwaZulu Natal, what would you like to hear regarding Zulu culture, tradition and customs? Do you think there could be any value in rediscovering them?

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6. Do you ever disagree about issues in your relationship? When it happens, how do you deal with the disagreement?

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7. If the church were to develop material suitable for your context for addressing marriage and family concerns, how often would you attend?

Once a month \_\_\_\_\_ Once in three months \_\_\_\_\_ Once a year \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3: Interview: structured questions for single parents

#### **MCSA: Clerpine Circuit 708**

#### **KwaNdengezi Region**

Motivation of interview

A. The interview comes as an attempt to bring about enrichment, growth as well as healing at all levels for all people in our congregation. This should be at spiritual, physical, economic and emotional levels.

B. To see if, as the leadership, we are meeting everybody's needs in the pastoral care and counselling work of our church.

C. To create material suitable to address single parents' needs as we are doing for married couples.

1. There are many reasons that lead to single parenthood.

(Please tick the reason that applies to you):

Teenage pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_

Divorce \_\_\_\_\_

Death of a mate \_\_\_\_\_

It is my choice \_\_\_\_\_

I do not like to be married \_\_\_\_\_

Other reasons \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you are a single parent because of a teenage pregnancy, what assistance/lack of assistance did you receive in your congregation?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. If you are a single parent because of separation or divorce, what assistance did you receive/not receive in your congregation?

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4. If you are a single parent because of the death of your mate or husband, what help/lack of help did you receive?

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5. If you are a single parent by choice, how does your congregation relate to you?

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6. If you are a single parent and have reasons other than the above, what are your reasons?

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8. What are your needs?

Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_

Physical \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional \_\_\_\_\_

Social \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are these needs not met in your Sunday service or Manyano group?

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10. If your church could commence a fellowship for single parents in the near future, would you attend? (Please tick.)

Yes/no \_\_\_\_\_

Once a month \_\_\_\_\_

Once a quarter \_\_\_\_\_

Once a year \_\_\_\_\_

9. What is your spiritual gift?

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Thank you for being part of this survey in our church.

## Appendix 4: Questionnaire for single parents

### MCSA: Clerpine Circuit 708

KwaNdengezi Region

Motivation:

- A. An attempt to grow our church so that it progresses evangelically, so that God's people grow in their relationship with God. They should also grow physically, spiritually, emotionally and in all aspects of their lives.
- B. To establish whether we as the leaders meet your demands of the church.
- C. To try and provide material that is specific for single parents as we have for married couples.
- D. This survey is confidential and you need not provide your name. In order for this to be helpful, we need your contribution in answering the following questions:

It is a general expectation that people marry, according to God. Society expects people to marry, especially in our community, but it is not always the case. People find themselves single while they have a family or sometimes without a family. Even though Jesus Christ and Paul were single, they were not parents. Nevertheless, they were single according to the Bible. There are many contributing factors as to why people end up being single parents.

1. What made you a single parent? Select your answer from below.

Teenage pregnancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Separation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bereavement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was never married	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chose not to marry	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you are single through a teenage pregnancy, did the church help you in any way? What was the church's response?

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3. If you are separated or divorced, what help did you receive?

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4. If you suffered bereavement, what help did you receive?

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5. If you were never married, what help did you receive?

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6. If you chose not to marry, how are you treated in church?

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7. If a fellowship for single parents is formed in our church, would you be interested in participating?

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8. What would you like to be included in such a fellowship to meet your needs?

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9. What are your needs as a single parent?

In church

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In society

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10. Are these needs not met in the Young Women's Manyano, Women's Manyano, Wesley Guild or Men's Guild?

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11. How frequently would like the single parents fellowship to be?

Once a month  Once a quarter  Once a year

12. What would you contribute to such a fellowship?

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13. Would you like to be part of the families committee?

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Anything you would like to ask or add confidentially?

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God Bless you for being part of this survey in our church.

Convener: AL Sigaba



**Appendix 5: MCSA: Clerpine Circuit 708**

**Counselling terminating form in vernacular language (Zulu)**

**Ifomu lokuqedwa komsebenzi wokweluleka**

Leli Fomu lidinga ukugcwaliswa uma umsebenzi wokweluleka sewuphuthuliwe nalowo okade elulekwa. Kubalulekile ukuba libuyiselwe ekoMkhulu lomnyango wezokweluleka ngokukhulu ukushesha.

Igama lomeluleki: \_\_\_\_\_

Usuku lweseshini eyedlule: \_\_\_\_\_

Inombolo yocingo	Ekhaya	Emsebenzini	Kumakhala Ekhukhwini
Amahlandla amaseshini			

Ukuphawula:

Izizathu zokuvala
-------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> Ukuqedwa komsebenzi wokwaluleka
<input type="checkbox"/> Ukudluliselwa ekomkhulu lezokwaluleka
<input type="checkbox"/> Ukubona omunye omeluleki (referral)
<input type="checkbox"/> Okunye


## Appendix 6: MCSA: Clerpine Circuit 708

### Ifomu lokudluliselwa kwemininingwane (Client's details)

(Kuyimfihlo)(Confidential)

\*Maligcwaliswe ngokuxhumana okokuqala (to be filled in on initial visit).

*Usuku
--------

Umnyango	Umaluleki othunyelwe
----------	----------------------

*Uhlobo lokwelulekwa (type of pastoral counselling)		
Ukuthanda/ukwenza ngokweqile	Ukushonelwa	Izingane/Intsha
Ukwehlukana	Ezezimali	Umshado
Ubudlelwane	Ukuhlukumezeka	Umsebenzi
Okunye (Okuhambisana nokweluleka)		

Igama lowelulekwayo	Izinombolo zocingo		
	Ekhaya/Emsebenzini	I-cell	Iminyaka
Owesilisa			
Owesifazane			
Umntwana			
Ubudlelwane (Uma bukhona)			

Ulwimi lokwelulekwa:
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Ubulungu bebandla:
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Ukudluliselwa ekomkhulu lezokwaluleka:
--

Incazelo evela kumaluleki (Kungafakwa amaseshini)
---

• Ukuxhumana nowelulekwayo	Usuku
• Usuku lokuqala oluhlelelwe	Usuku
Owelulekwayo uyabonana nomunye umaleluleki:	
Okunye okungenziwa	

Kubalulekile ukuba libuyiselwe ekoMkhulu lomnyango wezokweluleka (pastoral counselling centre) ngokukhulu ukushesha.

**Appendix 7: MCSA: Clerpine Circuit 708**

**EVALUATION FORM**

**MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT, GROWTH AND HEALING SEMINAR**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please give us feedback about the seminar to make it more effective next time.

**(“1” is the lowest rating, “7” is the highest.)** Add comments if you wish.

**1. Programme**

**Session 1: Scriptural values in marriage and family**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Could add  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Session 2: Roles in marriage and family**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

--

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 3: Zulu cultural values in a Christian home**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 4: Communication skills**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 5: Parent-child relationship**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 6: Family finance matters**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful

\_\_\_\_\_

**Session 7: Need for support systems**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Could add

\_\_\_\_\_

Not helpful



**Session 8: Family health matters**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Could add

Not helpful

**Session 9: Teenage problems**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Could add

Not helpful

**Session 10: Resolving conflict**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Could add

Not helpful

**Session 11: Forgiveness and healing**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Could add

Not helpful

**Session 12: Single parent session**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Could add

Not helpful

**Presenters**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family retreat**

**Venue (food & facilities)**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage and family wholeness team/IKOMIDI LEMINDENI**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Worship services**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**General comments and suggestions:**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your feedback.**

**Appendix 8: MCSA: CLERPINE CIRCUIT 708**

**Budget form**

<b>BUDGET</b>				
MONTH OF _____				
Gross income (before taxes) _____ *				
	<b>Item</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
		<b>Amount Allocated</b>	<b>Amount Allocated</b>	<b>Difference (+/-)</b>
1	<b>Tithe (10%)</b>	R	R	R
2	<b>Fixed Expenses</b>			
	Taxes	R	R	R
	Social Security	R	R	R
	Medical Aid	R	R	R
	Other	R	R	R
	<b>TOTAL</b>	R	R	R
	Total Tithe and Fixed Expenses	R **	R	R
	Working Income – Deduct Total Tithe and Fixed Expenses (**) from Gross Income (*)	R	R	R
3	<b>Savings (10% of Working Income)</b>	R	R	R
4	<b>Living Expenses (70% of Working Income)</b>			

	Mortgage or Rent	R	R	R
	Heat/Electricity	R	R	R
	Telephone	R	R	R
	Water/Rates	R	R	R
	Petrol	R	R	R
	Car Repairs	R	R	R
	Insurance	R	R	R
	Medical	R	R	R
	Food/Household	R	R	R
	Clothing	R	R	R
	Home Expenditures	R	R	R
	Gifts	R	R	R
	Vacation	R	R	R
	Buffer	R	R	R
	Other	R	R	R
	<b>TOTAL</b>	R	R	R
5	<b>Debts (20% of Working Income)</b>			
		R		
		R		
		R		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	R		
6	<b>Summary of Allocations</b>			
	Gross Income (from *above)		R	
	Total Allocated (Total of 5 boxes in column A)		R	
	Differences (Balance or Amount Short)		R	

7	<b>Summary of Amount Spent</b>			
	Gross Income (from * above)		R	
	Total Allocated (Total 5 boxes in column B)		R	
	Differences (Balance or Amount Short)		R	