

The Traumatic experience that causes women wearing black garments to be excluded from the body of Christ :

A challenge to Pastoral Care

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree
in Master in Trauma Counselling has not previously been submitted by me for a
degree at this or any other University that is my own work in design and execution and
tha all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged

SIGNED : _____

DATE : _____

Summary

My focus on this research is based on the Black African widows who find difficulties, in action and rejection from the Church after the death of their partners. I am aware that the subject had been dealt with in the past by the late **Rev T.B.S.Mnisi** and expresses her point of departure from the woman perspective. I'm coming from the background where these practices have affected me and challenged my ministry

As an African minister experiences had clouded our behavior and judgment especially to issues that are violent, abusive and harmful to women. I'm fully aware that being a product of patriarchal structure raises eyebrows, but it will help others to take care of widows in such a way that they are included in the community. The way the widows are treated from the church, raises questions that challenges the Pastoral care. The challenges lie on whether the cloth causes people to be stigmatized and isolated.

Therefore the findings of the research will enable the church and Pastoral caregivers to undo the wrongs that were done in the past and continue in the present. The author will use Sesotho influence to help in the method of doing Pastoral care in the Swazi context.



Acknowledgement

All thanks and Glory be to God who has continued to sustain me and my family during this research.

Big thanks to Prof M.J.Masango for being more than a supervisor to me. Your guidance, advice and also journeying with me the entire programme and made me realize that knowledge is something to share about in order to bring about change and healing in people's life. Also showing me that ministry is not about individual ministry but caring for those who are oppressed within the Body of Christ –especially Widows. I thank God for the Father in you.

Thanks to Christina my darling, companion, friend and lover for believing in me. God has been with us for the past ten years of our marriage and will continue to carry us through.

Your encouragement and sharing your thoughts have made this research successful. I love you so much and will continue to cherish our love till death do us apart.

Thanks to be my mother who became a widow, and help me to embark on this research. To my brothers and sisters for helping me during this time of study. I dedicate this research to Richard.Kamohelo.Matsaneng (father). Since his passing life has not been easy especially when we look back where we come from as the family. You have made me find my identity in an African praise song that says “ke setloholo sa Tlokweng” (meaning I am a grandchild of Tlokweng) *“Ke motlokoa motho oa mma-bosielo, ea anang potlwa kgomo e tshitjha madibola koena. E dibotse koena lehaheng, mosikong o moholo thabeng ea ha Lidingoana”*.

Lastly, to my friends and colleagues (Masters Class) in ministry who shape my theological thinking tank, and all their debates that had help me put this research together.

I love you all guys.

Aupa. Stephen. Matsaneng

PREFACE

The author will explain the following terminology in the glossary but also to indicate that there are three hypotheses emerging from the research. The author's mother is the widow to six children, and the author is a minister of the **Methodist Church of Southern Africa** stationed at **Kaboweni**. The author's mother experienced the traumatic ordeal, when in the midst of suffering the church turn its back on her.

They used to be close to her and even pay her visit, but after the death of my father when my mother graduated from wearing black garments things changes. They excluded her from their company and would her whenever she wants to be with them. Then one day when the author was conducting the Holy Communion service he noticed that everyone has celebrated the communion except a woman who was wearing black garments who was sitting alone .The author approached her and during the movement the members look at him with dismay.

- Therefore the questions emerges on my mind that raises the three hypothesis in which for the purpose of the research I will focused on only one of the following :-

- **The first hypothesis it is that, maybe the author has the unfinished business especially on what happened to her mother during her mourning times hence this research.**
- **The second hypothesis is all about a minister who is caught up in a cultural battle, where he had to choose between member's voice and a widow.**
- **The last hypothesis is the stigma which widows experiences during the mourning process and how the church treated them.**

The author has decided to do the research on the treatment of the widows who suffer within the church, but however acknowledges that the hypothesis raised will be left for whoever wants to do the research.

The author raised questions, which will be dealt with in the problem statement, and questions that challenge Pastoral care. The author therefore will concentrate on the male in the ministry.

Problem Statement

In life there are questions that affect people; especially those who are working with help seekers or the members of the church. Let me share this of them:

- **What is wrong have I done in offering pastoral care to the widow?**
- **What are the cultural issues involved?**

- **Is the church able to deal with the culture and the customary issues?**
- **How does a pastor, care for the widows especially against the culture?**

After asking myself these questions; it challenges me to create the pastoral model that sensitized the needs of woman in black. I realized that the customary issues prohibited pastoral care services. The author will use the qualitative analysis so that at the end of the research he can conclude by sharing whether the problem of widows is the pastoral care problem or cultural issue.

The question emerges from the cultural background such as **“Death is in the pot”**

The author will therefore interview the widows about the issue of black mourning clothes, and other clergy on how to deal with the problem pastorally. (See Appendix A)

Aims and Objectives

The study is aiming at enabling the widows to partake freely in the church in spite of their state of black clothes. The study also aimed at empowering the pastors to be true to the Scriptures and to challenge the culture that oppresses and demoralizes others. Paul reminds us about the unity within the church **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”(Gal 3:28)** The

study is aimed at helping the widows in order to deal with grieving process meanwhile the church can pastorally care for them. Finally, it seeks to develop the methodology that will capacitate the ministers to care for people in the context of cultural barriers.

Research Gap

How much work has been done in this area?

The late Rev T.B.S.Mnisi who journeyed with us did some work on the process of mourning focusing on African women. Her focus was on the traumatic experiences of widows tormented by negative idioms coming from men which oppressed them and lowered their status in second class citizen. Her contribution comes from the personal experience through her journey as the minister and a woman. Therefore, my point of departure will be to challenge these issues not only as a pastor, but also as a man. The author will use qualitative analysis and the questionnaires in order to deal with widows' issue. Therefore in answering these questions the author will introduce the methodology that will empower the caregiver to be effective in dealing with this kind of trauma.

Methodology

The author will use the methodology of **Gerkin** of shepherding as redefining the role of Pastoral care. The method involves the car-

rying for the flock and becoming a good shepherd. The author agreed with the statement and point out that **Ubuntu**¹ is not just a concept but also a way of living. The process looks far beyond a human description Therefore shepherding works in parallel with the process of **Ubuntu** that embraces the human dignity. The author is also going to use the model of **Wimberly** of claiming God and reclaiming dignity. The study will seek to restore the broken image of God. The author has indicated that the qualitative methods and interviews will be used in the research. In the next chapter the author will explain the method used.

Preliminary conclusion:

It is very important to know how the author approaches the problem and how on the other hand method he uses that may enable others to help them address their situations. The center of the research is to apply the Pastoral care using **Gerkin** as the foundation In the next chapter the author will outline the table of contents and the chapters.

¹**Ubuntu** is an African expression that means more than you're caring and loving (humanity).



ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE

1. The introduction 1

CHAPTER TWO

2. Methodology

CHAPTER THREE

- 3.1. African Culture and rituals
3.2. Black mourning garments

CHAPTER FOUR

- 4.1. Bereavement
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CHAPTER SIX

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mourning garment is the clothing mainly designed during the process of mourning after the funeral .The color of the garment is black/blue and sometimes varies depending on the ethnic group. The processes entail the twelve months cycle of wearing the black clothes, silence, isolation and even a punishment in name of culture.

The end of the process is done normally conducted during winter season, reason being that it is dry, cold and night is long while the day is short nothing is alive and it signifies a way of taking away death and when spring comes, new life begins . The women who are wearing black garment are restricted through the traditional laws that confined them to certain public places, which includes the Church.

They are not allowed to shake hands with other people The author is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Af-



rica, a southern -sotho who was born and raised at Sebokeng in Vaal Triangle. My mother became a widow when my father passed on, on the 08th May 2005. She graduated to wear the black garment which changed her lifestyle, and the whole process traumatized her, because of suspicious thoughts that develop among those who were not mourning, and some of her friends started isolating and rejecting her.

She couldn't attend the church, but had to avoid mixing with many people, and had to seat at the back when attending church. Some of the people will say "o sefifing" which means that she is mourning (bad luck). For the author there is no problem with the process, but the black cloth that changes people's mentality, and traumatized them causes concern and pastoral care response. Therefore the author will investigate whether the garments are the instruments of oppression.

Through these experiences of his mother the author has also experienced the similar fate during the Eucharist service that causes him to raises questions of concerns about mourning. The woman in black was sitting at the back and waiting for all people to finish celebrating the communion. After that, she made her way to com-

munion table after everyone has been served. The author took an initiative that was seen as an offence according to the reaction from the members of the congregation.

The author finds himself in a dilemma of having to address both members and the woman who were for the culture. He began to raise questions that inspired him to do the research about the subject. **Mosala** and **Tlhagale** says They had also lay down certain codes of conduct especially for women, being concerned about their morality, about their dress, reminding them of their roots in Eve, and instruction of Paul to be submissive and obedient. (**Mosala & Tlhagale; 1986:172**) I fully agree with **Mosala** by saying that the church need to redefine its theology and its pastoral role towards women; especially the way it cares for widows.

One Sunday during the Holy Communion service as usual the proclamation of the Gospel and proceed with the distribution of the elements (sacrament and wine). Everybody received the elements except the woman who was wearing the black garment sitting at the back alone. The author went to her and everyone look suspicious as he offered her the sacrament. There was a silence and the author began to raise questions that challenge the Pastoral care within the Body of Christ:



1. **What offence did I commit to the members of the church by serving the widow communion first?**
2. **Why this woman was isolated from the Body?**
3. **Is it her fault to wear black garments?**
4. **What issues are other members of the Body afraid of?**
5. **What influence does the culture have on the Body of Christ?**
6. **What must be the role of the Church and the Caregiver during the mourning process?**

The author had to investigate whether the subject is a community-cultural based usage, and to ask why this change of attitude? The black garments to me will seem to be a mechanism that facilitates oppression, isolation and a symbol of bad luck. Therefore, the author had to expatiate whether the garments or the process of mourning is a curse? **The person is divine, sacred, weird, holy and possess all the qualities of Divinity (Setiloane;1986:13)** The author agrees with **Setiloane** by articulating that a person does not become an island but part of the community. The question might be how are the garments causing trauma and exclusion within the

community? The Africans are very symbolic and relates very well with nature.

The colors and everything that is being possessed by nature to them it has its origin and meaning. The color “black” had its connotation that is associates with “**bad omen**”, “**misfortune**”, as well as being **unclean**. The questions can be raised about the origin of this oppressive tradition since it is handed down to the later generation. Therefore the role of the Pastoral care is to help redefined the tradition that will be embraced by the community.

The attire (**black**) stigmatizes the one who wears it, because people especially **Africans** forget the personhood and focus on the attire which causes them to isolate the person. The mourning process exposes young and middle aged widows to vulnerability of the community. It also raises several questions. What does it mean to be the child of God? **Wimberley** defined a child of God as being a part of a caring community. Therefore being part would mean belonging to the body as well as being treated with respect. Death in an African setting is the process or time of silence, respect and fasting .It is also a celebration of the one departing and joining those who have departed this world and now called ancestors.

A caring needs the wisdoms of different generations, interacting in full participation so that meaning be continually transformed and transmitted to other(Wimberly;2003:41).The strong warning is given to the church especially regarding the widows . **“Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan .If you do and they cry out to me, I will hear their cry.”(Exodus22:22)**

Therefore for the widow to have a sense of belonging and to partake in the house of the Lord, we will need to make self – introspection about where does the church place widows .The author wrestle with some questions: - **Is the back seat in the church a place for the widows during the Holy Communion service?** What is important between the soul and black attire, if the church is all about saving soul and caring for broken hearted?

The author challenges the church by referring to White’s response about the role of the church towards the bereaved. “The role of other Christians before and after the funeral is to make visible by their presence the environment of love that encompasses the bereaved. **(White; 1990:295)**The church must be supportive and caring for the bereaved.

The black attire stigmatized the women particularly the ones who are forced to wear it and the ones the family elders want to take

advantage of, especially if it involves wealth. Therefore the work of Pastoral care will be to capacitate the church about caring and supporting.

In the next chapter the author will use the methodology of **Gerkin** to address the questions that challenges the Pastoral Care. This issue has caused major problem to clergy conducting their pastoral duties. People do not want a widow to be served first.

Preliminary Conclusion:

The author in chapter 1 introduced the subject research and the highlights. In the next chapter he introduces the methodology and the method that will be helpful to do an effective Pastoral care.

GLOSSARY:

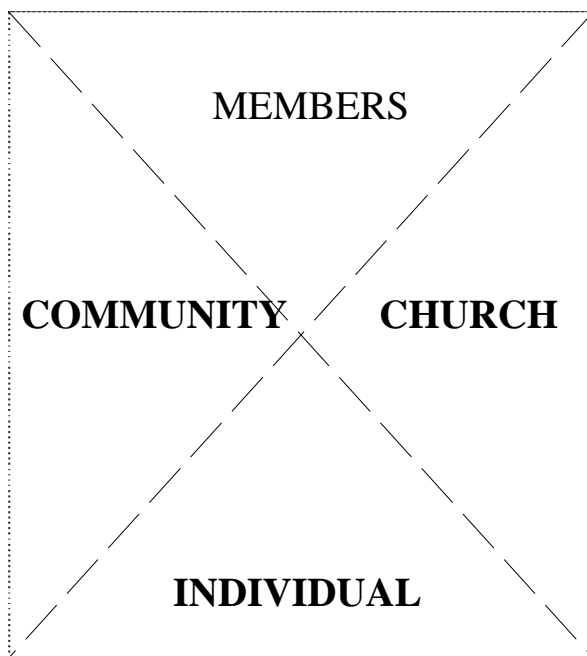
- ***Mourning garments:*** the black clothing worn by widows to the period of twelve months. The clothing varies depending on the tribe, but normally the preferred color is black or blue.
- ***Sefifi:*** it is a Sesotho word that denotes “mourning process”, and also refers to as the “dark days”, or “curse”.
- ***Widow:*** a woman who has lost her husband by death and not married again. In the next chapter the author will focus on the methodology and what method can be used to do an effective Pastoral care.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

In this **Chapter** the author **will** use **Gerkin** as the basis of shaping the model that will address the problems facing the widows and the church.

Figure 1



In the above-mentioned diagram the author is trying to indicate that in the African context the equation of mechanism start with:

INDIVIDUAL + MEMBERS = COMMUNITY + CHURCH

The equation as it stands; represent a modern civilized way of beginning to focus on an individual who grows within the ranks of community.

To belong to the community is to share in a life of ritual, prayer and action that continually reminds the members of a community who they are and who they are to be in the world. (Gerkin; 1997:110) .I totally agree with **Gerkin**, and continues to say that it is important for a person to belong to a community or tribe, but to challenge the dictatorship of the society is another issue.

Therefore in this chapter the author will show what method can be used to address the widow issue. There is any need to ask questions about what will the above structure help in addressing the pastoral care of the widows. We need to remember that a person was created in an image of God (**Gen 1:26**).

Therefore the treatment of the widows within the community and the church is determined by our attitude, egocentric and selfishness.

Gerkin challenges us to be the good shepherds who cared for their flock which also demonstrate caring, loving and compassion towards

others. The author will use **Gerkin's** method of as a model of caring for widows.

But in the next chapter the author will try to look at how the broken image of God can be restored. The question to ask is what it means to be an image of God and possessing the likeness of the creator? After the author has asked himself these questions he imagine serving the Communion and to instruct his mother to sit at the back row.

It is important to note that we cannot or have powers to question the authority of God. By isolating the widow, we then begin to be disobedient to His Will. The church is broken from that covenant bond, because of the sinful ways.

The author has mentioned the concept of Ubuntu as embracing the model of Gerkin's shepherding. **'Ubuntu can therefore be defined as a comprehensive ancient African world view based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family'**(Broodryk;2002:13-14).Because Ubuntu is not just word of mouth but a way of living in a African context.Broodryk definition clearly encompassess shep-

herding model because there is no way one can do Pastoral care without Ubuntu. When Gerkin quote John 10 “ I am a good shepherd”. The good shepherd in an African setting is defined as the caring someone who sacrifice his time for the flock .It is also respond of trustworthiness,

The incident of putting a widow at the back question the church morally whether it conforms to its norms and values. Therefore the author argues that when we apply the Gerkin’s method these questions need to reflect .What is it that the woman has done to deserve to be treated this way? Is it her fault to lose a partner? Where is the sense of caring when people are excluded because of their situation?

Broodryk continues to offer this from the summary of (Koka, 2002:7) that Ubuntu is from different sources is non racial philosophy or value system through which all people are regarded and treated as human beings....the art of being human. Therefore the act of exclusion is ungodly, barbaric and out of the boundaries of what Ubuntu is all about.

Preliminary Conclusion:

The author asks himself questions whether **Gerkin** is relevant for the research and also what other resources can be helpful. **Gerkin** in his book Introduction to **Pastoral Care** outlined the method of

doing **Pastoral care**. Although, he come from the Western cultural background even the method has that influence.

Therefore his method needed the supplement of other resources especially when dealing with the African context. **Waruta** and **Kinoti** with their methods from the Pastoral care in African Christianity. It will enable the author to consolidate the work of both **Gerkin** and **Waruta**.in which they look at the context of the Africans.

But of course, since the research is focusing on the trauma which the widows are experiencing during their mourning time. They look at the background and the culture as the base .Since the trauma affects them physically and spiritually, therefore these two aspects determine the picture of God .**Wimberly** had an idea on Claiming God reclaiming dignity. Therefore in the next chapter the author will focus on the broken image and its restoration.

2.2. BROKEN IMAGE OF GOD

Gen 1:26 “Then God said Let us make man in our image and in our likeness. The story that reconnect us and the nature about how things came to being, but at the end the question has not been answered.

a) What is an “image”?

The term “**image**” denotes a material representation, normally of a deity (**New Bible Dictionary**). Image: representative of object, figure of saint or divinity, reputation or persona of person (**Oxford Dictionary**). Therefore for the purpose of the research the author focus on the figure of saint or divinity. Possessing power the uniqueness, superior over animals and nature.

‘African understanding views the person (motho) as dynamic The physical source of this dynamism is the blood. This dynamism expresses itself in the form of “seriti” (image)’ (Setiloane; 1986:16). For personhood to be identified he/she must exist among others. He/She become part of the community.

The story of creation in **Gen 1&2** indicates that there was peace and harmony till in **Chapter 3** where Human beings broke that image and likeness of God. ‘Being a human means being engaged and value member of a caring community that makes contributions to the growth of both self and others in relation’ (**Wimberly;2003:43**).

The widows just like any ordinary also deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. The person becomes an asset to the community which she belongs to and is expected to be productive. There is a Sesotho saying: “**Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang**”. It means a person is a person because of others.

Therefore also force of nature does contribute in destroying the image of God. The unemployment, **HIV/AIDS**, crime, accidents and even suicide. The widows are God’s image and the world must not define them according to the clothes they wear. The church represent the image of God and because widows are that part of image they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Preliminary Conclusion:

The widows also possess the image and the likeness of God, so they deserve a fair treatment just like everyone. To define a person according to the state of his/her personality is wrong and need to be corrected. If the church was called to be caring community, she has to put the interest of those in need first.

Gerkin viewed the Pastoral care with the pattern Jesus modeled as good shepherd to his flock. Caring according to him is a sacrifice and willing to give up your life. Therefore this is a challenge to Pastors who are to risk their status to the path of Jesus. The widows are weak, vulnerable, and even traumatized by the death of their loved ones.

The image of a person can be broken by other members of the community. Society can also create clones to try to imitate creation of God, but their creations turns nasty. The work of the Pastoral care is to bandage those emotional and spiritual wounds. It is also to impart the culture of acceptance without any prejudice. Matthew reminds us about the great commission (**Mt 28:18-20**)

Jesus commanded the disciples to be witness to the world. Pastoral care is one of the elements of the commission.

Therefore the images of God are important and declared perfect by God and have no doubt to say widows are perfect as much as we are. The church has to learn to live with reality that widows deserve the Kingdom of God and also to be the children of God. In the next chapter we will look at how that broken images can be restored, it might not be restored to its original state but intention to return it to its natural state.

The role of the Pastoral care is to help the widow and the community mend the broken relationship. The image is not broken, but damaged, therefore the work of the Pastoral care is pick up the pieces and paste it back. The church has to undo all the bad things using the name of Jesus Christ to further their interest.

Furthermore to conclude that there is a misconception that image is everything which turns people to see others as the objects. Mbiti anticipates that kingship is more than a blood. It draws us back to treat each other like family.

2.3. HOW CAN WE RESTORE THAT BROKEN IMAGE OF GOD?

Ortega will help us restore those widows within the community, which **Gerkin** fall short by concentrating on shepherding. The church is seen as the community of women, children and men who believe in God the creator and in mind the God's mission for the Church. The caring community has to be grounded in a spiritual or faith and tradition (**Wimberly; 2003:41**). The author agrees with Wimberly that the three component produces human intergrity.

But the author also agree with **Ortega** but continues to say that if the church ceased to become caring community it is useless to call themselves a church. The church has to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ and to keep define the word "community", group of people living in one place or having same religion, ethnic origin .

To be a human being means to belong to particular community. The widows form part of the community which needs support and caring. The caring community has to put the needs of others before

theirs. The caring community has to embark on promoting peace and reconciliation.

Preliminary Conclusion:

Wimberly outlined the task of Pastoral care being to help internalize conversations that enable us to grow into the whole persons with the capacity to commit ourselves to the growth of others and of community (**Wimberly; 2003:121**). The restoration of image will be that the body has to be part of journeying with the widows in an intention to grow within the community.

He continues to say that Pastoral care aim at helping people to work through internalized recruitment into negative identities fostered by a market-driven economy, the commodification of values of human worth, and the disconfirming values associated with racism and justice (**Wimberly; 2003:121**).

The work of the Pastoral care is to assist person to restore his/her identity. The task of Pastoral care is to rekindle the extinguished hope that is lost as the result of trauma and pain. The most important to accept them and support with the intention of healing.

The support is entailed into two dimension material, comforting and spiritual moral support. The church must teach its members that it is important to be there for one another as the caring community. **‘A culture that is alive and open to challenges equally bears witness to the growing spirit of freedom from superstitions beliefs that hold the mind under their sway.’(Tlhagale; 1998:16)**

Tlhagale caution us that the culture must be flexible and liberal. Culture must be challenged and be able to accommodate everybody. As I indicated before the culture is a way of life. The point that needs to be looked at is the collapsing of morality which has decayed our society. It has made people forget the sense of recognizing others as the human beings. It is like an uncureable cancer that spread from one angle to another.

In the next chapter I will deal with the issue of culture and how it oppresses widows, especially those wearing mourning garments.

CHAPTER 3

AFRICAN CULTURE AND RITUALS

The word “**culture**” means customs and civilization of a particular time or people. In an African context culture is more like a heritage, and it is passed from one generation to another generation. Then the word “**ritual**”, means the procedure regularly followed, it can be either religious or solemn ceremony.

The **elder** becomes chief custodian of culture in an African village. This is evident even when there is a funeral; everything had to be stationary until the arrival of an elder. In other words, nothing cannot be done until an elder blessed it. He is supposed to care for widows who are isolated and rejected by the community.

The culture therefore serves as the identity of a particular clan or people within the community. The church follows doctrine which is dictated by the culture that suits their context. During the mourning process, there are certain common regulations with regard to rituals. The mourning process entails many practices such as to restricted women from the public till the end of the process. When death strikes, there are certain expectation placed on the widows for example the widows are expected to abstain from visi-

tation, speaking in a loud voice (shouting). According to **Paddington's** definition culture of the people is the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs.

Malinowski's definition culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge beliefs, art, laws, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by person as a member of society (Ayisi; 1972:1). The question is how does **Paddington** and **Malinowski** help in addressing the handling of the widows within the church.

The author's frustration is the fact that both definitions show the stagnance of the process which is not interchangeable. In Africa the people who hold the keys to liberation are the elder's who are the custodians of the acclaimed culture. **'The widow's conduct during both her husband's lifetime and after his death, determines whether or not her in-laws will bestow the widowhood status on her.'** (Kachere text; 2002:60) If the behavior within the community is that of abusive and tormenting, therefore the church will also operate on the same level. In many cases the church blesses the culture, instead of challenging it.

The author's argument is that no matter civilization has change the cause of time, the culture dictates the behavior of the community how they live and relate to the church. Therefore to be caregiver in a complex context where people hide under the culture and use it as a defense mechanism.

Gerkin modeled a model that enables a **Pastor** to redefine his pastoral role (Shepherd model). The pastor in an African context are respected and honored; hence the liberation of the women and children depends on their voices. He reiterates that following the footsteps of Jesus Christ (**John 10:1**), it is the good shepherd model.

The Pastoral care has to look after the widows, children, poor and oppressed, since **Gerkin** had help us to redefine our roles as pastors. If the time can have an influence in people's lives, therefore it can help to revolutionize the culture. The culture is designed to be the source of identification of a particular nation, so that we could distinct the difference.

Preliminary Conclusion

Culture is very important because it defines the type of community and their way of living. It will be wrong for Christ to let culture suffocate or dominate. The church is the place where people of different diversities met with none common goal to establish the kingdom of God here on earth.

The law of God must be the principle of his community and should handle itself. Culture is process that is subjected to change. The exmple is a democratic process that invidividual exercizes his/her rights free without prejudice. The need to be revised and revisited every time because it might lose its value and unique-ness. Culture must be part of pillars of morality. It must not shape us to be what we are, but what we should be.

Culture encompasses the rites ,rituals and symbols.The Oxford dictionary defines the word ‘rites’,as the religious ceremony or observance.The ritual is the prescribed order or a procedure regularly followed.The symbol mean a thing,object,idea and process representing something.

In the next chapter the author will focus on how the culture can be reconcile with Christianity

The culture is encompasses the rites, rituals and symbols. The word “**rites**” oxford dictionary defines it as religious ceremony or observance The **ritual** is the prescribe order or a procedure regularly followed. The **symbols** mean a thing, object, idea, and process representing something.

The wearing of the Black garments is the ritual which is the part of the culture. There is a belief in an African context that the person who is in the process of mourning must be left alone and not be touched and exchange hands with others. There is a fear that when touching the person who mourns might result in a bad omen (**isinyama**) and need cleansing.

Some even believe that by touching the widow they invite death to the doorstep. Some fear the usage of muti on the widows until the end of process. The members of the church maybe they reacted that way because of the bad odour from the muti. The impact of the culture is unquestionable and oppressive.

Because the ritual affect the members of the community and the practice becomes a rite of passage meaning that it had to be observed. Because the widows are the subjects of the culture whether they like it or not. The church members because they are the custodian of such rituals. But Mbiti defers with the myth in the changing context. Africans are a person who values colours like black is colour of elements like animals to be sacrifice for certain rituals. (**Mbiti; 1970:134**)

I believe that the chosen colour has nothing with the personality of a widow but an indication of her process which calls for respect and support. Therefore the base of argument must be on the behavior not clothing. As the matter of fact the colour black in an African settings process of the dark cloud that has befallen and the time of sorrow and pain. The lost of the member of the family as the result of the death.

In most cases women feel threatened that the widow will snatch their husbands so they will cause mockery and insults even go to an extend of spreading rumours about the widows.

In the next section the author will focus on what is called inculturation where culture and Christianity can find a common ground.

3.2. How can we reconcile the culture and the Christianity?

‘There is a traditional proverb that says **The cooking pots of many are broken** which refers to **situations of changing customs and traditions in a period of transition**’.(Healey;1996:37)The author uses this proverb to challenge culture with regard to the present dispensation where women’s rights are respected according to the laws which govern democracy in Republic of South Africa.

The culture has set a certain standards of living and behavior within the community.’ **Human beings, in order to live normal lives in reasonable peace must behave in prescribed ways.**’(Ayisi; 1972:2)Both Culture and Christianity confine people to behave in particular way, but my question will always be the criteria used whether is masculine or oppressive.

The danger of these practices is that it drives people to be oppressors and chauvinism. By chauvinism the meant to have loyalty on

something. Therefore these beliefs are enforced and there is no essence of peace and harmony. Women and children are objects of these traditions and beliefs.

If Jesus Christ is the **Emmanuel (Prince of peace)**, what more about those who followed him and continues to oppress others. The Law rule stipulates that in **Exodus 22:22** “**Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan .If you do and they cry to me, I will certainly hear their cry.**” This is evident in our church services in fear of being prohibited from attending the church gatherings and public meetings, widows are uniformed and put in a place where they will be monitored like little children.

They are oppressed and excluded from the daily worship. The culture compelled and confined them to be isolated as the results the backseat becomes their rightful place . The culture had played a role in orchestrating oppression and dispossession of widows.

The experience taught us that culture and Christianity deals with a person, and the change can be brought by the same person. Therefore, the author maintains that culture must help people to define their identity, but Christianity to be a way of life and existence.

The church therefore has to be a place that enables individuals to rediscover their lost identity, this means that both culture and Christianity work hand in hand. The church has to establish the support groups that have a common ground on issues of widowhood.

The young and old women had to be militant about issues affecting them, like for an example women had to stand up and voice out their opinions on issues affecting them. Remember the freedom slogan which was used especially by women during the Apartheid Era. **“You strike women, and then you strike a rock”**. It narrates that touching a woman will awakened the anger of the community The culture affirms morality and respect and this is ethics/Christian values of Christianity and it ought to help liberate those who are experiencing rejection.

If anyone who claims to be a custodian of culture or Christianity and continues to oppresses others literally they act opposite to what they believe in. Christian principles are founded on the basis of love, respect and caring. By creating a conducive environment which both culture and Christianity can reconcile.

The only way to reconcile culture and Christianity is through changing the mind set of people who are stuck in the past and have no back-up plan, I mean to argue without reasoning. For instance, widows are mothers, sisters, daughters who suffered as the results of hierarchy structures, but have no concern of liberating them. Therefore, back-up plan will be to think ahead. To uphold or embracing culture will demand respect, caring and loving.

I don't think originality of culture was meant to oppress, traumatize and even isolate other people. Christianity does not abolish culture but seen as the wheels of vehicle that defines a human being. In the next chapter the author will look at black garments its original, significance and the relevance now. This is what **Oduyoye** has to offer about widowhood and it involves three factors which are:-

1. Surviving a husband attaches negative influences to the widow who may then contaminate others.
2. The spirit of the deceased husband stays with the widow until rites are performed to separate them.

3. A man's soul can rest peacefully only when his spouse has meticulously observed all the rites of widowhood. (**Oduyoye; 1995:15**).

I must also indicate that some members of the family might embark on the procreation of the widow. Therefore; we cannot divorce community and the church. As for the church it supposed to be a place of refuge and be supportive since all people seeks to run to it. Christianity is a form of living and also conforms to certain standard of living.

Ruether argued that oppression in society is never a matter of open force only. It always seeks to become socially incorporated and to operate through modes of cultural condition. (**Frazier; 1975:417**)The fact that most denominations are dominated by male chauvinism that always pushes their agendas at the expenses of the marginalized.

Preliminary Conclusion:

The church need to relook at itself and revisit all what Christ stood for .The church need to be an agent of caring and support. It

should be militant and take a stance against cultural oppression which always uses the church as the base of shooting innocent targets. Ministers must be given a platform of exercising their ministry without hindrance.

The church must be in a position to help widows who suffer as the result of mockery from the in-laws who expects them to weep all the time. The Women in South Africa have been given the rights they deserve, and it will be incorrect if the churches still hold on to the old laws of Apartheid. The church needs to redefine the theology of today and the culture which is practised by the people today. The culture must divorce the masculinity and be inclusive.

Culture that segregates is not culture at all but must be defined by the masses. Maybe it also an argument that needed to be revisited especially when it affects Africans. Culture must liberate Africans. 'The Eucharist is often presented and interpreted as a sacrifice.' (Waruta; 2005:61) If the Eucharist becomes a sacrifice in an African context it is more than privilege because to them when there is assembly of the community it is a great deal. **'Sacrifice is an act of worship'** (Mbiti; 1969:58) The mourning period is all about sacrifice because it begins with death of a partner and the sacrifice the widow has to undergo in the name of love.



‘**Kalilombe** reminds all the Pastors that the caring depends very much on how well the members interact, negotiating carefully and respectfully the common resources available to all’ (**Gibellini; 1994:123**). Therefore if Christianity is way of living then culture will be way in which how to conform to that living. In other words they are intertwined. Eucharist plays an important role in the black context for comforting and supporting. Eucharist is seen as the place that draws near the members to the table of fellowship to share from the same bread.

The eucharist becomes the place of sharing and allows members to share their pains and frustrations.

In the next Section the author will look at the black garments its significant role and how it can stigmatize the women who wear it.

3.3. Black mourning garments

The black garment is understood to be the cloth or dress designed mainly for mourning. They were perceived to be special clothing that symbolizes the loss of loved one through death within a particular family. The widow/widower had to dress this for a whole year while mourning.

The black morning gown had a significant role in the Black context; because of its symbolic and helping others to know what one is going through. **Gerkin** remind us that Pastoral theology has to become the task of maintaining the connections between the varied stories of life and the grounding story of the Christian community. (**Gerkin; 1997:111**)

But the writer still maintains that the connection which is between varied stories of life and Christian community doesn't give ammunition to suppress others. Clothing and garments does not define who we are, but used as the mask that hides our personalities.

Even King David wore mourning clothes for the death of her child (**2 Samuel 12:20**). The wearing of mourning garments is a

transition to another part of life and it also helps people to mourn and deal with death. They become lonely and have a lot of responsibility towards family.

Through the family set-up the widow will have to prove a point to her children and the in-laws. **Clinebell** also agrees with **Gerkin** that the declining of the community support and of corporate rites of passage make it difficult to recover from the grief. (**Clinebell; 1988:220**)

I can therefore, say that the garments must be used as the instruments of reaching out and not of persecution. The clothing has stigma because it defines the personhood of the one who wears it. The research is all about exposing the traumatic experiences and how we deal with it. Firstly, we need to examine why colour is black and the isolation of those who graduated to it.

Marsden defines a '**fatherless**' family to be lacking a person who embodies the expectations, duties and functions usually fulfilled by a father (**Marsden, 1969:4**). The church must then take a role of becoming father to the fatherless.

The children and the women are still seeking answer from God, maybe mother still wondering what will happen with the children. The relatives and the in-laws putting pressure especially regarding how the affairs should be run and controlling with the intention of gaining properties of their son.

The church also contributes through isolation and defining rules of behavior in the house the Lord. The usage of the Scripture to justify their actions. The example is when Paul in 1Tim2:12 made the statement that turn out to be oppressive. It made women feel inferior and silenced. By abusing powers to oppress the disadvantage and the marginalized. The church therefore has to help widows and children to work through their grief.

The tradition forced widows to wear black garments designed; especially that she supposes to wake up early in the morning to wash the cloth which will be used. It is the same cloth that she will use to go the church. In an African setting the colour black is be associate with bad omen (**isinyama**), and the Christian understanding black symbolizes darkness or unclean.

‘Given the mourning customs themselves were in a state of transition by the middle of the fifteen century seemingly small modifications of clothing were perceived as a double violation; they deformed custom, on the other hand, and challenged women passive acceptance of a prescribed cultural role on the other hand’(Strocchia;1992:176).

The widows have a say or a choice of a designed material that should be worn by her, after all the dress is at the heart of a woman. The society hiding under patriarch structure should stop defining clothing for women without consulting them. The church must be in position of defending the poor, women and children.

The church represents the body in which all the members are suppose to become the healing community. God has ordained that the body must, give respect to the inferior member. There must be no dissension within the body, but the members must have the same care for one another.

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it (**1 Cor 12:24-27**). The role of

the elements used in the church worship communion, prayers and fasting calls for the totality in the body and express it in a daily life and to recognized God's will and the importance of God's commitment to care for people and creation (**WCC; 1997:78**)

The question that always pops in the author's mind is that what is the meaning of the widow? 'A widow is a woman who has lost a husband by death, has not remarried, and has thereby acquired certain legal rights of inheritance (for her husband's estate).

The Hebrew word for "**widow**"; "**almanah**" has its root the word "**alem**", "**unable to speak**" which refers to a widow as a helpless or exposed to oppression and harsh treatment"(Thurston;1989:9)

The widows are classified with the silent and the oppressed. The role of the church therefore is to enable the widows to voice up their opinions.

It also has empowered the church to know more about their situation, and be willing to suffer with them. The Pastoral care has to challenge issues that affect the women in particular.

The church has to reshape and reconstructs the theology of acceptance and caring. The communion is a climax of what community of caring is all about.

Preliminary Conclusion:

Therefore I can conclude to say as part of the tradition mourning garments are part of heritage. Mourning is normal way of showing sorrows some dance while others wore torn clothes. Weeping also is part of mourning .There is nothing wrong with the black garments and it is not something new.

But the segregation was born in the church; it will be wise to repent from the sin of isolation. **“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”(Acts 10:15)**Luke reminds us that we need to learn to respect and love every creature of God. The church must be helpful towards the widows during their mourning process.

The process of mourning it is discomfort and traumatic, therefore what the church can do is to offer support and prayers. The church should stop using clothing as the scapegoat .Pastoral care therefore called the church to follow the paths of Jesus Christ. The church as the healing community has to reach out to the widows.

‘The church should participate in the conscious raising processes that highlights and brings to the fore the shameful practice that render women vulnerable and incapacitated’ (**Waruta; 2005:150**).

Waruta points to us that the church had to engage to the dialogue which will open those closed doors that do not even permit challenges.

The church needs to be vigilant and militant especially to those who are oppressed, poor and marginalized.

In the next chapter the author will focus on the process of the bereavement in the black context.

CHAPTER 4

1. BEREAVEMENT

Bereavement is the universal human crisis, striking everyone sooner or later. (Clinebell; 1988:218) According to Clinebell the bereavement is a ticking bomb. People have different ways of dealing with their grief; some abstain from the group of people. There are those who rather stay in the darkness to deal with pain or loss.

There are others who don't eat, meanwhile others wears clothing that shows their grief. In an African setup a grief is done in a group. There is a Sotho saying: "**Di llela moswaneng**," which translates that when there is death in a family everyone assembles to same point where one family member has been lost. Gerkin viewed Pastoral Care as the way of communication.

Ministers are supposed to share their skills to be the instruments of communication. Although Gerkin is coming from the white tradition that believes from the existentialism. Death in a black context means a great deal, because, it doesn't become individual but a communal thing. Clinebell continues to say that grief is involved

in all significant changes, losses, and life transitions, not just in the death of a loved person. Therefore the widows had to deal with the loss, welfare of the children and answering to the in-laws. The loss of a partner is like a disjoint of a chain, because a woman had to adjust to the new setting.

The life changes in terms of single parenthood, meaning that a woman has to raise the children on her own. The question can be asked how? That were the part of pastoral care must come to the rescue, and it has to help widows to deal with their loss. **Loewinsohn** articulates symptoms of trauma that faces the widows as a:

1. Shock.
2. Disbelief.
3. Relief.
4. Guilt.
5. The Funeral.

1.Shock is a sudden and disturbing emotional effect (**Oxford dictionary**).The person who is in this state known to do extraordinary things .**Wimberley** then will help us to pastor to the wi-

dow when it is reconnected the lost image of God and be able claim their dignity. The disbelief state is a position of not believing what has happened. The two states actually intertwine and it takes long to be healed.

The state of relief depends on the state of marriages. Sometimes when the husband was troublesome and at the time of his death the widow will feel a sigh of relief. The other instances is of the husband who suffered from the terminal illness and the family did their efforts to help but in the end that's where they feel death is a relief. The guilt part is when a widow starts feeling guilty about the death of her partner.

The same guilt Jesus felt during the death of their brother Lazarus (**Jn 11:21**) "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died". Wilcox has this to say about what is the meaning of "bereavement", is the formal status in which individuals either have or have not legitimate occupancy. (**Wilcox 1981:179**)

I fully agree with Wilcox when she reminds us that in an African context the family operate as a unit. The decision of the family rests upon the elders.

Preliminary Conclusion:

Although the customs possess such power to overrule life of others, it also has value the interest of the community and respect the law of the creator (God) which entitles everybody to have a right to live freely.. The Pastoral care role as Gerkin's method narrates that a shepherd cares for the flock. **'He reiterates that Pastoral care entails the thoughtful reinterpretation of the tradition that shapes Christian identity as that tradition is brought into dialogical relationship with contemporary culture and its impact on the community of Christians as well as its individual members.'**(Gerkin; 1997:118)He simply means that Pastoral care has to restore that value which was lost during the transitional era.

In the next Section the author will look at the sacrament and its role in the life of the widows

4.2. HOLY COMMUNION (EUCHARIST) AND THE WIDOWS

The word Eucharist suggests the thanksgiving meal or the Lord's Supper. **Richardson** also listed five teachings and understanding about the Eucharist:-

- It is the real personal presence of the risen, glorified the Lord.
- It proclaims the Cross of Christ, the institution of the new covenant in his blood, and pledge of our share in its benefits.
- It points forward to the final consummation and is a foretaste of the final reunion with Christ in glory.
- It is a pledge and expression of fellowship between Christians.
- The remembrance (**Richardson; 1965:256-257**).

If the Eucharist is a meal and celebrated in remembrance of the one who does not discriminate and also values other human beings. The Eucharist as Jesus has celebrated with his disciples; it is the responsibility of the disciples to affirm one another and to express inclusion of others to the table so that He could be present.

‘The widow, by her way of life set an example of Christ “one fully, perfect and sufficient sacrifice (**Heb 5:8-10**).It seeks to address that widow’s life is a sacrificial, because she loses something special and out of nowhere society confined with their standard of living. Parallel to the Eucharist the widows are partakers within the table. Therefore, the church has to change its attitude and mindset towards widows. They have a room in a Kingdom of God.Furthemore, by depriving them (widows); the church is denying what Jesus Christ has instituted during the Last Supper.

Jeremiah also warned the church that God listened to the cry of the widows. “Leave your orphans, I will protect their lives. Your widows too can trust in me”. (**Jer 49:11**)Paul also reminds the church that communion or fellowship is intended for unity and sharing through the **1Cor 10:16-17** “When we bless the cup of blessing, is it not a means of sharing in the blood of Christ”. When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing in the body of Christ?

Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, we are one body, for it is one loaf which we all partake’. (**White: 1990:240**) Holy

Communion is all about unity and sharing to the same table of fellowship. Therefore, if it's meaning and essence is to unite people of different cultural background irrespective of their race and gender.

The concept unity in a sense it is a rebirth of humanity (**Ubuntu**), because it is the climax of what Christianity is all about, i.e. fellowship and inclusiveness. The author was asking himself questions that challenges the role of the church towards the widows.

Is it the Eucharist that isolates widows in particular who are also invited to the Table of Grace? What is the pastoral role of the Eucharist to widows? Does the status determine who should and shouldn't have to come? After raising those questions I began to look at context and the nature of the celebration, and bear in mind that Pastoral care is applied in an African set-up.

Mbiti' reiterates that 'a person has to be born a member of society, and he cannot change tribal membership'. (**Mbiti; 1969:101**) .I agrees with him at the certain levels that the land laws challenges such, which have become instrument of oppression and degrading our society. **Gerkin** viewed it and argues that the role of

Christian care is always set within a culture, it cannot be otherwise. (**Gerkin; 1997:229**)

Gerkin remind us that the role that the Pastoral care should play towards widows is caring and support. The garments they wear are meant for acknowledgement, rather than stigmatization. The celebration is a remembrance of the past pointing to the future. Therefore the sitting around the table of communion is means of grace, because it reconciles the past.

The widowhood is a temporal state, similar to the process of fasting. The people who fast are seen to be real Christians, and if that was the case also widows. When the Church begins to isolate the widows it will mean that there is paralytic damage on the body of Christ.

Preliminary Conclusion:

The **Eucharist** which the church uses as an element of worship and symbolic must enable a disabled mind- set which is trapped to past and culture. Like a family a table is a place of discussion and celebration, therefore the same table that is abused to chase must

be used to welcome them back. Let the church teaches the family that the table has been prepared for all humankind.

Martin Luther King Jnr once said **“We must all learn to love each other as brothers and sisters or we will perish like fools.”**I fully agreed with him that the Christ’ community is founded on love. The Eucharist is a koinonia : Its understanding and meaning is inclusive and fellowship celebration.

‘The relationship is in the eating and even sharing together .The family meal is a community experience’. (**Healey &Sybertz; 1996:256**)The widows are part of the family of Jesus Christ and they deserve to be treated as such. No one has the rights choosing who comes from the table or not. The table of Communion when Jesus breaks the bread he reminded his disciple that it is His Body shared for them and many. The widows have a place on the table of the Lord and are also children of God. The meal purpose was for thanksgiving and remembrance of Him. The author viewed the communion as a place of Pastoral care, because of the action and symbolism of what communion is all about.

Because it is a thanksgiving meal it encompasses a lot such as thanking the life, blessings, even death as the part of the package. In an African setting it is a lesson that is inculcated from childhood to adulthood. Pastorally, the church supposed to appreciate the creation. It reminds me of the song of Adoration

**Oh Lord My God when I in awesome wonder;
Consider all the world thy hands have made;
I see the stars, and heard the rolling thunder;
And the proclaim the universe displayed:**

**Chorus: Then sings my soul my savior got to thee;
How great thou art.**

The song reminds us to learn to adore God's work. Everything that God has created is perfect and good. (Gen 1 :) The thanksgiving is the instrument of Pastoral care which Gerkin uses to reflect the community. The widows needed to be appreciated as matter of fact to be loved and cared for.

‘In Eucharist Christians thank God for what has been done for them in Christ, God’s saving work.’ (Healey & Sybertz; 1996:259) The author believes that the Pastors like him deserve to be given a freedom to exercise their ministry without prejudice. Lastly, the celebration of the meal is supposed to bring comfort because it is done in remembrance. The breaking of the bread means the sharing in the body. The caring community has to sit together and share from the same meal.

In the next section the author will focus on Jesus and the widows. The approach Jesus’ uses towards the widows, and how we can pastor to them

JESUS AND THE WIDOWS

In Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4, Jesus clearly demonstrates the honour and commitment widows can do in the house of the Lord. He uses his divine intervention to empower the church that has ceased utilizing their gifts for the growing of the Kingdom. He challenged the status-quo of the church and justice.

Luke records a story of a widow who was the first prophetess **An-na** whom her role was to fast and pray for the church (**Lk 12: 41-44**). It really reflects that there is a lot of contribution to the community. The house was used by the widows as the place where they cried and shared their pains and suffering. The church is the place where they will be able to have a shoulder to lean on.

The church must emerge at the end as the place of comfort and caring. His approach reflected to the church which was judgmental and patriarchal. The Pastoral care challenges the church about the redefinition of becoming good neighbors'. The responsibilities of the church towards widows by supporting them rather than judging and discriminating. If Jesus' formula is all about compassion then the church must also follow his paths.

Preliminary Conclusion:

Jesus sees the importance of the widows in his body not only as members but partaking fully in the sharing. **“Pastors of churches need to confront their people with the quality and the extent of their resources.”**(Gerkin; 1997:239). The challenge to Pastoral care is to address the family (Christian community) who seem to have deviated from their responsibility.

The author suggests that the churches need to make provision for the widows, to take part in celebration of the Eucharist. The members of the church must establish the supporting groups and caring. Remember the climax of the Pastoral care was on the cross when Jesus pastor to Mary on the cross. **(Jn 19:25 -27)**

He totally demonstrated how the widows should be treated. Pastoral care was the core nucleus of the ministry of Jesus Christ for his inclusivity and caring for the human being. Therefore the caring of widows cannot be divorced from the daily routine.

The widows just like everyone deserve to be treated with respect and the dignity. The Pastoral formula had to be Jesus' driven and orientated. It means before taking any decision on who is and who is not supposed to come to the table must be to look at what would have been the response of Jesus.

Jesus approach is about being compassionate and caring .Therefore the role of the church (Body) of Christ is supposed to demonstrate caring rather than teaching about it. The community needs to show concern and open doors for the table of fellowship. In the next chapter the author will use the stories and the method that will help in addressing those problems.

In the next chapter will relate to stories about women wearing black garments and how Gerkin's approach could help them to deal with their pains and frustrations.

CHAPTER 5

STORIES OF WOMEN WEARING BLACK GARMENTS

In this chapter the author is dealing with several stories of widows, their struggles and pain as they deal with this reality. I will also apply **Gerkin's** method of shepherding as a way of healing.

LINAH'S STORY

The first story is about **Linah**, not her real name living at the place called **Mganduzweni**, three daughters and a son. She is an active member of the church and chairperson of the branch women organization. The church was the second husband and gives her much support in times of need. She was treated like a queen when her husband was still alive because both of them were contributing financially to the church.

The members of the congregation were so close and even idolize her as their role model and their hero to young upcoming mothers.

Her children were treated with respect, because of the reputation of their parents. In **2006** her husband got sick and she had to devote time to her husband and children.

Her husband passed on later same year and it was difficult to deal with grieving and the pressure from the in-laws who uses the situation to their advantage. They even mocked her sometimes about her church that were it is during the time of need. They also made allegations that the church has been parasitic towards their brother /son.

At times they see the church as having contributed towards his death, and as the result all those accusations and mockery traumatically silenced her. The church on the other hand retaliated by turning the back on her. Whenever she shows herself in the house of the Lord colleagues always isolated her, and all people who were close to her.

She discovered the shock of her life when she was told that her place is at the backseat of the Church. Sometimes the elder will indicate that during the Holy Communion, she will be the last person to receive the sacrament. The Women's organization had re-

lieved her from being the chairperson of the organization. They even, advised her not to attend any meetings, reason being the black garments. The members believed that she was going to affect others with bad luck. In reality, black gowns are meant for the process of mourning.

She literally cried when she narrates her story to me and I began to pause a while .She quoted the scripture from the Matthew 11:28 **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.”**She thought to herself that coming was a way of running away from the atrocity to seek a place of refuge, but turn out to be a place of judgment.

I questioned her if she is angry with the church and God and her responds was that human beings are part of God’s creation, meaning that she is also an image of God and does not deserve to be traumatized by the fellow Christians.

She even reminds me that one of the principle within the Christian belief (**Apostle Creed**); **“To believe in the community of Saints.** To her community of Saints will mean all those who believe that

Jesus Christ is the Lord and Saviour. They become members of the body of which **Linah** belongs to such.

She was devastated that the same body that was supposed to take care of her is the one that rejects her. This is where the problem lies in the church or body, which does not care for the sheep. She battled to come to terms with the fact that as part of the body she is being rejected. She was traumatized by the fact that the church instead of opening arms of support, love and caring, isolated and discriminated against her.

Her inner frustration comes when the church which was to be her pillar of strength and refuge turned its back on her. She began to raise a question that challenges the Pastoral care to the church.

In Linah's case study the author discovered the following aspects which led to her trauma :-negligence from the members of the church, Linah's pain has shaped the researcher about what John Wesley ordered to his preachers in the Rules of a helper "Do not go to those who need you, but to those who need you most. (Methodist L&D, 2008:Pg 191)

Being a good shepherding will then help the researcher educate his congregation to care not only for the widows but also for God's creation irrespective of the circumstances facing them.

The process that will bring about healing to the widows and the congregation.

Gerkin continues to say Pastor is an instrument of interpreting the stories of the community. The Pastor has to carry the stick of protecting the injured animals and also the flock in particular against enemies and wild animals. Therefore caring and support has to be at the heart of the shepherd.

The mourning process is painful and it is a burden that needs a shepherd to carry for the sheep. The church role will be to give support and caring which enhances what Africans call it **Umuntu ngumntu ngabantu** and it translates that **'a person is a person because of others'**.

In the next chapter the story of Thabo, widow's son who shared his experience.

THABO'S STORY

I happened to know Thabo and his siblings since we grew up in the same location in **Sebokeng**, but he was a senior at school. Thabo and others look up to us as his role models. His parents were staunch members of the church and his father was one of the dynamic preachers. **Thabo's** mother was a Sunday School teacher and a member of the choir. She was everything within the church and loved by everyone.

Her husband worked in a mine and was a breadwinner, but partakes to everything the church does. Indeed he was a good example to young generation. He was a provider and the sustainer of his family. In the year 2006, **MaThabo** as she affectionately graduated from the widowhood when her husband passed on. **Thabo** still could not hold himself together while sharing his story tears were rolling down his cheeks. I began to ask him what was bothering him.

He iterates that the church of his parent's disappointed him. He thought that they will uplift her soul by being there for her and children, but discuss her on how she is supposed to mourn her husband and take back seat. The church elders went to an extend on having a meeting with her that they have replace her from her

position and reminded her that during church service she must seat on a small carpet provided by herself. When people shake hands she has to excuse herself from the family.

Thabo was bitter and blamed God for this anarchy and trauma. She was told that even in singing; her voice must be down or not to sing at all. **Thabo** knows that her mother likes singing and viewed these changes that were going to make her a zombie. The life behind the black garments is terrible and traumatic especially when people emphasize the cultural aspect.

Thabo said sometimes he feels like tearing those garments, because of its slavery and oppression by in-laws and the community members. **Thabo** also sees the church as the place of crucifixion rather than the place of healing and caring. Her mother had to suffer the double traumatic experiences, first being isolated by family cultural background and the church which comprises of the same people who uphold the culture within the community and the church.

He saw his mother suffering, helpless and no father figure that will protect her and the children. The church members use vulnerability to suppress the mind of those who are marginalized.

Therefore speaking from the voice of the children of the widows and they are crying silently. They are angry and the picture of God is dented and cruel. In other words, God is viewed not as loving and caring for those who are bereaved. In the last story the author will engage with the widow of the caregiver and how the church has ostracized her and silence her to the tight corner of being an observer, digesting each and everything that comes before her.

The author had observed the following from Thabo's experience being that the pain suffered by her mother extended to him and siblings. He was disappointed to people whom he adored and looked up to as his brothers. He was angered by the nature of God who punishes the weak.

In the next section the author will present the story of Maletsatsi who also share her pain and her experience.

MALETSATSI'S STORY

Maletsatsi the mother of four i.e., three boys and a girl, former wife to the late minister of religion. On the 20th December 1980 as the common practice of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to report to the new station, they were relocated to **Eastern Cape** where their children were born and bred. They were a happy family indeed and loved by all. **Maletsatsi's** husband even went abroad to further his studies. On his return the church reallocated him to the church in Soweto.

Maletsatsi's family were adapting to removal from one place to another. They experienced all frustrations the ministers and their families were going through, until **Maletsatsi** lost her husband through illness.

Before the end of the day, she receives the call from the Bishop who sympathized with her in a way and asking her to make preparation to move out of the manse for the new minister. She was told to pack her staff and make funeral arrangements elsewhere than church premises.

The reader can begin to understand how the church participates in oppressing those who are servants in the vineyard. The question to ask is who takes care of clergy's family? The **Memorial** and **Funeral Services** the church buildings can be utilized. **Maletsatsi** began to ask herself after the twenty years of ministry this is how her family is being treated and swear that she hate the day she got married.

It is at that moment she became vulnerable and begun to look at God as someone who allowed frustration and suffering to happen on her. The death of her husband had brought shame and isolation. The members of congregation have even seen her as the thread to their husbands, whilst viewed as an object of entertainment.

Her world shuttered, because the one whom they (**church**) had a relationship with is no more. She suffered in the hands of the people who had to embrace her and her family. Then she began to raise a question that challenges the pastoral care especially to the church that she and her husband served with dignity and respect, but all she got was the send off ticket.

All people, whom she thought will be helpful to her, turn their back on her. She questioned the integrity of the community that called itself the church, which turns away people who do not conform to their standards. She began to question the nature of the God her church how it defines a person.

She even came to a point where she describes God as unfair and cruel. She reflects back to the time they were active, when everyone adored them, some even made them their idols and role models. When the death lightning struck, it changed every relationship, some felt her pain whilst others were saying we shall see.

Even other pastor's wives began to distance themselves from her with the sentiments that she will snatch their husbands now that she's available. Having listened to the three stories, the author discovered that the caring part from the members of the congregation, to the Pastor and the culture.

Gerkin's method viewed the role of pastoral care to be the community of caring. It therefore meant that pastor as the leader has to help the other members to learn to grow in loving and caring. The Pastor had to be an instrument of liberation and transformation. The African still holds a view that a Pastor is a respected man of

God. The Pastor has to spend enough time with the bereaved and the family to show them that they are cared for.

The Pastor has to journey with the family from the day of their sorrow until they are relieved. The Gerkin's method rekindles the African way of life, whereby people are treated like human beings and not animals. The method of Gerkin open doors for those who are trapped from the cultural bondage.

In actual fact, his method is a reminder to do the effective Pastoral care within our society. 'The life of Job teaches us that the process of becoming Holy must take place in the midst of one's own suffering.' (Wimberly2003:69) Although Wimberley's statement in this regard promote the spirit of perseverance in a Christian manner it does not address the problem of traumatic experiences.

The author argues that Wimberly's method can only be applied when the problem has been addressed because it will then encourage the widows to be excluded using such method to calm them

down and put them on the back seat. It will also encourage culture to oppress them, because they want to conform to Holiness in the name of patience.

Also to agree more with Oduyoye that communion through shared meals takes place among people who are, or who wish to be, on peaceful and kindly terms .(**Oduyoye,1996:111**)Therefore the same table which is used to exclude others ,must be also serve to be a place of reconciliation.

Just as the poverty, apartheid was seen as sin same applies to the exclusion of widows from the fellowship table. The treatment of voiceless and the bad behavior which contradicts with what Christ stood for should not be accepted within the body of Christ.

In the next chapter the author will deal with the analysis of the research.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

In my findings these are the discoveries:

- **Culture** must be seen as the tool of identity that enables us to interact with its subjects. The culture has to accommodate as it seeks to unite people of different ethnic groups.
- **Women** are objects of social, political and even cultural agenda. They are vulnerable , marginalized and can be used as instruments of warring factions
- **Lack of information and empowerment**, especially women who are forced to stay in the kitchen. The lack of capacitating women to stand on their own.
- **Widowhood** must be viewed as a state of emergency. It must be respected and given the support.
- **Eucharist** the misinterpretation and the understanding of how it should be celebrated within the church of God. The misrepresentation of Christ and the God's mission.

Through the research the author had to investigate analytically whether the culture had contributed in influence that leads to trauma. Culture has also in some areas dictated on how they should behave and live. Widows according to the reference of the culture are viewed as the objects which have no voice and relying on the instruction of what is commanded to do.

Because of this dynamics in our context, it will be advisable to firstly challenge the custodians of the culture which are the **Tribal Chiefs** and in the Church Ministers. The role of the Pastoral care is to enable the church to help shape the culture that values a human being.

Therefore it is the responsibility of the chieftaincy to challenge the culture that result in abusive, oppressive, tribalism and behaviour. To help especially men in particular to bury the partrichal culture which promote dominance and create anger and hatred. The process of mourning in some instances is punishment that emerges because of jealousy, insecurity and greediness.

The pillars of morality have fallen as the result of people who claim to uphold culture, but instead abusing it. Then women issue was to investigate whether they are victims of trauma or they perpetrate incidents that lead them to trauma. During the marriage ceremony women are given certain rules which connect them with their in-laws and the ancestors.

The parents are the ones who have to act on behalf of their children. Because that is where the problem lies. They lie low and enjoy lobola and don't bother about the happiness of their children.

The women also are contributing to oppression of other women. For instance when girls are getting married they are instructed that in marriage you have to be patient and learn not to respond when they talk to you. Therefore the same tone of the language is also applicable in the churches, which has to be a place of refuge.

When the church isolates people and make enemies with them it in turn makes enemies with God. The **Kairos Document** stipulate that people are made in the image and the likeness of God and whatever we do to the least of them we do to God (**Mt 25:49, 45**) (**Kairos1985:19**) It teaches us that the struggle has changed form

.The church which used to suffer and be on the side of the oppressed is sleeping and has become its own enemy.

The oppression of the widows by the church is the sign that it has lost focus and misread the tone of the struggle. The days of the patriarchs ‘are over and we are living in a democratic society which values interest of all. The women in particular must be supportive and vocal about things that affects them. The church must assume her responsibility of being compassionate and caring.

In the lack of information and empowerment, the author has discovered that some women they are not even aware of their Human and Legal Rights. Some are struggling in terms of the level of education. Some don’t have access to properties of their marriage. Some are not even aware that before the death of the husbands they have been divorced only to discover during the funeral .

The challenge of the church is to help them carry this heavy burden to Christ who will uplift it (**Mt 11:28**) .The role of the Pastoral care has to enable the church to empower the women. The research has helped the author to categorize the widows as young,

mature and old. The young widows are those who are young and who can still continue with their lives.

They easily make up their minds and give up easily because they don't want their future to be tampered with. The mature and the old can hold on to traumatic situations. The lesson that the church needs is pastor to the poor, the women and the children. The church also needs to learn from her past mistakes and challenges the government for the utilization of the resources to the women and children.

The Eucharist must be a unifying mechanism that brings together people of different race, gender and status. It must be a special place of harmony where widows get comfort, because they are invited to the table. Therefore the Eucharist was the center of where the incident took place. The other aspect is to question the measurement of our selves before the eyes of the Lord.

The church has to learn to make an amendment its patriarchal theology to reshape an inclusive theology. The Eucharist must be understood as the feast; similarly to African feast where everyone is invited even some becomes uninvited. The feast must be under-

stood as the time of reflection as it is common in an African setting to reflect about the past.

It has to be the time of celebration of thanking the lives of those who had passed on and those who are still around. I can imagine the meal with the disciple after the resurrection (**Mk 16:14**) and He questioned them about their integrity and commitment. Therefore putting a widow at the back seat questions our integrity and it is not about what people will say, but what Christ can do.

Christ' reaction has always been to care of the widows
.Remember Christ said '**Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**'(**Mt 5:4**)The responsibility of the Church is to open the doors and invite everyone to the table of the Lord.

Wimberly reminds us that in fellowship with God, not only are our worth and value established but we also learn to resist being recruited into negative identities, conversations and stories existing in wider culture. (**Wimberly; 2003:122**)I agree with the author when he challenges the position of the church and warned that it doesn't become ignorant.

The Eucharist was not meant to be special occasion for special people. The church has to be sensitive especially around issues affecting the community. If the church failed to support those who are poor, oppressed and all those who are voiceless. The Pastoral care therefore challenges the theology of the Church whether it is initiating the isolation and the segregation.

Gerkin in his model of Pastoral care challenges the shepherds' and the flock about their distinct roles towards each other. The church is the community of caring which needs to look at the interest of the members. He argued that if the attention is renewed to communal aspects it will involve the importance of ritual acts and liturgical practices that corporately express God's care for the people and care for one another. (**Gerkin; 1997:93**) The author agree with **Gerkin** that if the mentality of the community changes it will also bring healing.

The mentality of the society has been polluted by changes that have no interest in the development of human being. Because the author is a product of patriarchal society where a man is the head and the world revolved around him. Widows suffer as the result of the patriarchal mentality indoctrinated in our time.

Healy & Sybertz mention three aspects that make the Eucharist so vital in the African context that is love, peace and reconciliation.

(Hearly&Sybertz; 1996:271-272)The three theological reflection elements the authors mention address the behavior of members who act hypocritical to satisfy their desire and forgetting their duties towards others.

God sent his only Son Jesus Christ so that human beings should not perish but have eternal life. **(Jn 3:28)** The intension was seeing God's picture through Jesus Christ. Because we are part of His creation He gave us that love so that we love others. Pastoral care begins with an individual loving God and continues to love those around him/her. When we demonstrate love to the widows we don't impress God but at the same time we assume a role of stewardship towards them. Remember a good shepherd lay his life for the sheep.(Jn 10 :11)

The foundation of the teachings of Jesus is based on the peace which the widows need after the storm has struck their lives. The scenario within the communion service is that there is a moment where all members share the peace of the Lord.Gerkin looks at the

church as the community of caring .Caring means sharing the pain and frustration to extend a helping hand.

The peace we share that does not belong to the church but the Lord .The meal is celebrated to establish peace amongst the followers of Jesus. Jesus commanded them that He leave them his peace not the way the world give them. (**Jn 14:27**)According to knowledge of the author the word peace means freedom from disturbance.

Therefore, if the Eucharist is meant to bring about peace the act of putting the widows at the back is ungodly and very discriminating. The widows suppose to feel at home when they attend the communion service. **“We must aim at those things that bring peace and that strengthen one another”**. (**Rom 14:19**)



Paul targeted the behavior the members of the body demonstrated to others .Therefore the Pastoral care has to begin with those who lack the spirit of brotherhood. The last reflection is reconciliation in which the challenge is including the widows that everyone needs to be reconciled with God.

The celebration becomes more than food because it unites people and enable them to relate because they share in one loaf ,they are in a position of treating each other like brothers and sisters. The reconciliation helps them to recognize the art of God in others. The reconciliation serve as a therapeutic in enabling those who treat others badly to be given an opportunity to say how sorry they are.

CONCLUSION

The author finally had to answer the three hypotheses in the beginning of the research. The first one, being that maybe the author has unsolved issues especially, with regards towards what happened to his mother. The author discovered that emotions emanates as the result of anger and frustrations. The author also discovered that his mother's issue was the ventilation of anger which would have hindered the research. The research had also healed the author in a way.

The research had not only healed the author but enable him to pastor to the wounded ones, the author at the end was exposed to. The author however have highlighted that this research is on the man's perspective which may differ from other angles which can be further researched.

The research motivated the author to facilitate the process of empowering the widows. The establishment of a forum where they assemble and begin to challenge issues that affects them and how

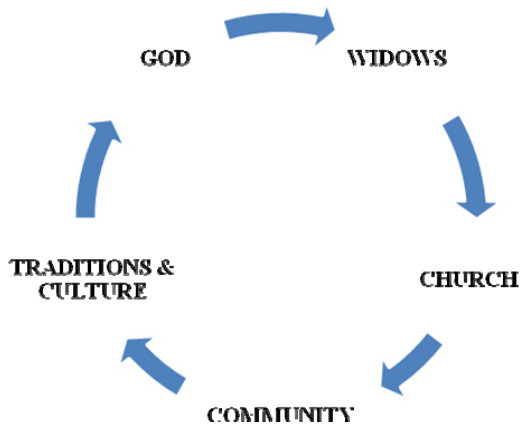
to deal with them. How the church can be instrumental in the caring and supporting ministry.

To engage the member of the community in a dialogue with the intention of informing them. The Pastor need to teach his /her members about caring and empower them how to be good pasoring agents. To alarm them about the sensitivity of discriminating behavior that isolates other members of the Body.

The Pastoral care has to liberate widows from bondage and suffering. The research was aimed at helping widows to see a picture of God through their pain and frustrations and how they can be helped. The research was focusing on addressing three components (widows, children of widows and the pastor's widow).

But the shepherd model from **Gerkin** provide an opportunity to caregivers to be empowered to do an effective Pastoral care. **Broodryk** continues to warned the community that never is another person or community to be prescribed to or forced away from their own conventions. (**Broodryk;2002:146**)

Fig Diagram 1



In the above **Diagram 1** the author tries to show how that widows are under protection of God. They discover their connection in the house of the Lord (**Church**), and the ways of how we should relate to another. The diagram illustrates the joint succession of everything begins with God who sees widows as beloved, the church who commissioned to embrace God's creation at the same time influencing the community to be the caring agents.

The community will resemble or imitates Jesus through traditions and culture. Then the last stage is the affirmation that because of the process of the circle everything is accountable to God.

It is through the celebration of the Communion (**Fellowship**) that we assemble around the Table of Grace, because the aim of the fellowship is unity. As the communion was meant for the community of Christ, widows are also part of it.

The community is constituted on love (**Jn 13:34-35**) **“A commandment I give you: Love one another .As I have loved you, so you must love one another .By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”**

The tradition are given when there is cooperation and respect. When Jesus shared bread and wine He also reminded his disciple to do the sharing in remembrance. Therefore, to be Jesus community we have to remember our duties towards our fellow brothers and sisters. If the nature and the tradition of Christianity is based on love it has no boundaries.

Paul continues to remind us that the widows must have courage and continue to claim their rightful place in the Body of Christ. **“It is for the freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, turn, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”(Gal 5:1)** The communion is a celebration of that freedom

which Christ has brought. Therefore freedom is having a privilege of being free from slavery, trauma, stress and poverty.

The church therefore at all costs avoids alienation, separation, segregation, racism and tribalism. Bearing in mind that the Pastoral care depends on the Pastor's ability to work with people. The Pastor therefore needs to know people. Knowing people will mean to share in their distress and frustration. The ability to lend the ear to listen to their outcry and be in a position of helping them.

The role of the Pastor is to tend the sheep in which to look after the members. Pastoral care has to help the victims feel being cared for. The widows are vulnerable and lonely so the support is all what they need. The Pastors has to be the role player within the community and for the transformation of the community

The author has discovered the following during his research that have enabled him to heal from the anger and to understand where to draw line between pain and stigma. Firstly, in the research the author seek answers that will do justice for what happened to his mother.

The research opens his eyes to be sensitive to the vulnerable since the Pastoral care is set upon certain culture in order to do it effectively one had to deal with culture even the Church has conform to societies' practices.

“The women are very much concerned about the church, but the church is not so much concerned about women.”(Oduyoye; 1986:124)I couldn't agree more with this powerful statement from **Oduyoye** who points out that even that these treatments are evident and evitable. The church goes to such an extend of labeling and mocking them.

‘Pastoral Care in the parish begins with pastoral leadership.’ (**Gerkin; 1997:119**)Therefore, **Gerkin's** method challenges the leadership portrayed by the Pastor. If the leadership of a Pastor is patriarchy it will favor masculinity at the expense of the women.

The leadership must not be biased, but be accommodative and supportive. When a Pastors shows concern to his members like what the author demonstrate when he offered to go at the back to serve a communion to the widow.

Gerkin's method viewed a Pastor as a coacher and facilitator.

The survival of the widows is upon the shoulder of the Pastor to protect and pastor to them. The role of a Pastor is to play a role in leadership of transforming the mindset of congregation he led.

The coach knows the team he/she lead, and when to substitute or recall a player.

Even during the celebration the Pastor has the duty to teach his congregation about the value of communion. Maybe such behavior of exclusion happens because of the lack of knowledge from the members. 'Members of one people share a common history.' (**Mbiti; 1969:100**) **Mbiti's** point of departure reflects that in an African setting a community exists because of its traced history can be identified amongst nations.

The widows are part of the history and they are also part of continuous journey of the Africans. The church is a place of refuge and allows everyone to be free to worship his /her God. Then **Waruta & Kinoti** has this to offer that "Pastoral care in the church should be holistic, attending to all levels of human caring i.e. physical (temporal) moral and spiritual." (**Waruta & Kinoti; 2005:84-85**)

Pastoral care should offer support and caring as the base of giving birth to healthy church. It has to intervene on behalf of the oppressed and the voiceless. What our community need is what **Wimberly's** utterances that by having a fellowship with God this then becomes a reservoir for courage to pursue the vocation of liberation. (**Wimberly; 2003:9**)

Pastoral care is aimed at comforting those who had been stricken by death and left marks of pain and sorrow. The question the author raises is that do the Widows deserved to be treated this way especially within their church?

- The author can then raise the importance of harmonizing the broken spirit of the widows who looks down to the church with dismay. The enough support from the church and challenge to the laws that suppresses the widows. The call for the church to do away with male chauvinism that is indoctrinated to women and men to applied to others.

Wimberly's utterance that the point of departure has to begin at the fellowship with God .The argument is that fellowship doesn't exist because if people will have prejudices in the house of Lord

and to claim to have fellowship with God. The research was not only a matter of academic but a lesson that go deeper in understanding the wonderful acts of God.

The Law of Christianity that was summarized by Jesus Christ that His community will be founded on love. (**Jn 17:23**) “I in them and you in me, so that they may be completely one, in order that the world may know that you sent me and that you love them as you love me.” If the church behave that way to others then it has missed the mark and not be called a church but a market place. According to Jesus way more than applying a Pastoral care we need to search within our hearts whether we have that love which need to given to others. As I raised these questions they brought healing because I discovered the following about myself:

- a) I was wounded, angry and sought answers.
- b) I ended up blaming everyone including those who were around me.
- c) I carried the cross I could not bear and became emotional.
- d) I’m close to my mother and to see her suffering was too much for me.



- e) I begun to create these denial symptoms of saying my father is laughing where He is.
- f) I begun to look down upon in the church and lost forth in those people whom I looked up to.
- g) The incident related to the woman who sit at the back seat awaken the sleeping lion in me.

Wimberly when he refers to strategic intervention being the process done involving a client and the counselor. The author because of his experience the process of Wimberly seems to be inadequate to address the problem of the widows. The African setting is about community. Therefore, it will be a challenge to sought intervention of Pastor, since they are highly respected and had influence.

The method has provided a room for the author to deal with his anger and be able to transform it to a remedy that will heal others. It has shaped the dignity of the author so that it becomes easier to restore others. South African history records that 10 Feb 1990 the release of Dr N.Mandela from the prison turned the clock and hope to people of South Africa.

The weapon that he used to win democracy for his people was a therapeutic of forgiveness and peace. By establishing Truth and Reconciliation Commission he opened a dialogue between perpetrators and the victims to share stories that will bring about healing of memories.

The same method could be helpful between the widows and the members in that way they will understand the pain and frustration. It will give an opportunity to the members of the congregation to identify their role towards their welfare. **Hearly & Sybertz** provide us on how the understanding of the church in an African setting that is the extended family, fireplace and the three stone that support the pot. (**Hearly & Sybertz; 1996:123-124**)

The family single out an individual within a particular context. Therefore a person cannot live alone but seek help of others. The widows just like individuals cannot carry the burden alone, but through the support of the extended family they will. The widows find a church as the place of crying to God to look after them and trauma they are going through.

There is saying in an African context that if the partner passed on, then the left one will be married to God. It makes sense to me that the widows place is in the church where she could get comfort and able to have a shoulder to cry on.

The fire represents the place where community gathered. Tales, stories and issues are entertained next to the firewood. The firewood even accommodate neighbors who might seek fire by lit from that big fire .The present situation teaches us that our Christian fire is the Holy Communion where we assemble around the table of fellowship.

Therefore, begun to share from one loaf .In no circumstances people were chased or excluded from the fireplace. There is a person who is busy putting wood when the fire goes out. He knows exactly when and where to put wood. It is evident that the person who facilitate fire is the elders, and in the church the pastor.

The role of the pastor is to keep the fire burning Lev 6:13 “The fire must always be kept burning on the altar and never allowed to go out.” The Pastoral care looks above what community is.The

Pastors hold the key that will unlock the tragedy that has befallen the community. Like the elder who has to alert the community about the anarchy they are facing, so is the pastor to protect the interest of flock on behalf of the owner.

The last is the three stones that support the cooking pot which represent the support. If one stone is removed then the pot will never have a support. The ideology reflects the connectivity and how those stones need each other. The church is also founded on those three stones which expresses the nature of God. (**Trinity**)

God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is defined as the God of family. The stones also represent the community that must be united and supported. The concept begins at home where love and support has to be the order of the day. The church serves as a compound that accommodates all the unit of the families.

The widow as the part of the fellowship also had the right to assemble at the table of the Lord. They deserved to be supported and to be given their rightful place around the table. Their place is not at back seat and they don't deserve to wait for everyone to be served, after that to receive the communion. Their names are not widows but daughters of God extended members of the family.

The three stones represent the hospitality, love and support. It really recalled the church back to its roots and its tradition. Therefore, the traumatizing of the widows has nothing to do with the tradition; the problem lies with the lack of fellowship with God of which the care givers had to nurture that.

The black garments also has nothing to do with the stigmatization of women who are wearing it .Tracing back the African history clothing is part of the Western civilization, the Africans were wearing animal skins. It is the same incident that happened in Kwazulu-Natal and Johannesburg the issue of mini-skirt.

In this two separate incident **Kwazulu-Natal** the woman was killed, meanwhile in **Johannesburg** was beaten and stripped naked by the taxi drivers. The author with these two separated incident is trying to show that the mentality of the society has been poisoned by hatred, lack of humanity and respect. The media also contributed in dismantling the pillars of moral within our society.

The author raised these issues because they are great of concern to the community today.**Broodryk** has this to bring back the originality of what family is:

The family is generally regarded as the primary institution of societies and some of the major functions of the family include socialization, informal education as well as the transmission of cultural values to young members of the society. (**Broodryk; 2002:77**)

There is a wise saying that states “charity begins at home”, which translates that the knowledge, moral and values of a person start at home. Therefore, because the knowledge has been inculcated within our societies, then the church will play the part of nurturing the spirituality and help the community to understand the purpose of their existence and their devotion to God.

The widows in all respect are human beings, image of God and they have gifts to contribute to the community. They are members of the community, and part of us mothers, sisters and daughters. Gerkin emphasizes that the Pastor’s of the church need to confront their people with the quality and extent of their resources’. (**Gerkin; 1997:239**) It is the duty of the Pastor to maintain the balance between the culture and the church. The Pastor had to help the church to interpret the message of Jesus Christ so that the world may believe.

One of their Pastoral obligations of the church is to take care of its members. They don't have to take care of them only when things are right but when times are hard the church moved away. The good example of Pastoral care story is of the Good Samaritan (**Luke10:29-38**) The story narrates that the man was attacked which can be widows .Then he shared that three types of community approached the victim.

The first community I don't care attitude and not our business .It is the type of community which is of high status and don't care about others except themselves. It is advisable for the Pastor to know what kind of community he /she is dealing with. The approach of such mindset, because they tend to be destructive and have influence to others.

The second community is **“ag shame! but what can we do”** attitude. It is the type of community who is sympathetic but don't to get involved. The Pastor has to be careful about this type of congregation because they cause a lot of confusion and they like gossip.

Pastoral care is very difficult when dealing with this kind of congregation with such attitude. They pretend to know and understand their role but their action does not reflect that. They can be seen as helpful and even have compassion, but in actual fact they mean the opposite.

The last category is helping hand attitude and this is the type of congregation that is helpful. They listen to the leadership and cooperate. They are the type of congregation that is supportive and they don't wait to be called for help. Pastoral care is very effective and even willing to share with their resources.

Therefore this is model where leadership of a Pastor plays an important role in the congregation. The model that show a Pastoral care in action and the result of support and caring. If I were to be asked to continue with the parable the continuation is when the victim becomes a victor.

Because of the Good Samaritan he manages to relate his story to others. He might have formed the support group and help others who are victim like him. He might also provided help to others

and share with his resources to victims like him. He did well to his fellowmen and did not think about revenge.

He became an ambassador of peace and support. His story manages to turn many people around, including those who attack him. He helped others to realise that there is hope and support. Therefore the duty of Pastoral care is to provide an opportunity to others a second chance.

In my conclusion this is what I have learned from the research that two wrongs don't make it right. The research have helped me deal with the after effects of trauma of my mother. After interacting with Gerkin's model, I was able close the chapter of unanswered question raised at the beginning.

I understood the context where I come from and where pastoral care is applied. I even understood that research was targeted at females and being male was challenge to me and them. It offered me an opportunity of Pastoring to widows without any fear of cul-

ture. The research taught me to be pastor and a shepherd to Christ's flock.

The author managed to make peace with himself and able to understand that there is a thin between the process and culture. In the brink of this traumatic experiences the church needs not to drift away but to extend a hand of welcome. The forum needs to be formed where widows need to share and able to voice out the common pain.

Seeking and journeying to discovering on how to deal with them. The clothes widows wear have to be recognized as the alarm that informs the community about the kind of attention and support she will need. The culture must embrace and value the life of human beings.

The church have to be a caring community that enable women restore back their lives. They had to provide a support to the widows and empower them to be part of the growing community.

It has also offered me an opportunity of making findings through the co-operation of the subjects. The information of other material and the insight of the group of Masters Student make it possible for this research

Lastly, there are other aspects of culture which I partly covered which other researcher could pick up. But also want to make suggestion for the purpose of Doctorate Degree.

1. How to Pastor to the Widows?
2. The role of widows within the Church?
3. The equality or justification of mourning process ?
4. Being part of the caring community?
5. Liturgical inclusion of the order of the widowhood.

APPENDIX

A

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA



INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

Researcher's Name:.....

Subject's Name:

Date :

Venue :

1. Can you please share your traumatic experience while wearing black garments?

2. What really happened with the Laws of the Church?

3. What is your own view on the Church and God?

4. Share your experience and your response about wearing a black garment

5. Did the church address the issue? If yes/no What was the reaction of your Pastor?



6. Why are you not allowed taking part in the Church?

7. What is your expectation in the future within the church?

8. What was the response of your friends, church etc?

9. Was the bench at the back a place forced to you by the church?

10. Was it part of the requirement by the church not to participate in worship? If Yes/No respond full

B

The informed letter of consent



University of Pretoria

**Faculty of Theology
Lynwood Road
Hatfield
0083**

Researcher's Name :

Contact Details :

Student Number :

Title of the Study :

This serves to confirm that I agreed to be interviewed by the researcher for the purpose of the study he is conducting. The purpose of the study was explained to me thoroughly. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am assured anonymity. The researcher will use fictitious name when referring to me and the information is treated as confidential.

Signed at.....on thisday of2007

Subject's signature:

Researcher's signature:

C



The City Press article dated 09 September 2007 that has been used as the Page Cover.

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