

**THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT IMPOSED BY
AFRICAN CULTURE ON YOUNG MINISTERS**

BY

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All thanks to God who gave me strength and wisdom.

This thesis is dedicated to my father Netshitungulwana Tshamano Philemon,

My mother Tshivhangu Mercy Netshitungulwana

and

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Moses and Rofhiwa

and

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and encouraged me.

Praise the Lord! Yes, give praise, o servants of the Lord!

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree Masters in Practical Theology has not previously been submitted by me or by anyone for a degree at this or any other University; that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

SIGNED..... DATE.....

SUPERVISOR..... DATE.....

SUMMARY

The rejection of young pastors by African culture with the old people is a serious problem and a challenge that are affecting Mulenzhe and other area within Vhembe district. The aim of this research is to equip young pastors who are experiencing this rejection by rejection by old people is to help young pastors in acquiring skills which helps them in overcoming this problem.

In this research a model which has been used is the one of the shepherding of flocks. This is the Gerkin's methodology which is on pastoral care of the flocks that belongs to God. The Word of God has been used to explore where the author wanted to show that God is the only one who call people to be a pastors out of His will. This research study explored the model of pastoral care which the affected young pastors have to be helped to receive healing after trauma counselling and guidance by pastoral care givers who are empowered through this research.

The research is done by exploring the following key questions:

- Why do some married men have extramarital sexual relationships with young women, and when faced with problems, they would not allow young people who are ministers to counsel them?

- Another problem facing young ministers is the secrecy issue, namely is it correct for a man to hide the fact that he is maintaining another child while being married?

- What is the role of a pastoral care giver within that kind of a situation?

- How can the attitude of adults refusing to be counseled by young ministers be changed?

Conclusion and recommendations

African culture is recognized to be a threat to young pastors in all its aspects.

The young pastor is urged to acknowledge that African culture is a barrier to his/her duties.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background.....	2
1.2. The author's theology.....	4
1.3. Problem statement.....	12
1.4. The aim, objectives and relevance of the study.....	13
1.5. Research gap.....	15
1.6. Preliminary Conclusion.....	16

CHAPTER TWO

2. METHODOLOGY.....	18
2.1.1. The pastor as prophet.....	22
2.1.2. The pastor as priest.....	23
2.2. Three stages on pastoral and congregational care of the aging.....	33
2.2.1. Stage one: the care of the young old.....	33
2.2.2. Stage two: the care of the middle old.....	35
2.2.3. Stage three: the care of the trail elderly.....	35
2.3. The therapeutic session.....	36

2.4. Preliminary Conclusion.....39

CHAPTER THREE

3. AFRICAN CULTURE.....40

3.1.1. Analysis of its roots.....42

3.1.2. Problem between young and old.....51

3.2. Problem statement hence research.....55

3.3. Preliminary Conclusion.....55

CHAPTER FOUR

4. CASE STUDIES.....56

4.1. The story of my uncle.....57

4.2. Story from Murendeni “praise him” (pseudonym).....59

4.3. Reflections.....64

4.3.1. The author’s reaction to the above case story.....65

4.4. Story from Dakalo “happiness” (fictitious name, attached to the story of the true experience).....67

4.5. Reflections.....69

4.5.1. The author’s reaction to the above case story.....71

4.6. Preliminary Conclusion.....72

CHAPTER FIVE

5. EMPOWERMENT	74
5.1. Equipment of skills.....	81
5.1.1. Empathy and understanding.....	81
5.1.2. Personal confidence.....	88
5.1.3. Cultural sensitive.....	89
5.1.4. Genuiness.....	89
5.1.5. Respect/positive regard.....	89
5.1.6. Communication.....	90
5.2. Apply methodology.....	90
5.3. Preliminary Conclusion.....	90

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSION	92
6.1. The role of the church.....	94
6.1.1. Conclusion.....	98
6.2. Appendixes.....	100
6.2.1. Appendix A.....	100
6.2.2. Appendix B.....	101

6.3. Bibliography.....103

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In this thesis the analysis is based in an African context, which will differ from that of the western culture. The area for this research is in Vhembe Municipality District of Limpopo Province in South Africa. Vhembe District is composed of different cultural groups namely, Vhavenda, Tsonga, Afrikaners and Bapedi. (African tribes) This research will be based among Vhavenda and Tsonga speaking people, who live in the northern part of South Africa.

The author of this research was born in South Africa, in the province of Limpopo, in the village called Mulezhe. The village is composed of Venda speaking people. This is the place where this study is going to be conducted. In this village there are many churches and their leading pastors who are struggling to care for people who are traumatized by life. Pastors in this area, especially those who are young, experience problems of being rejected by the churches and the community as a whole. They are not accepted by adults in order to conduct counseling. This led some pastors to quit and go to other working fields, like becoming chaplains in prisons or at a military base, rather than to remain a pastor in the community. There are both young and older pastors, but it is difficult for a young pastor to work within this village. Only the older leading pastors are working without too many problems.

In this study the reader should take note that the author will make use of “I”, “my”, “the author” and “the researcher” when referring to himself. In the African culture one does not see him/herself as an individual, but inclusive in the tribal life. So when referring to the following words, ‘my’, ‘I’ is to make sure of the critical analysis that reflects on certain statements.

1.1. BACKGROUND

Young ministers in our churches are faced with the challenge of ministering to older members within the congregation. A young man who was ministering in a village was once called to provide counselling to an older man in the congregation who was going through a divorce. When the older man realized that he was going to be counselled by this young minister, he chased him away, telling him that he wanted to see an older and mature priest. The assumption was that he was not capable of counselling adults because he was young and inexperienced. The African culture places a lot of emphasis on adulthood when counselling each other. I wonder why this is a problem, because there is a Venda proverb “**thoho thema I laya thoho tshena**” (a young person can give advice to the older person). The African culture nevertheless places a lot of emphasis on adulthood when counseling each other. The process does not respect young people, because they have not yet experienced life fully. The Bapedi proverb has great meaning to critic this process La hloho tshweu le rutwa ke la hlogo

ntsho mano. (Black hair is able to teach white hair some education in life) How true, because in any situation we learn all the time.

This young minister believed that this happened not because he was incompetent in counseling, but rather because culturally a young man does not discuss marital issues with an older man. The hierarchical structure of relations in African culture plays an important role, even in the church. Hinga says that:

“The root cause of the violence that women experience I would argue lies in the patriarchal and sexist culture in which they live” (cited in Waruta and Kinoti 2005:145).

The author acknowledges that the quotation above is referring to women, but he agrees with it in the sense that the patriarchal system exists and plays a role in the perspective of viewing gender and age in the African culture. On a social level the children fall under the category of women, and they are seen and not heard by adults.

To continue demonstrating this issue I want to tell my uncle’s story. My uncle got married to a woman who later discovered that he had had a child out of wedlock, who he kept secret from her. This problem brought conflict in their marriage and as a result they could not relate to each other anymore. The painful thing was that they were surprised when the head of the family at the end of month brought R300-00 out of R1700-00 of the family budget in order to care for them. The older son was in a tertiary institution and there were others in secondary school. The financial burden

brought more pain that affected their marriage. This whole issue brought a lot of fighting and conflict in their marriage.

The wife discovered that her husband was maintaining a child outside the family. This brought severe tension and conflict in the family. Before this their family was peaceful and happy. This instance brought trauma and shock to the family, and the head of the family was no longer enjoying life in his home. The family (mother and children) was brought in shame and were asked questions mother and children, how this could happen to them. The researcher was also traumatized by this situation, because it was challenging his theology. Several questions emerged on how a young minister cares or counsels an adult African person? Let alone his uncle. This is not permitted in an African culture. Yet, young ministers ought to develop their skills of ministry and caring. At the beginning of their ministry young ministers face lots of challenges, but this one was a cultural issue which undermined cultural norms.

1.2. The author's theology

The scriptures are clear, especially about calling people who are to serve God as prophets or priests. In the Bible we find God calling young people to be prophets; we find Him calling young people into his ministry, for example, Jeremiah:

“O Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I can’t speak for you, I’m too young.” The Lord replied, “Don’t say ‘I’m too young’, for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you” (Jeremiah 1: 6-7).

Several chapters or passages of Scriptures deal with young people who are called to minister (counsel) in difficult situations. The example is of Jeremiah who was called by God while he was a young boy in order to be counselor to Israel, looking after the nation and the kingdom. He had to do everything God told him to do, without any excuses. Age to God was not an issue, because God had a plan with his life before he had been formed in his mother’s womb.

“Jeremiah is rather a divine forethought, long planned as God’s man for this very time” (Guthrie, Motyer, Stibbs and Wiseman 1970, 629).

I agree with them, because Jeremiah’s life was to be as a prophet, and he had to give his whole life to be a servant of God. God put His Word in his mouth. He was not expected to say no to this call. God uses young people who have the ability to fulfill his plan.

Moses is another biblical example of a person who struggled while called by God.

“Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.” But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people?” (Exodus 3:10-11).

God called Moses to lead the people of Israel from the land of Egypt to Canaan. These two questions that he asked is a clear indication that when Moses compared himself to Pharaoh, he was younger than him. On the other hand, he also compared himself to the entire nation of Israelites where there were different ages of people, older and younger. To him these were the people who could not understand him. It means that it was not easy for the older people to listen to or believe in a young person even when he/she was called by God. This had a consequence, because they would not allow Moses to lead them. Another thing was the issue of the power that Pharaoh had. He was a king and Moses had no power or position which guided him and strengthened him to deal with this kingship. We see that God calls a person even if he has a low position and status within the community. Moses sees himself as not worthy to lead God's people.

“It is Moses (not God) who will meet with Pharaoh. It is Moses (not God) who will “bring out” “my people.” It is Moses who acts in God's place to save God's people” (Keck 1994: 713).

God called Moses for a special task of leading Israel to deliverance. But before that he was to face pharaoh first. When Moses compared himself with pharaoh he was nothing because of his weakness and the power that king has.

The third example is of David in the book of 1 Samuel;

“Then Samuel asked “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse replied, “but he’s out in the fields watching the sheep and goats.” “Send for him at once,” Samuel said, “we will not sit down to eat until he arrives.” So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the Lord said, “This is the one, anoint him” (I Sam 16: 11-12).

In this portion of the Scripture the researcher finds it clear that David was a young boy when he was called and anointed to be the king. For his father he was the youngest son, he was not worthy to be the king, when looking at his young age. It is clear, however, that when God calls a person He does not look at the physical appearance or the age of a person, but the heart.

“Samuel saw Eliab (17: 13; 28: 1 chrn 2: 13) and concluded that he was Yahweh’s anointed, but it turned out he was not the one whom Yahweh had seen/elected as his anointed. In the thirty-four times in which “anointed” is used of a royal person; it is always appears with the name Yahweh or a possessive pronoun referring to him. That is, one called “anointed” in the OT by virtue of one’s being anointed by Yahweh and not because one has been anointed by the elders or the people; etc. Yahweh

**urged Samuel not to look at a candidate's appearance or his structure"
(Klein 1983, 160).**

From the above quotation it is clear that Samuel just confirm that Eliab who was the first born of Jesse is a right candidate by just looking at his appearance. This is a good example that people always look at the appearance of a person. God did not choose Eliab because he is the first born and his physical appearance. God chose the youngest son. This means that can choose young people to his ministry, regardless of age and appearance. Myers defines the term "anoint" as;

"The custom of smearing or pouring oil on a person or in both secular and scared context" (Myers 1987, 58).

This means that a person who has been anointed has been called to a special position. Myers further indicates that:

"As such the old Testament kings may be said to prefigure the great anointed one Jesus Christ" (Myers 1987, 58).

The way Samuel chose the king was not the same to God because God looks at the inner person not at the physical appearance. At the book of 1 samuel we find the words that show us this truth.

"Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1samuel 16:7).

The fourth example is Solomon in 1 Chronicles, we find King David addressing the entire assembly and saying:

“My son Solomon, whom God clearly has chosen as the next king of Israel, is still young and inexperienced. The work ahead of him is enormous, for the Temple he will build is not for mere mortals — it is for the Lord God himself!” (1 Chronicles 29:1-2)

From this passage it is clear that Solomon was given the responsibility as a leader when he was young. To be the king means to lead the people of God under God’s authority. According to Douglas:

“The main responsibility of the king was the maintenance of the righteousness, possession of the testimonies or law or torah, with the duty not only to act as a judge but to preserve justice and proclaim the law” (Douglas 1962, 692-693).

The researcher agrees with the quotation, because this was expected of every king of Israel. Some may say that this office is different from being a prophet; in Old Testament to be a king one must be called by God and Solomon was called by God when he was young. The duty was to lead the people in righteousness. One can compare this process with that of a young pastor who is called to lead elderly people. Culture should not just see a young person, but also the pastoral office in which he/she represent.

The king was not just to rule the people on his own but he was under the authority of God. Through this we find the link between the priest, the prophets and the kings. The prophets advise the kings through the Word of God. In Samuel;

“The Lord sent Nathan to David” (Samuel 12: 1).

He was sent to rebuke David for the sin that he committed with Bathsheba and slept with her and this was a sin before God. So it is clear that the prophets are important because they help the kings to change their behavior. There is the link in all offices. The kingship was the most influential office and it determines the future of the whole nation. The kings that do not listen to God lead people to worship idols and God becomes angry with them.

The king was expected to live according to God’s law and when the king lead people in wrong direction of disobedient, the king together with the nation was then punished. In 2 kings;

“Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king” (2 kings 24: 8).

From the verse that the author quoted it is clear that Jehoiachim was still young. This was under God’s control which means that he put everyone in the leadership of his people that he want and does not look at the age of a person.

In the kingship God is ruling his people, He (God) stands and strengthens the king that is obedient to His law. In 1 Kings;

“Jehoanoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became a king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for three months’ (2 Kings 24: 8).

The scripture from the above quotation is interesting because it occurs at the time of his reign. In verses 32 we find that;

“He did evil in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Kings 24: 32).

God let him rule only three months because he was not obedient to the will of His will. This means that the nature of the Israelites kingship is the leadership of God and the king must take His law seriously.

The author understands that the way God calls people in order to become pastors within the church or the community is different from other people. Brown describes:

“The call of the higher in rank to individuals or groups, e.g. parents to children (Gen. 24:58), rulers to subjects (Exod. 1:18; Jdg. 12:1), and Moses to the elders” (Exod 12:21; 19:7, Brown 1975, 272).

I agree with him because God calls a person to convey His message to all the people, even those who are above him/her. This means that everyone must listen to the one called by God even if he is younger than them. In an African setting, when they think of the pastor, their assumption is that the person must be an adult or grown up person with life experiences. The reason behind this is that he must not be disturbed by the pleasures of this world. So the older person is already passed the pleasure stage and have experienced life to the fullest; not the younger person. He/she must first enjoy

the pleasures of life, and then afterwards it will not be so surprising to find that person in the ministry. God calls anyone he wants at His time. This means that the issue of calling rests with God and not with human beings.

1.3. Problem statement

- Adults do not appreciate what the young minister offers. The main problem is that in the African context young ministers are not allowed to counsel adults. As a minister I am aware that an African minister in the ministry (as compared to westerners) utilizes the service of the ministry for counseling others, but adults will not consult a young minister because of an African concept that regard young people as not fully equipped with wisdom to counsel adults. The question to ask is why do some married men have extramarital sexual relationships with young women, and when faced with problems, they would not allow young people who are ministers to counsel them?
- The problem faced by young pastor is the element of secret issues kept by adults who does not want his partner (wife) to know. He also expects the pastor to keep this secret. The question to ask is it correct for a man to hide the fact that he is maintaining another child while being married?
- What is the role of a pastoral care giver within that kind of a situation?

- How can the attitude of adults refusing to be counseled by young ministers be changed?
- Why are an adults disturbed by been counseled by young pastors?

The above questions will help us to analyze and create a methodology of counselling adults in African culture — especially those caught in this kind of dilemma. The problem is that they do not regard young people as having skills and wisdom to solve their problems. The other problem the adults need to confront is the educational background that the young minister brings in the community. The main problem is culture and its understanding of theology at times; culture seems to super side theology, because people will use culture in order to live their live. For example, in Venda adults will not want to be counseled by young pastors because they are regarded immature. Hence a paradigm shift will enable young ministers to counsel adults and help them to cope with problems they are facing in their ministries.

1.4. The aim, objectives and relevance of the study

The aim of this study is to help ministers in order to deal with family dilemmas effectively, especially when it affects adult African men. The researcher believes that maintenance of a child outside of wedlock causes family problems and thus needs research on the subject, because it brings conflict in the family. The main problem is

presented to ministers who are young and are culturally not allowed to counsel adults. There is no solution to this problem, as pastors are not equipped to deal with it properly. This study is therefore aiming to empower them in order to face these challenges, and to be able to care for adult men within their community even though it will take time to educate the community.

This situation has a negative impact on young ministers because they become wounded. As a results they become ineffective in ministry, Wimberley understands trauma as something that that disturb a person completely by saying that;

“Physically, mentally and spiritually, but especially emotionionally. As a result they are not able to function properly, while adult African men are becoming confused and start looking for the meaning of life outside family structures” (Wimberley, 2003:15).

This is disturbing to the young pastor as a results, young pastor are traumatized because they are not allowed to practice their ministry, which finally leads to ineffective service of ministry to both congregation and community, let alone those who are troubled by life issues. Therapeutically, skills are needed in such cases that will lead to healing. Unfortunately adults in this community do not see the gifts given to young pastors.

Healing is part of life hence it is needed in the family. The reader will now understand Howard quotation when he says that:

“Wholeness is a growth journey, not the arrival at a fixed goal” (Howard, 1982:18).

This means that there is the brokenness, which needs a remedy that can heal the wound. I agree with Howard because this is not a one day solution, but it happens in a process when people care for each other. The life of a pastoral care giver and his/her actions are important in healing the broken lives of adult African men. The problem is that the pastor is also traumatized in this situation where he/she has to help his/her own family, especially if they are relatives. Trauma is caused by resistance of members of his/her family. In my case it was my uncle. I think this is impossible which means that the family will always be in pain without any solution. Traumatic experiences are everywhere and in all people and this means that there is a need of pastors who will help people to find healing in their lives.

1.5. Research gap

Nothing has been done or researched previously in the area of African tradition and counselling of adult African men who have extra marital affairs, especially the part where young ministers are not allowed to counsel older people; hence this research. The only area that has been researched is based on the church within an African

culture. The book of Ndou share, some insight about this gap, for example he says that:

“The acceptance of Christian religion was hindered among the Vhavenda because the cultural background was not always taken into consideration” (Ndou, 2000: 2).

In this research the main issue is the empowerment of young ministers in order to use their therapeutic skills while working with the older African people.

1.6. Preliminary conclusion

In this chapter, the author realized that in order for young African pastors to fulfill their pastoral role, they must be aware of African culture as a barrier to work as a pastor. African young pastors must be well equipped in order for them to have an impact on the lives of people. The author finds that God is the one who calls the pastors into His ministry. He calls according to His will regardless of their age. The young pastors are called by God to be the leaders of people. As a leader people must listen to them because they are God’s servants. Through their work we find the caring of God. This can be concluded by saying that they have to respond to all situations which people face. They have to do pastoral work to all members of the church even community members. The problem comes in when young pastors want to do a pastoral work with an old African person.

The author noted that lacking skills as a young pastor in the African context leads to traumatic experiences because the young pastor will not be strong in taking leadership in ministry. The majority of young pastors quit the ministry. Some go to work as chaplains in prisons or military bases. Some completely change their careers. The importance of the pastor is also taken into consideration. In the next chapter the author is going to develop a methodology that addresses pastoral elements based on Gerken's methodology. Biblical elements will be used in this research.

The pastoral care method which is going to be developed during this research will be to empower young African pastors and bringing the practicality of African culture, particularly to those who are still in the theological seminaries, in order to develop skills to deal with this challenge. This will have the benefit not to lose those ministers who decide to go to serve in military bases or prisons, but intending to serve in the church. At the end a pastoral care model will be developed in this research that will help young African pastors to overcome cultural challenges.

CHAPTER 2

2. Methodology

The approach of this dissertation will be based on the qualitative method. Alasuutari refers to the two elements, namely;

“Reasoning and argumentation that is not simply based on statically relations between variables, by which certain objects or observation units are described” (Alasuutari 1995:7).

This study will be based on these two elements, where the African culture will be researched. In the end of researching African culture the strategies based on the relevance of culture will lead to come to the strategies that will help the young ministers in their ministries.

The story of my uncle is used to indicate that it is difficult for a young African minister to fulfill pastoral duties. It is a fact that some older people in the church and in the community are in need of pastoral counselling. The researcher will make use of Gerkin’s methodology of shepherding to help young ministers to enter into therapeutic skills of pastoral care.

The purpose of using Gerkin’s methodology is to look at the model that can be helpful in dealing with the traumatic experiences that are imposed on a young minister by

African culture. The researcher will also make use of the therapeutic session in Egan's book *"The Skilled Helper: A problem-management approach to helping"*. Gerkin indicates that the "shepherding motif appears again and again in the writings of the early church fathers as the organizing metaphor par excellence for the work of pastoral leader". The writer is living in a western culture which is different from African culture. The researcher of this study was a herdsman of cattle while he was a young boy; as far as I know how to shepherd I agree that the shepherding model of doing pastoral care works best when it is applied in African culture. Shepherds are with the sheep — keeping watch over their flock by night, passing through the valleys where in every shadow lurk the possibilities of death from a wild animal, gently leading those with young and gathering the lambs (Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:15; Psalm 23). It is the shepherd who "leads them out" of the fold and who "goes before them" (John 10:3-4). He defends them from the wolf with his rod. No wonder shepherds are called simply, but pregnantly "Leaders" in Hebrews 13:7, 17, and 24. That is why the writer of Hebrews may urge the sheep to "consider their way of life and to imitate their faith (v.7).

"The shepherd is an involved example" (Adams, 1980:322-323).

I agree with Adams, because when I come to the word 'shepherding' itself, as it is involves which is to guide, heal, nurtures, leads and seek for the lost ones. This is the intention to bring them back home where they are fully protected. This means that

shepherding is a biblical model of pastoral care that focuses on equipping those who are pastoral care givers and who are traumatized by confronting the African culture when they are approaching their ministerial duties, especially because of young age. This pastoral model will empower young pastors to face the challenges that are brought by the African culture which is presented as a barrier of pastoral fulfilment. I believe that this can help them to be effective in their ministries.

The method also focuses on the role of the pastor in the community and in the church. Note that he mentions the role of the pastor regardless of his/her age. Gerkin indicates this in the following way:

“The Priest, a hereditary class that had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life, the prophets, who spoke for Yahweh in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community and its stated political leaders, and the wise men and women, who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of good life and personal conduct” (Gerkin, 1997:23).

The author agrees with Gerkin because when we look at practical life, the role of the pastor is important in the community and in the church at all levels. The only problem is that in Africa it is highly impossible to rebuke older people when you are young. It is clear that if the older people stand in the way of the young pastors there is no way that they can fulfil their role. The role of pastor needs to be fulfilled in the

community. We have to see the pastor influencing people's lives in the community and in the church. This can only be done when the pastor reaches all the people and different groups within the community, younger as well as older people.

Gerkin states that “we need to carry with us the balance that our old testament Israelite ancestors struggled to achieve among the functions of pastoral leaders as priests, prophets, and as the wise guides of the people” (Gerkin, 1997:79-80).

The pastoral duties are fulfilled along these offices. Through these offices we find God leading His people. The way God cares for His people must be set as a good example to the pastor. In the Old Testament we find that God was against oppressors of His people and He was on the side of the widow, the poor and those who could not speak for themselves. To be a pastor means to be an instrument of God that is used to bring healing to the people. I agree with McCormick and Davenport when they indicate that:

“The leader is a highly visible shepherd who performs the servant's work” (McCormick & Davenport 2003:4).

The pastor is always at the forefront. This means that those who are going through suffering rely on him/her. In the family of my uncle the role of a pastor is needed, to be used as an instrument to bring healing to the victims.

2.1.1. The Pastor as Prophet

The prophet had a special function in the lives of people in biblical times. There were people who received the message from God and delivered it to the people. They prophesized about things that could happen sooner or later. They delivered messages of hope for the future and liberation from the suffering that they were going through. I agree with Gerkin when he says that:

“The prophetic imagination in day-to-day work of pastoral care becomes more important in times such as ours, where we are becoming more aware of human suffering” (Gerkin, 1997:80).

The role of pastor is important in the church and within the community. He/she is a prophetic voice of God in a difficult situation, and in the most hopeless or devastating situation. This process needs to be taught to the people of Limpopo who place age before caring.

The main function of Prophets was to reveal the Word of God to His people through visions given by God. In each and every generation in Israel there were prophet who prophesy about the future and things that God is going to do. Pastors are important in the community and the church because God uses them to communicate with people through His Word under the control of the Holy Spirit. In Luke;

“Abraham replied, 'they have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them” (Luke 16: 29).

From the quotation above it is clear that God has chosen his own people whom He put his Word on their mouth. People are urged to listen to them. People must be listening to the pastors because they are proclaiming the Word of God irrespective of their age.

2.1.2. The Pastor as Priest

The priestly office in the Israelite’s history was performed in the Temple. The role of the priest was and still is important in the lives of people. We find them doing things such as performing rituals and ministering educational processes to the people. Pastors in this office perform rituals by laying hands on people to bring healing to those who are traumatized. Some people are healed when the pastor follows the church liturgy or worship. Pastoral guidance is needed through preaching so that people will live according to the will of God. The word of God has been given to us in the form of the Bible and this is the source of wisdom and strength to pastoral care givers. We cannot separate the pastoral duties and the Bible. In an African context, pastors are needed who care for people based on the truths of the Bible. Pastors must know what problems people are experiencing before applying his/her counselling skills.

In the shepherding process the one who takes care of the sheep must protect them against predators. I agree with Campbell who indicates that:

“One of the most vivid aspects of the biblical image of shepherding is courage, pointing at your own risk” (Campbell 1986: 26).

This means to give your life for your sheep. In the Old Testament to shepherd means to lead, because the shepherd must be in front of the sheep and they follow behind him because they know his voice. In the same sense caring for people is to lay down your life for the sake of sheep (members). This indicates that the pastoral principle is to put people first, caring for the people who are in need. Pastoral theology is always engaging people who are troubled by the world. The minister is expected to be with the people, even when he/she has nothing to share. Your mere presence is good enough.

Pastoral care is to care without boundary, because you care for both your congregation and for the community. Gerkin indicates that:

“Pastoral care involves not only the care of individuals, but also caring for the community itself” (Gerkin, 1997:118).

I agree with him because this is something that must always be in the mind of the pastor. Pastoral care centers on solving the problems of the Christians and the people who are in the community. It also clarifies our calling as a pastor. We are called to

minister in the body of Christ as well as in the community. Cultural problems emerge when a young minister has to deal with adults. To understand of the pastoral care in this way is problematic to the young African pastor, because there is a boundary in both the church and the community for a young person when he/she is dealing with older people. This leads to his/her ministry to be ineffective. The church exists in the community and it is important for the pastor to understand that these are the people of God who need caring. The church is also influenced by the society. This understanding helps the pastor in approaching the caring of the sheep in his/her care. The caring does not have a boundary because Christians are related to the other people in the community. It is a pastoral calling for a pastor to shape the community and care for the flock. Studying the culture before coming with strategies helps the pastor not to come with irrelevant solutions.

Gerkin indicates four elements which guides the pastor when approaching the ministry namely,

“Pastoral care of individuals, pastoral care of community, pastoral care of tradition and pastoral care of a culture” (Gerkin, 1997: 118-120):

Pastoral care in the parish begins with pastoral leadership, which is comprised of a complex set of relationships between the pastor and the congregation at multiple levels. The pastoral approach to ministry and the pastor must clearly understand the

theology of the church and ministry, and thus exercise pastoral care which will lead to restoration and healing.

Firstly, we can say that pastoral care in the parish begins with pastoral leadership. I agree with him because some of us fail in the beginning when we approach the ministry without knowing our role. People in the church and in the community are expecting something of the pastor. For example, one of their expectations is to have a pastor that is there to lead them in the different angles of ministry, baptizing children, visiting houses, counselling marital problems, and burying the dead. This is different in the African culture. It is applicable in western churches and their communities because a young western pastor fulfils his/her pastoral duty without cultural problems arising as in the African culture. If the pastor is younger, they respect him/her as someone who has been studying in the theology and therefore must be able and equipped to deal with the problems of people, regardless of age. In the African community he/she will remain a baby in the eyes of the elders. Atkinson and Field define the term pastoral care as;

“The practical outworking of the church’s concern for the everyday and ultimate needs of its members and the wider community” (Atkinson & Field 1995:78).

The author agrees with them because pastoral care does not have a boundary with the understanding that all people have been created in the image of God and they need the

pastor to care for them. The above definition also indicates that pastoral care must be applied to all situations. My own understanding of the word pastoral care, means caring for the body of Christ and the community at all cost. They further indicate that:

“Concern has its mainspring in the love that God has for His people and for His world” (Atkinson & Field 1995:78).

I agree with them because when we read the Scriptures we find that God reveals Himself as a God of love, who sent Jesus to reveal this love to human beings who were broken and lost from God’s kingdom. In the book of John we hear these words:

“for God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3: 16).

This means that God sent His Son to die for the world because of the love he has for the world. Pastoral care must be done to everyone without any condition whether the person is a Christian or not. Doing pastoral work in this way is the simple way that God cares for the people.

Secondly, “pastoral care in the parish is comprised of a complex set of relationships between the pastor and the congregation at multiple levels”. When we come to an African culture, we will find elder people who reject young pastor in fulfilling their pastoral duties because they are young. They are not allowed to relate to old people in

the church and the community. They will undermine him/her because of their young age. This will not happen if there is a good relationship in terms of acceptance of the young pastor by the elders. In a good relationship, people become more open to each other with the help of a shepherd or pastor, especially when there are problems. It is difficult for the younger pastor to build a relationship with the whole congregation, especially with the older African person. Culture then becomes a big problem. Working with people within community and church means building a relationship between people. In fact the pastor ought to have a good relationship with people. Without relationship it is highly impossible for the pastor to be effective or influencing people's life. Herman indicates that:

“Trauma damages the patient’s ability to enter into a trusting relationship” (Herman 1997: 136).

I agree with Herman even if the above statement is referring to the patient not to the care giver because the research is about the pastors who are a care giver. It is clear that it is hard to build a relationship after a traumatic event. It will be difficult for the young pastor in African context to be able to have a good relationship with all people especially in the congregation. In Vhavenda, the young pastor can relate to certain people, while adults who are traditionalists will find it difficult to relate because of cultural barriers. For example he/she will not have a relationship with old African people because of a rejection that they go through because of African culture does not

allow young to speak or advise adults. So to be a leader in that community means that you have to impact people's life with healing which is one of the pastoral duties.

In the third element Gerkin reminds us of pastoral approach to ministry. He says that:

“When we as pastors enter into ministry in a particular place, (we) become part of a story of life and ministry that has been going on for a long time before our arrival” (Gerkin 1997: 119).

I agree with him because there is a difference between the church that has existed for a long time and the church that you start yourself. The church that existed before you is the church with history. In other words, their journey becomes part of your journey. This must be kept in mind by the pastor and should encourage him/her to listen to the church members.

This becomes another stratagem to involve the members of the church in the ministry. The pastor must not claim as if he/she knows everything. Listening to members and discussing what had happened to them becomes pastoral care. This can become the process of healing for those who are still wounded by traumatic events that have occurred in the past. It is also possible that the relationship between God and a person has been broken. Counselling with such a person must be done.

“In counseling too, the pastor/priest attempts to help the person re-establish broken relationships between oneself and God” (Waruta & Kinoti 2005:92).

I agree because if the traumatized person asks the question concerning God in the situation, the pastor can use it as an opportunity to counsel, so healing establishes the relationship again. This can not be done without listening to the church members about the past. Most pastors do not have listening skills and as a result they do not allow people to talk. It is important for the pastor to listen to the flock. Young pastors should take advantage of the situation to learn more about the congregation. They come from theological training and have knowledge but no practical experience, and as a result they fail to listen, while every church and every congregation has its own unique history.

The fourth element indicates that the pastor must clearly understand the theology of the church and ministry. Everything that happens in the church, including the activities, forms part of theology. It is important for them to research everything and come up with theology. In the history we find past experiences of people and the way they responded to that. The understanding about God and ministry is in part of theology. The pastor must be creative enough to interpret everything in order for him to come up with the strategy of pastoral care.

My uncle's problem of having another child outside the family causes a traumatic experience to my family, as members of the family were not aware of it. They only discovered it when the head of the family comes with less money to the family. He was no longer enjoying living in his home. The family was at breakpoint and these

circumstances became a challenge to the researcher. There was no trust any longer. It was challenging to the researcher's theology, because he was young and to the head of the family it seemed inappropriate that he should counsel the family. The whole family was seeking help from him as a pastor and it was difficult to do counselling because the head of the family did not want him to get into these family affairs.

Egan names two skills that are basic to interpersonal communication, namely attending and listening.

“ By attending Egan refers it “ as a way in which helpers can be with their clients both physically and psychologically” and by listening he refers to the ability of helpers to capture and understand the messages clients communicated verbally, clients communicate as they tell their stories, whether those messages are transmitted verbally or nonverbally, clear or vaguely”(Egan 1998 : 62).

When working with clients, the therapist needs to be aware of the following issue of attending, which helps the client to be at home in therapy.

“Effective attending puts helpers in a passion to listen carefully to what clients are saying both verbally and non-verbally. Listening carefully to a client's concerns seems to be a concept too simple to grasp and too easy to do what one may wonder why if it is given such explicit treatment here” (Egan, 1998: 64).

I agree with Egan because without those two elements mentioned above, there would be no pastoral care done in counseling. One of the helpful skills suggested by Egan is attending, which includes the way in which the care givers behave and care for others. In other words all focus must be on the client not on any other object. The other skill is listening; here the researcher understands it as the way of keeping tight eye contact. This is the way that helps the care giver to read the verbal and non-verbal communication correctly.

This principle does not apply in the African context of a young counselor giving counseling to an elderly couple or individual in a marriage situation. The young person is not allowed to look to the older person in the face. To look in the face of the adult African person means disrespect. The pastor can be there but his/her presence cannot be appreciated if he/she is a young African pastor. He/she can listen but is not allowed to give any direction. An African man hides information, so the younger pastor must be able to read non-verbal communication in order to find out the problem.

The one who set us an example of pastoral care is our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave his life for his friends and for all of us. The most important element that we find here is love. It was only love that let Jesus to leave His throne and come to this world to suffer and die for us. If the pastor wants to fulfill his/her pastoral duty, he/she must

love the people. This means that as a young African pastor he/she must love all African people. You cannot offer your life for pastoral care if you do not love your people. Campbell is helpful in addressing the issue of caring, especially the shepherding method. I agree with Campbell when he states that:

“The shepherd leads, guides, nurtures, heals, seeks the lost, brings the scattered flock together and protects it from harm” (Campbell, 1986:28).

Love is key to therapy especially when working therapeutically with clients. Therefore my role in this community is to guide elderly males who have extramarital affairs, which causes pain to their families. The difficulty is that they do not even need therapy to be done by a young person because of their cultural biases.

2.2. Gerkin gives three stages on “pastoral and congregational care of the aging” (214-223).

This issue is helpful in informing young ministers on how to deal with elderly people; different stages are shared by Gerkin in order to show growth that leads to old age. I will share some of these stages.

2.2.1. Stage one: the care of the young old.

The process makes young old to realize that they are also on the way to being old, and will need care later on. Therefore they can no longer deny their aging process. In other words, this growing awareness not only sets an agenda for the aging person; it also

defines an agenda for those who are to provide care for the elderly. As we find it difficult to work with elderly people as young pastors, we must also be aware that we are getting old, and should not continue with the same problem of refusing to be cared for.

Gerkin identifies the young old group as the people who reach the stage where it is difficult for them to see, hear and smell in other words they will be well advanced at this stage. He calls them the people who are becoming “senior citizens”. This is the stage where different diseases attack strongly. This group of people has their own specific needs in their lives. Gerkin indicates that they need assistance in making decisions based on styles of aging and this must be a biblical which helps them to serve the Lord. The author observes this stage as a dependent one. Miles says that:

“Good guides know when they need help, and they are willing to seek advice. They know when to share leadership and decision making” (Miles, 1999: 6).

I agree with him that the pastor must be able to know the changing and the expectations of a person who reaches this stage of life. This will help the pastor to be relevant in his/her pastoral care. These people can not be left on their own. The pastor is needed at this stage to help them make their decisions.

2.2.2. Stage two: the care of the middle old

Gerkin does not share precise age but call it middle old age which to the author can be between the ages of 40-50 years. At this stage of middle old age Gerkin views it as a stage where there is still possibility of life. Among this group he indicates that some are able to continue the activities and interests of the young old well beyond their eightieth birthday. Gerkin continues by saying that:

“The vital part of ministry with the middle old involves assisting them in finding ways to continue their participation in the activities of the world around them” (Gerkin 1997: 217).

I agree with Gerkin that when people grow old, their power decreases. This means that they need support from the pastor for them to be continuously effective in the community and in the church.

2.2.3. Stage three: the care of the frail elderly

This is the stage where we find a person being at the point of death. There is no other expectation at this stage. This is the stage where they need to be strengthened to trust God. Without the pastor some become hopeless.

From all these stages that Gerkin mentioned, it is clear that people from adulthood need a pastor. Caring for these elderly people is a big pastoral responsibility. In African context it is not that easy to care for the adults because of the culture.

2.3. The therapeutic session

Caring for victims of trauma means that the therapist/pastor must be well equipped to counsel the adult African person, and he/she must have alternative ways to deal with problems.

He/she views the problems that people experience in the community. This means that he/she can not simply come to conclusions without letting people tell their stories of their experiences. The therapist must let those who seek help tell their story. It is important for the care giver to be able to develop listening skills. Without proper listening you can not find the real problem, because in communication there is verbal and a non-verbal side. The care giver must be able to communicate on both levels.

In the process of telling his experience we can find that the person is hiding some information. One can often find this hidden information through listening and watching at the non-verbal behavior of the body. According to Egan;

“Effective listening involves four things, firstly listening and understanding the client’s verbal messages; second, observing and reading the client’s non-verbal behavior-posture, facial expression, movement, tone of voice,

and the like; third listening to the context of the social settings of his or her life; fourth, listening to sour notes- what is thing the client says that may have to be challenged at last” (Egan 1998: 65-66)”.

The author agrees with him because listening is aimed at understanding the problem. In order for a care giver to understand a client, he/she must listen not to judge the person. Listening is a challenge to care givers (pastors) because we have been taught to talk and not to listen. This means that we cannot separate listening and understanding. Without listening to the client, care givers will never be effective in counseling because it becomes difficult to understand the problems of a client. This lead the care giver to be ineffective.

I agree with Egan, when he describes “observing and reading the client’s nonverbal behaviour as an active listening to the client”. In most cases you will find that the client’s behaviour is the opposite of his/her words, for example you will find a person telling a painful story while he/she is smiling. In all of this you need a skillful care giver who is able to read or to analyze the non-verbal behaviour. This means that a counsellor must not take everything that is said for granted, but he must also observe everything which client is doing because behind action there is a meaning. Patton M.Q indicates that:

**“Qualitative method is based on what people say which is a major source”
(Patton, 1990: 25).**

Through interviews one is able to get into the life issues, by asking question which will help one to develop therapeutical method of being with broken people.

Qualitative method considers context. Gerkin indicates that the pastor is involved in a day-to-day relationship with persons at all levels of social life. There is a link between him/her and people's lives in the community. The lives of people are the respondents to the environment. It means that the care giver must listen to the client in context. An important thing that pastors take for granted, is to study the context. The problem is surrounded with influences, for example the society can traumatize people, or the culture within the context has a role to play in people's traumatic experiences. The care giver must therefore not ignore the context, because to be familiar with it, a relevant solution would be possible.

In the story of my uncle, one can not easily fulfill a pastoral role if the context is ignored. My uncle got married with one woman and had children with her, but he had another wife outside marriage and a child with her. When you listen to the problem you will hear many things, because my uncle blamed his wife even if there was no problem.

The problem in this whole story was the cultural aspect. This happened in an African context and because of that the situation was different than in a western context. The one who is care giver to this family had to study all the events which were linked with the family and the lifestyle of the people in this specific context. To understand the

context meant to listen and analyze everything accordingly. The western culture can also operate in this area but as individuals, while Africans will include family and the rest of the community.

2.4. Preliminary Conclusion

The researcher has discovered that Gerkin's methodology is important in dealing with the healing of young pastors who are wounded with the experience of rejection because of an African culture within the community and the church. In it is clear that God is the one who call pastors who are to serve in the church and the community. Their roles are so important because through them we find the caring of God. The African culture became a barrier that let them not to fulfill their role. In the next chapter the author will focus on African culture and its roots.

In this research the role of pastor is to care for all people who are traumatized or who need help. People in the life face different situations some are for pleasant or painful and all this call the pastor to be a counselor. All people regarded of the age face difficulties in life where they are indeed of pastor. The problem in African culture is that the elderly people will not accept to help from young pastors.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter deals with problems experienced by young pastors. Because they are young, culture becomes a barrier that affects the counselling done by them. Mbiti observes culture as:

“The human pattern of life in responds to man’s environment” (Mbiti, 1976:12).

It impacts the regular way in which people do things. Every group of people has a specific way of doing things. It starts in the family and continues in the community and this forms the identity of the people. It includes the whole being of a person. Atkinson and Field say that:

“Culture is the context within which every person inevitably lives his or her daily life” (Atkinson & Field, 1995:278).

The author agrees, for every context has its own culture and it is not the same as in another context, because the environment and the adaptation to it will differ. This means that every group of people is unique and their way of doing things will differ from another group of people.

3.1 African culture

The African culture is the way in which the African people live. The early African people were dependent on the environment for food, clothes and shelters. This shaped the way they behaved or conducted themselves. Mugambi says that

“Culture is what we are, what we have, what we believe and what we long for. Culture is for the people what agriculture is for the land. Culture influences the way we chose to live. For example, the food we eat, music we listen, the way we dress etc. culture is what we consider to be our hope and despair, joy and suffering. Source of love and hatred, what gives us satisfaction or anxiety” (Mugambi, 1997:14).

From the above quotation, the author comes to the understanding that African primitive society played a vital role in shaping African culture. Belief, art, morals, customs, knowledge, and laws are some of the aspects that we find in culture. The reader can now understand why culture can inhibit young people from sharing their expertise in ministry. Culture can be understood;

“As the way of thinking and the behaviour shared by a grouping which gives them identity in relation to others” (Ferguson & Wright, 1988:183).

The author views this as another fact when looking at the way African culture moved from one generation to another.

The family and the community have a way of teaching their beliefs and behaviour. This is mostly done by initiation schools. The families give full support so that their children will be taught their ways of understanding and behaviour. This is done in order to fulfill the social and biological needs of African people. They teach the children to obey the elders within the family and the society. They also teach them the

way of being a father or mother within the family structure and their roles. So, if as a youngster a pastor is taught only to obey and to listen to the elders, I do not think it would be easy for him/her to challenge the elders in the community and in the family. In culture we also find that the identity of people is built by the situation they are facing at the time.

“The term culture is thus an imprecise way of describing the social realities in any given society” (Ayinis, 1972:3).

Sometimes culture can misdiagnose people, especially woman and children, because it favours men more than others. This is the way of finding out the way African people behave in their life. The researcher believes that in order to experience how younger pastors are treated by elders, it is important to analyze the ground of African culture itself. These origins have influenced the way African people live today, for instance they were taught to obey the elders within the family and society.

3.1.1 Analysis of its roots

African culture shows how different people operate within the patriarchal structure. In the family we find that there is a father, mother and children. All these people have a different function within the family structure. Every one has a role to play. The father is the head of the family and he has to make decisions in everything. The family must move according to his will. This indicates that he is the owner in the family structure. As the head of the family he must make sure that there is food for the family. He is

the one that must go out and work for his wife and children. The power of the mother on controlling the children is limited. The role of mother in the family structure is to look after the house and the children. Concerning the different roles that people play in the family hierarchy Murphy says that:

“Role is used to denote the behavior expected of a person in a particular status. Role, with its dramatic connotation of actions and lines in a play, suggests the part of a person” (Murphy, 1979:41).

I agree with Murphy because it is clear that the way men behave is to be in power in a way that they are not willing to listen to children. This is the reason why young African pastors are treated like young babies even if they are ordained by African adults. In the family no one is allowed to cross the boundary or it means conflict.

Household or the family is a basic in their lives. The identity of a person is identified within the household. The way people live in the family shapes the way people conduct themselves within the community. Parents in the household have a special role in the lives of their children and their future.

The father does not stay at the same place with the children because they will disrespect him. This means that the child does not have direct access to the father, but should go through the mother. The father to them is like a lion that you cannot come close to and you are forced to fear him. These barriers develop from early childhood

and when you come into ministry they become problematic because you are not able to relate to adults. Culture does not permit a child to work with adults. Mbiti says that:

“Polygamy in Africa raises the social status of the family” (Mbiti, 1969:142).

They are proud of having more than one wife. In Vhavenda there is the proverb that says **“munna ndi ndou hali muri muthihi”** (man is an elephant which does not eat one tree). It is therefore not surprising to find my uncle having an affair outside his family. He is in fact proving that he is an African man, because culturally that is allowed. Any young pastor who is against this will be in trouble, because he/she is against the cultural custom and again he/she is too young to tell an older person otherwise. Within the community no one will support the young pastor on being against what my uncle did to his family. The reader should remember that African culture respects adults and consider young people as in mature.

In African culture respect is something that is required in an African child, hence a problem rises when a young pastor wants to counsel adults. The simplest symbol which is an indication that the child has respect towards the adult African people is to obey them and follow their instructions. When my mother, named Thinavhuyo (meaning ‘there is nowhere to go’), or my father, Humbulani (meaning ‘to think’), speaks I am not expected to argue even if I do not agree with them. Augsburg indicates that:

“each person is related to others so closely that one has literally hundreds of fathers; mothers; brother; sisters and so on even if there is no immediate blood or biological link” (Augsburger, 1976:82).

The researcher agrees with Augsburger, because the child is expected to respect everyone older than him/her. This means that this respect that the child has to his father and mother or grandmother must also be shown outside the family. There is no boundary when it comes to respect. It is a clear that the young African pastor will be regarded as a child at home and within the community. He/she must be guided by the adults and show respect by following their guidance. This becomes the hindrance to a young pastor who wants to preach nothing but the truth in the church and in the community. But we can see that the truth is compromised for the sake of acceptance in the community. This also means that it is difficult to discipline the members of the church when there is that need, because they require respect from you as a younger person. Counselling as pastoral care is almost impossible because you can not listen to the problems of elders and advise them when they see that as disrespect.

Augsburger says on the differences between genders of the son and daughter: “the son was the bearer of the family line and its continuity in immortality. The daughter was considered an “outsider” or temporary family member, even today, except to those Africans who are influenced by western culture. Augsburger reminds us that culture is based on patriarchy hence.

**“The economic value of woman would go to her husband’s family”
(Augsburger, 1986:223).**

For example girls and women will be regarded as spilled water, because they are going to be married and leave the family.

I agree with him besides the fact that my research is not focused on the young pastor’s gender. In an African context the daughter and the son are not valued at the same level. There is a big difference. In early African society the daughter was not allowed to go to school. One of the reasons is that there will not be any benefits because she has to get married. Her identity is aligning with the husband that will marry her. Even if it is not a field of my study, I would like to mention how difficult it is for unmarried and for married young women to do counselling as part of pastoral care in the church or in the community.

The kings of the community have a special role in the way people conduct themselves. Kingship plays an important role in shaping the African culture as a whole, although there are African communities who are without the king. He/she has an authority over everyone and households of every family. The author refers to male also to female kings because Modjadji was also respected equally like men, Mbiti indicates that:

“It is kingship which controls social relationship between people in a given community; it governs marital customs and regulations, it determines the behavior of one individual towards another” (Mbiti, 1969:104).

All the orders that come from the king must be followed without any reasoning or excuse. The king has the authority in order to judge people who are guilty of transgressing. This means that the future of that community depends on how the king leads the people. If the king is not a leader who stands for justice it means that there will be corruption. The king is always right and there is no need to correct any mistakes by him. No one has the right to argue with the king so the question to ask is what if the pastor, regardless of age, challenges the authority of the king or wants to correct him if he has done an injustice.

The authority of the pastor is limited but as a spiritual leader he has to fulfill his pastoral duty even to the king, which is highly improbable in our African context. The western world will not have problems because they respect the position given to a person irrespective of his/her age.

A good example is found in the book of Exodus, which says:

“But Pharaoh shouted, “You’re lazy! Lazy! That’s why you are saying, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to the Lord.’ Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks” (Exodus 5:17).

The Scripture here puts it clear that even in the Bible the authority of the pastors were less than the authority of the kings. Pharaoh ignored them and he commanded them to do his will. Kings do not want to listen to the pastors so if the pastor is young before the king, he will simply be ignored.

Young pastors, when it suits the African tradition will be taken as advisors, but at times will be rejected by virtue of their age. If they are disobedient they will be expelled from the community. The question to ask is what a servant of God has to do when he/she is called to help the people who have an authority over all others. The pastors are called to help all people:

“Apart from the heads of single families, there may be other kingship ties woven into the group thus forming ‘a web of kingship’; this group may now be bigger than a family and may be described as a household” (Ayisi, 1972:17).

I agree with him because in Vhavenda culture kings have more authority over all the people in the community. In a similar way in a patriarchal family power lies on the man. He has to be respected by everyone in the family and the community.

The child has no rights to decide for him/herself, but the decision rests in the hands of the parents; hence the reason why my uncle saw me as a child. The reason behind this is that they have experience of life, so they believe they should be the ones to give guidance. Because children have to be obedient to their parents, it builds a perspective

that the parents are always right so the children should just keep quiet and listen to them. The African elderly people have to understand that the pastor is called by God to bring God's message to all people and must do counselling to people in the community and in the church.

“The normal practice however, is for the parents to make the choice with the full consent of their son or daughter” (Mbiti, 1969:136).

My own experience as I grew up, I realized that the child needs to accept everything that comes from the parents, hence a young pastor is expected to get advice from adults, where else in the western culture the office of ministry will be respected and the pastor allowed to counsel anybody who needs counselling. In African culture this custom has the result that the children are always dependent on the parents. This means that they are not independent thinkers. They are forced to go for the parents' option even though it may not be right for them.

The reason why the parents make decisions for their children is based on the experience that they have as older people. If looked at it in another way, they really are trying to protect the children. The decision to them is important in the way that it will mean a lot to the future of the family. They know for example the right family where they will choose the right marriage partner for a child. This includes the young pastor who is not yet married. They decide for him/her on the person he/she should

marry. There is a view that in the minds of older African people there is something that reveals to them something concerning life, especially marital issues, while a child does not know anything. If the child has been abused or oppressed by the father according to the African culture he/she must keep quiet. Yet Mbiti contradicts this statement by saying:

“Ancestors are not happy when adults treat young ones to the extent of even abusing them” (Mbiti 1969: 75).

He says that they become spiritually dry, and thus cannot lead others. He warns us that we should;

“Recognize two categories of spiritual beings; those were created as such a way of healing, and those who destroy other human beings” (Mbiti 1969: 75).

Mbiti further reminds us that, in African context we find that there is the connection between people who are living and those who passed away. In other words, life does not stop at death. Hence those who are alive continue to respect those who are dead.

He indicates that:

“Surviving members must not forget the departed; otherwise misfortune is feared to strike them or their relatives” (Mbiti 1969: 107).

It is clear to the author that respect among African people was important. The living i.e young and old ought to respect the departed. Such behavior shapes the people’s

life. This is the reason why children have to listen and respect the elderly people. They will have to lead or teach them to respect the old people and the dead ones. Because if there is a disrespect to the living ancestors, it will bring misfortune to the community or families.

Religion played a role in shaping the social life and behaviour of African people. They believed in the ancestors.

“The ancestor spirit, medzimu (within quotation, but correct word in Venda ‘midzimu’) (sing. mudzimu), have many idiosyncrasies, and if they think that they have been slighted by their revenge by bringing misfortune to them; they are therefore feared rather than loved” (Stayt, 1968:240).

I agree with Stayt because the ancestors are respected in the way as when they were still alive. This plays a role in people’s behaviour and their minds. It becomes the barrier and when a young pastor is called by God and trying to proclaim the Gospel to them, they will not listen to him. To fulfill pastoral duties by doing counselling among them is useless. They are only obedient to their gods.

3.1.2 Problem between young and old

There is a big gap between the young people and the elders, because older people do not develop a situation where they can communicate with their children. The emphasis in African culture that young people ought to respect the elders which,

results in a relationship where they do not have time to teach their children, for example, Mbiti says:

“Sex knowledge is often difficult to impart from parent to child” (Mbiti, 1969:135).

I agree with him and the reason behind this is that there is no close relationship between the children and parents. They learn things by themselves without the help of their parents. The child does not feel free to discuss matters with the parents. This gap is problematic for young pastors who must work with adult African people. The communication will not be easy, because it will be difficult for a pastor to approach an adult person.

Communication is built in such a way that a young person does not seek the older person, looking straight at him. You have to look down when you talk to an older person. This is another barrier that forbids young pastors to talk to older people when looking them in the eyes is a sign of disrespect. As results children fear the elders. It is even a challenge when you are working with older people in ministry. It is not allowed in African culture to sit at the same table, eating together and sharing, for it is regarded as disrespect. Strayt says that:

“A married man, visiting his father’s home eats with his brothers” (Strayt, 1968:155).

I agree with him, because a married son within the family is not equal to his father. It is clear from the quotation that there is a big gap between the father and son even after he is married. This reminds me of a Venda proverb which says “nwana u do dzula a nwana namusi o no hula” (which means that the child will remain a child even if that child is old). The way that father and child live bring a clear indication that there is a big gap between the two of them. He can only relate to his brother, which means they can discuss and give advice to each other, but not to the father.

The issue of distance between the old and young people becomes problematic. This is impossible in an African culture where the helper is a young person and the one who need help is an elderly person in therapy. How then young pastors can fulfill pastoral duty with elderly in therapy? Egan suggest that attending is one way of beginning to work with them.

“Attentive presence can invite or encourage them to trust you, open up, explore the significant dimensions of their problem situation” (Egan, 1998:62).

This is one of the elements that are so important when helping a person who has had a traumatic experience. To be available should be a clear indication to the one who is traumatized that he or she is important. This helps the counselling to be successful, because the client is starting to open. It is true but the problem with it is that it is applicable in the western culture, but not in the African context. As young pastor seek

to work under such conditions, they are stressed and finally get depressed, which leads to trauma. In African culture this is not simply because only elderly people are needed to help in a difficult situation. It does not matter whether you are married or not, you are regarded as a child.

The authority is an important thing in African culture because it plays a role in the way people behave. The author finds that the authority is within the family and the entire community. Hence old people are to be respected and obeyed. The king has the authority over all the people. Mbiti says that:

“Authority is reorganized as increasing from the youngest child to the highest being” (Mbiti, 1969:206).

The matter of age is different in the African context than in the western culture. To have authority means that you have the power to control another person who is under you. This applies in the family, where the children are viewed differently; the first born is having authority over the second born within the family structure. The mother’s responsibility is not the same as that of the father. There is a distinction between the two. The first born will not have authority over his father and mother, and even if the father is dead, he will always be respected.

3.2 Problem statement hence research

The pastor experienced the pain that is not expected by the young pastor in ministry, because of the African culture. This is different from the western culture. Most of the theological seminars where the young pastors are trained are in the western culture. In the church the pastor is going to work with young and old African people who have their own culture. The way they do things and their specific cultural way of treating others is different from the western culture.

3.3 Preliminary conclusion

In this chapter the author reach the conclusion that the patriarchal structure within the society in African culture, causes of the trauma to young pastors, who are seeking to exercise their ministry. When taking African culture in consideration it is clear in this chapter that young person is regarded as young person even if he/she is a pastor within the community and the church.

Older African people are living within the culture where they are not allowed to listen to person. Listen and obedience are only things that are required from the young person. In summary the researcher discovered that African culture is indeed problematic for the young pastors to fulfill their pastoral duties. They always have boundaries. In the next chapter the case study will be used to reveal the trauma that young pastor face because of African culture.

CHAPTER 4

In this chapter I will share the story of my uncle and two case studies of young pastors who experienced trauma by being rejected in their pastoral duties in the African culture by elderly people. This rejection occurred in both the church and in the community. The story of David (not a real name) was very painful. He was called to minister the church at Tshitungulwane village. At that time he was 23 years old and married with two children.

He was rejected by the church council because they felt that he was too young and they had known him as a child as he grew up in that village. They reminded him that they had raised him and now he wanted to tell them what to do and discipline them. They stopped the monthly payment and he started to struggle with making a living for his family. He was traumatized by this situation because they also did not allow him to do pastoral visits to their families, simply because he was so young. The African culture would not allow such a young person to counsel adults when they experience marital problems as he/she lacks experience.

4. Case studies

The following case study highlights problems faced by young people while trying to deal with elderly people in therapy.

The story of my uncle and two other stories will help the reader understand how African culture and customs can oppress young people as they seek to minister. They

will enable the author to understand the experiences of a young pastor and what they are going through when they are working with the elderly African people. The stories of those young pastors who had been rejected by the elders led the researcher to the pain that they had to go through when they sought to care for adults. The researcher is going to use a first person singular in connection with those case studies.

4.1. The story of my uncle

The story of my uncle is a classic case that shows how African customs can become oppressive to young pastors, women and children. He married a woman who later discovered that he had a child out of wedlock. He (my uncle) kept it secret. When his wife discovered the truth, it brought conflict in their marriage and as a result they could not relate to each other any more. She was surprised when the head of the family brought R300-00 to care for them. The older son was in a tertiary institution, while the other children were in secondary school. The financial burden of supporting another child affected their marriage and relationship.

The second problem was when his wife discovered that her husband had been maintaining the child outside the family for a considerable time, as it was not a baby anymore. This brought severe tension and conflict, when before the family was peaceful and happy. This incident was a big shock and the head of the family was no longer enjoying life at home. It brought shame to the family and they were asking several questions. Why was this happening to them? The researcher was also

traumatized by this situation because it was challenging to his theology of caring.

Herman says:

“Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning” (Herman, 1992:33).

I agree because this disturbs people’s normal life and it leads them to asking questions. The researcher asked this question after being exposed to this situation. How does a young minister care for or counsel an adult African person? This is not permitted in African culture let alone being his own uncle. Yet, young ministers ought to develop their skills of ministry and caring by being allowed to exercise their pastoral duties.

The issue of trust was another important thing to tackle, because there was no longer trust between the wife and her husband. This process also affected the father and children. As I was exposed to this situation, I also had another theological problem, because my understanding was that divorce was not the solution. It affects the whole family who will end up in a poor situation, and with no income will lack food and care.

As a minister I was expected to bring a solution to the problem that this family was facing. When I was about to approach my uncle, he indicated that I was a young boy and could not tell him what to do in his family. After all, he was supposed to care for me and not be advised by me.

The researcher was traumatized because this difficult situation caused conflict and broke the level of trust between him and his uncle as well as between the couple. The author was also faced with the problem of an adult who was supposed to be a mentor to others but had wandered from good Christian values. My uncle would not allow me to stand by him only because he believed it was culturally right, i.e. not to be advised by a young person. In his eyes I was a child and was supposed to respect adults and not to question them. He refused to listen to me, but because I was a pastor there was the need for me to play my role of counselling the whole family. The role, in which I was exercising my ministry, was undermined and misunderstood by adults. These are the problems that affect young pastors who work in African villages where the elders still believe in adults and customs. Some of the adults are still trapped in old traditional patterns of life; as a result they are not able to allow those trained in ministry to exercise their pastoral work. This way of life inhibits young people in working with them; as a result they are traumatized by negative feedback given to them by those who stick to the African culture. A good example is of the story that is following.

4.2. Story from Murendeni “praise him” (pseudonym)

The following is the story of Murendeni. He is a young pastor who also was a victim of cultural beliefs, namely being treated as a child who was not suitable to be a pastor

among the adults, because of his age. He is, in fact, not enjoying it to be a pastor, but when he was 18 years old, he went to a theological seminary with the intention of becoming a pastor, and the church members and the church council encouraged him to study theology.

He relates his story in the following way:

“I grew up in the family where my father and mother were both Christian. They brought me to the Sunday school where I was taught the Bible and spiritual life. I enjoyed my Sunday school and its activities. This is where I started to feel God’s call in the ministry. The church members keep on saying that God is calling me. The church started to use me and the community where there was a need of preaching the Word of God, they call me to participate fully in that position. This motivated me to have a positive respond towards the call. Before the metric results I wrote an application letter in order to enter into theological training to the church council, and they responded positively by coming to me and asking the question concerning the letter and the call. After metric results they send me to the seminar. I state this because I want to indicate how the church and the community play a significant role my life. I entered this vocation with an assumption that the community affirmed the calling I had.”

During my studies the church members and church council kept motivating me by offering their money so that I may be able to buy books. They kept saying that they will call me to be the minister of my home church, because I am their son. This is true because they raised me. At my last year in seminary they fulfill their promise by giving me a calling through letter so that I could become a minister of their congregation. The letter was full of all promises. The description of the call I was call to care for the church, but with the restriction of working with the youth. The church leaders indicated that they are the ones who will make the home visit. I do not understand why this is happening because I am called to take care of the whole church, but I thought that they are hiding something. I finally accepted the call with my whole heart. By this time I was not married when I started working in the church.

I worked successfully in the first two months. After that period the problem started to rise. This is the church that I know its weakness and strong part. I firstly appreciate the way they were leading the church. I even ask them how to do the work of God here and this was the way of involving them to the ministry. This was aimed at building the church in order to fulfill its purpose in this world and to impact the community. There was the church members who were alcoholics and some were robbers and woman abuse were there in the church council. This is the thing that I know because I grew up in this church and during the holidays I was doing my practical here. I was

respecting these people very much. Now working with them was difficult. They were using their adulthood as well as their customs, in order to silence me and my ministry.

My first three weeks I had planned to preach about repentance. Because I understand my calling as being called by God in order to serve in His church. I started to fight for the truth. The church council was totally against me. No one was on my side, and they said that I have to be obedient to them because I was a young, know nothing and they raised me. The question I asked myself is whom do I have to be obedient to, especially between the church council and God.

I remember when one of the church council members phoned and said that I am not worthy to tell them their wrong doing. They said I am a boy and I am younger than some of their children. This was a painful situation that I never met before, I try to use any strategy that I learn from seminar and I found that it is irrelevant to this current situation. I do not understand why this is happening and the negative feeling about stopping to be a pastor started to develop from there.

On the issue of counseling the members of the church, there was a boundary because I was working with the youth. This affected the whole work of the ministry. If there were an accident such as funerals and a family problem that need to be resolved by the

pastor I was rejected and they hire an old pastor not me. It is difficult for me even today to council an older people who are looking for my help even when they understand that counseling is one of my duties the trauma continue to interfere as I seek to relate to adults. I remember when I was counseling an old man who was HIV positive, and I was forced to tell him that he has to stop having sex without condom, and he said to me I am young to tell him that. He end-up refused to allow me to exercise my ministry and my pastoral advice and left abruptly once again the community and adults. Pressurize me to keep quite and listen to them. They indicate that if I keep preaching about fighting for the truth, they are going to stop everything (service) for me. I decide to keep quite for the sake of peace with the hope that sometimes things will change. The question was that I have to compromise the truth because I wanted to be a pastor in this church. I found that the church was corrupt because of the way people are living. When I made a research of how I am mistreated I found out there is a cultural thing that are disturbing me from working in this church. The church and the community rejected me. I was living being alone. Every one need to beloved and accepted by others. When rejected, one begins to believe the negative said to you.”

4.3. REFLECTIONS

The author used the following questions to communicate with Murendeni: These questions were designed in such a way that they reveal problems faced by young ministers. Murendeni is ministering at Mulenzhe district under the Reformed Church

Researcher: What difficulties have you encountered as a young minister regarding counselling adults?

Murendeni: *“It is difficult to counsel an old African adult because they usually hesitate to take advice that young pastor gives, and discourage young pastor to advice because of their age. African ideas also emphasize this process by saying that adults are more experienced than young people.”*

Researcher: Do you still love your pastoral work after finding yourself being traumatized by your own culture and elderly people?

Murendeni: *“No, because I am not free to fulfill my role as a pastor, and I am treated like a child especially by people who are not theologically framed. This kind of hindrance makes me to hate what I am called to do”*

Researcher: What role will you play in challenging cultural issues that make it difficult for you to do counselling?

Murendeni: *“I will teach people about the culture from childhood up to adulthood. The culture can be developed by educating the next generation.”*

Researcher: Through your traumatic experience, how would you empower other young ministers who are struggling in this area?

Murendeni: *“Encourage them to stand firm in the pastoral duty until they accept him/her as a pastor. I will also organize group discussions so that the people can begin to face the issue. In other words, young people need to come together so that they discuss the issues faced by them. In this way they will be able to empower each other”.*

4.3.1. The author’s reaction to the above case story

This story of Murendeni of things that happened before the theological training, after training and during his first months as a young minister causes serious concern for the future of the ministry. The researcher reflected on what happened and what it meant to him as a young pastor too. The experience that Murendeni had gone through led him to have a negative feeling towards the pastoral office. The issue of being a young pastor exercising your duty in an African context is not possible, because of the

culture. Through his experience I do not think that he could honestly advise someone to enter the vocation of ministry. These experiences discourage and affect one emotionally.

The story of Murendeni leads the researcher to understand those young African ministers who are to work in an African context, and who need to be aware of cultural barriers. Mnisi said that:

“African people have come a long way with the issue of oppression and discrimination” (Mnisi, 2005:68).

I agree with Mnisi because when we look at the social structure of the African people that is determined by culture, we find that it makes Murendeni to be unable to fulfill his pastoral duties.

The African culture played a role in the confusion of Murendeni and it affected the fulfillment of his pastoral duties. The church council regarded him as a young boy and as someone who had not been given an opportunity to lead people as a spiritual leader, simply because of age. There is an understanding among Vhavenda which says; *“mufunzi u tea u vha a oluwaho ane a si tshenaho lutamo na zwithu zwa shango”* This means that the pastor must be adult-matured when ministering people and must not have worldly desires. I disagree with this thinking and I think this is one of the things that make Murendeni not to be accepted by the church. Someone who

wants to be a pastor in this context seems to be old enough to be near death to be experienced enough for the elders. This is clearly reflected in my uncle's story because of culture which led him not to understand me as someone who is empowered by the Church to address his situation and minister to him in a pastoral way. He chose to suffer because of cultural barriers. The result was that his family fell apart and could not function properly. This process affected me as a pastor, who knew that I could minister to them. The next story will also show some of the elements of the struggle experienced by young ministers.

The second story involves another young minister who is also struggling with the issue of culture, and elderly people who refuse to be counseled by young pastors.

4.4. Story from Dakalo “happiness” (Fictitious name, attached to the story of the true experience)

“I am born and grow up at Mulezhe, under single parenting. My father divorced my mother. My mother was a Christian. She encourages me to go to church with her. There was a midweek prayers, the pastor put me in leading those prayers by preaching the Word of God. I discovered that God is calling me to ministry. My pastor kept on encouraging me to go to theological seminar. I become passionate about serving Christ by giving my life to him. During the year when I was on Grade 12, I applied to synod to be one of the students who are about to study theology. They

accepted my application and I was only waiting for my Grade 12 results. When results are published in the news paper, I find out that I passed with exemption. In the beginning of the following year I went to the seminar to study theology.

On my last year of my studies I received a letter of calling me to the very same congregation that I grow within. I was called to work with a youth because by then I was not yet got married, the marital issues was then given to the senior pastor. At the same year, the pastor asked for the study leave and I was in charge of everything in the congregation. One of the families in the church has a serious problem that needs a pastor. The problem was a wife who was having sex with another man outside marriage. The husband was accusing her and wanted to divorce. I was called to help and I counseled both husband and wife.

*When I was at the counseling session I asked them to explain their problem. They did that without any problem, but I discover that they are hiding some information but I keep- on asking. The situation was forcing me to ask about the sexual issue between the two. This question was not easy to ask because I know the age different between me and them and I was not married too. I frame my question in this way, **what is the last day when you have the sex together?** The husband immediately stops me and said to me that you are not the one who is worthy to ask us about our sexual issue.*

You are too young to ask us such type of question. They only pushed me to solve the issue of divorce. I was in dilemma and I asked them to excuse myself. They forced me to make another appointment and we agreed to meet the following week on Tuesday at their home. When I come on Tuesday I found that they called another old pastor who is a member of the same community and being pastor at one of the church on the community.

With this situation, I felt worthless and not part of the church. Having the feeling of rejected I asked myself questions like, because I am young this family thought that I do not have skills to solve their problem. Why this congregation give me a boundary of only focusing on the youth? I also regret from accepting the call from this church.”

4.5. REFLECTIONS

The following questions were used by the author in order to communicate with Dakalo’s frustrations:

Researcher: What difficulties have you encountered as a young minister regarding counselling adults?

Dakalo: *“I do not have a confidence, because of that it is even difficult to keep an eye contact with other people. Our culture does not allow young people to look at adults when addressing them”*

Researcher: Do you still love your pastoral duties after finding yourself being traumatized by your culture?

Dakalo: *“I do irrespective of all frustrations and conflicts experienced by me and other cultural issues which leads people to dismiss us”.*

Researcher: What role will you play in challenging cultural issues that make it difficult for you to do counselling?

Dakalo: *“I will challenge the acceptance of young people by the old African adults within the society, the family and the church. One way is to embark on educational way of opening them up into new realities”.*

Researcher: How would you empower other young ministers who are struggling in this way?

Dakalo: *“I will help and guide them to be aware of African culture when they approach ministry. I will also challenge the Church in order to prepare congregation to accept young ministers.”*

4.5.1. The author’s reaction to the above case story

It is important to constantly reflect on these issues so that young ministers may also prepare themselves as they come into ministry. The other important issue is to create workshops within our denomination. The reader can now understand through these atrocities, problems experienced in ministry.

Dakalo’s story shows how he was traumatized by the African culture when he was counselling the family. It seems that he was feeling pressured because of the cultural barriers that blocked him from ministering to adults. The fact that he was not married also played a role. This indicates to the author that to be a young African pastor, with a duty to counsel an adult person, is difficult and not allowed in the culture.

Both Murendeni and Dakalo felt rejection from the church and the community because of their young age. Before they went to the seminar to study theology the situation had been encouraging simply because they were not exposed to a situation where they had to counsel adult people. The process of listening to these stories of

young African pastors helped the researcher to understand African culture as an obstacle to young pastors.

Waruta and Kinoti, when referring to the African Christian as a way of doing pastoral counseling indicate that:

“For their efforts to offer counseling service to succeed, pastors must understand the culture in which they are operating; the way the people see themselves, their world and the way they approach and solve difficult issues and problems” (Waruta & Kinoti, 2005:93).

I agree with them because people of Africa have a certain understanding about pastors in general. Culture plays an important role in the rejection of young pastors. If pastors have a misunderstanding of the African culture in an African context, it will always lead to ineffectiveness. This is the reason why Murendeni and Dakalo face a great challenge in their ministries.

4.6. Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter the traumatic experience that young pastor goes through when they are exercising their duty. Traumatic experiences have been explored through interviewing young pastors. Several stories show how they are traumatized by congregations, especially elderly African people. There is no acceptance from the older people as a way of letting young pastors to work easily. The author realizes that only acceptance will make young pastors to be effective within African communities. The main

challenge is an educational strategy that will help in opening up culture and elderly people, including young ones.

It is clear that both young pastors experience the same problem of rejection that leads them into a hopeless situation. In fact, they are traumatized by this situation daily. The author reaches the point where he understands that all people who are working with people need to be accepted by the people who are working with them. This is one of the pastoral needs that need to be addressed. When working in a community, one needs to earn respect in such a way that both can work together. This process will allow congregants to open their hearts in order to be teachable. Transformation will thus take place. Young pastors also need to humble themselves and learn from those who are not educated. Respect should govern the process of working together. In the next chapter I will focus on empowering young pastors so that they are able to work within such communities that do not except them.

In African context it is not so easy to find old people who are ready to accept young pastors. It is not only the ordinary old people it is also the fellow old pastors. They reject young thoughts. Only their adult thinking is correct. It is extremely difficult if the young pastor is not married. He or she is regarded as a child. The author will discuss this concept fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Empowerment in this process comes as a result of the problem young pastor's face in Vhavenda. The culture does not allow young ones to counsel adults. It is worse when a young pastor is not married. One of the ways of entering into a community is to use elderly people who will introduce you to the community. Empowerment comes as a result of allowing those adults who are respected to introduce you. The other way of introduction in the community is to start with Bible studies which will aglow a dialogue among the young and old people. Young pastors need to be aware that pastors are alone in their self expectations and demands in ministry. One way of overcoming resistance in the community, is to visit with adults who are known and respected- thus introducing the young pastor slowly in the community. Visiting houses will help you know members of the congregation. Finally, young pastors need to slow down in introducing new structures. Win their confidence first with alone in mind. One would then ask the question what is empowerment?

5. Empowerment

Empowerment is a good process that is used in therapy a lot. It shapes the life of those who are broken. For example, Elliston say that:

“Empowerment must also be seen in terms of relationship, between two people. One who has a leadership power and the one who have to receive power” (Elliston 1943: 1240).

Both have power which may hinder therapy if one misuses it, but when shared it becomes helpful for the one who is in need of empowerment.

I agree with the quotation above because empowerment helps the one who is falling to be able to be effective. The young pastors need to be empowered in order to be successful when they enter into a ministry. He further indicates that:

“Empowering is the process of turning followers into leaders” (Elliston 1943: 125).

Even though the above quotation is referring to the ordinary person, the author uses this quotation to indicate that the research is intending to help young pastor with therapeutic skills that will help in counseling the elderly African people.

The identity of the pastor itself empowers those who are members, because this office has authority over the church and the community. God is the one who calls the pastor into a ministry of caring for others. It does not matter whether the church and the community decide not to listen to him/her; he has to accomplish the duties that God has given to him/her. In short, it is a calling from God and not human beings. The above is properly articulated by the prophet. As we read from the book of the prophet Ezekiel we find the following statement:

“And whether they listen or refuse to listen for remember, they will know they have had a prophet among them” (Ezekiel 2:5).

This part of the Scripture inspired me, because God gave his prophets to prophesize among the nation of Israelites. It reveals to me that it is not automatic that they will listen. The possibilities are that they can refuse the Word of God, for example by simply looking at the age and undermine this person's teachings. The fact is that even if they do not listen to her/him, he has to speak to them and teach the Word of God. This means that the pastor must be obedient to God. He/she must not compromise the truth because of the situation that he/she is facing, for this is the call of the pastor in the community and the church.

It comes to my understanding that the pastoral work is built on servant hood. That is a way of serving others. This process is helpful when two people work together. In an African culture that respects elderly, it is impossible, because older people do not want young one to interfere in their affairs. We are reminded by the concept of ancient east which helped others to operate with those who were serving others. Hence, Shelp and Sunderland indicate that:

“We must turn to the ancient Near East, where those in the service of the king were called “servant” or a slave,” including those in the highest positions of authority” (Shelp & Sunderland, 1986:4).

I concur with this idea, because we find that in the Old Testament God elected the prophets, the kings and the priests. It is clear that they were serving the nation under the authority of God. The servant in the Old Testament was indeed a slave because

he/she belonged to the service of others. They had no rights to do the things which came from their minds. They were expected to be under the authority of God. This means to be a pastor is to lay down your life and offer a service. God who calls you is the One who will give you the credit: and authority to administer service to others. Gerkin is once again helpful when he says that:

“The prophets who spoke for the tradition and its concern for response to the voice of God, the priests who led the community in its cultic worship, and the wise ones who offered guidance to the people in the daily affairs of individual and family life” (Gerkin, 1997:26).

The author, through this quotation, finds that every office has its own role, but it is not independent from God. This is a clear indication that God is expecting something in every pastor in this world. God leads his nation through the ones who are in the office. In African community it means nothing to be a servant of God, the elders will still not listens to a young servant. Orden referring to the pastor or Shepherd and sheep indicates that:

“They know their own Shepherd will not mislead them. The shepherd is able to anticipate their need in advance and willingly to deal with each one individually” (Orden 1817: 52).

The researcher agrees with Orden because this is what is expected from any pastor who is on pastoral office. The pastor must be willing to care for the people who are in need not by any force.

In the community there are many things that are happening which are against the Word of God, especially issues such as injustice, corruption, divorces, crime, abortions and oppressions. Gerkin says that:

“Care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues for justice and moral integrity in the life of people” (Gerkin, 1997:25).

I agree with Gerkin because the pastor must really influence the lives of the people. He/she must be able to study the situation. This means that the ministry as pastoral care involves the preaching of the Word of God and living according to it. The preaching must be relevant to the situation which people encounter. To impact the community means that the pastors must study the community in order to come with the relevant message.

The researcher wants to pinpoint some of the important aspects in Mile’s book, *the pastor as moral guide*. In this book he describes the identity and role of the pastor within the church and the community on pastoral work and on counselling which is an important factor in shepherding.

“Pastors can serve as resources, drawing on the wisdom from Christian traditions and other fields such as medical ethics or psychology. The pastor is an attentive, active presence with the parishioner in crisis” (Miles, 1999:9).

This means that the pastor has a role to play in giving spiritual as well as mental direction when people are in a dilemma, and facing difficulties in life. People reach the stage where they give a pastor a time to lead because they can not see the way out or respond to problems they are facing. The person in ministry must be ready enough to answer difficult questions in people’s lives. A pastor must have theological answers when dealing with different situations that affect people. The reader must remember that it is difficult for a young pastor to deal with these issues, when not allowed by adults. As a result it traumatizes the pastor, and thus closes the door for caring. Miles quotation is helpful in addressing the self doubt among young pastors:

“If pastors set poor examples and lead others astray, they bear responsibility not only for their own, but also for the sins of the others” (Miles, 1999:10).

I agree with Miles because people are learning from the pastor how to respond to life in general, especially to the Christian faith and its practices. The only problem is that in an African culture young pastors are judged and not even allowed to exercise their

ministry freely without hindrances. The scriptures are clear about those who are called light, which can be equated with ministry. Matthew says to us,

“You are the light of the world like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden” (Mt. 5:14).

The disciples were called to be the servants of the Gospel that Jesus was teaching them. He did not ignore the fact that their lives will affect the message to the people who listen. The pastor is a leader of people’s lives. The life of the pastor is important in influencing the church and community.

The existing church has its own tradition and culture. But the two must not become pastoral problems were they hinder young ministers. This is the general perspective we have and we find this in all activities of the church. It is reflected in the way they view things such as marriage, corruption, divorce and death. This might be irrelevant to the Bible. Miles further indicate that:

“We seek not only to transform our own traditions, but also to transform the wider public culture. Faith shapes Christian opinions on the most controversial issues” (Miles, 1999:11).

The author agrees with him because in the end the church and the community must both be influenced by the pastor’s views. The life of people is a respondent of their views. Unbiblical views lead the church and community to immorality. The preaching of the Gospel builds a biblical view and makes people to start and see things through

God's eyes. As a result they are able to submit to the authority of God, and thus allow ministry to occur. Again we are faced with the problem of rejection by adults and culture. An educational process is needed in order to change the concept embraced by adults. The young people will need to be equipped with skills that will enable the educational process to work within the community

5.1. Equipment of skills

Preparation through education is important in preparing young ministers for the task of the ministry. Therefore, approach in the ministry especially that of pastoral work is important, because it prepares one to listen to those who are troubled by the world. Most pastors fail in the beginning. If a pastor is going to work in an existing church, it won't be the same as starting a new church. This means that the pastor can not say that he/she has pastoral authority and is therefore above everyone else. This means that he/she will not be able to listen to anybody in the church. You cannot minister in isolation; you are bound to work with others. The western world reminds us that "no man is an Island" we are here to work with each other. Hence we are called shepherds of the flock. All people need us as much as we need them McCormick and Davenport quote Psalm 23 in order to make a point of servant hood. They have this to say about this issue:

"The leader is a highly visible shepherd who performs the servant work.

Like servants, shepherds care for the needs of their sheep in what often

seems to be a one way relationship. Should the shepherd abdicate the servant role, the flock would quickly fall into trouble, as sheep are not known for their ability to care for their own needs. Sheep need a servant leader to find them food and water, bind their wounds, and even carry them when the going gets tough” (McCormick & Davenport, 2003:4).

I agree with the authors because caring is one of the pastor’s responsibilities. This means that the availability of the pastor for the members in the church and the community in all situations that they are going through is important. A pastor must be available for those who are in need.

Preaching is one of the pastoral tasks of a pastor. This has an impact on people, transforming their lives and perspectives. We can not say that the pastoral duty is fulfilled without preaching.

“Pastoral care and personal counseling lend feeling and meaning to preaching. Preaching becomes the preparation for counseling” (Oates, 1946:118).

I agree with Oates because preaching plays a role and brings answers to some people who are going through difficult times. It is part of the healing process of those who are troubled. This means that the pastor must be prepared enough in preaching the Word of God which finally leads to healing. The opportunity of preaching within the community (wedding ceremonies and funeral services) must be used. In the

counselling process it becomes easier to reach the wounded people because of the connection through the preaching.

Pastoral care giving should be based on love as an essential element. To be in pastoral office in the church means to take care of people with love and to meet their needs whether they are spiritual or social, or physical. For example;

“Many people in need see the ministers as a competent, trusted shepherd they ask to walk with them through their shadowed valleys” (Clinebell, 1966:47).

The above quotation implies that the pastor must be there in every situation. It might be a difficult situation when people are happy and well. They need the pastor for guidance or advice in difficult times. It is another way of caring and none of this work can be done without love. In the gospel according to John 21:15 we read: “After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Lord’, Peter replied, ‘you know I love you.’ ‘Then feed my lambs’ Jesus told him”. The author of this biblical passage finds that Jesus is the owner of the church and he demands love from those whom he calls to serve in his church. The love that Jesus was demanding from Peter was not just an ordinary love. It was a sacrificial love, which demanded you to offer your life for the sake of the sheep. This is an example how the pastor has to make time for his people cares for them. With the element of love the pastoral care must not be done for the pastor’s benefit. In other

words it must not just be a way of earning money. It must be done as a sign of loving Christ. Kgabe describe the pastor by indicating that:

“A pastor or care giver is the representative of God in serving God’s people. A pastor resembles God who is caring and tender. The shepherd is the one who leads, guides, nurtures, heads, seek the lost, brings the scattered flock back together and protects it against all forms of harm that might come their way” (Kgabe 2007: 67).

The author concurs with Kgabe because without all the above elements in the pastoral care, the pastor will not be able to be responsible in handling care to the broken. And there will be no fulfillment of pastoral duty or care. This simply means that he/she must care for the people and be on their side. Through these elements we find God caring for His people Israel in the midst of oppression. The reader needs to bear in mind that, pastors are called to look after the flock of God. Therefore the flock does not belong to the pastors, but to God. Which means that every pastoral work that we give to those in need, we are representing the owner of the flock.

The pastor must be able to be present where the people are and where they want him/her. The presence sometimes means a lot more than words in a situation. It is important for him to know his members by their names and it entails a process of building a close relationship between the pastor and a member. Kind of working with them will open the doors for members to be open to the pastoral care giver. The

pastoral care giver must visit people in their homes, as well as in hospitals and shut ins. In this way, we will be following our mandate that:

“Our Lord and Saviour Jesus hath left us a commandment, which concerns all Christians alike — that we should render the duties of humanity, or (as the scripture calls them) the works of mercy, to those which are afflicted and under calamity, that we should visit the sick, endeavour to set free the prisoners, and perform other like acts of kindness to our neighbour, whereby the evils of this present time may in some be lightened” (Gerkin, 1997:42).

The process helps to identify the people’s needs in terms of everyday life. Hospital visits are important because it has an impact on those who are sick. For those who are traumatized by different situations, counselling must be done. This means caring for God’s flock.

The pastor must build trust in the whole congregation and the community. The author sees this as an area where pastors are failing to fulfill their pastoral duties. It is a fact that no person will be open to someone who is not faithful, and keeping the secret or confidentiality. In house visitation you will find people telling you their problems. It can be a family problem, so it needs somebody who is willing and ready to help and to keep it confidential and not gossip about it with other people outside of therapy. This is a privilege that we must not take it for granted.

“A pastoral perspective needs a focus on faith that is uniquely Christian if it is laid in ministry to person in their process of development” (Aden & Ellens, 1988:128).

The above quotation reveals the goal and direction of the development of faith. Faith is important in the life of the Christian and it brings hope to the hopeless. Faith conquers, especially in a worshipful atmosphere. In faith you find the meaning of life. The pastoral care giver must lead people to have faith. This must be the goal of counselling a traumatized person or preaching on Sundays and during the week. Brown and Srebalus rightly acknowledge that the secret of Christian counselling which is based on becoming open to God, allowing therapy as a way of breaking through many barriers that lies between God, the people and worldly problems. Brown & Srebalus suggest praying as another method of doing therapy by indicating that:

“Prayer plays an important role in the process” (Brown & Srebalus 2003: 304-305).

A traumatic experience has a negative impact on the relationship between God and the traumatized person. Questions are asked about God, like where was God when all this happened. Prayer is another element of pastoral care giving. This means that he/she must have time to communicate with God through prayer. This could only be done if the help seeker asks for prayer. The care giver should engage the help seeker

in such a way that he/she may overcome fear, anger and frustration that lead her/him in therapy. There is a need for the pastor to be well equipped (in order) to do effective counselling in the session with the client. This process involves the client as well as care giver. At times one has to receive insights from the client, other times you become an expert who guides and lead the client into decision making. Participation is from both sides. Waruta and Kinoti say that:

“In counseling a priest/pastor is called to participate in the inner turmoil, agony, frustration and hopelessness of the sick or troubled person” (Waruta & Kinoti 2005:92).

From the above quotation the author understands the above as a responsibility of the pastor which will lead a person to healing. Without healing a person is in difficulties and cannot function better in the world of disorder. The pastor needs to require the skills to help a traumatized person. Without skills the pastor will not be effective even if he/she is willing. Therapy involves both parties, especially when dealing with trauma. The quotation that follows will help clarify the issue further.

“Brown and Srebalus shares an interesting point by illustrating an important element of dealing with trauma, when counseling the help seeker, the process of handling traumatic issues is extremely important, and need sensitivity and care” (2003:64-68).

Therefore we need to understand culture and its elements fully. Let me clarify some of the issues that may hinder therapy when dealing with traumatized people. One needs to be able to use them as instruments that will help therapy flow. They are empathy, understanding, personal confidence, cultural sensitivity, genuineness, respect / positive regard, and communication. When dealt with properly they lead one to healing. The author will be sharing inside about them in the following way

5.1.1. Empathy and understanding

The counselor must be an understanding person. The therapeutic and diagnostic understanding is important when dealing or working in care giving ministry. The researcher recognizes that this is a challenge to most pastoral care givers. They judge a person even before they listen. People want to be understood. This is a need of a traumatized person. It is clear that the skills of understanding must be developed through reading and mentorship of those who are equipped with pastoral skills.

5.1.2. Personal confidence

Counselors must have confidence in their ability to be effective in human relationships. I believe that behaviour of a care giver also indicates whether there is this confidence. Personal confidence of the care giver helps the client to be open and to deal with therapeutic issues effectively. It also helps the person to be able to operate in the community with other people.

5.1.3. Cultural sensitivity

Understanding is a core ingredient in cultural sensitivity. Every person has its own culture and it must be well understood. Understanding is a result of listening. The care giver requires the skills of listening. He/she must be able to enter into dialogue taking into account the culture of the person in need of care. Through this understanding the care giver will be able to respect what a person bring in therapy. If it is not taken into consideration the person will not be able to dialogue with the one seeking help, especially in an African contexts.

5.1.4. Genuineness

The counselor is a real person. The absence of genuineness may hinder therapy because one may not be aware of the here and now experience, which may affect dialogue with the one seeking help, thus hiding behind the role as a counsellor, doing what he/she is supposed to do as though being programmed. He/she needs to be flexible, allowing himself/herself to be a teacher as well as a student as therapy continues.

5.1.5. Respect/positive regard

Respect refers to the valuing of others, to hold them in positive regard because they are human beings. Always remember that clients are created in the image and likeness of God, and thus have to be respected.

5.1.6. Communication

Effective helpers must have effective communication skills. In relating to others they must make their intentions clear and concrete. They are able to communicate both verbally and non-verbally. They also need to be able to journey with clients through their difficult moments when they are not able to communicate.

5.2. Apply methodology (young care givers)

Finally, it is important to keep in mind the methodology which will allow them to enter into the client's stories. Gerkin's method of shepherding is used in helping young pastors to fulfill their duties of caring. These guidelines are important when dealing with traumatized people or clients.

5.3. Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter the author explored ways in which the young pastor can be introduced by well respected adults within the congregation and the community. This process will help him/her gain respect. The pastoral skills are also needed in order to enable the young pastor to exercise ministry. For example when one is performing counseling to an old African person, it is important to follow all these elements and skills of pastoral counseling. Some of the techniques that will help young pastors to work comfortably in counseling others have been discussed.

In the next chapter the author through research conducted will share some insights and findings revealed by the research. Finally, I will share some conclusion and new topics of research that I discover as I worked with elderly people in Venda.

CHAPTER 6

6. Conclusion

From the above chapters, it is clear that African culture is traumatizing young pastors who are trying to minister. Some of them are not married. This is a problem which disturbs them in order to fulfill their role as pastoral care givers and leaves an impression that to be a pastor is not a good thing. Herman says that “traumatic events have primary effects not only on the psychological structures of the self but also on the system of attachment and meaning that link individual and the community” (Herman, 1997:51). The victim will end up being isolated from the community. It is difficult to find the pastoral care giver disconnected from the community which God called him/her to work within. The struggles that young ministers are facing not being allowed to therapeutically care for elderly people in congregations, congregations traumatize them to the extent that they fail to care for the flock.

The Bible has several portions which pastoral care givers can use, especially when they read through the prophet Jeremiah. For example, in Jeremiah: we found the following interesting portions. The reader will recall Jeremiah refusing to serve God’s people because he thought he was young.

“The Lord replied, “Don’t say, ‘I am too young’ for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don’t be afraid of the people

for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!” (Jer. 1:7-8).

With the above quotation, the author has realised that this will give hope to young pastors and encourage them when they are facing a cultural barrier in their ministries. The Lord, who called them, made a promise that he would not leave them alone. God will be with them always through every process. The only thing to do is to help the help seeker to analyze their prayers. In other words, develop contact with them and find out the way they understand their own world of prayer. Isaiah becomes helpful at this time: Remember that:

“When you call the Lord will answer. “Yes I am here”, he quickly replies (Isa. 58:9).

God promised to help us and will listen to us when we call upon His name. He will answer quickly. This must encourage us to continue fulfilling the roles that we are called for.

The experienced pastors must play a role in helping young pastors to be aware of the cultural barriers. They should mentor them and develop them. They have a role to play in terms of connecting young pastors to the church and community. This must not be done in order to let the young pastor be dependent on the experienced one, but they should develop a relationship of nurturing. They should both depend on God who

called them. This can be done in the way of accepting a young pastor as having an equal authority with the older ones.

6.1. The role of the church

Young pastors need acceptance from the church by virtue of their call. The members of the church must open their homes for the pastor to have a successful home visit as well as to deal with their problems. They must be open to him/her while counselling. They must learn to trust their pastor even if he/she is a younger person. "A primary function of the Christian community is that of creating and maintaining a climate of relationship within which all members of the community are understood and cared for.

“To experience such a community is to overcome the loneliness that pervades contemporary culture” (Gerkin, 1997:126).

The Christian community is expected to play a role of giving the necessary support to the young African pastor. Instead of gossiping, mocking, cursing and using stigmatising or destructive words towards them, they must have an understanding that all pastors are equal, regardless of their age, even though they may not be equally equipped for their ministry through experience. The church members and friends must be good examples to show that even young pastors have been given equal authority with older pastors within the community. They must show the significant part of a relationship within the Christian community which demonstrates love and care to the

young pastors as they are an integral part of the community. God who called them wants to use them in order to develop in different ways. The church should accept them with unconditional love.

The church must understand that we need each other. Every member is important. The church cannot have an impact if they ignore one member. Paul in 1 Corinthians says:

“But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part!” (1 Cor. 12:18-19).

This is the indication that no part is less important. Even a young pastor is important in the life of the church. We belong to each other as Mbiti says that:

“I am because you are, you are because I am” (Mbiti, 1986:12).

Once again Mbiti reminds us that it takes the whole village to raise a child. It is clear that any one that is living in this world has a sense of belonging, especially in an African village. Their understanding includes even those who have died. Africans believe that they are with God, and thus have to be respected. The church cannot reach what they intend to be without a pastor. So he/she must not be rejected by the church. The pastor needs the support that is coming from the church.

The Christian family must change the ideology of understanding a young pastor as someone who can not be listened to because he/she is perceived to be immature. The

reason behind this is that the church must present their spiritual leaders with respect.

Matthew says:

“You are the light of the world — like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden” (Mt. 5: 14).

This means the world is learning from the church. The church is leading and must change the community’s view about young pastors. To change the community the church must be able to ask itself critical questions about the way young pastors are treated in the church. Mugambi indicates that:

“Culture is not static, it can be changed” (Mugambi, 1997:14).

I concur with Mugambi because culture is dynamic; it keeps on changing. Without doing that the young pastors in Africa will remain isolated and ineffective. With regard to this problem we need to change all aspects that have become so harmful and traumatizing to the young African pastors. This will help them when they go to the community and the Christian community that has an influence and impact on people. Challenging this concept of culture will help people deal with new issues that are developing in the twenty first century. It will finally become a blessing to the community and the church.

6.2. The things that author learned in this research

This thesis has been extremely meaningful to me as a young pastor who has just entered ministry, because it shows the way African culture prohibits young ministers.

Coming with a pastoral method was not only helpful to me but to African adults, and the culture that prevent young ones to exercise their ministry fully. The researcher learned that in the African context, approach as you work with others is important because it determines whether the young pastor will make it or not. In other words, cultural awareness is key when working with people. It requires pastoral skills for a young pastor to work within the African communities and the church. Sensitivity is also another factor that will help in ministry. One should not come with the spirit of being educated, servant hood is important too.

This study of research helped the author to reach the understanding that to work with old African people is not that easy, but connecting with them in spite of frustration is important. There are a lot of challenges, and one need to slowly enter into their culture, and not change things quickly. This requires perseverance even if there is rejection by the old people.

The researcher learned that God is the one who call people to His church, in order to be a pastor. In other words, it is God who calls young person into ministry. All it requires is for me to listen to him, and submit myself to his authority. Through this way one will be able to be a Shepherd

6.3 Conclusion

It is important to educate the church and the community about cultural blockages that young pastors have to face in the ministry. It is also important that elderly and experienced pastors should help equip young pastors so that they are able to care for others. The last part has to do with areas of further research, Culture need to be explored as another way of opening therapeutic dialogue. It is important to note that young pastors need to humble themselves, learn fro members of congregation as well. Dialogue in minister is important; it leads people to develop trust which will open doors of working together.

One of the topics of research is how the church could prepare young pastors before they are placed in difficult congregations. The other is how to deal with traditional leaders who own the church as theirs.

6.4. Appendixes

6.4 .1. Appendix A

Questionnaires

The researcher used the qualitative method to collect information that helped him to research the problem. The respondents were young African pastors who had been traumatized by African culture when they were doing pastoral counselling.

The questions asked were based on the experiences they had when approaching the ministry. The following questions were asked to several young ministers, as a way of getting to the root of the problems they were facing in ministry.

- What difficulties have you encountered as a young minister with regards to counselling adults?
- Are you able to freely counsel adult African males in your community; if yes/no give reasons?
- Do you still love your pastoral duties after finding yourself being traumatized by your culture?
- What role will you play in challenging cultural issues that make it difficult for you to do counselling?

- How would you empower other young ministers who are struggling in this area?
- Do you have any other suggestions to contribute to pastoral care?

These and other questions were asked during this research study when debating with co-researchers (see in verbatim stories in Chapter 4).

6.4.2. APPENDIX B

THE TRAUMATIC IMPACT IMPOSED BY AFRICAN CULTURE ON YOUNG MINISTERS

The responses come from my understanding of problems experienced by young pastors. I

Also experienced them because I fall under that category.

Consent form for the respondents

Elia has explained the purpose of an interview between me and him on the above research topic. I understand that his findings are to be used for his research for a Masters in Practical Theology. I also understand that I am free to ask for any question clarity at any stage of the interview.

DECLARATION PART

I know and understand that:

- All personal information shared by the author will remain purely confidential throughout this research. Even after the whole work has been completed. The author will explain in detail about this part of the declaration. I will also make them aware of the following issues:
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and that no payment or compensation for participation should be expected.

- I am fully aware and allow him that my contributions may be used in the research.
- I am also aware that the promoter will read and know the information that I
Contributed are confidential, especially the names of those involve as co-researchers.
Who help in sharing their information and struggles in the ministry the following
statements will further help them to terminate if they so wish because of difficulties
they encounter when being interviewed.
- I am also free to terminate the interview due to any reason in the process.
- I am willing to share my experiences as well as my views in this research.
- I also permit my pseudonym to be used in this research or in any other publications
from the information I will share in the interview for academic purpose.

Name (pseudonyms) used (Murendeni and Dakalo) in stories.

Signature of the participants: 1.....

Date:.....

Signature of the researcher:

Date:

Date of the interviews: 1.....

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