

THE CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CAREGIVERS IN THE EVENT OF SUDDEN DEATH

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original, and that all sources used I have indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

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DEDICATION

**To: my wife Kentsheng 'Keshebile' Margaret Gabobonwe nee' Mosimanegape
and all my children and**

my mother Nelly Sephiri nee' Gabobonwe

all without whom my being is meaningless.

GLOSSARY

AIDS : Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Abaluyia: One of the Black African clans found in Central Africa.

ACTH: Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone

Adrenal Cortex: the outside layer of glands found on or near the kidneys.

ANS: Autonomic Nervours System

Barolong of Ganyesa: Barolong is one of the Ethnic clans of the Batswana tribe. The Barolong referred to in the work are those who are indigenous of Ganyesa.

Biopsychic: something having to do with or involving both the biological and psychological phenomena.

Death: that power that destroys life, sometimes used as the result of that power that destroys life.

Depression: a mental disorder characterized by prolonged of dejection and despair, often accompanied by fatigue, headaches, and other numerous physical symptoms.

Distress: a kind of enthusiastic stress that attacks a person and pressures him/her to do well positively.

Ganyesa: one place (Village) 70km North of Vryburg town, in the Northwest Province of South Africa.

Eustress: a kind of destructive stress that attacks a person in very negative ways.

GCT: Gate Control Theory, one of the Psychological Theories.

Grief: great sadness caused by trouble of any kind, in this case, caused by loss through death of a loved one.

Mourning: the act of a person who mourns, who expresses his/her grief.

Muti: traditional medicines used in many or all Afriican rituals, sometimes it is used as those medicines used to bewitch others.

Minister: a clergyman/woman serving the church as a leader and spiritual guide, especially in Protestant Churches.

Ndebele: one of the Black African ethnic group found mainly in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. There are some also found scattered in other areas.

PSTD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Pastor: a minister in charge of a church or congregation

Sefifi: (literally) meaning the blackness casted by a shadow, but understood as every act of bad-luck that befalls a person.

Stress: a kind of unbearable pressure that strains a person in almost every way.

Stressor: any kind of stimulus that yields stress

Sudden Death: a kind of death that happens unexpectedly through any form of accident

Trauma: a kind of psychic wound caused by emotional shock that has lasting effects in the mind of a person.

UCCSA: United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, one of the denominations of a Protestant Church that has her roots in LONDON and there known as London Missionary Society.

Vasopressin: a pituitary hormone that contract **small** blood vessels, sometimes raises blood pressure and reduces the excretion of urine by the kidneys.

ABSTRACT

Death, and in special ways, sudden death has struck the church and various families at different times in our lives. The grief in the bereaved has challenged the church, in numerous ways including having to deal with people who are out of possibility with regard to the competencies of the church due stress disorders. This has asked serious theological questions about the pastoral care of the church who is expected to be the custodian of healing through faith. Sudden death as a stressor, has grown to be more common in recent years, and having checked a number of church registers and finding out that there are more funerals than baptisms the church has to conduct, one looks and evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling done through funerals that the church has had to handle---whether there is still meaning accorded to such services or not---whether there is any attempt to engage the bereaved during their mourning in the sound theological reflection on to the questions:

“Where, o death, is your victory?

“Where, o death, is your sting? (1 Cor. 15: 55).

Paul puts it in his address to the Corinthians “the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. This understanding, and several others usually cited has needed theological reflection in helping the people in grief for their loved ones snatched from them by sudden death, especially when it is through no fault of their own.

Quiet practically, many people have befallen prey to stresses of different kinds trying to cope with big losses through sudden death, and this has manifested itself differently. In the event of lack of knowledge of what to do to help such people, the church and pastoral care givers have either conducted many ordinary services (common to those done usually) or have coincidentally engaged one or more of the other fields namely:

- ✓ The medical sciences
- ✓ Psychological sciences and/or
- ✓ Psychiatric sciences.

The work enquires into the improvements that have happened in the course of time in the theological sciences in dealing with people stricken by sudden death through pastoral care, and attempts to allow theology to claim her responsibility in the midst of all mentioned sciences. The work attempts to empower the church and guide all pastoral care givers to skillfully deal with such circumstances as sudden death, invoking the methodology of shepherding to alley the sting of death that has found the church to be lacking, and questioned her credibility on the subject. Effort is put into comparing sudden death with the common 'bad luck' perception brought about by cultural traditions. It will attempt to craft the common ground from which the church and all the sciences mentioned can cooperate fruitfully for common goals and better assistance to the people we all serve today.

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