Chapter 1

To the end of the world and back!

A specific context is described.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

For they will be called sons of God.

- Matt 5:9(NIV 2001)

1.1 The Context of My Interest

My interest in the coping abilities of people, especially caregivers during deployments in Peace Keef ping operations, developed gradually. Initially my interest started with the effect of isolation on people and their stories of coping with isolation. Isolation in a world full of people may seem to be a contradiction, yet there are various forms of isolation. Since my initial interest in isolation, my research has developed and grown into a new field of enquiry. My main focus for this research is the stories of how caregivers in the SANDF manage to cope while they are on deployment and literally trying to support others on the same boat. These stories are of specific significance in this study.

My initial interest in the different ways and means of how people cope with the effects of isolation was strengthened through my own experiences of being sent to the end of the world and back. After conducting a midnight sermon in broad daylight in Antarctica, we held a party to celebrate New Year. It was quite a memorable experience. In this text, I will refer to some of my experiences during my deployments to the Antarctic, the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho and the Namibia-Angolan border during the Namibian War of Independence.

During my compulsory National Service, I was deployed for three months on the Namibian-Angolan border. This coincided with the gradual withdrawal of South African Forces at the time. My deployment was shortly after the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Namibia and to implement Resolution 435 (1978). The Council endorsed the United Nations (UN) plan for Namibia and decided to establish the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). UNTAG's purpose was to assist in the peaceful political transformation process and to ensure that all parties observed all provisions of the resolution. It was my first experience of the importance of peace-keeping operations, of the number of lives that can be saved in the long run if the process were conducted correctly. I was privileged to be on good professional and social footing with some of the foreign soldiers and policemen. Their professionalism and conduct made a positive impact on me as a young National Service chaplain.

My deployment experience to the Antarctic had nothing to do with direct peacekeeping, although it could be argued that the Antarctic is one of the few places in the world where people are still co-operating to the benefit of humankind.

The South African Department of Environmental Affairs utilises the skills of chaplains from the South African National Defence Force to assist in the South African Antarctic Program (SANAP) during annual expeditions to Marion Island, Goth Island, and the department's base at Antarctica. As a member of SANAE 34, the 1992-1993 South African National Antarctic Expedition, I participated in all the pre-deployment training, from fire fighting and first aid courses to abseiling and instruction in culinary skills. As meals were served only on the SA Agulhas, my culinary instruction came in handy when it was my turn to prepare meals for the rest of the deployment group.

I was seconded to the Department of Environmental Affairs as a chaplain, a caregiver! My task was not only to provide spiritual care to all members of the expedition, but also to support them emotionally and spiritually during their time away from home. During the summer (southern hemisphere) of my deployment, the team consisted of ±130 people excluding the 40 crew members of the SA Agulhas. At the end of summer, the ship departed from the Antarctic continent with most of the people. Only a small team of researchers and support personnel remained for the duration of the winter.

The SANAE 34 team consisted of nine members who endured the harsh winter in very difficult and isolated circumstances. They were physically cut off from the rest of the world and the only people left at the base for almost nine months. While they were deployed on the Antarctic continent I remained in radio contact with them once or twice a month. Their only interactions were with one another and radio communication with other bases. On days when the communication channels were functioning well, they were able to talk to friends and family in South Africa. Their nearest contact was the German base at Neumayer Station on the Ekström Shelf Ice almost 300km away.

One needs to ask questions about one's own experiences of isolation as well. I remember when sailing past Bouvet Island (six days sailing from Cape Town), the Captain announced that we were at almost equal distance from the continents of Africa, South America, Antarctica and Australia. At that moment, according to my understanding of the Captain, it was one of the most isolated places on earth. Whether it was a hundred per cent correct or not, it certainly felt that way! It was even more significant to understand the Captain's comment on isolation after a fire incident in the one of the laboratories necessitated the evacuation of all passengers to the emergency boats. The announcement of "*this is not an exercise*", combined with the knowledge that the nearest ship was three days' sailing away, opened a new dimension to one's perceptions of isolation! We waited in the emergency boats for what felt like hours before the all-clear signal was given once the fire was contained.

On the one hand there was the geographical isolation, the simple fact of distance between our ship and the rest of civilization. We can focus on statistics of so many nautical miles away from the nearest land with permanent residents such as Tristan da Cunha or Goth Island. On the other hand, we were sitting in this emergency boat, tucked in like sardines in extremely close proximity to one another! Definitely not isolated in terms of close human contact, but there is a difference between emotional, physical and geographical isolation. In chapter six, the differences between emotional, physical and geographical isolation will be addressed in-depth.

Was the time in the emergency boat the most isolated moment of my life? Or was the most isolated moment while I was conducting a midnight sermon on 31 December under a shining sun? As part of the sermon, I gave all participants the opportunity for self-reflection. We were busy with our own thoughts and prayers, beneath the midnight sun as the calendar changed to a new year. After contemplating life, we decided to join the New Year celebrations with unbounded enthusiasm. That was definitely not my most isolated moment on the Antarctic continent!

Maybe my most isolated moment was when three of us were trapped in a snowstorm for six days at Grunahogna on the Antarctic. It is approximately 210km inland from the old SANAE base, and more or less 40km inland from the new SANAE IV base at Vesleskarvet. We were without any radio communication for the entire six days. Recalling an interesting snippet of humour at one of the cabins at Grunahogna, someone put up a sign that read "Welcome to the Restaurant at the end of the World". Deployment can literally take you to the end of the world and back. During a snow storm, isolation becomes a reality.

I vividly remember a call on Christmas morning to my wife. At that stage, the allocation of a phone call was only three minutes. Unfortunately, due to bad weather and static, she was not able to hear me. I, on the other hand, was able to hear her uncertain voice while she was waiting in vain for my voice during that very long, and very short three minutes. The uneven reception was due to the considerably stronger transmitter at Cape Town Radio in comparison with the equipment at the SANAE base. That was before satellite communications and e-mail became the norm!

I sometimes wonder whether today's unlimited e-mail, compared to my 50 words per week via telex, is an improvement on the communication ability between the deployed and those they left at home. Is quantity always more effective than quality? Maybe more words have decreased our communication ability! Maybe a barricade of words has become a mechanism to hide behind from what we really think and feel. Even the art of writing letters is rapidly replaced by e-mail and Mix-it. Sometimes the more we talk, the less we say.

Reflecting on the question of real isolation, I think that one of the most isolated moments of my life was one afternoon on a perfect wind-still day while walking away from the SANAE base. Within a few kilometres I left

behind all noise and human presence. The dull noise of the power plant was totally indistinguishable. While I was enjoying the pristine environment, I impulsively decided to lie down on my back in the snow. As I lay there and marvelled at the greatness of it all, I was struck by the incredible and complete silence around me. It was truly a wonderful and unique experience.

I became aware of a strange drumming sound. At first I thought it might be some vehicle or the bass sound of music in the distance. I opened my mouth. Then I realised that I was hearing my own heartbeat simply because there were no other competing sounds. On footage I recorded at that time, one can actually hear the inner mechanisms of the video camera!

I think that the narrative approach has a lot in common with that particular experience - *The opening of a mouth and the privilege to hear not only noise, but the actual emotions and stories of the heart inside!* I clearly remember my absolute joy and ecstasy with the privilege of being in such a marvellous place and wondered why there were people who were unable to enjoy the experience at all. For some the expedition was the most exciting and exhilarating experience, while for others it was an unpleasant necessity that must pass as soon as possible.

Why the difference in experience? I will never forget the incredible impact of that moment on my life. My experience at that moment was very positive. However, I was also acutely aware that some of the people on the expedition who experienced the exact circumstances responded totally different. This gave birth to my first big question. Why do some people enjoy things so completely different than others? Why are some people more equipped to manage and cope better than others? Are they better equipped or is it a personality trait that enables people to function more effectively in difficult circumstances?

The team returned to South Africa after 117 days. As part of the summer party, I returned to South Africa, leaving a small group of men on the ice shelf while as we sailed away. I remained in radio contact with them to provide support for the duration of their sixteen months' stay.

During the return trip, we travelled for almost 300km next to the ice shelf to pick up a German patient who needed medical attention. One evening while the ship was crushing through thin ice and leaving open sea in her wake, I was standing alone on the helicopter-deck at the stern. I leaned against the rail. The next moment the rail gave way under my weight and I thought that I would fall overboard. Rails around the heli-pad can be lowered to allow safe departure, but the sudden movement was a brutal reminder that if you fell overboard in the ocean next to the ice shelf, you will never be found. At that moment I felt very lonely.

After returning to Cape Town, it was very interesting to listen to the stories of the expedition and how some of them change to accommodate new listening ears. For instance, during our last few weeks on the Antarctic, a rumour persisted that due to miscalculations in the planning process, there was a distinct possibility that the deployment may run short on food! This made some people highly agitated and panicky. They demanded that the SA Agulhas return immediately to South Africa. When back in Cape Town, the same members explained to friends and family how some people were under the stupid impression that we might actually run out of food. This caused varied reaction, but was most noticeable amongst the summer replacement

group. The returning team was so strongly bonded that they refrained from the temptation to fall for rumours and accepted their situation calmly.

On my return to South Africa, I remained in contact with most of the team's close families and girlfriends, trying to render support where possible. After the team's return, I had the subsequent privilege to conduct marriage ceremonies for five of the nine team-members. Two of the members' fathers were clergy and performed the wedding ceremonies of their own offspring! This is an indication of how close the bond between members can develop in such isolated circumstances. I attended the ten-year reunion and am still in contact with most of the members. My personal belief is that most of the members would not have been in any friendship relationship, if it were not for their shared experiences.

During the 1999-2000 festive season, I was deployed in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho for three months as part of South Africa's Operation Maluti. I was not only responsible for the South African soldiers, but also involved with the Lesotho soldiers. It was a very difficult time in Lesotho and even more difficult for members of the Lesotho Defence Force. The Operation was focused on establishing peace and to encourage reconciliation between former enemies. I was privileged to work with a Non- Governmental Agency (NGO) which vastly contributed to my high esteem of the role and functioning of an NGO in peace operations. I value the contributions by NGOs made all over the world. It is my opinion that it is not only the military peace keepers who contribute towards the rebuilding of a nation. NGOs also play a critical role in the process of reconciliation and peace building.

My interest in members' coping skills during their deployment coincided with my own memories of

how I managed to cope with my first deployment in1989 during the Namibia-Angolan war. I was privileged to share my deployment experience with UNTAG in Namibia.

During these visits to UNTAG, I learned quite a lot regarding the purpose and challenges of facing a peace-keeping force in a foreign country. My experiences during this time contributed significantly towards my own understanding of deployment. I think that it was during this deployment that I initially developed an interest in the coping skills of others during their foreign deployment.

From 1997 until December 2003, I was stationed on a remote Air Force Base near the Zimbabwean border in the northern part of South Africa. The same question was often asked: "how is it possible that some members and their families are able to adapt to isolation, while others try their utmost to be transferred to a city?" Although this chapter was written while I was stationed at a Unit in Pretoria, I have a very good idea of what life on a remote base entails. The Unit I was stationed at in Pretoria, Mobile Deployment Wing, specialises in tactical deployments and members are thus often away from home. Subsequently, as part of a chaplains' delegation of duties, it is stipulated that he/she must visit deployed members on deployment in places all over the country.

As a chaplain providing pastoral counselling, I often listen to members' chronicles of coping. Some stories indicate that people are quite successful

in their endeavours to cope, while other stories tend to convey a picture of emotional pain and instability. As part of the South African Air Force (SAAF), and having experienced the effect of isolation personally, I am convinced that my effort will make the stories of coping with isolation more accessible and hopefully contribute to the better understanding thereof. We use our stories to express how we experience and cope with specific incidents. Unfortunately, some stories are never shared and remained untold.

Thompson (2006:184) stated that stories told years after incidents are indicative of the moral and personal issues soldiers carry around with them, long after the deployment and the actual incident has occurred. One such story, told thirty years after the original incident, clearly demonstrates this point:

"There were ten dead. The one guy's head was lying at my feet. One guy, K, who grew up on a farm very close to where I did, was killed. His father and mother were very good friends of my parents. I was holding him and thought he would hang on even if he had lost an arm and a leg. But he died after the attack, while I was holding him. It was very emotional."

Thompson (2006:185) refers to a comment made by the same soldier. He refers to Ric, who made the following comments:

"At the time you don't care. You are so angry with these people. You just see K's face and the other guys who'd got blown to pieces and you just didn't care. And that is the bad thing about those sorts of actions and war: you lose your self-respect and you don't feel emotions for or empathy with anyone. The person you fought has a mother and father back home too. You don't think about that at the time. That comes later. At that time you are quite happy that the son of a bitch is dead, because he tried to kill you.

I have friends who saw a lot of action in the seventies and eighties, the really elite guys, who were absolutely awesome soldiers. We talk about things amongst ourselves, but even then, only superficially. Even now, 30 years on, if you get into the emotional side of things, we will change the subject or watch rugby or get a beer or something."

Peace-keeping deployments are supposed to be safer, more moral and ethically sound. However, during these peace-keeping deployments, you are often a helpless bystander to carnage, the brutal misuse of force, poverty, diseases and an eyewitness to a whole new spectrum of moral and ethical issues.

My questions are:

1. How well are we really coping with peace-keeping deployments?
2. What is the long-term impact on our Continent?
3. What is the long-term impact on the individual soldier deployed during a peace-keeping operation?
4. What is the long-term impact on the caregivers deployed during a peace-keeping operation?
5. What stories will be told after their return home?
6. What stories will be told in thirty years' time?

Unfortunately, we have already some very sad stories, from soldiers shooting their colleagues, to soldiers who rape and murder members from the local population as well as stories of soldiers who shot and killed their own children in cold blood. Is it possible that some of this carnage could have been prevented if the caregivers were better prepared to cope with their own stress? Is it fair to even ask the question?

1.2 The Method of Approach in Context

My interest in the topic developed with the growing need in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to cope with an acute increase in deployments in Africa. As part of South Africa's rapidly changing role in Africa after 1994, more and more requests are forthcoming for South African soldiers to assist in Peace-keeping Operations. According to information shared at the Air Force Operational Readiness forum (CSAAF), an average of 3000 soldiers were constantly deployed somewhere in Africa during 2006. My own interest was further fuelled by my own unique deployment experiences and numerous stories of how other people were coping with their specific deployments.

After I had decided on the general topic, it was important to decide exactly what the title of my research would be. I considered the following titles for my research:

A: Coping with Peace Keeping operations by the SANDF, a Narrative perspective from caregivers.

B: Narrative perspectives of coping with military deployments by Caregivers in the SANDF.

C: Coping with military deployments by the SANDF, a Narrative perspective from caregivers.

D: Coping with Deployment during Peace Keeping operations, a Narrative perspective by caregivers in the SANDF.

After careful consideration my personal choice was (D).

1.3 Why Narrative Research?

In my proposed titles, I referred to the Narrative approach. The reason why I have chosen this approach is because people are by nature storytellers. Stories provide consistency and continuity to experiences and play a central role in our communication with others. To explore and understand the inner world of individuals is important for Practical Theology to be able to function. Lieblich (1998:7) explained it that narratives provide us with access to people's identity and personality.

Therefore, one of the clearest means of learning about the emotional world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators on their lives and experienced reality. Lieblich (1998:7) explains that stories are usually constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide

platform for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, accumulation of and interpretation of these remembered events.

Müller *et al* (2001:1) stated that they expect that their research may not change the world; however, they strive to understand what the narratives they are involved with mean. In their article, *Fiction writing as metaphor for research: A narrative approach*, they wrote: "For us, the aim of research is not to bring about change, but to listen to the stories and to be drawn into those stories."

Müller et al (2001:90) explained that research is similar to other stories in that it has an ending somewhere, it cannot continue indefinitely. Hopefully, the end will be joyful, but the end will be different from the beginning, in that sense, the end will always be better than the start as it provides a new perspective, even though not at all times pleasurable or even satisfying for the researcher. Müller et al (2001:90) also state that research is uplifting, inspiring, exhausting and can hurt, but that those who are called towards it, will continue to do so because in the process it gives meaning, in spite of, and during suffering.

Ann Lamont (1995:19) gave me one of the best explanations of how research is conducted in practice with the following:

"... thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead.

Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said. "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird".

I used to answer questions regarding my development and the progress of the research process, using her story. The phrase "Bird by bird" inspired me to answer questions regarding my progress as follows "Word by word, I am progressing word by word!" Sometimes, I would have preferred, if I were able, to progress page by page!

Müller et al (2001:1) stated that the structuralistic researcher has objectivity in mind by trying to be an observer from outside and by trying to bring about change from the outside. The narrative researcher, on the other hand, has subjective integrity in mind and strives for "participatory observation". I am interested in learning about the caregiver's personal experiences through their own stories. These stories are the ones that will be documented as part of personal interviews as shared by caregivers through looking back at their experiences and how they recall reality. These are the stories of how they coped with their own reality during their deployment.

Under the term "caregivers", I understand professionally trained people focusing on caring for other people as part of their mainstream work. For instance, under this broad definition, I am looking at chaplains and members of the medical profession, social workers, psychologists, doctors and nursing personnel who spent time caring for others in a professional capacity.

Since the narrative approach is more focused on a smaller sampling group, it was a natural development not to incorporate co-researchers at random, but to rather narrow down the focus area. It was during unplanned conversations

with people in the above-mentioned caregiver's professions that I asked the question "How do these people cope?" I realised that very little research is done in this field. Therefore, it was only natural to ask some of these people if they would be interested to become involved in the research process.

My first criterion was that they should have been deployed for periods of at least three months or longer. Secondly, these members' deployments should have been part of the South African National Defence Force (SANF). Thirdly, their deployments should preferably have been part of a peace-keeping or peace-enforcing mission somewhere in Africa. I was not primarily concerned about gender or race, but managed to firstly interview two female social workers and thereafter a male and female chaplain. My last interview was conducted with a nursing sister. This resulted in a 4/1 women against men ratio. It was relatively easy to decide to listen to the ladies' stories in order to focus on the research process.

1.4 The 7-Movements Approach

The research develops in 7- Movements, which reflects the assumptions and foundation of the post-foundationalism in practical theology that is implemented in the research. Methodological guidelines have been decided on for each of the movements of this research proposal. The research is constantly in a developing phase and we cannot declare that we have finalised the ideal approach. As Müller (2004) stated, the 7- Movements were still in a developmental phase and therefore, I presume that changes will be made to better reflect the purpose of the new approach. In broad terms, I have tried to base my chapters on the outlay as suggested by the 7-Movement approach.

The main headings of the 7- Movements Approach are:
1. A Specific context is described.
2. In-Context experiences are listened to and described.
3. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in Collaboration with "co-researchers''.
4. Descriptions of experiences as these are continually informed by traditions of interpretations and experiences.
5. A Reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation.
6. A Description of experience, augmented by interdisciplinary investigation.
7. The Development of alternative interpretations, that point beyond the local community.

My reasoning in preferring the 7-Movements Approach is as follows: The specific focus and reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation, are a huge change in mindset. As practical theologian, one must simply

reflect on how God's presence, whether positive or negative, is understood and experienced in a specific situation.

For me, the other positive outcome in the 7-Movement Approach is the acknowledgement of the growing contact between various inter-disciplinary groupings. In exactly the same way that we as theologians need the inputs from our colleagues in the fields of medicine, psychology, social work and other human sciences, we play a similar role in their respective fields of focus. This means that we can learn from one another and that there are certain areas where we are working in the same field, almost digging next to one another. Both can benefit from the knowledge of the other party, thus assisting one another in the "digging" process and contributing towards new and exciting findings in the digging pit!

1.5 A Specific Peace-Keeping Context

"In these areas, there are many opinions but few established experts; no immutable guidelines; and no partial precedents which, like the Bible, can be cited to prove just about anything you want."

- Madelaine K. Albright

The first movement in this research is to describe the specific context. I will focus on the context of peace-keeping, South Africa's involvement in peacekeeping through the South African National Defence Force and my academic positioning. In my introduction, I have already addressed my personal context regarding isolation in deployments to the end of the world.

Since the 1994 democratic changes in South Africa, hailed by the world as a "miracle", there are great expectations of the role that South Africa can and

must play in contributing towards peace and stability in Africa and even elsewhere in the world. Cilliers and Mills (1996:153-161) refer to the following comments made by South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996, Aziz Pahad, during his address "South Africa and Preventative Diplomacy". Pahad stated the following:

"In the light of the so-called 'African fatigue' prevalent amongst many of the principal industrial and military powers, and the understanding that South Africa cannot prosper in splendid isolation in a continent not at peace with itself, it is in its national interest to play an important role in the conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, especially in sub-Sahara Africa."

Williams (Cilliers & Mills, 1999:153) recalled how the new South African government, after having emerged almost euphorically from the elections and negotiations of the preceding four years, was not initially focused on peace-keeping missions. Yet, within months, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence were inundated with requests and queries ranging from courses to elaborations on their position on direct participation in peace-keeping missions per se.

Recent developments of peace-keeping evolved from the need amongst stable countries to assist those in turmoil in order to create stability and make progress towards a more peaceful universe. Theo Neethling (Cilliers & Mills, 1999:27) confirms that peacekeeping was pioneered by the UN as one of the

means to maintain international security and peace. Although the Cold War, to most, became a mere bad memory of which original tensions have subsided considerably, resurgent ethic, nationalist and other factors have threatened peace in many regions. Consequently, UN peace-keeping operations have grown rapidly in number as well as in complexity.

According to Neethling (Cilliers & Mills, 1999:27), the UN has launched more peace-keeping operations in Africa than in any other single region on earth. Up to this moment, African Wars remain one of the priorities on the list of the Secretary-General of the UN. Unfortunately, it seems that the UN successes in Africa are outweighed by the many unresolved conflicts where intervention is needed. Neethling (Cilliers & Mills, 1999:27) also points out that the failures of peace-keeping operations are highlighted by the weakness of the UN as a diplomatic, arbiter, peacekeeper and especially as a peace-enforcer. In fact, the successes of the peace-keeping role of the UN can easily become the standard against which the organisation's successes are measured. Since 1999, considerable successes were achieved in many of these peace-keeping operations where the South African Defence Force played a significant part.

Shaw and Cilliers (1995:2) established that the original terminology associated with "peacekeeping' has changed since the Secretary-General of the UN issued his pioneering report in June 1992, "*An Agenda for Peace*". According to NATO, preventative diplomacy is defined as "action designed to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur." According to Shaw and Cilliers (1995:2) peace-support operations describe a range of activities including conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, peace-enforcement and peace-building. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and the distinction between them is often unclear.

John Ruggie (1993:3) explained that Peacekeeping can be recognised by its interpositionary or "umpire" role as peace-keeping forces fight against neither side in a dispute but remain impartial and try to keep the disputing parties apart. They normally carry only light arms and shoot only in self-defence. In other words, unlike combat units, peace-keeping forces are not designed to create the conditions for their own success. These conditions must pre-exist for them to be able to perform their role. This implies that it is considerably more difficult to conduct successful peace-keeping operations than it is to conduct a straight forward conventional military operation.

John Ruggie (1993:4) also stresses that the role of peace-keeping soldiers is essentially a non-military mission, conducted by military personnel. Beginning in the late 1980s, the United Nations included monitoring and conducting elections, as well as related services that facilitate transitions to stable government. John Ruggie (1993:4) continues his argument by pointing out that Namibia's first democratic election is an example of this type of peace-keeping mission, implying that the non-military part of the peace-keeping operation was the dominant priority.

According to Malan and Lord (2000:87), the most important development in peacekeeping in Africa in the 1990s was the emergent African consensus that countries south of the Sahara will have to take responsibility for most interventions in the future. The long-held African faith in the United Nations, fuelled by the large African presence in the General Assembly, has dissolved

in the face of outright failures in Somalia and Rwanda and the inability to act in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These statements were made in papers presented at two related conferences held in Prague and Pretoria in May and October 1999. Herbst's (Malan & Lord, 2000:94) paper "*The Complicated Future of Peacekeeping in Africa*" stated that there has been a gradual disillusionment globally with the Organization of African Unity in view of its recurrent inability to organise effectively.

The ambitious goal for an African solution to African problems is admirable. It signals the end of the West's patronizing attitude towards Africa. However, according to Herbst (Malan & Lord, 2000:94) the assumptions behind the now widely held idea that 'African Solutions to African Problems' is somehow more appropriate, more ethical, and more efficacious than other types of intervention have not to date, been examined.

Herbst (Malan & Lord, 2000:94) concludes his argument by stating that benign interventions, where the peacekeepers act in a matter that is not guided first and foremost by their own parochial national interests, are unlikely in Africa. The international community welcomed the new African assertiveness, although by sub-contracting peace-keeping interventions to African states, the international community is essentially saying that conflicts

in large countries, such as Angola, DRC and Sudan, are hopeless. This admission was a stunning moral and ethical lapse at the end of the twentieth century.

In the brutal world of international relations, soldiers are forced to try not only to stabilize an almost impossible situation, but they must also cope with their own emotions, feelings and strife to find internal stability in an unstable environment. For caregivers involved with trying to find and provide moral and ethical guidelines, this is a growing challenge in the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Ambassador Howard Walker (Lewis, 1993:7), Vice-President, National Defence University, referred to the growing interest in peacekeeping during a time when the consequences of UN peacekeeping have exploded both in cost as well as in complexity. Walker (Malan & Lord, 2000:94) commented that "we see brutal civil wars that are difficult to control". He made a very valid point by stating that injecting UN peace-keeping operations into those situations have far-reaching human and material cost. Therefore, it is essential that we try to understand the nature and impact of peace-keeping, not only in the local population of the deployed countries, but also on the deployed soldiers and their families.

Cilliers & Mills (1999:1) place a number of facts in context regarding the development of peace-keeping operations:

1. Peacekeeping was originally predominantly a matter of upholding a peace on which consensus had already been agreed.
2. In the aftermath of the cold war the situation changed drastically.
3. In 1987, the UN was involved in five such operations with a total deployment of 10 000 military personnel.
4. In 1994 this had increased to seventeen operations with a deployment of over 70 000 members.

5. It is also notable that in 1994 an estimated seventy per cent of these deployments were conducted in Africa.

6. This led to a growth in the UN's peace-keeping budget from US $400 million in 1990 to more than US$3,5 billion in 1994. This budget is still growing annually.

Stuart & Halverson (1997:737) point out that since the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the deployment of US troops worldwide has increased dramatically. However, the knowledge of the long- term effect of frequent deployments on the general psychological health of active soldiers is still not known. Several international studies documented in Military Medicine, The Journal of Applied Social Psychology etc, were conducted in recent years. The Canadians and Americans did most of these studies. Theo Neethling (Cilliers & Mills, 1999:27) noted that research in the field of peacekeeping has focused on a wide range of different issues, ranging from political science, to military science and psychology.

I was not able to find any recent research in South Africa regarding the topic "Coping With Deployment During Peace-Keeping Operations". There was a number of studies done prior to 1994 and the transition to a new South Africa, focusing on either the role of National Service and/or the impact thereof on society. Ferreira (1984:56) focused on the effect that the Namibia/Angolan war had on families. Currently the new studies and articles in South Africa are focusing much more on the strategic level and the domestic and foreign policies in terms of peacekeeping, peace-support operations as well as on peace enforcement!

Shaw & Cilliers (1995:2-3) tried to promote better understanding of the terminology. It is necessary to clarify the terminology used. This overview refers to an article written after a Seminar in Cape Town in May 1995 on "South African Policy on Global Peace Support Efforts":

1. Conflict prevention can range from diplomatic initiatives to the preventative deployment of troops in order to prevent existing conflicts from escalating into armed conflicts.

2. Peace-making is the diplomatic actions aimed at establishing a peaceful settlement once conflict is in progress or has resumed.

3. Peace-keeping is the containment, moderation and/or termination of hostilities between or within states through various mediums as to complement the political process of conflict resolution and to maintain peace.

4. Peace-enforcement is defined under Chapter VII of the UN Charter as "using military means to restore peace in an area of conflict". The most dramatic instance of peace-enforcement was the US led Operation Desert Storm that re-established the territorial integrity of Kuwait following Iraq's invasion.

5. Peace-building is generally seen to be actions taken after conflict to identify and support structures that strengthen and solidify a peace settlement in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Pro-actively, peace-

building could also include concrete co-operative projects that would link two or more countries in a mutually beneficial undertaking.

6. Humanitarian relief operations refer to missions conducted to relieve human suffering, normally when local authorities are either unable or unwilling to do so. South Africa's involvement in such operations may follow upon natural or man-made disasters, such as floods, drought, pollution and even tsunamis.

Rosebush (1998:559) focused on research done on Canadian Forces during deployment in Rwanda. This research provides some insight into what South African soldiers may experience during their deployment elsewhere in Africa under extreme conditions.

Typical stressors for Canadian Forces during deployment to Rwanda included fear of the unknown, personal safety, overwork, uncertainty about how long the mission would last, and the need to constantly adapt and to cope with death and human misery on a daily basis. The major psychological conflict-deployed soldiers grappled with, was the denial of powerlessness.

A vital component of research within the framework of Practical Theology on a topic embedded in political and military science, is a broad investigation into Practical Theology's origin and development.

1.6 History of Pastoral Theology

From the very beginning of the church, the actions of Christians described as "shepherds" or "pastors" embodied theology in practice. This perception is expressed in numerous documentation, descriptions, discourses, positions and statements that contain, at least originally, a pastoral thought. Mario Midali (2000:16) refers to some Classical texts: the Apologia on his Flight, by Saint Gregory Nazienzen, (Midali, 2000:330-390), On the Priesthood, by Saint John Chrysostom (Midali, 2000:349-407), On the Duties of the Clergy, by Saint Ambrose of Milan (Midali, 2000:430-379), and the Letter to Nepotian, by Saint Jerome (Midali, 2000:350-420). Browning (Willows & Swinton, 2000:9) stated "critical reflection on praxis lies at the heart of the practical theological task. Critical reflection on the discipline itself will encourage growth and positive new directions".

David Willows and John Swinton (2004:11) acknowledged that with the fascinating aspects of practical theology, it remains one of the fastest growing areas in theology in the UK and elsewhere in the world. Through numerous courses and modules at universities and seminaries, students are given an opportunity to explore the interface between theology and practical living. However, the question of what the term practical theology precisely entails or implies, remains a topic of debate and disagreement.

The concept of how practical theology is currently so "open" that one could be forgiven for assuming that practical theology is whatever any participating theologian defines it to be. Therefore, it is important to understand the background and development path that the phrase has followed on its journey through history.

According to Mario Midali (2000:11-12), the Catholic church has originally used the term Pastoral Theology for several centuries although they added the term "Practical Theology" as a sub-title, intending to focus their theological reflection on the application of pastoral ministry in the widest possible context of the church.

Currently, a considerable number of pastoral theologians, especially in German-, Flemish-, French- and English-speaking areas, has abandoned the term "pastoral theology" in favour for the term "practical theology".

Amongst Protestants, the theologians have usually held to the nomenclature or classification of practical theology. Nomenclature refers to a system of names or terms used by an individual or community, especially those used in a particular science. Most theologians worldwide currently use the term practical theology. Mario Midali points out (2000:19-20) that in the Catholic Church, pastoral theology was born on significant impulse by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) as a practical implementation of the Council's reform plans. These steps outline a plan for church reform, which resolves itself in determining the characteristics of the ideal pastor.

During the Enlightenment, the need to establish a University statue for Pastoral Theology arose an in the process, justifying its theological and scientific character. Midali points out (2000:21) that the first important attempt to move in this direction can be ascribed to Stephan Rautenstrauch, a Benedictine abbot (1734-1785). He was the first director of the theologian Faculty of Prague and later in 1774, director of the theological Faculty of Vienna. It is very interesting to note that the debate at that time was focused on the position of practical theology solely as part of the pragmatic world and not as part of theology. Midali wrote (2000:21) that "at the same time, the theological speculation of the time was open to profound criticism for its propensity to devote so much time to useless academic hair-splitting on topics that had no practical value".

Rautenstrauch, as the first director of the theologian Faculty of Prague, proposed a plan that does not simply "touch up" the amalgamated practical relevance of the current being taught then. In fact, he proposed reorganising the entire theological curriculum in order to mould it into a decisively pastoral orientation. Rautenstrauch laid the first foundations of what later would be the humble beginnings of an academic discipline called Practical Theology.

The question that constantly needs to be answered, is the balance between "practical" and "theology" going from theory to practice and back again in a never ending spiralling movement. The same balance and debate between practical relevance and theological depth are still as relevant today. Often the same critique can be heard today against splitting hairs over "irrelevant" theological issues and topics, or being so 'worldly' as to be similar to all other academic disciplines, and that without any merit to our Christian heritage and belief systems.

David Willows and John Swinton (2004:11-12) feel that the different perspectives present in practical theology range from the ministers applying theology in their daily encounters, to academics looking at the process of theological reflection. It can range from the counsellor where practical theology presents itself in a dialogue, to an ongoing conversation with contemporary psychological theories. All of these actions in their own specific ways are helping and guiding us to develop a more meaningful existence as

human beings. Since this research is based on the platform of Practical Theology, it is important to understand the origins of practical theology and some of the fundamental assumptions these are based upon.

Osmer stated (Shults, 2006:327) that practical theology as an academic subject, emerged in the context of the modern research university. It forms part of the four-fold pattern of theology as practiced by the encyclopaedias in North America and Europe. Subjects that are referred to, are biblical studies which include Old and New Testament studies, church history and theology which include dogma, ethics as well as practical theology. Most Universities teaching theology in South Africa followed this theological pattern to some extent. Theology cannot research God or scientifically prove nor disprove His or Her existence. Theology can only research how people experience God's presence in their own lives, and how they relate and describe their experiences of the presence of God.

1.7 Practical Theology

The terms Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology are sometimes used as if these are exactly the same thing and in other circumstances as if they are totally different from one another. Woodward and Pattison (2000:1-2) explain that Pastoral Theology is an older term that goes far back into history and that it is related to the need to guide and heal. Here the image of the pastor as the Sheppard looking after its flock, based on John 10:11, where Jesus described himself as the 'Good Sheppard of His sheep' is used. Pattison and Woodward see Pastoral Theology in broad terms as the theological reflection and underpinning that guided pastoral care towards ensuring the well-being of the individual and the Christian "flock". This term is still used particularly in the Catholic tradition to describe practical pastoral action such as marriage preparation, burying rituals or serving sacraments.

Practical theology is a term that emerged in the German protestant tradition in the late eighteenth century as part of their academic theological curriculum. Woodward and Pattison (2000:2) are of the opinion that the concerns of Practical Theology extend beyond pastoral care with specialisation in worship, church management, preaching and Christian education.

It must be kept in mind that practical theology and pastoral theology have different historical uses and traditions, although the term is often applied interchangeably. Woodward and Pattison (2000:4) rightly stated that it is certainly possible to define practical theology and pastoral theology, but it is probably not very useful to do so because definitions differ. There is not one universally accepted definition of either term.

The Woodward and Pattison (2000:7) definition is as follows:

"Pastoral/practical theology is a place where religious beliefs, traditions and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming."

Müller (1996:1) stated that Practical Theology occurs whenever a person at any place and time starts contemplating on practice, from the viewpoint of their personal experience of the revelation and presence of God.

With any thinking and reflecting upon God and His manifestation in daily life, one is already actively busy with some form of basic Practical Theology. There are clearly diverse degrees of Practical Theology. On the one hand Practical Theology can be very rigid, formal, and systematic - almost over-organized and very structured. On the other hand, Practical Theology can also be very spontaneous without deep theological debates, informal discussions and localised in the specific situation. This localisation may vary from a hospital to a pub, from a deployment theatre in Central Africa to a youth group in Durban.

Practical Theology can function and operate on different levels. It can equally be part of ministerial activities at congregational level, and in the chaplaincy in the middle of Africa. Similarly, Practical Theology can either happen informally between laypeople while discussing how they experience God's presence in their lives, or it may be a highly academic discussion at university level between PhD students or professors of their understanding of God's presence in their own, but particularly in the lives of mankind.

Müller (1996:1) added to a phrase used by Anthony H Jones in a lecture with reference to Calvin Schrag commented, when he wrote the following about practical theology: "It is always guided by the moment of praxis practical theology, is always local, embedded, and situated". This is the strength and the challenge of Practical Theology to remain in the moment of praxis, relevant and essential to the people in the situation, but notwithstanding the practical applications, still managing to remain scientifically accountable.

That is the challenge for Practical Theology. It implies that similar problems at different locations may lead to different questions and different answers. The different conclusions may be equally correct in different places between different people in different times. In short, this means that there is not only one answer, but different options are possible in different localised situations depending on culture, education, religious outlook, social background and the time frame the questions are posed in.

1.7.1 Theology

Before Practical Theology can be contemplated, one has to ask: "What is Theology?" Although Theology has been taught at Universities through the ages, its status as a University subject had always been in question. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) explained that since the word "theology" is a combination of two Greek words – *theos*, meaning God, and *logos*, meaning word. Theology is thus a word about God. The question that arises is whether one can speak scientifically about God. We can only speak to God. Any statement about God is almost a statement of faith. Whether the individual accepts or rejects God is his/her statement of faith.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) state that God cannot be captured in human language, nor can God be objectified and thus be studied scientifically. All that can be studied is people's statements about God and their faith in God.

How individuals, groups and society experience and respond towards their specific understanding and perception of God or gods can be studied. Theology may, therefore, be defined as a scientific study of people's faith in

and their religious statements of their own understanding of God. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) further state that theology would never have developed as a field of study, had it not been for people's faith and religious reflection.

Ballard (Willows & Swinton, 2004:29) emphasises that Practical Theology is not simply the bridge between theory and practice, but that it is one of a number of fields in theology. Each of these fields draws on the resources and concerns of the others, but each also has its own central focal point. The purpose of all these theological activities is to equip God's children to live on the earth. Ballard (Willows & Swinton, 2004:29) feels that the specific task of Practical Theology is to start with the concrete, historical, instantaneous reality, critically assessing and in the process allowing the practical life of the church in all its many different variations to draw on the conclusion founded in historical, fundamental, and systemic theology.

On the other hand, Practical Theology will simultaneously be needed by the other theological disciplines as they too wrestle with the question of how to empower and enable the church and Christians to remain faithful in today's world. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) rightly state that practical theology does not confine itself solely to the formal activities of the church, but also examine all the religious activities of people who seek to live Christian lives. Therefore, practical theology is not only important to pastors, but to all Christians, because we are all daily confronted with people's spiritual needs – particularly those close to us – our friends, family and colleagues.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) continue this line of thought by stating that it is currently accepted that modern (and post-modern) societies could not be conquered by the institutional church from the outside. It could, however, be accomplished through the witness of believers living and working in those societies, intimately acquainted with their communities. It is not about dishing out tracts or conducting prayer meetings at work, but about performing our daily tasks in a perspective of faith.

Part of this research is looking at the practical impact of whether or not caregivers' faith assists them in coping during a deployment. It would be wrong to make such an assumption simply based on one's own perception and point of view.

1.7.2 The Minimum Requirements for a Post-foundationalist Practical Theology

In an article that was originally presented at a workshop during the International Biennial Conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology, 25-29 June 2005, in Brisbane, Australia (2005:78) Müller formulated his viewpoints of the minimum requirements for a Post-foundationalist Practical Theology.

According to Browning (1983:6), theology can be practical if we bring practical concerns to it right from the start. Browning favoured the practice-theory-practice model, which breaks with the application model that has only two elements namely theory and practice. This pattern follows from practice to theoretical reflection and back to practice again.

Thomas Ogletree (Browning, 1983:85) wrote: "Theology is practical in the sense that it concerns, in all of its expressions, the most basic of human existence". Paul Ballard (Willows & Swinton, 2000:27) refers to a seminar for post graduate students. There was a discussion on the nature of Practical Theology. During the debate one of the participating pastors asked why all the academics are so anxious to analyse the nature of theological activity. "After all, he said, as a working minister, he had to get on with the job on the basis of a convenient and appropriate working theological model". It was, therefore, not necessary for the academics to continuously peer under the bonnet of the car when the car had to be out on the road.

This emphasises some of the issues at hand. It points to the growing alienation between academic theology and the need in the practical situation. This very tension is precisely what theologians are constantly trying to come to grips with. Theology's task is to provide a resource of how Christians can understand God's message, of how it can be understood in practical day-to-day life. Ballard (Willows & Swinton, 2000:29) stated that each field of theology is part of the practical demands for Christian understanding in contemporary society. Theology is not purely theoretical or a critical enquiry that remains detached from reality. In fact, Biblical studies are not only archaeological history or text critical studies, but it informs doctrine, preaching, prayer and very importantly - ethics.

There may be tension and differences, even some conflict of opinion between the different theological subjects. However, at the end of the day, they all work together, striving to make sense of biblical documents, history, ethics and applying them in practice in different ways and in different styles.

I will try to explain this concept further by using a metaphor. Imagine numerous different vehicles on the road, all with different engines and various capacities. Notwithstanding the huge difference in price, age, colour and so forth, they still share a common transportation purpose. They are expected to move from point A to point B. In that broader picture they all have different yet very specific purposes. A hearse and an ice-cream truck are very different in their specific purpose, but both must be able to move from one point to another to qualify as vehicles.

The main question that remains between the different theological subjects, is whether all these different vehicles are able to fulfil their specific tasks, with or without looking under the bonnet constantly? Even admitting that although some are using diesel and others are using petrol, batteries or solar panels to achieve propulsion, they still share vast mutual purposes.

Practical Theology is an instrument for how people can reflect their experience of the presence of God in their lives in a way that is logical and may hopefully carry great weight with both the individual and those interested in a more academic approach. The following are pre-requisites not only for sound methodology doing research within the Practical Theology, but also to reflect on its epistemic nature. This is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

In an effort to better comprehend the methodological dynamics, which are created by a post-foundationalist understanding of Practical Theology, a closer look at these minimum requirements is needed. Social constructionism will be discussed in some detail in chapter four. The following points should be considered to assist in the process of understanding God's presence in our lives:

1. Locally contextual.

2. Socially constructed.

3. Directed by tradition.

4. Exploring inter-disciplinary meaning.

5. Pointing beyond the local.

1.7.3 Locally Contextual

One of the basic building blocks of Practical Theology is its specific focus on the concrete context (Willows & Swinton, 2000:42). Practical Theology cannot function in a general context. It must be very exact, not vague and generalised. It must be concrete and applicable to the actual situation and relevant to "real' people in that particular situation. Practical Theology must, therefore, always be local or specific. If Practical Theology were not to be practiced in this way, it moves into the field of Systemic Theology.

It could well be argued that all theology should be relevant and practically applied in some form or the other. However, some subjects in theology are further removed from being extremely relevant in day-to-day practical situations than others. For instance, specific documentation on a church meeting held fifty years ago about the problem of bees in the outhouse may be interesting on certain levels, it may be humorous for some and others may be reminded that every generation has its own challenges. How interesting or boring the story of the bees in the outhouse may or may not be, it will probably still remain less relevant today than it was fifty years ago for those that needed to use that specific outhouse!

It could be argued that caregivers about to be deployed as part of a peace-keeping mission might be very interested in reading my research; they may be motivated by their hope to gain some guidance on how to survive emotionally and spiritually as a caregiver in a deployment situation. But, it is quite possible that caregivers may not be interested at all due to their own religious point of view or simply that they prefer not to be influenced by other people's stories and perceptions prior to their own deployment.

Similarly, it could be easily argued that non-deployable caregivers, especially those who are not part of the military, might not be interested at all in the relevance of my research, simply because it is not locally contextualised and has no relevance to them personally. Others more interested in the general effects of coping in more isolated circumstances, like remote mining areas or working for civilian companies in Africa, may equally be motivated by their own specific context. They maybe. A chemical engineer living in Minnesota would most likely not be interested in this particular research, even at the odd change that he/she may even be aware of its existence in the first place.

Going back to the argument that all theology should be relevant, in addition to the story of the bees in the outhouse, I am going to take the argument one

step further. The debate of whether or not soldiers should relinquish their arms before entering a place of worship, may lead them back towards a fictional tale of swords in church a long time ago. For me it is possible that a reverence towards a non-specific, undated, unsigned, badly documented meeting that may or may not have occurred in the eighth year of the twelfth century, debating whether soldiers may or may not bring their swords into church, may still be slightly relevant for some soldiers today.

It may be more relevant if there were currently an active debate over the question of whether arms may be taken into church or a place of peace and sanctimony by those soldiers deployed in an operational theatre or as part of a peace-keeping mission. They may be asking whether or not weapons may be brought into a church service or not, and try to determine guidelines in history of how similar dilemmas were dealt with in the past. Currently, most soldiers would probably not be interested in such a debate at all.

Similarly, someone who is doing research on the impact of HIV on children, or the children themselves, will probably be considerably less interested in the above-mentioned topic, if at all. Simply because the initial issue is not relevant to them, they may not be interested.

Operating from within the paradigm of the post-foundationalist social constructionist practical theology as framework, it is relevant for me to ask how does a specific caregiver in a specific context cope with deployment and then to focus on trying to understand how that individual copes with the stress during peace-keeping missions. This is more relevant than talking about swords in church during the twelfth century, or even discussing small arms in a present-day chaplain's service. The question regarding the swords will most probably be of no concern or relevance to anybody not affected by or interested in the topic. Similarly, there are numerous studies in South Africa on the topic of HIV/AIDS that may be of little interest to people in Turkey where there is an almost non-existing HIV/AIDS infection rate.

The reference to Church History and specifically to the history of Practical Theology, does not imply that we cannot learn and gather very useful information from history, or that Church History as an academic subject is of lesser value than Practical Theology. Church History is simply a different

subject with different focus areas. This explanation tries to emphasise the fact that Practical Theology is locally contextualised in order to remain relevant.

We as humans have a history of not learning from the past. We can learn from debates in the twelfth century, but it must have practical application value for the praxis, the moment we are in. If such knowledge cannot be applied locally and be relevant in a specific context, it is not Practical Theology and remains either an interesting, or useless bit of historical documented information.

Müller explained (2005:78) that Practical Theology should be distinguished from other theological disciplines, not only by its general context but also by its truthfulness when observing a particular context. Practical Theology should not only be truthful to the exact context, but also be truthful to the methodology of choice with a definite movement from context (praxis) to theory and, very important, a move back towards context again.

1.7.4 Practical Theology in relation to Systemic Theology

Child's (1998:193) recollection of the following interesting conversation between a pastoral theologian, Hiltner and a systematic theologian, Tillich, illustrates the position of Practical Theology in perspective to systemic theology:

Tillich: "Let us say there was a certain man…"

Hiltner (interrupting):"What was his name?"

Tillich: "Oh, … err… let us say John. So there was this man named John and …"

Hiltner (interrupting): "Was he married?"

Tillich: "Let us say he was. So there was this married man, John, who …"

Hiltner (interrupting again):   "What was his wife's name? Did they both work?"

Tillich (with exasperation: "Prof Hiltner, won't you please let me finish? What is the meaning of all these questions?"

Hiltner: "To speak of just any man is to speak of no man at all".

This frustrating story between the two theologian professors clearly illustrates two different approaches and perspectives. One approach is not necessarily right, wrong or better, it is simply different from the other. The one refers to a vague unidentifiable man with a fictitious name – if need be, but without any real substance and depth in his character, while the other participant in the story was specifically interested in the unknown facts of how the man's life is really constructed. He was interested in the detail and personal specifics that make 'John' unique and different from other people.

That is why I am not interested in all the stories of all the caregivers ever deployed, during all peace-keeping missions, in all the different countries that have seen peace-keeping deployment since such missions first occurred. I am content to listen in-depth to the experiences and stories of four professional caregivers. I try to focus on the stories of these unique women, all of them working within the SANDF, and how they, in their own unique way have managed to cope within a specific localised context within their specific own circumstances, with more or less success. The level of their success in coping is also determined by themselves and not by me. They are in a better position to determine whether or not they were able to cope with their specific situations than an outsider listening to their stories at a later stage with his or her own subjective outlook.

The specific focus on localised situations is in line with the narrative Practical Theological approach.   Within the narrative approach and qualitative approach, it will at any rate become totally impossible and impractical to listen in depth (especially with feedback loops included), to all caregivers ever involved in deployment. The time involved and the logistics involved, as well as the effort to listen to all the stories, and reinterpreting all the stories of everybody ever deployed, are simply an unattainable task. The enormity of such an undertaking makes it an impossible task. This is in sharp contrast with a research process where a list of questions on an answer sheet is ticked

off. Quantitative research is not a feasible option; therefore, the qualitative approach was the obvious choice for this research.

1.7.5 Socially Constructed

Social Constructionism is also discussed in chapter four. Here it is addressed as part of the points to consider in assisting us with the process of understanding God's presence in our lives. Carla Willig (2001:7) correctly points out the growing influence of Social Constructionism in that it draws attention to the fact that human perceptions and experiences are mediated linguistically (by the words we use), culturally (by the norms and practices we accept), as well as historically (where we come from).

In other words, what we experience and perceive is never (or very seldom) an undeviating indication of environmental conditions. Our experiences and perceptions must rather be understood as 'reality' viewed and then interpreted by the individual, leading towards a very specific understanding of those unique conditions as experienced from that particular angle and approach. This does not imply that we can never really understand anything 'correctly', but it implies that we accept and acknowledge that there are "knowledges" rather than "knowledge".

Berger (1966:15) wrote: "The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality". Willig (2001:1) also emphasised the fact that language plays an important role in the process of how the "knowledges" are socially constructed. How we see and interpret and consequently understand life is primarily expressed through words.

This can easily be explained by the well-known metaphor of a bottle being "half full" or "half empty". Both descriptions are equally correct, yet one can be more negative and worrisome, emphasising the emptiness and lack of recourses by focusing on the bottle that is half empty. Whereas, if one focus on the half full bottle, it provides a positive, optimistic almost hopeful look on the same situation. This metaphor of the half full or half empty bottle is in my opinion applicable to a large portion of the population.

This approach implies that the same situation, observable fact, or incident, can be described in different ways, giving rise to different options and ways of understanding or perceiving the same thing. Yet, neither way of understanding and describing the same situation, an observable fact or incident, is necessarily incorrect or accurate, they are just different ways of looking at, and understanding the same thing. It is ironic that the same fundamentalist claiming that the Bible as the only "truth" and who opposes some of the social construction and post-foundationalist ideas so strongly, accepts the different versions within the gospels without realising that those different versions were themselves socially constructed. This is due to the individuals' (who recorded the original message) different understanding and focus areas within the process of writing them, thus explaining the differences between the "same" stories.

According to my understanding, social constructionism does not diminish the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the process of understanding scripture at all. It rather emphasises the wonderful way in which God guides us towards understanding, not only through scripture, but also emphasises how the Holy Spirit guides us towards new understanding of our own lives and the lives of

those who share the world before us as well as those sharing the world currently with us, and, hopefully, to consider those who are still coming.

Until today, the study of ancient languages and background history is essential for serious biblical scholars in order to assist them in deconstructing the original message and re-constructing it in a relevant form today. We cannot reach a point to declare, full of arrogance, that we have reached complete understanding of God's revelation to man, or that we understand the universe and everything in it completely. We must rather humbly admit that we do not understand the universe lock, stock and barrel; neither do we understand mankind or ourselves all that well. We can only strive for better understanding and wisdom.

This reminds me of the scripture in 1 Corinthians 13:11-12 (Good News 1998:227):

"When I was a child, my speech, feelings, and thinking were all those of a child; now that I have grown up, I have no more use of childish ways. What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know is only partial; then it will be complete – as complete as God's knowledge of me".

The more I know, the more I am aware of how little I really know. The mirror is indeed very dim, and instead of getting clearer, it is as if more and dirtier cloths are adding new obstacles that add towards the difficulty in seeing God clearly. In fact, it is quite possible that every new perception and thought add towards the process of obscuring our image of God and not necessarily in clarifying our view. Maybe, it is time to accept that what we observe in the mirror may well be different from what another person is seeing and observing in the same mirror.

This metaphor reminds me of the story of the couple that moved into a new home. After the wife had seen the neighbours' newly done washing on the washing line, she commented on how faded and even dirty the neighbours' washing looked. This continued for a few weeks, until one morning she exclaimed, surprised and joyously, that the neighbours washing was at last clean and bright without any sign of fading. Her husband's only comment was "I cleaned the window this morning"! The sad part of it is human's unwillingness to admit that we do not all see and experience God in the exact same way. Our difficulty is not only to realise that we look through a window, but also the realisation that sometimes our own beliefs and ideas may distort the picture of how we see the world. It will never cease to amaze me how adamant and totally convinced people are able to state their position as correct and all other opinions that differ with their "truth" to be in the wrong.

1.7.6 Agree to Disagree

This suggested approach of understanding "knowledge" implies that there may be more than one way to look at something and that both positions, although different in their point of view and standpoint, may in fact be correct. I want to take the point even one step further. Even if I may not think that someone with an opinion different from mine is correct and I may be convinced, based upon my understanding of the truth, that he/she is indeed

wrong, it does not imply that he/she does not retain the right to have an own standpoint, even if we agree to disagree.

This argument is not acceptable at all for those with a more fundamental point of view. Especially when the possibility arose where certain scriptures may be interpreted from different perspectives and traditions (shared points of view), people react very negatively towards any point of view that differs from their own. Sadly, Christians, while proclaiming not only to accept the love of Jesus and spreading that love to the world, don't have a very good track record for tolerance. This tendency of intolerance and aggression against those that differ from "us" is unfortunately not completely in the past. History reveals some frightening episodes of very unchristian love amongst believers. Bettenson (1963:132) refers to the decrees of the Fourth Lateran council in 1215 where the foundations of the inquisition were laid.

Bettenson (1963:179) continues his explanation by pointing out that although the inquisition never functioned in England, except for the Templars' trails in 1401, it marks the beginning of the official persecution of heresy in England.

Miller (1980:1010-1012) shares the following story from the year 1517, the same year Luther nailed his thesis to the church door:

John Brown of Ashford, an intelligent Christian, happened to seat himself beside a priest in the Gravesend passage boat. "Dost thou know who I am?" said the priest, in a most haughty manner.

"No sir," said Brown.

"Well then, thou must know that I am a priest, you are to near me."

"Indeed, sir! Are you a parson, or a vicar, or a lady's chaplain?"

"No, I am a *soul-priest,* I sing mass to save souls."

> "Do you, sir?" rejoined Brown, that is well done "and can you tell me where to find the soul when you begin the mass?"

> "I cannot," said the priest.

> "And where do you leave it, pray, when mass is ended?"

> "I do not know," said the priest.

> "What!" continued Brown, "you do not know where you find the soul or where you leave it, and yet you say that you save it!"

> "Go thy ways," said the priest angrily, "thou art a heretic, and I will be even with thee".

As soon as the priest arrived in Canterbury, he denounced Brown to the Archbishop. Three days later, Brown was dragged from his dinner table and thrown into prison, held for forty days without his wife having any idea what happened to him or what had been done to him. Then he was brought up to trial and ordered to retract his blasphemy.

Brown said: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and it is by this sacrifice we are saved, not by the repetitions of the priests".

At this reply the archbishop made a sign to the executioners, who immediately took off his shoes and stockings and placed his bare feet on a pan of burning coals. This was in direct violation of the English laws, which forbade torture to

be inflicted on any subject of the crown, but the clergy thought themselves above the law. The flesh was burnt off the soles of his feet even to the bones, and still John Brown remained firm.

He was burned alive the next morning. This is but one of numerous horror stories in the Christian history, tainting the church's reputation and credibility until this very day. The recent court case between a congregation and a previous employee after a dismissal by the church due to his sexual preference, is not as physically violent as burning people on the stake. However, in my opinion, the message of unconditional love in that churches are the carriers of love and hope, the carriers of peace and forgiveness, is still not coming through to the majority of people!

To continue with the same point on a different track, I want to refer to the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (2008) "Dictionary of Theology" on their web page. On this web page they provide short explanations for specific terms and phrases. One of these explanations refers to post-modernism as "a relativistic system of observation, a thought that denies absolutes and objectivity according to their understanding".

The Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry acknowledge the fact that Post-modernism has influenced theology, art, culture, architecture, society, film, technology, as well as economics. They feel that traditional, social, art, and cultural constructs are discarded and reinterpreted in relativistic terms. An example of post-modern thought for them would be the validation of homosexuality as an equally legitimate sexual expression over and against the Judeo-Christian ethic of heterosexual monogamy. In other words, according to their understanding of a post-modernist approach, previously taboo practices and beliefs are given equal validity to traditional values and norms, often to the point of displacing the latter. This equalization and displacement are not restricted to religious realms, but affects all circles of human interaction.

Although the information provided on the web page could not directly be faulted factually, it may be worthwhile to re-read it to also take up the underlying message. It is interesting to note how subtly the "truth" is mixed with a hidden message implying that "this thing" (post-modernism) is indeed a bad "thing" and should therefore be avoided because it is against God's will.

Please take note that this specific website has not been researched extensively and is only used as a broad example to show how language and the subtle use of words can create a very specific message. I do not criticise it or recommend its "Dictionary of Theology". With this explanation, I am not making any pro- or anti-homosexual or heterosexual statements, neither am I trying to comment on the viewpoints of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry website. I am only trying to show that different approaches exist regarding the way that we understand the world we live in, and that we must be aware of our own framework of understanding.

The data gathered from the participating co-researchers may contain experiences that are applicable to other caregivers, but it may just as well have little relevance to other caregivers' experiences. It may differ between caregivers who were already deployed, or those that may still be deployed in the future. The fact that it may differ, does not at all affect the truth or validity of those unique experiences as documented by my co-researchers. Their

specific situations (localised content) may be totally different from any other person's experience.

Notwithstanding the differences, we may always be able to understand their shared experiences and gain some new knowledge of how they coped, even if it were only to acknowledge that we do not understand. We must comprehend the building blocks that supported and assisted us towards reaching a specific point of understanding. We, therefore, need to understand how our own social construction took place.

Willig (2001:1) wrote: "Research from a social constructionist perspective is concerned with identifying the various ways of constructing social reality that are available in a culture, to explore the conditions of their use and to trace their implications for human experience and social practice".

It was, therefore, very interesting to me to realise that although the specific localised personal experiences between the four co-researchers, have many different "facts" and unique experiences in them, all of them were able to identify themselves easily with the stories and experiences the others have shared. Although the stories were different, the experiences of loneliness, despair, anger, frustration, helplessness and hope were very similar. Humans tend to pick up emotion in stories quickly and are able to identify with those emotions relatively easily. This is probably one of the main strengths of the narrative approach – to be able to bridge understanding through shared stories.

Müller pointed out (2005:78) that the shift in emphasis from individual to social, from subjective to discourse, which represents a new epistemology in the social sciences, is an integral part of the post-foundationalist movement. The principle of socially constructed interpretations and meanings is without a doubt part of the post-foundationalist approach. Müller (1996:5) wrote that due to lack of emphasis on the socially constructed nature of knowledge and knowledge-systems, he has decided to focus on a narrative Practical Theology. His decision influenced me to select the narrative path as well.

1.7.7 Directed by Tradition

Dyson (Willows & Swinton, 2000:19) feels that it might be necessary to tell different stories in order to give a more accurate account of how "pastoral" theology developed in the different Christian traditions. There is no doubt that there are at present noticeable differences between the various denominations and traditions. The dissimilar wording and terminology and customs between various traditions and denominations are ample prove of these differences.

Stephan Pattison and James Woodward (Willows & Swinton, 2000:36) wrote in their article *In search of words that will resurrect the dead:* "One of the most important functions of pastoral theologies formulated within the Christian tradition is to be faithful to, and truthful about, reality, however difficult that may be". Obviously, it could be argued that there are numerous different realities, as well as many different interpretations of these different realities even amongst those coming from a similar traditional background.

In complex situations the truth may come in different forms and the differences may not immediately become apparent. It is not that different interpretations should all be forced into one unifying thought, but that part of any worthwhile theology is likely to lead towards a truthful reality as it is perceived, if only by them. This may include a denial to be naïve about the complexities and differences of opinions, traditions and realities of life, however difficult they may be to live with.

Pattison and Woodward (Willows & Swinton, 2000:41) further state that part of the importance of pastoral (practical) theology is in its "consonance with spiritual tradition that requires truth" and facing reality. This includes the honesty to speak out and address wrongs - even sometimes at the risk of life or limb - by not trying to pretend that things are in fact different, but rather to speak up about the "reality" as it is perceived.

Willows and Swinton (2000:12) made an important comment when they pointed out that the diversity in approaches in the field should not lead to desperation. Rather, the diversity in approaches is part of the strength and beauty of practical theology as a discipline, that in various ways, it is committed to the possibility of encountering God within the diversity of everyday human experience. Willows and Swinton (2000:12) also feel that practical theology as a discipline is serious about accepting the diversity of human experiences and incorporates the diversity of those experiences as unique "moments" in the drama of divine revelation.

It is, therefore, important not only to be aware of the different approaches; it is vital to be honest about one's own approach. This is necessary to enable the researcher to position him/herself within the academic paradigm, but equally important for the reader to know in which tradition one can expect the research to be conducted. For example, the Catholic tradition and the Reformed tradition differ in the ways in which they approach certain issues. Similarly, there will be distinct differences in the approach between the Pentecostal tradition and African tradition. This diversity must be acknowledged and research must be directed within a specific tradition.

We do not only find different traditions amongst religious denominations, but also amongst all socially and culturally constructed human institutions. This may vary from schools, business and sport and is applicable to the military as well. The many different traditions in the military with specific ones in the Navy, Air Force and Army, are a worldwide phenomenon. The different traditions in the Defence Force even led towards different management styles in the various arms of service.

All four co-researchers are convinced that these different approaches in management styles between the arms of service are partially responsible for the problems that the co-researchers experienced during their deployment. The moment that members from the SANDF are deployed externally, they fall under the command lines of Chief Joint Operations (CJOPS), and are no longer under the jurisdiction, command and control of their original arm of service until their return to South Africa. This is simply to ensure that commands are issued from one central point during operations.

Due to the current numerical distribution of personnel and the fact that the Army is by far the biggest component in the SANDF, it is not difficult to understand why the 'traditions' followed within CJOPS are strongly influenced

by the Army. This is definitely true in terms of their management styles and the general way commanders treat soldiers under their command.

The wide spectrums of different and contrasting human experiences with all its complexities in an uncertain and unpredictable world are mirrored in the different approaches and methodologies in Practical Theology. Practical theologians work with a living "text". The task of Practical Theology will necessarily likewise be diverse in order to reflect the wide spectrum of human experience. This approach has a direct impact on the end result. It implies that different outcomes are possible due to the numerous differing traditions that influence human behaviour as well as the diversity in human experiences. This diversity in approach and outcomes are in line with a post-modernistic viewpoint.

1.8 Exploring Inter-disciplinary Meaning

The vast difference in possible approaches added towards the difficulty experienced in Practical Theology in order to achieve an equal academic and scientific status with the other theological disciplines during the previous century. Practical theologians invested much effort to obtain equal status with other theological disciplines.

Müller rightly (1996:2) stated that in the process of becoming scientific, and in its effort to achieve an equal academic and scientific status with the other theological disciplines, Practical Theology unfortunately became too much of an elitist academic affair, with too little contact with the informal forms of practical theological reflection. Until today, it still remains a challenge for all serious theologians to balance scientific academic studies while remaining in touch with the "practical" side where the research needs to be relevant, absorbable and understandable within its specific focus area.

Don Browning (Willows & Swinton, 2000:9) correctly pointed out that during the last four decades or so, in Practical Theology there emerged a new dream of practicing practical theology in an exiting, vibrant, multi--disciplinary manner that incorporates and challenges both accepted practice and theory. Inter-disciplinary contact plays a big role, not only in balancing the practice and theory, but it also enhances the output of Practical Theology's output by comparing and enhancing the quality of academic output, and impact.

To explore and to discover inter-disciplinary meaning refer to more than diverse theological disciplines, in fact it refers to all fields of academic knowledge that are somehow related to the topic being researched, or the "issue" under "investigation". Therefore, it could mean that valid information from "pharmacology" could be linked with "medical" knowledge and again with "psychology" towards a broader understanding by not only considering the chemical effects of the different prophylaxes used to prevent Malaria, but also to understand the impact of the medication on the human body that leads to hallucinations.

The next step in an inter-disciplinary approach would be to try and understand the emotional and psychological impact of these hallucinations on a specific individual. The initial information regarding the effects of prophylaxes may

have been presented during an interview conducted within the field of Practical Theology (RC/1-46).

If a "none"-inter-disciplinary approach were utilised by such a Practical Theologian, a very important aspect could easily have been misunderstood in its entirety. The contributions from other disciplines towards meaning and understanding could not simply be ignored, but should be utilised to broaden and strengthen the field/discipline in which it functions.

Therefore, if one neglects to approach the situation from within a multi- and inter-disciplinary angle and only focus on theology, a very different explanation could have been arrived at. Without the guiding knowledge of other disciplines, creative theologians could end up with explanations of "prophecies" and "visions" of messages coming from God that most probably would have been totally wrong and misguided.

An over-eager zealous pastor may be able to come up with very interesting and imaginative, or even ghastly explanations after listening to the stories of the hallucinations that co-researcher C shared in some detail. Both stories, the one where the deceased woman follows co-researcher C in the hospital's corridors and the story where frogs warn her colleague of an ambush, could be interpreted in ways that disregard the chemical and philological effect of prophylaxes (RC/1-46- RC/1-50).

The impact of research done within the field of isolation, ranging from social sciences to medical space research, can all contribute towards providing one with a better understanding of how caregivers cope with isolation within their own situation. Likewise, it would be very difficult if not impossible, to do research on peace-keeping missions without looking in more detail at political and military science.

In chapter six, the question of how and why inter-disciplinary co-operation is not only needed, but also utilised in practice, would be further explored and investigated. In chapter six, more in-dept attention is given to disciplines that academically do not resort under the umbrella of theological disciplines.

1.9 Pointing Beyond the Local

I briefly looked at the points Müller (2005:78) formulated as minimum requirements for a Post-foundationalist Practical Theology. The following aspects were touched upon:

1. Locally contextual.

2. Socially constructed.

3. Directed by tradition.

4. Exploring inter-disciplinary meaning.

5. Pointing beyond the local.

It is possible that locally contextual and focusing beyond the local, may seem at odds with one another. This is, however, not a contradiction, but a movement of growth and growing influence beyond the initial impact. Locally contextual emphasises that Post-foundationalist Practical Theology must be exact, not vague and generalised, as well as concrete and applicable to the actual situation and relevant to "real" people within a detailed identifiable "local" situation. The "knowledge" acquired in the process must have some relevance, value or at least be of some interest to them. This does not imply that "knowledge" gained locally does not contain value or be of some interest to parties or individuals outside the local interest. This interest may be a direct or an indirect interest.

Van Huyssteen (1997:4) wrote that a post-foundationalist theology wants to make two moves. The first move is to acknowledge contextuality, the epistemic essential role of interpreted experience as well as the specific tradition that shapes the epistemic and non-epistemic values that form our consideration and thoughts about God, and how some experience God's presence in our world. The second movement occurs almost simultaneously within the post-foundationalist notion of rationality. In theological reflection it focuses beyond the confines of the local situation, beyond the local group, community or culture towards a probable form of inter-disciplinary exchange.

This impact beyond the local is not only applicable in terms of direct local or non-local interest, but also applicable to different disciplines. This means that it is not only of possible interest to others working in different places within the same academic discipline, but it may also be of interest to those working in a totally different academic field. The four original co-researchers will be affected and interested in the research, but other SANDF caregivers, particularly those who were deployed, or are about to be deployed on a peace-keeping operation outside the borders of South Africa, may also be interested in this research. However, focusing beyond the local takes it a step beyond the local interest.

The research may be utilised by caregivers from different Defence Forces that may also be involved in peacekeeping. They may be interested in the stories of fellow co-caregivers from a different Defence Force to make comparisons. It can also stretch further towards other disciplines that may be interested in the results inspired by curiosity from within their own field of interest.

As suggested by Müller (2005:78), admitting and understanding the possible impact of the research beyond the local is an essential part of the approach. In order to keep it relevant to the secular world, the need to make an impact

beyond the local is currently growing in importance within the field of Practical Theology. Pattison and Woodward (Willows & Swinton, 2000:49) made an alarming comment when they wrote that all theology is in danger of being dismissed as irrelevant in the secularised world.

This is specifically due to the "private language" used by theologians that is only understood by a small minority and also that their books are often only read by other theologians. Pattison and Woodward (Willows & Swinton, 2000:49) feel that most theological activity has become marginal, private and of little interest to non-specialists. This statement is relevant to Europe and also applicable to England to a lesser extent as the impact and importance of theological studies declined dramatically in recent years. Although the United States of America is currently more faith sensitive and still aware of the

potential value of theology, theology is definitely not on the forefront of academic debates. In South Africa, there is a tremendous growth in the commercial business conducted within religious and spiritual books, but academic theological debates are seldom on the bestseller list.

Müller (1996:2) felt, and correctly so, that with all the emphasis on the scientific and academic value of Practical Theology, a situation has gradually developed where some form of practice and Practical Theology on the local as well as informal levels was unintentionally disregarded. More than one accepted answer exists for the same question, depending on the person's age, culture, gender and social reality. Berger (1966:15) points out that the particular agglomeration of 'reality' and knowledge relate to a specific context, and that these associations must be incorporated in an adequate sociological study of these contexts. The particular context does not imply that local "reality" and knowledge could not impact beyond the local.

Practical Theology is definitely the theological discipline that should never run the risk of becoming detached from the basic forms of theological reflection. I am in support of Müller (1996:2) when he stated that this is precisely the reason why he found the concept of post-foundationalist Practical Theology such a valuable contribution towards the understanding of Practical Theology.

This approach endeavours to move beyond the modernistic boundaries of Practical Theology, which tend to be very strict, formal and rationalistic in its approach. It was exactly that rigid, strict and almost unrelenting approach that contributed towards creating an academic atmosphere from which statements can now be made that theology is in actual danger of being dismissed as irrelevant in the secularised world.

1.10 Academic Positioning

In the light of the danger of theology being dismissed as irrelevant, it is very important to position one academically. I experience a continuous move within the scientific paradigm and find myself currently within the post-foundational social constructionist paradigm, aiming to utilize a narrative research process. Müller et al (2001:77) place the narrative approach within the framework of the sociological-constructive paradigm. It requires an altered view when listening to the truth. According to Morgan (2000:5),

viewing the research question from a narrative angle entails stories/events that in the course of time, are linked together to form a plot or a story line.

1.11 Methodological Requirements

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that endeavours to answer the questions of "what and how can we know?" Epistemology is concerned with the theory of knowledge. Carla Willig (2001:2) wrote that this involves thinking about the nature of knowledge itself, about its extent and regarding the validity and its claims to knowledge. One epistemological approach is positivism. Willig (2001:3) feels that Positivism implies that there is a straightforward relationship between the world (phenomena, objects and events) and understanding our perception thereof. This implies that it is possible for Positivism to accurately describe what is out there and to get it right without any doubt. Willig (2001:3) refers to the term "correspondence theory" because it suggests that phenomena directly determine our perception of them and it could be stated that there exists a direct correspondence between things and the representation of those things. Kirk and Miller's (1986:14) definition of positivism highlights the notion of positivism that the external world itself establishes in totality the one and only correct view that can be taken of it. This happens independently and is not influenced by the process or circumstances of observation. Willig (2001:3) points out that a positive epistemology implies that the research goal is to produce objective knowledge, striving towards an understanding that is supposed to be impartial, unbiased, without any personal involvement or vested interests from the researcher, based completely on a view from the outside.

Willig (2001:3) goes as far as to state that to label someone as a "positivist" in contemporary epistemological debates, usually represents an insult. The reason for this is that it is generally accepted that observations as well as descriptions are necessarily selective, and that our understanding and perceptions of the world are at best a partial understanding, based upon our own individual, biased perception (Chalmers, 1999). What people disagree on regarding positivism, is how the level of our understanding and perspective of our world can approach objective knowledge, and our understanding of what is really true in the world. Willig (2001:3) points out that the various reactions to Positivism range from naïve realism, which is akin to positivism, to extreme relativism, which rejects ideas and concepts like "knowledge" and "truth" when all is said and done.

In between, we may find critical realism and social constructionism. This brief explanation should provide ample reason why I cannot associate myself with the idea of an epistemological approach based on "pure" Positivism. I feel more comfortable within the social constructionist and narrative approaches. Social construction will be discussed in detail in this research in chapter four, and also to a lesser extent in chapter five.

In 2001, Müller explained that (2000:1) the narrative approach is a relatively new approach and the methodology of the approach is, therefore, still in a developmental phase. Within the narrative approach researchers do not use the term "research objects", but rather "Co-researchers". Morgan (2000:3) pointed out that one of the characteristics of the narrative approach is the co-

operation between the researcher and the persons (Co-researchers) on whom the research is applicable. Therefore, we would choose not to use language such as "research objects", or "research population", but rather refer to them as *research participants* or *Co-researchers*. For the purpose of this research, I have decided to use the term co-researcher.

Müller (2001:77) correctly stated that it is important that our research must not primarily serve our personal objectives as researchers, but should be of value for those being researched. The rationale of the narrative research is not to reach the objectives of the researcher, but that the research should be meaningful to the persons that form the basis of the research. Narrative research is not about change, but about listening to stories and becoming part of the stories, even if only in understanding. Schoeman (2002:191-195) summarises it as follows: "The researcher strives towards participating inter-action".

Neuman (2000:399) explained that from a methodological point of view, the research highlights the following characteristics of the narrative approach:

1. It tells the story, including the plot, water-shedding parts and climax.

2. It follows the chronology and sequence of events.

3. It is focussed on specific individuals.

4. It is not focused on structures or abstract ideas.

5. It is specific and descriptive by nature.

6. It is not analytical and general.

7. It views events as unique, unpredictable and coherent.

Schoeman (2002:191-195) added that one of the basic requirements, which is valid with regards to research, is reliability. The research process and the eventual outcome must be reliable. If the data and the process were under suspicion, the outcome will not be reliable. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to be truthful regarding the set requirements to ensure credibility and reliability. The methodological starting point and approach are part of the process to ensure reliability.

1.12 Reliability

Babbie and Mouton (2000:119) explain that reliability refers to the fact that by using a specific technique, if it were applied repetitively to the same object, it would eventually lead to the same result. Mouton and Marais (1993:73) contribute to reliability by stating that it implies that the application of a (valid) measuring instrument would lead to the same observation on different investigation groups under the same conditions. Schoeman (2002:191-195) added that the following four variables would ultimately determine the reliability of the observations:

1. The researchers.
2. The subject of study.
3. The measuring instrument.
4. The research context.

The general guideline of reliability is also applicable in narrative research. Looking at the guidelines for reliability, the specific technique being used in this research is the narrative approach.Lieblich (1998:8) explains that stories provide consistency and continuity to experiences and that the story reflects the experienced reality presented by individual narrators about their lives. The experienced reality as perceived by the individual is shared in the story and not necessarily the "clinical" truth as perceived by somebody else when they listen to the story, or recollects their own experiences in the same situation.

In different conversations about the same topic, the emphasis within the story may move slightly depending on the narrator's state of mind, or the altered focus brought forward by asking a specific question. The essence of the description will vary within the parameters of the some story.

The story as told may even be full off factual lies, for example a small child telling a story about aliens in the dark - for that child it is an absolute reality. Even if grown-ups from their own perspective can comment that the child's story is untrue, they cannot question the fact that the story from the child's perspective is an absolute truth!

In exactly the same way, some of the facts of the narratives may be questioned by readers as untrue. For instance, comments like "to be deployed for three/six/nine months is too long", is absolutely true for the individual, even if somebody else may have a totally different opinion regarding the length of deployment. This is the main reason way it is often easier for a manager or Officer Commanding to manage a specific technical aspect, rather than to manage human beings. Radar can be calibrated to function within specific parameters by following the same procedures every single time it is calibrated. Humans, however, are different. Not only are they different from one another, but some individuals can constantly vary on a daily basis. Humans can be quite unpredictable.

Therefore, if the reliability of narrative researchers is questioned, what in fact is questioned? Is the tendency of human nature to be able to fluctuate between their stories concerning their own lives and their experienced reality, and therefore to make sense (for themselves) in the way that they reflect their perceived reality? Often, the person questioning the research is simply doing so due to the 'fact' that the research results differ from his or her own opinion of what the results should have been.

The question regarding reliability can be a potential risk for narrative research if validity were not regarded in a narrative approach. Therefore, all research done, using the narrative approach might be rejected through some of the more traditional research approache's. The following comment is from an alternative approach. Mouton and Marais (1993:41-42) highlighted that ecological fallacy occurs when certain conclusions are drawn with regard to groups of people where only individuals have been studied. This is in contrast with the narrative research approach, which in fact focuses on the unheard

voices and although it might be the only person with that particular story, it is still important! We not only have to listen to the majority opinion and voice; it is not necessarily an absolute rendition of the event!

A problem in the research process is finding the balance between the unheard voice of an individual and the (un)-heard voice of the bigger group. My opinion is that the Caregivers, in this case the chaplains and the social workers, are in fact the unheard voices since they are the people who always listen and support the rest of the deployed members. As far as I am able to determine, nobody really listens to caregivers' stories or ask them how they are able to cope with deployment.

Caregivers normally have a tendency not to complain - almost never to the people in a managerial or decision making position. They have a propensity not to complain towards the people who can make a difference in their own lives. In general, they are often reluctant to talk in order to enhance the wellbeing of all deployed members as a whole, especially if the commanding officers are not open to discuss their suggestions of how to improve the general quality of life. Caregivers, especially the chaplains, can be very isolated during deployment in terms of emotional and spiritual support.

1.13 Methods

After mentioning to some colleagues that I am planning to do research on the reason why some caregivers are coping better during their deployment in Peace-Keeping operations than others, I received positive reaction. Some of them contacted me directly and referred me to other caregivers who were quite willing, some even eager, to assist me in my research. I am planning to do the interpretation of the interviews on a social-constructionist basis.

After I had explained the concept of the narrative research to the interested parties, all were willing to allow me to use an audio tape to record our conversations. They were also willing to grant me permission to use their first story or the re-interpreted versions of their stories in the research process. Their second perspectives and considerations subsequent to adding new inputs to it after reflecting on their own stories and reconsidering their opinions could also be utilised freely. Wherever possible, I will share my own interpretations with the co-researchers and they will likewise reinterpret these from their own perspective. Their comments will be included in the final documentation.

Currently, it will be highly unlikely for all the co-researchers to be together at one place for the feedback sessions. This feedback will preferably be personal, but if not possible, it will be by e-mail or telephonically. This feedback will be part of a feedback loop. It is probably quite understandable why they were happy that they did not have to complete a twenty-page questionnaire. Most were surprised to see how into many pages of paper an hour of conversation can be converted!

Roberts (2002:115) mentioned how narrative analysis of life has become a substantial area for analysis of life experiences and identity as connected to social groupings, situations and events. Roberts (2002:116) argues that narratives relate both to a phenomenon and a method. People tell stories of their lives, and narrative–researchers collect stories.

This is exactly what I am trying to do. I am listening to stories of how caregivers coped with deployment, and then I re-share these stories with them. After their new inputs, I must allow the stories to speak for themselves! Gregory Bateson stated in 1972 that people created meaning of events and ideas by re-telling it as stories. Freedman and Combs (1993:294) refer to Michael White, David Epston, Jille Freedman and Gene Combs who expanded on the idea by claiming that people can change their life stories.

1.14 Maintaining Subjective Integrity

I am not convinced that I have no "pre-determined" perceptions since I experienced my own stories of coping during deployment on the Namibian border, Antarctica and in Lesotho. To claim that I have no pre-conceived ideas or no knowledge (a complete not-knowing position) is probably not true. In fact, I should be aware of my own position (subjectivity) and determine my own code of conduct, ethical behaviour and operate within that framework. Without being aware of my own subjectivity and admitting my position, there would be no possibility of subjective integrity.

My subjective integrity is hopefully improved by being previously part of the situation, but currently not enmeshed in the same society. The advantage of being previously deployed in three vastly different circumstances and living for almost seven years on an outlying base, give me at least a new and fresh look upon my own story when I reflect back on my experiences from a different angle. The fact that I am relatively well-known amongst some of the SANDF members assisted me in finding willing co-researchers. It must be noted that people apparently prefer a verbal commitment and a handshake - some were immediately suspicious if you mention the option of a written contract.

Gerkin (1991:67) said that ordinary life tends to be governed more by the imagination than by reason, and to the extent that practical reasoning is involved, it seems more often to be governed by common sense wisdom rather than rational principles or logical rules of ethics. One must be very aware of one's own subjectiveness and guard against the risk of being over-confident in one's own perspectives and interpretations of the stories! The more the co-researchers' interpretations can be utilised the better.

1.15 Reflection on the Journey

In this chapter I have tried to convey my personal motivation for attempting through research to better understand how caregivers cope during peace-keeping missions. I have shared my own story of deployment of coping and how it influenced my subsequent research choice.

I have looked briefly at the history of Practical Theology in order to position this research. In the light of the danger of theology being dismissed as

irrelevant, it was important for me to position myself academically. Finally at the end of chapter one, I briefly touched upon the issues of reliability and maintaining subjective integrity.

In the second chapter, I will look at the purpose of research, the three basic narrative principles, qualitative research and intervention. Attention will also be given to the participatory action research imagination in narrative research and the seven-movement approach. Caregivers, as part of a Multi-Professional team, will be looked at and the question regarding care and what is understood by "care" will be focused on. Chapter two will also shed light on the methods and criteria used in how and why Co-researchers were selected to partake in this research.

The development of Peace-keeping missions in the world, particularly in Africa since 1991 is looked at, in order to better understand the "in context situation" that peacekeepers found themselves in. The emotional impact of deployment on soldiers is addressed in the next chapter. The criteria and conditions for international involvement in peace operations are focused upon. Some attention is also given to understand what factors motivate peacekeepers to be deployed in a foreign country, often far away from their loved ones and their own familiar world, as well as the question of how one could understand loneliness.

I believe that the narrative approach is superbly suited to aid us to open our mouths and experience the privilege to hear the emotions and stories inside! After listening to, and re-framing our stories, I am convinced that it is possible to develop a new and better story.

I sincerely hope that peace-keeping deployments will not only bring a new story of hope and growth to a besieged country, but that the soldiers will find a new story of hope and personal growth in their own lives as well in their own personal journey to the end of the world and back.