

**TRAUMATIC SUICIDE ATTEMPT DUE TO LACK OF
REMUNERATION TO CLERGY BY THE CHURCH: A
Pastoral Care Perspective.**

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A dissertation in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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DECLARATION

I Joseph Mongezi Gugushe of the Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, solemnly declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of Pretoria for the Degree of Masters in Trauma Counselling has not been previously submitted by me or by anyone for a degree at this or any other university, that is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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

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

DEDICATION

The Author dedicates this work; (1) in loving memory of his late mother, Julia Tozi Gugushe, who being a Deacon at Mparane Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa Congregation has inspired him to take the route of Ministry; (2) in loving memory of his ancestors as the living dead who continually supported him to be with the living God; finally, (3) to all relational refugees who are struggling for membership in various societies.

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on traumatic suicide attempt due to lack of remuneration to the clergy by the church: a pastoral care perspective. The assumption was that no one in the church took responsibility of caring for clergy families. Trauma referred to a spiritual wound in the soul of humankind and it is a spiritual event when humankind was experiencing loss of faith, loss of hope, loss of trust, loss of meaning, loss of innocence and when the spiritual wound was being healed spiritually. Suicide was defined as purely personal act that appeared to be entirely the outcome of the extreme personal unhappiness of the minister who as a result of non-payment of their stipend by the church. The operational framework of research methodology included: the research design, literature review and interviews; data collection method and data analysis and interpretation. The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa belongs to the Reformed family of the Protestant churches. In this project, semi-structured scheduled interview open-ended Questions were designed to allow interviewers free movement. The concluding chapter dealt with research findings and recommendations to the church.

GLOSSARY

ANTAGONIST – A mean- spirited, hostile or antipathetic person, in their attitude and behaviour in the church.

CLERGY – A religious leader who has been set – apart to preach the Gospel and administer Sacraments.

“CLERGY KILLERS”- These are clergy abusers whose major objective and role, in the church is to abuse or hurt ministers to the degree that they would leave the ministry.

CONGREGATION – A congregation is a fellowship of Christian believers who are united in a corporate body to serve the purpose and function of the Church.

DEACON – Elected stewards who serve on the Stewardship Board, and sit together with the Elders.

ELDER – An ordained lay-leader who constitute the Session and also appointed member of the Stewardship Board.

GOSPEL – Gospel is the Good News, of Jesus Himself, who was the Word that became flesh and born by sorting refugee in the womb of a virgin through miraculous works of the Holy Spirit, died and rose to come and provide us with eternal life.

MANSE – This is a rent – Free Church house for provision of minister and their Family.

PROBATIONER – A licensed minister of Word and Sacraments who is not yet ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.

PCSA – Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.

RPCSA – Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

STEWARDSHIP BOARD – Stewardship Board consists of the members of the Session and the duly elected Stewards sitting together in making decisions.

STIPEND – a fixed or regular amount of money paid as a salary or allowance, as to the clergy.

The CHURCH – The Church is a divine institution, founded upon Jesus Christ. It is not constituted by the decision of religious individuals to come together for devout purposes; instead it is born of the Word and the Sacraments through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY – The General Assembly is the supreme Church Council, whose duties are to develop the life and work of the whole Church and promote the proclamation of the Gospel.

The KIRK SESSION – The Session is a council of the Church composed of Elders who are responsible for all aspects of the life and work of the Congregation other than the conduct of Public Worship, which is the Responsibility of the Minister, who is accountable to the Presbytery.

The MINISTER – The minister is set apart to administer Sacraments and Preach the Word of God. The minister is thus called a teaching elder, while Other members of the Session are commonly known as ruling elders.

The MODERATOR – The Moderator is one who presides over a Church Council.

The PRESBYTERY – The Presbytery is a council of the Church whose duties are oversight, discipline and jurisdiction over the Ministers and Congregations within its boundaries and over any preaching place or preaching station which is administered by or through a Presbytery committee.

The SYNOD – The Synod is the Council of the Church immediately above the Presbytery where there is a geographical need.

UPCSA - The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

This topic serves as a result after the author has experienced a situation where a minister in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa was traumatized and later attempted suicide as a result of non-payment of his stipend by the church. As a result; this affected the minister's family.

Waruta and Kinoti states that: the question of pastoral care of the clergy is one of companionship. On the practical level in their ministerial life, do priest find solace, encouragement and a sense of direction in today's rapidly changing world in the political, social, economic and, just as certainly, in the religious and theological spheres? From whom and in what way do ministers get counselling? Are there established structures which help in talk of caring for them? If so, which? If not, what informed ways are available to the priest in any given diocese to find re-orientation in his ministry in times of stress and disillusionment? Such companionship and structural and informal concern are necessary if priests are to sustain their own physical, mental and spiritual health in our day (see, Waruta and Kinoti 2005). They are essential as well if they are to maintain zeal and not become tepid in the service they offer people for the realisation of God's love. At this point, what resources does the church have in counselling ministers? The

author's research will seek to explore the trauma experienced by the clergy family (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:219-220). The author agrees, fully, with Magesa and asks this question to the church: Should there be measures in place for traumatised ministers and their families in their jurisdiction.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Is the congregation aware when ministers are traumatized, or continue to seek to be counselled by the very person who needs counselling? Is the church doing enough to counsel its ministers? If so, how is it being done?

Weaver warns that: the clergy are the ones who are mostly called in crisis situations associated with grief, depression, or trauma reactions such as personal illness or injury, death of spouse, death of a close family member, divorce or marital separation, change in health of a family member or death of a close friend (see, Weaver et al2003:24-25). In such situations, the author struggles with a question: "Where do the ministers go when they go through such crisis situations?" The author is aware of some mechanisms in place, such as a Pastoral Teams within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa; but is these visible or functional?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Firstly, it is to research the impact of the traumatic events experienced by the clergy families. The author will confine the study within the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, although the author is aware that this also impacts other denominations. This impact includes the role of the congregants within the minister's jurisdiction. Secondly, it is to define the role of the church in responding to such traumatic experiences and difficulties that are facing the church when seeking to address such crisis situations. Lastly, the research aims to make recommendations for solutions in these experiences.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

When dealing with conflicts within a congregation, the main resolution for the leadership is to transfer a minister to another church or simply removing the minister from such a congregation; even if it means the minister is not placed anywhere. The family is not considered when such 'unpopular decisions' are made.

The congregation sometimes has an upper hand; since the minister is dependent on the congregation for the stipend. This study will seek to address the traumatic experience that is encountered by clergy families and to come up with a solution as to how the church could play a significant role in healing such 'forsaken families'.

The family is like a sheep without a shepherd when they are not pastured. No one seems to be responsible for the family during in such a crisis situation.

1.5 RESEARCH GAP

The research surrounding the area of trauma has been done before by many theologians and other researchers from social studies. Therefore, the focus of this is on trauma leading to suicide due to lack of stipend not paid UPCSAs ministers. The author aims at emphasising on the former Reformed Presbyterian Churches within The Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The author is aware of the fact that trauma within clergy families is not only limited to the UPCSAs ministers; their spouses and children, but to other denominations as well. The author's focus will be directed at the UPCSAs, which is formerly known as RPCSA (which was black dominated before the union), its ministers; and their spouses and children. The author will strictly focus on ministers, their spouses and children, who suffer emotional trauma because of the neglect they experience during church conflict times.

The author will use the methodology whose design is as follows:

- Case Study : Sharing of stories with some selected clergy families;
- Target group : Clergy families in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa;
- Collection of Data : The author shall interview the affected families;
- Tools for collecting Data: Interview Questionnaires.

According to Magesa, as it is the case with every Christian, the theological foundation of the life of the committed priest in the contemporary world is Koinonia; which means ‘communion’. Christian communion implies an ‘above all’ union with God; through meditation and prayer. Here again; meditation and prayer mean not merely empty silence, fantasy, or merely verbal formulas and liturgies. On the contrary, they mean thought and expression which lead to commitment to goodness. So, ultimately, we are talking about affectivity: the relationship of friendship and concern between the priest and the Church, and between the priest and creation. If the significance of the ‘church’ in this relationship must again be spelled out, it means, principally, that the local community is united by the bond or faith in Christ, ends the desire for a full communal life (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:221).

The author will approach the study by firstly explaining: Pastoral care theories like:

- Gerkin's shepherding theory:

Gerkin draws us to the heritage of Ancient Israel where he describes the Pastor as a Shepherd of the flock. He continues to say, "*First, we need to carry with us the balance that our Old Testament Israelite ancestors struggled to achieve among the functions of Pastoral leaders as priests, as prophets, and as the wise guides of the people*". (Gerkin 1997:79-80).

- Wimberley and Wimberley Narrative theory:

Wimberley and Wimberley begin by sharing their stories as they were spouses both from clergy families. They then narrate other clergy families' stories. In the preparatory framework for story sharing, the Wimberley and Wimberley have five primary practices and these include:

1. The practice of unmasking;
2. The practice of inviting catharsis;
3. The practice of relating emphatically;
4. The practice of unpacking the story; and
5. The practice of discerning and deciding the way forward (Wimberley and Wimberley 2007:37).

Pollard developed his theory after he had bought his first car which was an old car. He then heard about another car which was similar to the one he bought. The car contained lots of new parts although it was a write off from an accident; and he purchased it. The mechanic started deconstructing the parts by replacing the old ones with the new ones. Pollard realised that it was not a negative deconstruction but a positive one.

Pollard claims that, *“You can preach all you like (and I am very committed to clear biblical preaching), but if people are not listening we must consider what can be done to encourage them to want to pay attention”* (Pollard 1997:45).

The author will then identify the ‘clergy killers’ worldview by means of analysis. The author will check if it corresponds with reality and if it affirms the truth.

1.7 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

Chapter Two,

- This chapter shall unfolds the methodology of the study and all it associates.

Chapter Three,

This will then deal with the literature surrounding the concepts of trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Trauma and families, and clergy counselling. It

will discuss causes and symptoms of trauma, and then discuss suicide and the problems of evil.

Chapter Four,

- The chapter will explore the reality of trauma and suicide faced by the clergy and their families.

Chapter Five,

- This chapter will deal with findings, recommendations for further research and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the nature of qualitative research and its epistemological foundations. The sampling, data collection and data analysis methods employed by this research are detailed below. Finally, ethical issues such as the welfare of the research participants are discussed.

Practical theology is an intricate and complex enterprise that deals with theological and human experiences on the ground. It has in itself the diversity of methodological and other theological approaches in dealing with human experience. The common theme that holds this discipline together is its perspective on human experience and its desire to reflect theologically upon those experiences. This understanding of practical theology makes it exciting and essential as it enables us to engage with important topics in a meaningful manner. As this chapter outlines the research method employed, it takes into consideration the depth of African people's experiences by outlining all the associated methodological concerns. Linking practical theology with qualitative research has the potential to uncover credible data on the ground.

2.2 DESIGN OF RESEARCH

It is imperative to commence a research project by detailing the research design. Buffel says “*a research design is comparable to the glue that holds a research project together*” (2007: 75). He continues to say that “*it can be thought of as a structure of the research, which also tells how all elements of the research fit together*” (2007:75). This design explains the area of focus, the procedures of data collection, as well as the method of data analysis used. It also discusses the research sample and ethical issues pertaining to this research.

2.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

As the research unfolds, it is imperative to qualify the scope of epistemology as it guides the entire research.

Qualitative research has a distinctive way of understanding the world, and it is therefore helpful to begin by looking at the epistemology that underlies this approach to research. Epistemology, from the Greek words ‘*episteme*’ (knowledge) and ‘*logos*’ (words/speech) “*theory of knowledge*”, is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope (including the limitations) of knowledge (Mason, 2006:16).

It therefore addresses questions such as:

- What is our knowledge of the other?
- How is knowledge acquired?
- How do we know what we know? (McLeod, 2001: 3)

The above questions bear some relevancy to the field of practical theology, as it deals directly with the pain of human experience on the ground directly or even indirectly. Knowledge can be divided into a prior knowledge, or knowledge that is automatically known apart from experience and knowledge gained from human experience. In the light of this, trauma and suicide are well-known concept in both Western and African societies. However, the experience differs greatly between various cultures in terms of accepting a traumatic experience. The main idea is to find out where minister should find help in case where they are over clouded by series of events leaving them traumatized.

This study focuses specifically on some of the Uniting Presbyterian church ministers as they experienced this within the African context,(that is, in black congregations), with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding and knowledge on the phenomenon.

According to Mowat and Swinton, “*knowledge of the other occurs when the research focuses on a particular individual or group and explores in-depth the ways in which they view and interact with the world*” (2007: 33). This quotation reflects the researcher’s aim of attaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon as experienced by ministers in black congregations. The essence of epistemology is fundamental to how we think and acquire knowledge. Without some means of understanding how we acquire knowledge, how we rely upon our senses, and how we develop concepts in our minds, we have no coherent path for our thinking.

A sound epistemology is necessary for the existence of sound thinking and reasoning. “*The centerpiece of grounded theory is the development or generation of a theory closely related to the context of the phenomenon being studied*” (Creswell, 1998: 56). the research generated a theory or model of care from data on the ground thereby making use of it to build the scope of knowledge.

According to Swinton and Mowat, “*the epistemology of qualitative research relates to the particular theory of knowledge that underpins this approach*” (2007: 32). Epistemology as a scope of generating knowledge is also parallel to qualitative research in that it contributes a lot in collecting data from human

experiences on the ground. It is essential in this regard to look at this mode of inquiry as a larger mechanism of collecting data for the research project.

2.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research recognizes the world as being the locus of complex interpretive processes within which human beings work towards making sense of their experiences. This mode of data analysis was selected due to the research's focus on understanding both the phenomenon.. This study consisted of two components, namely:

- A review of relevant literature in terms of : trauma, suicide, ministers and pastoral care. .
- Empirical research, which is qualitative in nature. The researcher used a grounded theory approach, which refers to theory derived from data that has been systematically gathered and analyzed.

Qualitative research methods utilize an inductive mode of analysis. This mode of analysis is in contrast to quantitative research methods, which rely on deductive thinking or a process of moving from a general theory to specific observations. This research will delve into the world of traumatized ministers and poses open-

ended questions with the aim of eliciting in-depth, detailed responses regarding their experiences, perceptions, feelings and knowledge.. Swinton and Mowat define qualitative research as “*a process of careful, rigorous inquiry into aspect of social world*” (2007: 31). They continue to say that “*this definition suggests that qualitative research relates to the careful exploration of the ways in which human beings encounter their world, an exposition that offers new ways of understanding and interpreting the world*” (Swinton and Mowat, 2007: 31).

Denzin and Lincoln define qualitative research as being “*multi-method in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter*” (1998: 3).

The above quotation is helpful to this research because it aimed to describe and explore the nature and reality of trauma, and ultimately aimed to enable researchers to understand the phenomenon differently in order to add new knowledge to the field.

Qualitative research involves the utilization of a variety of methods and approaches, which enable the researcher to explore the social world in an attempt to access and understand the uniqueness that individuals and communities inhabit it.

Qualitative research always begins with the theory on the ground. Buffel describes this as “*what is actually happening on the ground and in praxis*” (2007: 76). The

study was guided by Gerkin's methodology of shepherding, which is discussed later. The methodology of shepherding will be implemented throughout the research in order to gain an understanding of pastoral care needed. Qualitative and quantitative researches have distinct differences in their application and use within a holistic process.

The researcher attempt to develop a close relationship with the participants, since the existence of such a relationship was the key to successful data collection.

The process of data analysis in grounded theory takes cognizance of certain key analytical strategies, namely:

- *“Memoing - this is a process for recording the researcher's thoughts and ideas as they evolve throughout the research.*
- *Coding – this refers to the process of categorizing data and describing the implications and details of the categories identified”*
(Trochim, 2001: 160; cf Neuman, 2000: 420).

2.5 GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that was originally developed in the 1960s by two leading sociologists, Glazer and Strauss (Creswell, 1998; Trochim, 2001). According to Grove, “*grounded theory is an inductive research technique. It means that the theory developed from the research is based on or has its roots in the data from which it was derived*” (2005: 57). This mode of inductive analysis can be thought of as a theory that is derived from or “grounded” in daily experiences.

Grounded theory aims to conceptualize understanding through using empirical data. In a way, grounded theory involves the process of retrospectively formulating new hypotheses to fit data. This theory or mode of analysis attempts to create a new understanding based on the actual experience and perceptions of the participants from the ground. The evolving theory hopes to both add to the existing body of knowledge and practice, and serve as a basis for further research.

Strauss and Corbin (1996) point out that in grounded theory the researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind. Instead, the researcher begins with an area of study that allows theory to emerge from available data. Similarly,

this research attempted to approach the question of divorce and resilience with an open mind. The reality of divorce as experienced by African men was seen as the source of theory formulation, where the theory was generated from data or evidence collected from the participants or interviewees, rather than from preconceived theories or hypotheses.

2.6 DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Open-ended, in-depth interviews will be conducted. These interviews will be based on previous theoretical and research constructs combined with other fields of social issues.

The primary methods of data collection in qualitative research are:

- Observations (including document/literature review)
- Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions

The in-depth interview is the most appropriate data collection technique for grounded theory research. This method is considered appropriate for the study due to the focus on the phenomenon of ministers within the uniting Presbyterian

church. Patton (2002) differentiates between the terms data collection method and data collection technique. On the one hand, data collection method refers to the systematic approach to data collection. And on the other hand, data collection technique refers to the art of asking, listening, and interpreting (see Patton, 2002). This study will therefore make use of a data collection technique. This technique is helpful in a number of ways such as:

- Helping the project in producing quality data from the ground.
- Helping and building the researcher's listening aptitude, in order to interpret data in accordance with the phenomenon.

The researcher believes that the chosen technique will allow the generation of valid and reliable information regarding the various strategies . During the process of data collection a few key principles will be observed:

- The fact that this method of data collection deals specifically with in-depth information, rather than numerical or statistical information.
- The data will be collected from a limited number of people or individuals, rather than from a large sample.

The data will then analysed using grounded theory. Henning defined grounded data analysis as “*a tool for constructing substantive theories*” (2004: 114). The researcher agrees with this definition, as it reflects one of the primary goals of this

study in trying to discover data on the ground. The research also adopts Elder-Avidan's definition of data analysis. He conceptualised data analysis as “*a dialogical, descriptive and explanatory, complex process aiming at creating an internal order, and searching for as many alternative explanations as the data allow, by extricating central themes, conceptualizing them into core themes and identify typology*” (2009: 33).

In other words, the process of analysing data will follow a funnel-like (see Harry, Sturges & Klingner, 2005, pp. 3-13), in order to attain a clear description of ministers' traumatic series.. “*This analysis is a process of breaking down the data and thematizing it in ways which draw out the meaning hidden within the text*” (Swinton & Mowat, 2006: 57). The first step of analysing data in this regard will involve collecting the data from the ground. The sample will be selected in order to allow for an understanding of their experiences and their need for pastoral care. “*The criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category is the category's theoretical saturation*” (Buffel 2007: 86). This means that saturation is reached when no new data is discovered. This saturation point is reached through the joint collection and immediate analysis of data. Thus the processes of data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously.

2.7 PARTICIPANTS

In the context of this study, the participants are essential as they contribute their knowledge acquired from practical experience of and exposure to the phenomenon of suicide attempt. .

In terms of selection, letters of invitation were written to selected participants, detailing the purpose of the study and requesting their voluntary participation. The letter also addressed the ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity, assuring potential research participants that both would be upheld in the final data report.

The letter of invitation contained the following information:

- The topic of the research.
- The aims and objectives of the study.
- The guarantee that the researcher would maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

The final sample for this research consisted of:

- Ministers from both rural and urban areas. These had all attained different levels of education.

- Children and other family members who had witnessed this traumatic experience.

The research feels that the varied nature of the sample offered a more nuanced account of trauma and suicide. The duration of each one-on-one in-depth interview was estimated to be between 30 and 60 minutes.

2.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues are always of great importance in research. Certain ethical issues were of particular importance given the sensitive nature of this research topic. It is essential that the research participants' anonymity be protected throughout the research. This was done through the use of fictitious names. The researcher will use the principle of respect for persons when conducting the interviews and ensures that all collected information remained confidential. Murphy emphasized the importance of "*assuring the participant's confidentiality*" (1980: 88). These ethical precautions are designed to protect the legitimate rights of the participants.

All the data or information will be recorded in writing after obtaining the participants' written consent. The participants will be provided with a thorough explanation of the reasons for the study and the aims and objectives of the study.

The researcher also “*pledges to be sensitive*” (Babbie, 1989: 472) and in regard to adhering to ethical standards and interpreting data collected from the participants. This sensitivity relates to participants’ welfare, the community to which they belong and their voluntary participation and confidentiality. Lastly, the research endeavoured to adhere to the above mentioned ethical considerations while at the same time providing a true reflection of the data.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is an essential part of the research project in revealing and examining or even excavating related information to shape the research project. This literature review examines critically the concepts of trauma of attempted suicide as experienced by ministers of the word of God.

3.2 TRAUMA

Terr defined trauma as sudden extra-ordinary and external event (Terr 1991: 1). Figley see it as “an emotional state of discomfort and stress resulting from memories, catastrophic experience” (Figley 1985: xviii). According to Hermann, a traumatic event is an experience that occurs in a situation of physical violence, personal violation and extreme violence, it can also occur when witnessing a violent death (1992: 40).

When people are forced into extreme life-threatening situations, they experience helplessness and loss of control, as well as an intensive fear and threat of termination. A trauma may have effects for a long period of time after the actual event. And it has a harsh effect on a person's normal reaction to danger as it creates a long-time change in the person's feelings, perception, memory, and physical activity. Hermann argues that a trauma does not end with the actual event. It continues to live its own life within the person, with different consequences. Traumatic events can be related to various situations such as; participating in violence, being tortured, being raped, or in relation to political violence, including fighting a war, being attacked or witness to an attack and other events, for instance witnessing one's home being burnt or destroyed, being evicted from one's home, or living through a life-threatening event. Common trauma symptoms may include the persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event, persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the event, numbing of general responsiveness, and signs of increased arousal. In spite of the fact that all these symptoms may be observed in all traumatised people, including Africans, relying on the symptoms alone should not be the only way to assess or diagnose trauma.

Herman declares that: *“In situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection. Wounded soldiers and raped women cry for their mothers, or for God. When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered. Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life. Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of disconnection, pervades every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion. When trust is lost, traumatized people feel that they belong more to the dead than to the living”* (Herman1992:52).

The above statement helps us to understand the impact of trauma and how it is associated or can be linked with the suicidal world. This is what the author experienced regarding the Dikgohlong episode; the author will discuss this later in this chapter under the sub-heading, ‘When the evil invades the church’.

The main question to ask now is: what is trauma? Levine and Kline describe trauma in the following way: Trauma happens when any

experiences stuns us like a bolt out of the blue; it overwhelms us, leaving us altered and disconnected from our bodies. Any coping mechanisms we may have had are undermined, and we feel utterly helpless and hopeless. It is as if our legs are knocked out from under us (see, Levine & Kline 2007:4).

Weaver et al has this description: The word trauma is derived from the Greek word meaning ‘wound’. Just as physical trauma can cause suffering by wounding and disabling the body, a psychological trauma can cause suffering by overwhelming the thoughts and feelings. To be profoundly traumatized and victimized is to have your faith in humanity tested, sometimes broken. Recovery from trauma –wounds to flesh and feeling and spirit, requires more than individual effort (Weaver, Flannelly and Preston 2003:19).

The author agrees fully with the above authors, as one tends to ~~can~~ feel powerless when overwhelmed by the effects of trauma. One becomes unable to help him/herself when trapped in such a situation. This requires someone who is not affected to lift one from such a situation. This could be rendered by someone who would journey with the affected person by

giving a helping hand and interpretation of such traumatic experience.

Trauma comes in different way to different people and it is experienced in a different way also. Events such as divorce, job loss, death, mugging, armed robbery, rape, car accident, can subject one to a traumatic situation. *“The ‘ideal’ priest, even in such circumstances, ‘hardly requires pastoral care. But the problem is that the ideal priest hardly exists in real life”* (Waruta & Kinoti 2005:226).

According to Herman, *“traumatized people suffer damage to the basic structures of the self. They lose trust in themselves, in other people, and in God. Their self-esteem is assaulted by experiences of humiliation, guilt, and helplessness”* (Herman 1992:56). Herman is helpful for the in this regard as it unpack the concept and lay a foundation in which the res4rch is to take. Trauma counselling is a short-term intervention, which is appropriate when a person has suffered a traumatic incident. Most people will experience a traumatic event at least once in their life.

Trauma counselling supports you in identifying and coming to terms with the feelings and emotions you may feel during and after a traumatic

experience. These emotions will vary from individual to individual, but the most commonly experienced emotions are anger and fear. According to Herbert, *“the most common reactions to trauma fall into three groups; first group are intense, reliving experiences of the trauma, and the second group, which are periods during which you feel utterly numb and empty of all feelings and emotions. A third group of reactions are increased arousal symptoms”* (Herbert 2003:23).

The author feels that the emotion’s capacity for intimacy is compromised by intense and contradictory feelings of need and fear. The identity they have formed prior to the trauma is irrevocably destroyed. Trauma counselling supports you in identifying and coming into terms with the feelings and emotions you may feel during and after a traumatic experience. An emotional trauma contains three elements:

- It is unexpected
- The person was unprepared
- There was nothing the person could do to prevent it from happening

Herbert continues to say that *“re-experiencing reactions happens because your survival system stored the information of what went on during your actual experience of the trauma in parts of your memory in the brain”*

(Herbert 2003:24). It is not an event that determines whether something is traumatic to someone, but the individual's experience of the event. Also, it is not predictable how a given person will react to a particular event. When the above is not handled properly in therapy, may lead a person to attempt suicide. Kinchin teaches us that, PTSD (Post traumatic Stress Disorder), results when a person has been exposed to an event which is outside the range of normal human experience: an event which would markedly distress almost anyone. It is the normal human response to an abnormal situation (see, Kinchin 2005:2).

Weaver et al warns us that the *“traumatic event is re-experienced in specific ways, such as in recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections or dreams of the event. Additionally, the person often persistently avoids situations which are associated with the trauma and has emotional numbness; in general. Often there is hyper-vigilance and irritability. PTSD becomes the diagnosis when these symptoms persist for more than one month”* (Weaver, Flannelly and Preston 2003:19)

3.4 SUICIDE

For one to be in the state of suicide, one needs to understand its roots and elements. What do we know about suicide? "...suicide- the intentional, direct, and conscious taking of one's own life." (Sue et al 2006:389). The author agrees fully with Sue in attempting to clarify the myth and reality of suicide, when she says;

“Myth: People who attempt suicide are not serious about their lives. They are usually manipulative, attention seeking, and have little intent to complete the act. At the beginning is an attempt to get attention.

Reality: Although this statement may hold some truth, it is dangerous to assume that people who attempt suicide are not serious. It is common that, most people who are successful have made attempts in the past.

A suicide attempt is a danger signal that should not be taken lightly (Sue et al 2006:392). Ronald and Stephen Holmes define suicide thus, the word suicide, however, is relatively new. Broken down into parts, *Sui* means “of oneself.” *Cide* is derived from Latin verb *caedere*, which means to cut, chop, or kill. When we translate it in Latin, it is literally to “kill oneself”

(Holmes & Holmes 2005:15).

Commenting on our era, they claim that, perhaps we are looking at the issue of suicide differently now and accepting more the teachings of psychology and psychiatry about the mental aspects of those who commit suicide. Some would call us more enlightened, whereas others pray for our souls but neglect the souls of those who deserve their prayers more (Holmes & Holmes 2005:26).

The author's opinion, suicide is a 'monster' that needs not be watched, and when suspected, it should be taken seriously. We should conduct awareness campaigns on Ministers and congregants; in order to avoid suicidal behaviours. The author believes there were delays in trying to help Rev Erasmus while his family was struggling without his stipend. Now we need to understand the impact of the above on the family.

3.5 SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR

The author's opinion is that traumatic events are life threatening, or close to a personal encounter with death. Humankind is confronted with extremities of helplessness and terror. This is why trauma and suicide (suicide attempt

in this case) seem to be related.

The author agrees fully with Herman's claim that: when a person is completely powerless, and any form of resistance is futile, may go into a state of surrender. The system of self-defence shuts down entirely. The helpless person escapes from situation not by action in the real world but rather altering of consciousness (Herman 1992:42). This is witnessed by Wimberley, in *Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity*, when he says that the process of separating persons from their original meaning legacies and recruiting them into alienating conversations and stories is called dis-membership (Wimberley 2003:25). This is what happened to Rev Erasmus when he was dis-membered by some members of the Dikhohlong church community.

Freden claims that, to be classified as a depressed person, the subject had to have been feeling really low, so much that he/she found it difficult to cope with his/her daily life, and this stage should have lasted for at least fourteen days (Freden 1982:1). He continues to explain that, depression is the ego's emotional expression of helplessness and powerlessness. In the author's opinion, Rev Erasmus may have reached that stage.

It is the result of the gap between a great longing to be valued and loved, to

be strong , assured and good, and the realization – real or imagined – that these goals are not attainable. Depression occurs when we are incapable of living up to our own ego ideals. This is because we have set the goals too high and sometimes because the social situation has changed (Freden 1982:4). Goldsmith explains that understanding childhood trauma and its psychobiological effects, has the potential to illuminate the pathway of causation from early trauma to later suicide (Goldsmith 2002:164). Ronald and Stephen Holmes argue about biology and suicide, by claiming that suicidal behaviour often runs in families. If we accept this genetic disposition, it may be that alcoholism, drug addiction, and other forms of destructive behaviour have a biological basis (Holmes & Holmes 2005:35). This could be true in other situations that are not connected with the church communities. They further say that, this biological predisposition may also include a psychiatric profile that increases the risk for suicide. Certain parts of the brain may be affected in such a fashion that impulsive and violent behaviour which is directed towards others may lead to violent behaviour which directed inwards, such as attempted or completed suicide. However, if we can make the leap between church attendance and personal religiosity (the degree of participating in the beliefs and doctrine of religion), then it can be indeed be true that religion and spirituality (the quest for life

meaning and purpose) play an integral role for people in deciding not to commit suicide (Holmes & Holmes 2005:35-36).

The above authors help us to dig dip into our lives. It taps on issues like hereditary behaviour and link these with our childhood trauma and its psychobiological effects. The authors mentioned above open a way for us to enter the suicidal world. Catherall warns us that, it is well established that people with PTSD and depression, especially if comorbid with substance abuse, are high suicide risks, especially during anniversaries of the trauma or in response to major losses, such as the death of a child or loss of a job (Catherall 2004:14).

The author views this warning as applicable in general situations as it cannot be applicable to the clergy category, with the expectations that the clergy should live 'holy lives'. Problems that ministers are facing could be connected to evil.

3.6 EXPERIENCING TRAUMA WITHIN THE FAMILY

Webb argues that *“traumatic events have different effects on the people who are exposed to them. Just as everyone has distinctive fingerprints, everyone’s history and personality is unique, and these personal*

characteristics determine what meanings we attach to traumatic events. These attributions, in turn, activate a wide range of responses to these events – terror and horror for some people, anger and sadness for others” (Webb 2004:23).

When traumatic events are of natural disaster (acts of God), those who bear witness sympathise readily with the victim as compared to atrocities or traumatic events of human design. Those who bear witness are caught in the conflict between victim and perpetrator where it is impossible to be neutral in such a conflict. (Herman 1992:7). The author wrestles with Herman’s findings in her book, *“Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror”*, (1992).

The author believes that neutrality is possible but people nurse other people’s feelings. If the perpetrator is someone who is respected by church community; people tend to support the perpetrator and vice-versa.

According to Herman, *“the bystander is forced to take sides. It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator, the one who violates. The victim on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain”* (Herman 1992:7). The two sides are face to face; on one side is the victim’s, who perhaps wish to forget but cannot, on the other hand is all

those with strong, often unconscious, motives who very intensely both wish to forget and succeed in doing so. She continues to say that, after every atrocity, one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies:

“It never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon self; and in any case it is the time to forget the past and move on” (Herman 1992:8).

Rev Erasmus had opposition from some who were not church members but members of local community, who were not even familiar with the church policy.

The author’s opinion is that ministers are called to imitate Jesus Christ. Wimberley warns of the forces in the world that attempt to undo liberation, to resist change, and to reverse positive changes, and further advises us to: *“Putting our relationship with God first puts everything else in the perspective”* (Wimberley 1999:27). The author will conduct interviews which will reveal how the forces worked against the victim of trauma and the position of bystanders.

3.7 CHALLENGES OF 'EVIL' IN THE CHURCH

When the author attempts to explain 'evil' in a context of 'theology of suffering', there is always a need to mention theodicy. Theodicy from Greek is a theological and philosophical study which attempts to prove God's intrinsic or foundational nature of omniscience (all-knowing), and omnipotence (all-powerful).

The average lay person simply does not understand the nature and power of "the wiles of the devil" (Eph.6:11). The apostle Paul warns us about this problem. So serious that he calls on believers to "put on the whole armour of God" to engage in the battle (Eph.6:10-20). He does not say that the battle is outside the church but implies that it can be anywhere the people of God are found; yes, even inside the church (see, Greenfield 2001:54-55). In the philosophy of religion, the problem of evil is the question of how to explain 'evil' if there exists a deity that is, Omnipotent, and omniscient. Some philosophers had claimed that the existences of such a god and of evil are logically incompatible or unlikely. Attempts to resolve the question under these contexts have historically been one of the prime concerns of theodicy. Some responses include the arguments that true free will cannot exist without the possibility of evil, that humans cannot

understand God, that suffering is necessary for spiritual growth or evil is the consequences of a fallen world.

There are also many discussions of "evil" and associated "problems" in other philosophical fields, such as secular ethics, and scientific disciplines such as evolutionary ethics. But as usually understood, the "problem of evil" is posed in a Theological context.

Wimberley referring to Jesus temptation in the desert describes evil as: tricking people into exchanging their personal future in the egalitarian (equality or equity favoured), promised reality of God for the shame-based, stratified world of this present reality. Evil is derailing God's plans for our futures and making we believe that the status quo is all that there is to life (see, Wimberley 1999: 26). The author had experienced a situation where the moderator of the Presbytery was verbally insulted by the congregational session clerk when he tried to mediate when the Minister was attacked by a few congregants. The moderator wanted to determine inter-alia, how many people wanted the minister to be removed from the congregation, and whether the congregants still needed the services of a minister or not. This happened to Rev. Garry Erasmus, (not real name), of Dikgohlong Congregation, (not real name), at the Maseru Presbytery (not real name).

The author has reserved the real names for the sake of confidentiality. Conflict erupted but when the voting took place under such tension and proved to be in favour of Rev. Erasmus, some of the most atrocious expressions of evil hide under the umbrella of religion.

Greenfield warns that *“ministers should not be surprised when evil shows its ugly head in their church. For an example, when a deacon or other church member launches an unjustified attack on the minister’s reputation, ability, or character to the degree that serious damage; is the ultimate goal of such an attack”* (Greenfield 2001:49).

Rev Erasmus’ experienced a situation where key persons in leadership of the Congregation that he was serving, were being at the forefront of the ‘unruly’ disorderly behaviour.

The free will argument is as follows: God's creation of persons with morally significant free will is something of tremendous value. God could not eliminate evil and suffering without thereby eliminating the greater good of having created persons with free will; who can make moral choices. Freedom (and, often it is said, the loving relationships which would not be possible without freedom) here, is intended to provide a

morally sufficient reason for God allowing evil. This is witnessed by the fact that the author was asking himself as to why God is allowing all that to happen.

How can God, out of all people, allow the key leaders in Christianity to behave in such an unruly manner?

Lewis writes in his book *The Problem of Pain*:

One could, perhaps, conceive of a world in which God corrected the results of this abuse of free will by His creatures at every moment: so that a wooden beam became soft as grass when it was used as a weapon, “*and the air refused to obey me if I attempted to set up in it the sound waves that carry lies or insults. But such a world would be one in which wrong actions were impossible, and in which, therefore, freedom of the will would be void; nay, if the principle were carried out to its logical conclusion, evil thoughts would be impossible, for the cerebral matter which we use in thinking would refuse its task when we attempted to frame them*”(Lewis 2009: 13).

"Natural" evils such as earthquakes and many diseases are sometimes seen

as problems for free will theodicies since they don't seem to be caused by free decisions.

Possible reasons for natural evils include that they are caused by the free choices of supernatural beings such as demons (these beings are not so powerful as to limit God's omnipotence); that they are caused by original sin which in turn is caused by free will; that they are caused by natural laws that must operate as they do if intelligent, free agents are to exist; or that through observation and copying they allow humans to perform greater evils, which makes moral decisions more significant. The author strongly supports Haugk when he is asking that, *'whose problem is it when an antagonist is raising Cain in the church?'* The question is not who is causing the problem? The antagonist is. The question is rather, *'who is responsible for dealing with the antagonist and the problems he or she causes?'* The answer is everyone. *"Whether one is a pastor, another staff person, a lay leader, or simply a member of the congregation, all are responsible collectively"* (Haugk 1988:23). At Dikgohlong, there was a split among the Presbytery members. As a result, two camps emerged - one was supportive of the Moderator and the other, was supportive of the Presbytery Clerk. The two groups differed in the method that was to be used to handle the situation.

Greenfield further says that evil can better penetrate a church when its leaders have developed an administrative philosophy rather than a ministry role. Administration is a necessary part of directing a church's life, but administration must always be a means and never an end. When deacons and other lay leaders see themselves, primarily, as administrators, then control is likely to be more important than ministry. *“When deacons emphasize that they are a “board” (not biblical concept), or when elders call themselves “ruling elders”, watch out. Control will become the primary issue”* (Greenfield 2001:56).

Both authors are warning that we are all responsible for the smooth running of the church of Christ. We need to be aware and be able to identify the antagonists in the church and take the responsibility of directing church's life. In the case of the Dikgohlong Congregation, it was the responsibility of Maseru Presbytery to intervene. The author believes that the intervention by the Maseru Presbytery was not successful; hence there were differences which created two camps.

Ronald and Stephen Holmes warn that *“suicide should never be treated lightly. To tell someone to jump from a bridge just might result in the individual doing so. The decision to commit suicide is often weighed down*

by situational stressors, physical demands or strife, or a multitude of other concerns and conflicts that we will never understand completely” (Holmes & Holmes 2005:2).

These authors help us to be able to enter the suicidal world and be knowledgeable of the seriousness of killing oneself. They also equip us with information that suicide differs from one person to another and from one time to another. They further emphasise that, generally speaking, suicide is simple to define. It is the act of killing oneself. Despite this simple definition as “self-murder,” no one commits suicide for the same reasons and under the same circumstances. In other words, suicide is a behaviour that differs from one person to another and from one time to another and has different motivations and anticipated gains.

Commenting on suicide attempts, both authors claim that there are about 25 attempts for every completed suicide. As far as gender is concerned, men are more successful at committing suicide than women. (see Holmes & Holmes 2005:5).

The author fully supports this statement as it is with the case at the Maseru Presbytery, in that it is the man who attempted suicide, and that if the signs were taken lightly, suicide could have been completed. This is the author’s

opinion. However, the author still needs to gather full information in chapter five with the help of interviews and questionnaires.

3.8 CLERGY REMUNERATION

This chapter will focus on how ministers are remunerated within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA). The author will frequently quote Greenfield in this chapter. Dr Guy Greenfield is the author of several books, a former pastor and a seminary professor; who was wounded in ministry. His book, ‘The Wounded Minister’, is not a book for the weak-hearted; according to Dr Brooks Faulkner, a Senior Specialist of Leader- Care Life- Way Christian Resources. In his foreword, in ‘*The Wounded Minister*’, he states that: “*The book takes the minister into surgery. It reveals the cancer. ...It helps the surgery succeed into potential spiritual health*” (Greenfield 2001:9). Greenfield does not only share his experiences, but has strong remedies, namely: Re -strengthens your faith, listen again to your call, be creative, and replace dysfunctional core beliefs (Greenfield 2001:10). Rev. Erasmus, of the Dikgohlong Congregation, was also wounded by “*mean- spirited persons who are able to inflict disastrous wounds on unsuspecting ministers in the name of religion and for God*” (Greenfield 2001:16).

According to Mwikamba in his work, *‘Challenges and Problems of the Clergy: Some trends in Kenya’*, the term ‘clergy’, is a representative one meaning the body of all persons ordained for religious duties. It also refers to religious persons who are trained and ‘set apart’ to perform spiritual rites and ceremonies, offer sacrifices as mediums for humans for obtaining divine graces, favours and spiritual harmony.

“Hence, the clergy are symbols and representatives, spiritual and moral guardians of God’s love to and for humanity. They are personal representatives, mouth-pieces of the divine will, teachers and interpreters of the sacred mysteries and spiritual counsellors in their communities” (Waruta & Kinoti 2005:243).

Mwikamba is fully supported by Magesa when dealing with *‘Pastoral Care for the Clergy’*, by claiming that: Pastoral care for the clergy pertains intimately to the depth of sanctity of the clergy. Sanctity means commitment of one’s whole person to goodness, to God. It has very little to do with ‘piety’ as one observes it in ‘pious’ priests for whom piety is

taken to be merely outward practice, somehow devout of heart (see Waruta & Kinoti 2005:220). In this chapter, the author uses the term ‘*Minister*’ to describe the one who is set apart to administer sacraments (see glossary).

On remuneration, the minister must not be distracted from his/her spiritual responsibilities by having to worry about where the next plate of food will be coming from. The minister should be relieved of financial worry, as much as possible, so that he/she is able to focus on the needs of the congregation. Within UPCSA, the minister receives a stipend (see glossary) to cover day-to-day living expenses, such as food and clothing, with all other reasonable expenses like accommodation, transport, telephone, water and electricity. These are all met by the local congregation (see glossary).

In this chapter, the author will make use of the ‘*Fellowship of Vocation*’ booklet and the ‘*Manual of Faith and Order*’ to clarify the calling of a minister in the UPCSA.

Although it is not an ideal situation, the author will highlight on ministers who invite the attack from lay persons; dysfunctionality between the church

and the clergy; ‘clergy killers’ and associated collateral damage to the church, the clergy and clergy families.

3.9 CALLING A MINISTER IN UPCSA

According to FOV (Fellowship of Vocation) booklet, the Word of God is not simply the Bible and the ministry of the Word of God is not simply preaching. In its fullest sense the Word of God is nothing less than the person of Jesus Christ himself and the ministry (service) of the Word is nothing less than serving Jesus Christ (FOV n.d. : 15).

The booklet further warns that the call by God into ministry of the Word and Sacraments is most often heard the loudest by the minister and not his/her spouse and children (FOV n.d.:25). The author’s opinion is that many congregations struggle to meet all their financial obligations and because the congregations are solely responsible for the minister’s expenses, it often leads to further worry and stress for the minister and his/her family as to whether or not the congregation’s finances will be sufficient to pay him/her.

The author is aware of cases where the congregation has reason to believe that it lacks or will shortly lack the resources required to maintain the minister, it could apply for a stipend subsidy from the Presbytery (Manual of Faith and Order : par. 16.61). The author poses this question: *Is it possible to apply for a stipend subsidy in times of conflict between the lay leaders and the minister?* The answer is a resounding no! If this is agreeable, then the minister will be a victim of abuse.

In most conflicts, reasonable people can come to a compromise or resolve to disagree amicably. ‘Clergy- killers’ abuse or attack pastors, running them out of churches, or the ministry.

Within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, ministers have a special role in enabling the church to proclaim the Gospel. They are called and ordained to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to care for those in their charge, and, with the Elders to rule. To emphasise their teaching role, they are often referred to as Teaching Elders, thus distinguishing them from Ruling Elders. This division in terminology is not

wholly satisfactory because the main functions of Ruling Elders are also functions of Ministers by virtue of their calling to share in the obligation to rule. Ministers form a key leadership group in the Church, with special responsibility for its life at the local level in Congregations; at a regional level where all Ministers in pastoral charges and others, Such as Ministers Emeriti, have seats in the Presbytery and the Synod; and throughout the Church in their opportunities to be commissioned as members of the General Assembly and to serve as commissions and/ or Committees (see Manual of Faith and Order Ch. 16 P.1). The Rev. Erasmus was called by the congregation of Dikhohlong and licensed by the Maseru Presbytery.

Wimberley and Wimberley claim that: *“clergy family members also bring to congregational life their-own sets of expectations, including what they imagine for themselves, for one another, and for the congregation”* (Wimberley and Wimberley 2007:51). These authors help us to understand our expectations as ministers; comparatively to our congregational expectations.

Paragraph 16.1 emphasizes that, ministers are obliged to be faithful in the study of Scripture and prayer, to live holy lives, to preach he Word, to

administer Sacraments, to care for those that are entrusted to them, to participate in the fellowship and work of the ruling Councils of the Church, to subject themselves to the discipline of the Church and to seek its unity and peace. Paragraph 16.2 states that, the Presbytery controls all ministerial appointments and transfers within its boundaries. The author is quoting these sub- paragraphs to show that the manual is silent on these issues.

A higher Council or Committee of a higher Council may negotiate such appointments or transfers with the Presbytery, but may not make the appointment or transfer without the Presbytery's approval (see Manual of Faith and Order : Ch. 16). Paragraph 16.31 declares that, ministers of the church, probationers who have been awarded ministry certificate, and ministers of churches with which there is an agreement on mutual eligibility of ministers are free to accept a call to a pastoral charge.

Although the higher council has authority of negotiating appointments and transfers of ministers, the Presbytery is the one authority to finalise such approvals. The author remains wrestling as to whether the Maseru Presbytery did exercise its powers in the case of the Dikhohlong Congregation.

The author is aware that there are different types of calls within the Uniting

Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. For example; ministers are called by congregations to fill in vacant position on a full time basis, or as a colleague and successor.

Sometimes it could be a stated supply, which is the temporary appointment of a person to conduct public worship and to undertake such duties as may be required of him or her during a vacancy while the normal procedures are underway. The relevant financial authority, (it is the congregation in this case), is responsible for the payment of minister's stipend, allowances and related costs.

The author will focus on ministers who are full time and dependant on their congregations for their stipend. He will also investigate the possibility of a stipend-centralisation. He will further look at secular jobs as alternatives to curb financial constraints in those churches who could not meet financial obligations.

3.10 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The author has discussed trauma and its effects, and how trauma can be linked to the suicidal world and warned suicide attempt as a danger signal.

Trauma comes in all shapes and sizes. Events such as divorce, job loss, death, mugging, armed robbery, rape, car accident, in fact, any event that you regard as negative and that changes your view of yourself and your world may lead to trauma. In linking trauma and suicide attempt, the author discussed anger and fear as emotional or psychological trauma.

On myth and reality, the author clarified that it is not true that people who attempt suicide are not serious about their lives and that they are usually manipulative, attention seeking, and have little intent to complete the act. At the beginning is an attempt to get attention. The reality is that it is dangerous to assume that people who attempt suicide are not serious. Indeed, most people who are successful have made attempts in the past.

A suicide attempt is a danger signal that should not be taken lightly. The word: suicide, when broken down into parts, *Sui* means “of oneself.” *Cide* is derived from Latin verb *caedere*, which means to cut, chop, or kill. When we translate Latin, it literally translates to “kill one”.

Further discussion was on the trauma and families, before introducing the narrative of the Dikgohlong Congregation ‘*indaba*’ (issue), in sub-

paragraph 3.4, (When evil invades the church).

Depression is the ego's emotional expression of helplessness and powerlessness. To be classified as a depressed person, the subject had to have been feeling really low, so much that he/she found it difficult to cope with his/her daily life. Depression occurs when we are incapable of living up to our own ego ideals, either we have set the goals too high or because the social situation has changed.

We also have to understand childhood trauma and its psychobiological effects that may result in later suicide. Certain parts of the brain may be affected in such a fashion that impulsive and violent behaviour which is directed towards others may lead to violent behaviour which is directed inwards, such as attempted or completed suicide.

The author further explained the meaning of evil and how evil or 'forces of reversal', as revealed by Wimberley in his book, "*Moving from Shame to Self-Worth: Preaching & Pastoral Care*", can derail God's plan for our futures and making us believe that the status quo is all that there is to life. He also discussed the problem of antagonism within the Church. The antagonist is the one who causes the problem in the church, but the responsibility lies on all the members of the church to deal with antagonists

in the church.

In the following chapter, the author will consider clergy remuneration and how ministers are called in the UPCSA. He will further discuss ministers who invite the attack, and warn of the clergy killers; those lay-persons who have serious mental or emotional problems and who feel an inner hostility toward clergy persons. He will also warn on collateral damage that could have cost implications to the church.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXPLORING THE REALITY OF TRAUMA CAUSED BY SUICIDE ATTEMPT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that African Christians or African families tend to expect too much from their clergy or pastors. Most Christians claim the rights to be serviced pastorally by their minister irrespective of their condition.

African people recognize a pastor or servant of the lord as a person who ministers without a sense of pain. But the point is, pastors do feel pains and they too can suffer from traumatic experience.

This chapter presents a section of empirical data that explores the journey of traumatized ministers who attempted suicide due to lack of payment. The journeys narrated by each of them were scripted during the interview. In some cases, the transcripts were paraphrased, with their original words indicated clearly with the use of quotation marks. All names used in this research are fictitious in order to hide the participants' identities.

4.2 REV. THOMAS

4.2.1 Background

Thomas is a 42-year-old separated minister who lives in the areas of Eastern Cape. He had been separated from his wife, Thandi, for two years at the time of interview. He ministered a rural congregation in the EC province. As he grew up with a traditional mentality that a woman does everything for a man; he never learned to cook for himself, or clean his own house, as his sisters used to do this for him. The interview was conducted at Thomas's parents' residence.

4.2.2 Journey to separation lead to trauma

Thomas described feeling overjoyed when he married Thandi six years ago and the couple was blessed with a daughter, who is now five-years-old. Thomas felt as though things were moving well. He had cherished every moment with his family in a very remarkable way. With his little income, he managed to pull the family and support his wife's needs since she was not working.

Things turned upside down when he was involved in a terrifying car accident which left his spinal cord paralyzed. He was hospitalized for a two month period. After he was discharged from hospital, he was confined to a wheelchair. This brought tremendous changes in the house as he was the only source of survival.

His wife, then suggested they should get a helper to assist with house duties. The reason given was that, “she can’t do everything in the house anymore”. But in reality, Thomas could not afford it as he was not getting paid enough to get a helper.

Thomas continued to say that “I never had a problem, because I loved her, and so I understood everything. But this worried me a lot when she later left my room to sleep in a different room. I confronted her about it, and she said, “It changes not the situation”. I said to her, “your presence gives me hope and courage to be optimistic about recovery”. Her response to this was, “Yes but it does not bring back what the life we use to have. This pained his heart tremendously as the situation got worse. On the one hand, Communication was getting lesser and lesser and feelings were fading agues. On the other, the church had to release him as he could not minister. This meant some financial challenges and huge

adjustment. His monthly income was no longer guaranteed as he was not in a congregation.

As time goes, Thandi never wanted to touch or to be touched by me as I meant nothing to her anymore due to my condition. I could not cope anymore as this put more trauma in me and so I decided it would be better if I had killed myself. As I attempt to kill myself by drinking poisonous liquid, I was then rushed to hospital and survived. Upon discharged from hospital, I went to live with my parents.

4.2.3 Aftermath of departure

Following that, the only thing my memory could recall the trauma of losing life, lack of money as I had no monthly stipend. I have always wanted to be a father as an African man; I wanted to feel the sense of being a dad to someone. You know, I wanted to be that epitome to provide and protect for my loved ones. For a minute I thought I was a burden to my parents, but they were full of compassion towards me.

At home I would just wake up and do nothing as I could not work anymore. I had to face many series of events, including a church which I think never cared much

about me as I could not walk. I had no money to care for the family anymore. Her family tried to bring some senses in her mind but she refused, telling them the similar things she told me.

My state was deteriorating detrimentally, and I therefore, had to go and see a professional counsellor. When my friends visit, I felt like running to the house knowing that everyone must be aware of my situations. It made me feel so small and useless'. But thank God for my parents and siblings, for they become the antidote to my situations. Nevertheless, I felt uncomfortable to be around people.”

4.2.4 Thomas' Analysis

What is notable in his narration are the three major stressful events that followed each other, namely the accident which left him on a wheelchair, lack of income from the church where he ministered and lack of communication with his wife. Despite all of these challenges he found himself facing, he was able to find a sense of direction in the emotional maelstrom. This was primarily due to the support he had received from his family and friends.

He felt overwhelmed by the sudden life change, which seemed to threaten the plans he had made for himself and his family. Finding himself on a wheelchair was a devastating situation that he had to face for the rest of his life. Even when he failed in committing suicide due to his traumas, he had to find a way of accepting

his condition, and start a new chapter of life on a wheelchair which was not simple. Part of him wanted to confide in them, but another part of him battled with the cultural tradition that he should not speak about his experience as it would humiliate him.

4.3 REV. J. K

4.3.1 Background

Rev J.K is a 51-year-old father of two boys aged twenty and fifteen and is an ordained minister born and raised in the rural areas of Eastern Cape Province. At the time of the interview, he had been suffering inside for a year after not receiving his stipend. This interview was conducted at his house.

4.3.2 Journey of problems

Before Rev J.K moved to Limpopo, he ministered in a congregation around his hometown, and life was very fine. He was able to deliver the word of God without any disturbance. The Rev J.K took his responsibilities as husband and father very

seriously, and cared for his family in a loving way. With the little income he was getting, he managed to do many wonderful things in his house or family. He also cared for the congregation he was placed or charged to look after very well. People admired and respected him as a man of God. Things changed when he was moved to another congregation in Limpopo. For him the move was not in the best interest of the church. 'I was doing very well from the previous congregation and I was halfway with constructing a church and just before it is completed, they moved me'. Upon my arrival at the new congregation in Limpopo, I discovered that the congregation I am to service is actually having many things in the plate. 'They had huge disagreements with my predecessor, they were angry for a certain amount of money which went missing while the minister was a signatory and lastly, it was an issue of adultery within the church.' These issues culminated to his removal from the congregation. When Rev J.K resumes his duties, he could see or tell the unresolved issues within the church. After some times, Rev called a meeting with church elders, with an intension of pastorally asking them to put things behind and move to a new direction since he was a new minister. But this angered members or elders of the church since the previous minister left. They never got their money and their reputation in the community and other different churches was not good anymore. Before the predecessor departs the congregation, they had taken a decision never to pay their monthly tithes. On the arrival of the new minister (Rev

J.K) this decision was already in effect. Few people did pay later at the arrival of a new minister, but majority never did. This affected the life of Rev J.K as he could not get paid for four consecutive months. The more he spoke about it or reminds congregants to pay, the more they associate him with his predecessor. After six month when the presbytery leadership had tried to intervene, still it could not be resolved. On the other hand, the wife began to put more pressure on him as she also needed money to for the house. They began a life of begging for survival but this did not last. And the money was not that good since the congregation was in rural area where majority of members were unemployed. He also had many things to pay since he had a family, and for many months he could not do so. Later on he got sick and rushed to hospital where he was attacked by a stroke on his right hand and leg. He could not walk properly nor deliver his pastoral duties as he use to do. Few months after this, Rev J.K took an overdose of medication due to stress of being rejected by the congregation.

4.3.3 **Aftermath of** stroke

This issue affected his children and had developed a negative thinking about the church. These disturbances preoccupied their mind, and soon they came to view

their own church as a ruthless institution. The reverend found life to be challenging after being ejected by the congregation due to situation that was created by the very same congregation. He felt as though he could leave the church as a member and as a minister. His first son would sometimes take him to a different environment for a weekend in an effort to help him forget about what happened. His son was an antidote and a hope for the future.

4.4 CARE FOR THE CLERGY

The case study above about the minister who has gone through traumatic experience and yet continues with ministry without receiving proper care by other professionals poses danger in ministry. Rev J.K (in the case study) did not receive any treatment or care to his traumatic situations which led almost to his death, contributed a lot in his ministry. On the other hand Christians do expect too much from their clergy without looking after them in terms paying their stipend regularly. The clergy as a spiritual leader, and as regarded as a representative of God on earth, must also be understood in the light of a normal being whose image is the same as other but act like the servant of the lord. In other words, he does feel the pain and can also be traumatized by human situations. The church should develop a mechanism for unearthing the problems of ministers or pastors and encourage them see a professional counselor as a solution to some of their problems. This will assist minister even when coming to preparing the word of God for a Sunday service. This type of care must be mad

available in almost all presbyteries so that ministers can get help anywhere. According to Waruta and Kinoti “*proper preparation of sermons guided by the principle of simplicity, piety and humility; and delivered with a spirit of love, concern and solidarity in the search of spiritual fulfillment are challenges that pastors should address themselves to*” (2005: 264). In essence, there is no humility of pastoral care to a minister who is ministering under traumatic or even stressful personal situation. They run the risk of being an elite and might forget that they are there to serve, love, and nurture the community of God. In most cases, pastors who need psychological attention, tend to use the pulpit and address issues which are not even related to the reading of the day. They normally cry out on the pulpit during Sunday services. In order to guard against such things, churches must organize workshops or retreats for pastors with professional counselors to help them for the betterment of the community of God. This will enable the church to reap good fruits due to the service members will be receiving.

4.5 THE CLERGY KILLERS

According to Rediger, clergy killers are people who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction. We must distinguish them from “normal” person who disagree with the pastor, injure her or him inadvertently, or even oppose some

pastoral project or issue (Rediger 1997:8). When that occurs, dysfunctionality between the church and clergy begins. He continues to say that generally, there are few clergy killers in a given congregation or agency, but they are deadly, and they have expandable influence that typically attracts people with common gripes, frustrations or misguided agendas. Such often unwitting cohorts can produce a numbing fear in that pastor and congregation and that hordes of people are organised against them, and that resistance to their agenda will only bring personal injury to the resisters. In reality, however, only the clergy killer is deadly (Rediger 1997:8).

Greenfield claims that, *“when a minister is under attack by mean- spirited people, he (sic) will not be the only one hurt. When antagonists seek to destroy a minister’s life and career, the attack is like throwing a hand grenade: several persons and relationships will be damaged if not destroyed. This could be called collateral damage”* (Greenfield 2001:97).

Among damages, we could start by ‘damage to marriages’. The author will not discuss damaged marriages in this topic. Although the marriages of ministers could be strong, although not problem- free, conflict in the church could dent the marriage in the author’s opinion. According to Greenfield, *“a frustrated and angry minister can easily find himself (sic) engaged in an argument with his (sic)*

unsympathetic wife (sic) that can gradually become very disruptive to the marriage”(Greenfield 2001:99).

Haugk, in his book, ‘Antagonists in the Church’, explains that: Being a Christian is difficult. Being a Christian is easy. In supporting his statement, he quotes Jesus when he said, “In the world you have tribulation” (John 16:13). But Jesus also declared, “... my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt.11:30).In describing antagonists, he claims that they are individuals who, on the basis of non - substantive evidence, go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others.

These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down, rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in a leadership capacity (Haugk 1988:25-26).

He continues to say that, when a church abuses a minister, the minister’s children will be abused as well. *“Watching their parents being abused by ‘callous and cruel lay leaders’, the minister’s child will eventually become cynical about the church. The reasoning goes like this: You people deeply hurt our parents, often over trivial matters, and you call yourselves “Christians”! If that is Christianity, you can have*

it! Bitter, disappointed and discouraged, the children of abused clergy are inclined to leave the church, never to return” (Greenfield 2001:101).

4.6 DAMAGE TO THE CHURCH

Greenfield explains that, when ministers are wounded by certain leaders in the church, those ministers and their families are not the only ones who suffer collateral damage. The church itself will be severely damaged in several ways. *“For every wounded minister, there will also be in time a wounded church. It is very costly in more ways than one for a church to abuse its ministers” (Greenfield 2001:115).*

The wounded clergy will make the church wounded. A classic example comes from the Dikgohlong Congregation whereh congregants split into two groups: those who supported Rev Erasmus upgraded a station to accommodate him, while those who are against him called a probationer, a licensed minister who has not yet been ordained into ministry of Word and Sacrament, to lead them (see glossary).

The author supports Greenfield in claiming that, when a minister of the church is abused by oligarchy of antagonistic lay leader, the word about conflict inevitably gets out to the community that is served by the church. *“Unchurched people, eventually, learn that this is a church that abuses its ministers, and this is*

something they cannot understand. They wonder: Is this the way Christians treat their leaders? Why do they behave in such an unkind, unloving manner?” (Greenfield 2001:115).

At the Dikgohlong Congregation, the ‘*unchurched*’ people took side of the perpetrators, as though invited for support, and shouted at those who were conducting the voting process, “*You left your churches to come and destroy ours here! When you go, go with him (Rev Erasmus), nilala ngengub’anye*” (sleeping with one blanket, meaning you are supporting or friends with him/ her).

The dysfunctionality not only damage people. Greenfield notes that, when a church tolerates the abuse of the minister, it will cost the church also in financial contributions, emotionally but also finances or stipend. One can measure the degree of abuse by the decline in offerings (see Greenfield 2001:117). These symptoms are symbolic in UPCSA. He further advises that it stands to reason that when a church allows one or more of its ministers to be abused by pathological antagonists over a period of time, it will cost that church not only the loss of evangelistic zeal and financial contributions but also its weekly attendance. Of course, there will be a core of loyalists who will attend “their church” no matter what some leaders are doing to their ministers (see Greenfield 2001:119).

Calvin argues that: *“conflict is normal in all relationships, but conflict stirred up by clergy killers cannot be resolved through normal avenues. In most conflicts, reasonable people can come to a compromise or resolve to disagree amicably. Clergy-killers abuse or attack pastors, running them out of churches, or the ministry”* (Calvin 2009:86).

Everist and Nessian, in their book ‘Open the Door and See all the People’; view is that trust is foundational in forming the community called church. *“How one enters a new community requires wisdom, insight, and strategic planning. Setting and collaboratively maintaining a trustworthy environment, fosters healthy relationships”* (Everist & Nessian 2008:1).

Smith reminds us that in the Gospel, Jesus invites us to remember him through the breaking of bread and sharing the cup of wine. The word “remember” means to re-member or put back together in consciousness. In the Eucharist, we tell the story of Jesus and are put back in him. *“Similarly, the remembering and telling of stories of people’s best appreciative process re-members or puts them back together at their best”* (Smith 2009:87).

Church conflict is normal, according to Rediger. But incivility and abuse is not. If we want healthy congregations and pastors, conflict is healthy because it helps keep communication healthy and honest. It promotes authenticity by recognizing

diversity; it teaches us how to be a community of faith rather than an artificial homogenous group. And it help us to keep learning and being creative (see Rediger 1997:47).

Rediger claims that the reality is that conflict is present and can be both useful and debilitating. *“The following generalization can be made about our current conflict and ways of coping with it:*

- *Conflict is real, persistent, and sometimes mean.*
- *Conflict can be normal, abnormal or spiritual.*
- *Conflict can escalate into abuse and inflict collateral damage.*
- *Conflict can be managed poorly or well.*
- *Effective conflict management is not yet the norm in congregations or Judicatories” (Rediger 1997:48).*

4.7 SHEPHERDING THEORY

Gerkin, when citing biblical models for pastoral care, begins by saying that: *“From very early in the recorded biblical history the custom was established of designating three classes of such leaders: the priests, a hereditary class that had particular responsibility for worship and ceremonial life; the prophets, who spoke*

for Yahweh in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community and its stated political leaders; and the wise men and women, who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of the good life and personal conduct” (Gerkin 1997:23).

He draws us to the heritage of Ancient Israel, describing the Pastor as a Shepherd of the flock. He continues to say, *“First, we need to carry with us the balance that our Old Testament Israelite ancestors struggled to achieve among the functions of Pastoral leaders as priests, as prophets, and as the wise guides of the people” (Ibid 1997:79-80).*

The author supports Harold Taylor while he shares the idea of shepherding as familiar to the people of Israel; most of who owned or worked with flocks, herds of sheep, goats, and cattle. *“This theory was widely used by writers of the Jewish Scriptures to describe religious and political leaders, and even God Himself ” (Taylor 1983:1).* In the community where the author grew up, in the Maluti highlands, the shepherd walks behind the flock as opposed to shepherding in Palestine, where the shepherd leads the flock.

This methodology of shepherding will help the author to journey with the traumatized clergy when conducting this research. The author will conduct this research on the clergy, their spouses and children.

4.7.1 Pastoral Care as Pastoral Education

Gerkin argues and states that: “... *it is the function of pastoral education, a function that in the 20th century has usually been assigned to other specialities within the role of ministry. At each step along the way of the history of pastoral ministry, priest’s and pastors were formally or informally teaching the people about what it means to care- for the tradition of faith, for the community of believers, for individuals and families and for the socio-cultural milieu of the believing community. In his visits to new testaments churches and his letters to them in his absence, Paul was constantly teaching people about the meaning of the gospel and the expectations that were to be fulfilled. Pastors in the primitive post-New Testament church were teaching people about the necessary boundaries between life in their community and life in the surrounding pagan culture. The medieval priests combined their sacramental pastoral practises with teaching the people about the use of those practises to give meaning to their life and death*” (Gerkin 1997:94). This methodology will help teach pastoral care to the clergy. This includes the Presbytery; wherein ministers have been placed in its care within the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

4.7.2 The Pastor as a Ritualistic Leader

Gerkin asks the question that what we have to desire in order to take from our ancestors of the middle age. He continues to say, *“Probably not their tight-fisted control of the keys to salvation: the right to administer indulgences or the giving and withholding of the sacraments.*

Those devices for the exercise of pastoral authority are no longer available appropriate for the pastoral in our time. Yet there is something of sacramental, liturgical, ritualistic expression of care by the community of Christian believers to be learned from the church of the middle ages. Liturgical tradition can be preserved only by careful administration by pastoral leader who carefully tend the connection between the liturgical practice and life experience. Important as it is, not all care can be expressed through the medium of conversation. Some care can only be given the power of deep connection with communal meanings by way of corporate participation in the symbolic acts of receiving bread and wine, the laying on of hands, and the administration of the water of baptism.

Singing together can express care and acknowledge our mutual need for care. Praying together can search for and celebrate the receiving of the care that only God can provide” (Gerkin 1997:82). In the author’s opinion, the moment during the interview and interaction with those who feel neglected plays an important role.

4.7.3 The Pastor as a Shepherd of the Flock

According to Gerkin, the New Testament’s depiction of Jesus Christ as the good shepherd, who knows his sheep and is known by his sheep (John10:14), has painted a meaningful normative portrait of the pastor of God’s people. Reflecting on the action and words of Jesus as he relate to people at all levels of social life, this gives us the model sine qua non for pastoral relationships with both those people who are within our care and those strangers we meet along the way.

He continues to say: *“We need also to take with us our memories of those pastors of past eras who distorted the image of the pastor as Christ’s shepherd by assuming the authority to judge and direct God’s people- an authority that rightfully belongs only to Christ himself”* (Gerkin 1997:80).

The pastor, as the shepherd of Christ's flock, has been like those ancestors who exercised their shepherding authority to empower the people and offer care for those who were neglected by the powerful of their communities. This element will help enter into understanding and assisting the suicidal clergy. While the minister shepherds the congregants, he/she needs to be shepherded by the Presbytery. The above statement from Gerkin will help reconstruct the church to understand that ministers need as much caring as they care for their congregants.

4.7.4 The Pastor as Mediator and Reconciler

Although our pastoral posture towards the people whom we serve, will greatly differ from the early leaders of the church in the New Testament and Post-Testament times, we will want to keep before us the ancient function of the pastor as a mediator and a reconciler among individual believers and community leaders.

Gerkin quotes St. Paul letters by saying:

In the New Testament, no one is a better model of this role than Apostle Paul.

To read the Pauline letters, is to listen to long conversations between the great missionary apostle and the diverse people: who were made up of congregations

that he visited. Conversations that sort to reconcile people to one another, to the gospel as Paul had received it and most of all, to Christ, the head of the church.

We, therefore, need to take a ‘not knowing’ position and be good listeners when stories are being told by participants. The participant is an expert in telling his or her story. From shepherding, we move into sharing our stories and this will help us enter the world of suiciders.

4.8 NICK POLLARD’S POSITIVE DECONSTRUCTION THEORY

Reconstruction of life is one of the aims of Pollard. Pollard developed his theory, when as an undergraduate, he had bought his first car; which was an old car. It had a good chassis and the body was good as well. However, the engine was worn out, the gearbox crunched pathetically and the suspension was broken. He, then, heard about another car which was similar to the one he bought.

The car contained lots of new parts which were in good condition, but unfortunately it was a write-off from an accident. He purchased it in order to reconstruct a new one out of the two. This process will help the author in reconstructing the lives of the broken-hearted. The mechanic started by deconstructing the parts by replacing the old ones with the new ones. Pollard realised that it was not a negative deconstruction but a positive one.

Pollard claims that, “*You can preach all you like (and I am very committed to clear biblical preaching), but if people are not listening we must consider what can be done to encourage them to want to pay attention*” (Pollard 1997:45).

Positive deconstruction, according to Wikipedia, in relation to Christian apologetics, is a term which was firstly used by Nick Pollard in *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult* (drawing on Dr. David Cook), to describe a methodology for engaging with worldviews in Christian apologetics.

The process is one of *deconstruction* because it involves 'dismantling' the worldview in order to identify areas which conflict with a Christian's worldview.

It is *positive* because the intention is not to destroy the person's ideas and belief system, but to build on areas of agreement between the two worldviews; in order to argue for the truth of the Christian worldview.

Pollard identifies four key aspects, namely:

- Identify the worldview: What beliefs, values and attitudes are being communicated? Most people seem unaware of the worldviews that they have absorbed. That is why it is so rare for people to articulate a worldview.

- Analyse the worldview, primarily in terms of the correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth. Does it cohere? If a statement is true, it will cohere. Whatever which is truth, will make sense.

Does it correspond with reality? If a statement is true, it will correspond with reality. Does it work? If the statement is true, it will work. That is, truth enables us to function, whereas error does not.

- Affirm the truth: What aspects of the worldview are in agreement with a Christian worldview? Non Christian views are not totally wrong. They do contain elements of truth (sometimes very large), and we must affirm them.
- Deny the error: what aspects of the worldview are in conflict with a Christian worldview? As well as containing the truth, however, non-Christian worldviews also contain error. (see Pollard 1997:48-55)

Pollard claims that the process is deconstruction because he is helping people to deconstruct (that is, take apart) what they believe in order to look carefully on the belief and analyze it. It is a process that the clergy need in order to reconstruct their lives. He further claims that the process is positive because this deconstruction is done in a positive way; in order to replace the false belief with something better.

“There are none of the negative connotations that are sometimes associated with the branch of literary criticism known as deconstructionism, but rather a positive search for truth” (Pollard1997:44-45).

He continues to say that for many people, in today’s culture, it is vital that they discover the inadequacies of the views they have adopted. But this must take place within the context of the whole gospel; which centres on God’s love for the people. If we genuinely love the people, we shall want to help them discover the inadequacies of the worldview that they have adopted, and we shall also want to assist them and serve them in other ways too.

“Employing positive deconstruction is just one part of demonstrating God’s love for the people” (Pollard 1997:46).

Tony Watkins develops this in relation to film in *Focus: The Art and Soul of Cinema*. He aims to make the positive deconstruction process more accessible, and accordingly re-labels the four aspects of the process:

- Analyse the worldview, in which he suggests a five-part framework for considering worldviews:
 - What is reality?

- What does it mean to be human?
 - How do we know what the good is?
 - How do we know anything at all?
 - What is the fundamental problem confronting all human beings, and what is the solution?
-
- Evaluate the worldview (as with Pollard's second stage, this he terms as correspondence, coherence, pragmatism)
 - Celebrate the good
 - Challenge the bad (Watkins 2007:31-45).

As the author works with co-researchers, the above will be applied.

4.9 USING NARRATIVE THERAPY IN RELATIONSHIP TRAUMA

According to Strydom (2007) every relationship has two faces: public face and a personal face. In lots of relationships the personal face can be so problem saturated or painful that the members of the relationship cannot face the truth. This often

leads to the secrets and maintaining of secrets. Shame accompanies secrets (p.29). These shameful secrets occupy so much of the relationship's energy that there is no energy left to work on the relationship or to address the problems (Muller 2002:88). According to Muller (2002) it is important to remember that forgetting (or actually repressing) a problematic story, is never helpful. First, one has to face the problem, unmask the secret and tell the horror story, before you can start to heal and eventually forget in a healthy way (p.90). The bigger Christian family story helps us interpret our own problematic stories (Genesis 37, and 45). People create distance; God wants to create whole intimate relationships. God repairs, not only patch relationships. Our natural reaction is to hide, deny, and keep the secret. God's way is to remember, to uncover, the story, by telling it in the light of God's grace and to encounter the distance between us by words and deed of forgiveness (Strydom 2007:29-30).

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATIONS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this final chapter is to present an overview of the study, and recommendations for further studies. This research project had explored trauma leading to suicide by ministers of the Presbyterian church. The methodology used was qualitative in orientation and involved in-depth interviews with participants.

5.2. PARTICIPANTS

In the research project aimed at ministers of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in S.A who had attempted suicide due to their stipend unpaid consecutively. These participants were aged between 40 and 55, and were from different places in South Africa, specifically from the rural areas. The research question explored the participants' different experiences of trauma, and focused specifically on their

unique points of view, ideas, motives, beliefs and feelings on the phenomenon. They were thus allowed to tell their stories in their own way, since they were viewed as experts in their own journey and experiences. In this regard, the aim was to remain congruent with each participant's context and continually refer to the text of each written story whilst making interpretations. The interpretations have dealt with individual themes and through the processes of the use of language, personal identities and exchange of dialogue, new meanings were created with the participants. These were recorded in chapters four.

Participants were selected objectively, and could not to be friends or acquaintances of the researcher, in order to ensure that the researcher's objectivity could be retained (Walker, 1985: 30). The letters further explained the nature of the study and provided an indication of how long the interviews would take. Following the invitation, co-researchers were invited to participate in the study and were again given a verbal and written explanation of the nature of project.

5.3. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The research found guidance in qualitative which was in-depth in orientation with participants. One-on-one interview method was followed in collecting data from

the ground. For those who were interviewed in African languages, their answers were then translated into English. The research questions were designed to study the participants' experience from their point of view and immersed in from their ideas, motives, beliefs and feelings. During the time of interview, the researcher ensured that there were no distractions by anybody during the process of interview. Based on the questions raised in the interview guide, the participants' answers were classified and discussed extensively in chapter four.

5.4. SMALL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In chapter two, focused on the research method and design utilized for this study, and outlines the epistemological basis, sample, and data collection and analysis methods. Finally, the chapter touched on some ethical considerations that the researcher took into account when devising this study.

Chapter three the theoretical bases and literature review of trauma and understanding of suicidal ministers and their families were both dealt with. Chapter four explored the reality of trauma and suicide asclergies experienced with their families. It also investigated the transitional challenges these participants faced in their resilient journey. .

5.5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

In most churches, the hierarchy tend to treat problems of pastors as personnel problems having little or no bearing at all to the churches as an institution. At times due to one reason or many, ministers are being disowned and sometimes suspended by their own churches in a very inhuman manner. The only assumption that the people are making is that the church has no problem only the minister does. But in essence the church is meaningless without a minister or pastor. People assume that the pastor is a being that does not feel any pain or even to suffer traumatic situations. When this situation occurs in their lives, congregants and even other the hierarchy rejects them as being unproductive in the service of the Lord. The church must see to it, to serve the souls of pastors that they become productive instruments of God. The church must create or avail professional counselors in each every district for pastors residing those areas. It must also create a retreat forum where pastors meet to revive one another pastorally. In other word, the church must be there for the pastors even in the times of difficulties or need. There is a great need for the people to change the attitudes and consider the church as a divine and

human institution. The following were said as a means of aiding the ministry of God:

- Crating workshops, retreats and seminars in order to capacitate one another, in response to pastoral care to the people of God. This will also assist in addressing personal matter in deferent families as pastors.

- Creating support groups for pastors in moral and spiritual matter. This will enable minister to deal with their stress and trauma in a good environment without tempering with their responsibilities.

- The church then must grow to the level where ministers, even if they are not in good terms with the congregation, get painful full so they may be able to deliver and service congregants pastorally.

5.6. THEOLOGY OF RESILIENCE

The researcher has come to conclude that, people's ability to bounce back aftermath of their traumatic experience, depend mostly on their ability to forgive and to let go. This creates a flourishing space and opening for the future. The

researcher however kept in mind that forgiveness is not reconciliation, but rather a way of easing oneself. It may not even one recommended method in dealing with traumatized people, but in some situations is also helpful and can be applicable to others.

Forgiveness therefore, is one of the ways that creatures can deal with those events that wounds their souls as it is a religious thing. It must therefore, be incorporated in the mode of pastoral counselling in order to for the help seekers to gain positive resilience. This will help to make people let go of their resentment towards their perpetrators.

5.7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Firstly, the choice of the study is derived from qualitative and social constructionist principles. Due to the extensive time and labour intensive nature of the study only three main participants were interviewed and their stories were narrated. This small sample only represents a small proportion of ministers of UPC SA suffering under traumatic situation and therefore cannot be generalized to a larger population of other other ministers from different denominations. Although the researcher knew that interviewing

more people would have elicited more information and assumptions about the research topic, the aim was only on the selected participants in the context of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in S.A..

- Secondly , I acknowledge that the manner in which I elicited themes from each participant's narrations was coloured by the lens through which I was looking at the particular point in time. I therefore note that another researcher may highlight different themes. A more empirical or qualitative vice in the field of psychology research could therefore criticize this study, as its outcomes cannot be generalized to a larger population.

5.8. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- It would be interesting and valuable to undertake a study similar to this one that includes the perceptions of church members and elders concerning the impact of their ministers trauma that led them attempt suicide.. This would help in acquiring a holistic understanding from all members involved with respect to the impact of traumatic situations.

5.9. CONCLUSION

Trauma and suicide are facts of life in modern society. It therefore amount a major change in the life course of all family structures requiring all source of help in order to bounce back. As a way of concluding the research project, these phenomenons are not just a psychological concept alone but also has huge impact in the lives of people of God. The researcher has come to conclude that:

Firstly ministers need to find and experience care, concern and guidance in their own life so as to be able to be a source of care, concern and guidance to the lives of others. The church as a community of love and care must see to it that pastors are well in their soul through regular intervention in their lives. In other words, the hierarchy of the church must make it their responsibility to avail professional counselors for pastors often in order to nature their soul for the sake of God's church. Otherwise all their bitterness, dominating spirit and frustration will have huge negative impact on the growth and development of the church. For the church to grow negatively in all side (i.e spiritual and economically) ministers must be well in their souls. This method of care to pastors must also include the treatment

of particular illnesses, anger, stress, including the abuse of alcohol.

Secondly, people's ability to bounce back aftermath of traumatic or even stressful situations depend mostly on their ability to forgive or let go of those. This creates a flourishing space and opening for the future. The researcher however kept in mind that forgiveness is not reconciliation, but rather a way of easing oneself. Forgiveness is also one of the ways that creatures can deal with those events that wounds their souls as it is a religious mandate to do. It must therefore, be incorporated in the mode of pastoral counselling in order to for the help seekers to gain positive resilience. This will help to make people let go of their resentment towards their perpetrators.

6. “Appendix A”

THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PRETORIA 002 SOUTH AFRICA

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER NAME: *GUGUSHE, JOSEPH MONGEZI*

STUDENT NUMBER: *10543067*

ADDRESS: NO 42 MNYAMANZI STREET, HILLCREST, MTHATHA 5100

TELEPHONE: 047 534 2084 (HOME) / 082 821 7555 (CELL)

FACULTY: THEOLOGY

DEPARTMENT: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

TITLE: *Traumatic Suicide Attempt due to Lack of Remuneration to Clergy by the Church: A pastoral Care Perspective.*

PURPOSE: To research trauma experiences of the clergy, and their families as a result from the minister’s non-remuneration during church conflict times, and to survey how the church handles such experiences and submit recommendations to the church.

PROCEDURE: The researcher shall consider the ability of the participant to participate in the entire process before entering into consent. Before signing the agreement, the researcher shall consider literacy, age, mental capacity and general health status. Depending on the extent of the traumatic event, the duration of the interview will range from between one hour to three hours per session. Where necessary, a second session shall be arranged for another day. The participants shall be the clergy and their families.

RISKS: The researcher shall inform the participant of all possible risks and discomforts that may emanate from the interview. The possible risks and discomforts may be psychological, in that, the past will be resurrected as well as that the interview may lead to fatigue.

BENEFITS: There shall be no financial benefits for participation other than a possible healing process if the participant has not consulted any caregiver before. The researcher shall inform the participant that there is no filing-in of the forms, except signing of the consent form.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: The participant has a right to decline to sign the consent form, to participate in the interview as well as to deny any member of the family to participate in the interview.

The researcher shall, in a language that is understood by the participant, explain the essential terms of the agreement to the participant in order to ensure that the meaning and consequences of the agreement are understood.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The researcher shall promise not to disclose, without the consent of the participant, any confidential information that is obtained in the process of the interview and the research.

THE DECLARATION

A copy of this signed consent form is provided to the participant, and the researcher undertakes to comply with the obligations stated therein.

The participant declares that he/she is presently of healthy mind and is able to sign an agreement.

The researcher agrees that in the event that an input of a minor child is needed, the researcher shall discuss the matter with the parent and request permission to interview the child. If the parent disagrees, the interview shall not take place.

I, the undersigned interview participant, confirm that I hereby consent to the interview as per agreements stated above.

Signed atthis.....day of2011.

.....
PARTICIPANT RESEARCHER DATE

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