

CHAPTER 3

3.1. DEATH AND DYING

Despite the presence of death in the midst of our lives, we continue to live our lives as not having any relationship with it (death). This is caused by our dislike for it. Instead, we are more closed, in relationship, to funerals than death as the (funerals) happen to be a way of acknowledging that death is residing in our midst. Clearly, many of our people especially the young generation, is struggling to talk and discuss about this issue, although they want to know and speak of death by 'personification' as a funeral. This necessitates more the responsibility of defining the same death by pastoral caregivers at all angles of life. It can not be disputed here therefore that death and funeral of our beloved are inseparable, yet can be distinguished. It is because of the death of all of those that we bury, and in burying them we order the burial in the kind of a battery called funeral. This happens to be more of a battery because it is an order of how the service of burial which incorporates pastoral care will unfold, and this differs from one context to another.

The author, in his life experience, has witnessed and conducted many funerals. This witness comes from different angles that happen to face us concerning funerals of the dead in our lives. He has attended these funerals as a mourner, a pal bearer, a minister and other ways that may include just accompanying people. As a member of the clergy himself, he has also listened and heard many of our brothers and sisters both from the clergy and laity in their sermons making shocking claims of the authorities they have over death. This is claimed as either a particular church denomination or in their own personal selves, and this has always left the author asking serious questions about us (pastoral caregivers) as the church, and our

responsibility during funerals and when burying the dead. This state of affairs tears every grounded pastoral caregiver in attendance of such services to the level of even feeling lost and losing the entire purpose of attending such funerals.

In a rather positive note, when all this happens it sparks dialogue that yields introspection about what we all say and do in the times when the society is looking to us as a ministers to bury the dead. In a number of instances, this has compelled the author to confess that his lack of knowledge of death, but at least he knows that human beings and all living species of the universe do die one time.

In remembering the times when we were growing up as small boys and girls, a long time ago before there were current common accidents and diseases, many construed or misconstrued death to be something of the adult and the aged people. It was then a conventional belief that children are born, they grow into adolescent and adults, they age into old men and women and then they die. The current struggle that is sometimes heated by sudden deaths and bereavement that we all experience is the question whether we are losing so young people. The answer is shocking. They are lost in many ways and accidents, long time before they age into adults and the aged. The unbearable pains we have had to face are the loss of the promising life and success, sometimes even comfort of prosperity.

Kubler Ross' definition and/or thought of death as a 'final stage of growth' is very dear to the author's heart given what happens at that stage. That can be understood through conscious and careful imagination. We all grow in many ways, but the growth that happens at the time when one is in death's path to be exclusive to the dying.

Following their belief then, nearing the grave as a journey was a thing for the aged. One feels safe today following current experiences about death

to state that 'the journey to one's death and grave begins immediately after birth, actually at conception, immediately when life begins'.

The state of not knowing what death in itself is, answers the question whether we know what life is. Our life is so overwhelmed by death that we never really consider and capture what life and living is for us. We very often confuse life and living to be frantically accumulating a range and the quantity of experience valued in fantasy by others. We ultimately just pass through our lives without really living them.

It came to the author's realisation that life is a period or time of being alive and it is characterised by all biological processes such as growth, reproduction, movement, respiration etc. And living is expressed by the way we struggle to find in this time a sense of peace and strength to deal with disappointments and pain, while always striving to discover vehicles to be more accessible and to increase and sustain the joys and delights. Death is thus captured by many as is by Barnhart who defines it as:

- 'the fact or act of dying' (World Book Dictionary 1995 : 533).

It is a deduction from the above definition that dying is a fight against losing and loss of life. Having acknowledged the flaw of not knowing death, one has to come out straight and bold, and say that death is 'known' by the dead. It is one of the absolute myths only tangible in the hands of God, the one believed to be the giver of life.

But our human views and responses of those affected by death induces our attitudes towards death. Very often and commonly, we view death as undesirable, unwanted, sinful, bad and in all negative other terms that describes how we do not want it and perceives it as the worst enemy to be conquered and yet always conquering us. More often than never, we HATE death. But negative as our perception might be about death, times warrants and oblige us to begin to revisit death as in Kubler Ross's words:-

**‘Invincible, but friendly, companion on our lives journey---gently reminding us not to wait till tomorrow to do what we mean to do’
(Kubler Ross 1975: x).**

In any event of death we suffer, and in our suffering our faith can be seriously shaken and severely tested. It is when one is directly and specifically hit by death that one realizes that one is only a ‘nominal’ Christian whose faith has weaknesses and with biblical knowledge fragile, and quite often lacks firm grounding. At these times, being told that it is ‘the will of God’; whilst of course ultimately true, it might not satisfactorily explain the tragedy especially in cases of sudden and tragic death. Whilst agreeing with Smith, that until this day:

‘Psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists have made contributions from their own sciences, and novelists and poets have addressed the subject’,

One also has to stress with complete affirmation Smith’s own finding that:

“Death and its results, for the living, comes in many different ways and combinations” (Smith 2002: 2).

This is exemplified by the numerous shocking news of death we all have received in many instances such as:

- The old age home that suddenly catch fire and many die there unexpectedly;**
- Many friends go to the soccer match in the stadium and suddenly there is stampede and many die there;**
- A father leaves home going to work after being home for holiday and on his way he meets an accident and dies;**
- A mother attends a church conference and on the way home she meets an accident and dies;**

- A young adult and a son in a home has conflict with his girlfriend and in the misunderstanding he decide to commit suicide; and many other ways and forms in which sudden death hits us.

All the afore mentioned examples leave the bereaved with very intimate and crucial questions to respond to, and often the responses conflict with other dear people, sometimes even result into being serious enemies.

The author believes, it all begins with LOVE. In the event of every death there is grief. All this is squarely founded on an aspect of our human formation called emotions. Smith distinguishes two sides of our emotions as the concupiscible and the irascible. The concupiscible being love, desire and joy, and their opposite being hatred, aversion and sorrow. (Smith 2002: 55). When we deal with the frustrations of our desires, we become angry and we fear, we become anxious and so forth. When we grieve or are bereaved, we are in a state of sorrow, but can also be angry or anxious, depending on the situation we are in. This is also correctly captured by Kubler Ross on the five reactions people often experience when they face their own death.

‘These are: Denial,
Anger,
Bargaining (with God),
Depression and perhaps final,
Acceptance’. (Kubler Ross 1986: 34-121).

I have to remind the reader that Kubler Ross was dealing with the dying and all these stages relate to that same person, dying. But I have noticed from interaction with the people that the same stages apply even more practical to those who remain the bereaved. At the reception of the news of death, many often deny that. They keep asking questions such as:

“Is this true” and followed by the answer, “no, this can’t be true” There is naturally a following up anger with someone, usually the one that is believed to have caused that death then. On and on the stages go, until

the final acceptance that “s/he is gone through death, and nothing can be done to undo that.”

It is worth asserting also that given all our different experiences with these bereaved and grieving on loved ones, the afore said stages are not always all there, and their order vary naturally.

Whilst striving to love as we all must as a way of responding to God’s love and commandment, and law through Jesus, we also must accept that love is a risk of sorrow, sadness, grief, and all such feelings expressing frustration at a particular time in our lives. This was also exemplified by Jesus at the grave of Lazarus and the Jews affirmed it: “see how he loved him”. (John 11: 36).

Death is most of the times a fact; but a fact that necessitates grief. It is thus a subject that is evaded, ignored and denied by our youth and all progress-oriented societies. It takes courage to stop and think positive about it, and if done well, it brings about development and informs life and living as gifts, and guides towards life’s fruitfulness of happiness and productivity. But until this stage, and from the community I come from and even the one I care for as a pastor, death is a problem. It is more a problem when it is sudden because to the relatives, such deaths cause a strong sense of unreality and even feelings of guilt. There is sometimes increased need to, kind of, blame somebody in the feeling of helplessness and deeper depression than might be expected. The relatives affected by sudden death ask among other questions:

- “ if only I had seen him/her once more before s/he died”
- “Did s/he say anything before s/he died?”
- “I feel terrible. We had a fight this morning, before I left for work, and we both said some awful things to each other. If only I could make things right with him/her”.

- “I wish I had been a better husband/wife/daughter/son/mother/father etc to him/her. If only I could start over”
- “Why can’t I see him/her just once more so that I can tell him/her how sorry I am, and how much I love him/her?”

It is never enough to love a person, even when true love is shown to people in different ways, love is never saturated. It is a feeling and a part of human nature that demands more and more. Sudden death is like a bullet that shoots the chord called love that binds people, and it shoots with the intention of killing it. In the event of failing to kill it, strain of this chord result because a host of ‘meaningful’ gestures and expressions are impossible and many a times does not fulfil. Kubler-Ross had a better expertise in this field because of the kind of pastoral care she did. It is important to look closer to her discoveries by way of explaining what we hold in our hands today about the same problem to inform our responses in such times of need.

3.1.1 ANALYSIS OF Kubler-Ross’s VIEW

The author reached a point of adoption that the most distinctive feature of Kubler-Ross’ thought on the dying is to imagine death as a ‘process’ rather than as a ‘state’. Her work like that of many other researchers was done in hospitals with the terminally ill. Her patients had plenty of time to reflect on their situations. She speaks of the ‘stages’ of as distinctively psychological happenings, and organizes her data into a schema of progression. That most empirical studies have not entirely validated this area, or revealed only unsurprising conditions such as denial and depression, does not make the idea of stages less attractive. A process heads somewhere, and this fact in itself implicitly promises an order and goal. This is perhaps what has made Kubler-Ross uniquely popular. It re-visited time and again that

Kubler-Ross' work differs with this topic, as was noted in the research-gap above, in that she dealt with the dying whilst the topic focuses on the stress and depression which forms largely the contexts within which pastoral caregivers and practitioners work in any event of sudden death.

3.1.2. DYING 'STAGES'

If dying is progression, and this is a psychological process and not just a way to describe the course of the fatal disease in Kubler-Ross' view, then the process has a starting point and a goal. Lucy Bregman notes that:

“The five stages of dying are Kubler-Ross' major contribution to the American culture's perspective on death. The stages begin with 'denial', when the person first hears the diagnosis, generally, and proceed through anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. (Kubler-Ross 1969: 264).

Overall, what this process accomplishes is to acknowledge the reality of impending loss, conclude one's 'unfinished business', and finally let go of life. This schema requires an attitude of renunciation, expressed perhaps in the ancient near-death posture of turning one's face towards the wall and away from the living. But the term renunciation forms no part of Kubler-Ross' vocabulary. Instead she transforms this into the very positive-sounding goal of 'acceptance'. (Bregman 1992: 33).

In our context of Africa, all these stages affect not the dying only, but the entire family and relatives. The stages have got no order, and often are distinctive to all. As a result, there come various hallucinations of seeing and hearing this and that by many people involved. Given the strength of faith and believes in supernatural powers, the possibilities of witchcraft become important to be investigated. In pursuit of such investigations people are either made or destroyed, healed or seriously wounded by some of false traditional healers are the result of hunger and starvation due to economic ups and downs of the whole world. A closer attention to

people by pastoral care at this point is inevitable, and this must come from both inside the family and outside.

On death and dying concepts, when we begin with such American-Freudian generalizations as “in our unconscious, death is never possible in regard to ourselves... in our unconscious mind we can only be killed” (Kubler-Ross 1969: 2). “Fear of death is a universal fear.” Kubler-Ross 1969: 5). Denial and projection are seen as universal responses to the frightening power of death. Children are not aware of death’s irreversibility; like the unconscious, they simply do not believe in it. (Kubler-Ross 1969: 3). We can sit and think today but we can never come to imagine the conclusion of what the goal of acceptance would be or would mean. Maybe it becomes as one way of trying to legitimize the repression of death as it often was to the American society. Kubler-Ross then shifts to factors within contemporary culture that exacerbate the denial of death. Among these are the elaborate medical technology and the impersonal bureaucracy of hospitals, the setting that turns human mortality into ‘management of terminally ill patients’. She then relates a story that plays a key role not only in her work. When she was a child in rural Switzerland, she remembers, a farmer had an accident and died a few days later in his bed at home. His family was with him; even she, the neighbour’s child, was present. He had time to say good-bye amid familiar surroundings. This is the way most people once died, and this, she claims, is the way people ought to die even today. (Kubler-Ross 1969: 5-6). Such a death is termed to be ‘natural’, it forms the peaceful and terrifying end to life. In such a setting, death can be ‘accepted’, not just by others but even the dying person. It is a kind of way that one can ‘wish’ to die by his/her time of death. This kind of death comes after following a kind of closure for both the dying and the next of kin, and therefore does/should not in any way result in casualties that needs immediate attention by pastoral caregivers.

Kubler-Ross' five stages are defined as emotional state. She insists that denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance can have any variety of cognitive contents. What is constant of the dying patient is to express the emotions appropriate to each stage. Unlike a denying patient, an angry patient disrupts hospital civility and routine, and will often be deliberately avoided and isolated by the staff. Kubler-Ross' strategy for dealing with anger is to stress to its human targets that it is not meant personally, and to encourage its expression for emotional catharsis. Screaming, hitting a pillow, raging at God all right; they express, but in such a way that no one will be hurt. She continues to assure her readers that God is mighty enough to be able to take and welcome our anger. But at all stages, emotional expression is healthy; suppression is not. In addition, some of the responses mostly accepted as proper such as fighting one's illness to the end, are seen by Kubler-Ross as unhealthy and unnatural. "If dying is a process that unfolds spontaneously, then 'the will to live' can impede the process. To cheer up patients, to encourage them to fight, is counter-productive". (Kubler-Ross 1969: 87). So is pressing them to continue treatments when they are 'ready' to die. She deliberately challenges the language of heroism, of military resistance to death. "After all, the entire medical profession relies on a military model of conquest, of unlimited unconditional war". These are the words of William May as quoted by Bregman in her book, *Death in the midst of life*. She continues to assert in line with her source who is Kubler-Ross, to say medicine sees in any patient's death its own defeat. Knowing Kubler-Ross' line of thought now, one can safely say how much would she refute such a stance of medicine. The importance of medicine must be ensured to reach human nature relative to death, and what death is relative to what life is. This might help in the redefinition of death, and what it is when sometimes it hits us all of a sudden. The distinction of death as an enemy and death as a friend shall be made, and the paradox of bargaining with death shall be given a new meaning.

3.2. Towards defining Death anew

Death is already defined above by scholars who worked deeply and broader with the dying and the bereaved. Given all our experiences about it and following what we felt in those times, one knows it as, at least, more of an enemy than a friend. Death has suddenly gained more and more explanations recently in our modern society and relative to our broad diversity of beliefs some of which we have acquired with the modernity of our life. It raises eyebrows when at any given time one tries to differentiate between deaths. Whether death differs from sudden death in any way is debated by many saying all death is sudden because nobody knows the hour of death in advance. The answer to the above has given particular and new responses and thoughts by many people in different societies, including the bereaved and this fact has emerged as one of those aspects which have concerned the author to necessitate an attempt to answering these questions.

Charles-Edwards thinks' of death as:

“Both a passive and an active force. The figure in mythology is sometimes given an active character: in Ingmar Bergman’s medieval film, *The Seventh Seal*, for example, the figure of Death challenges the knight to play chess as a means of postponing the knight’s own death. When the game is over, inevitably Death wins, taking the knight’s life as the prize. Death is prepared to cheat but always wins in the end. The chess game is a powerful metaphor for millions of different battles with Death. Some of us endeavour to keep Death at bay by building up our health, giving up smoking, saying our prayers or making some sacrifice in order to benefit others. Death can be given many names in this active role, sometimes neutral, as in *The seventh Seal*, sometimes as a malign force, with such negative as Satan or the Devil, or the positive personality of an active God who chooses when each of us is to die: ‘the night thy soul is required of

thee'. Death can also feel as if it is passive. It has been described as a fact rather than as an experience. It just happens, perhaps by chance: why that night for the heart attack, that journey for the fatal accident? Death can occur without apparent reason. Just as the sun rises on the just and the unjust, so some people live comfortably to old age, while others die young” (Charles-Edwards 2000:118-119).

But the sudden death that occurs in the form of accident, murder or suicide evades in many ways the description as that ‘it is the loving God’s choice’ for the person to die. It befits in many ways to be related to the devil’s negative ways, and such death comes to many people as loss to the devil’s evil thoughts and actions. Such death inflicts stress and challenges in a serious way to even those who we consider grounded in their faith in God. This kind of death inflicts stress, some of which might be possible to result in undesirable responses such as depression. The people, who happen to, one way or another, reach these levels of stress responses cannot simply be construed to be unreasonable weak, they need pastoral care that is skilful from the broad church.

Death itself has many meanings. Raphael remembers it as: ‘the grim reaper; a sleep from which the sleeper does not awake; a catastrophe and destruction; non-being; transition to another life; the end; the loss of loved one; the death of self’. She continues to stress that:

“it is the inevitable part of human experience. The knowledge of its inevitability is incorporated into the psychological structure of each person and accommodated in many ways. Human society, from its earliest times, has evolved rituals and myths in its attempts to give meaning to death: the mysterious, fearful, and the unknown. Through the ages man has devised many symbolic primitive ritualistic ways to cope with death and bereavement. Many include magical beliefs about the causes of death and ways one may be protected from it---as if in an attempt to

control it and make meaning of it. It is commonly assumed that many contemporary societies are death denying.

Death is conceptualized in many ways. In early childhood, its nature and finality cannot be easily visualized, yet as the individual grows he/she comes to understand it as personal and inevitable and associated with the natural cessation of bodily processes. The individual may understand this for others, but analytic views would suggest that the unconscious mind cannot accept death, and that human being cannot contemplate own death as absolute cessation of all existence. Freud thought that all interest on mortality was denial of death. Jung, on the other hand, saw enormous significance in the symbolic idea of immortality, yet he recognised the fear of death and described it as 'the fear that envelopes the sleepless one like a smothering blanket' (Raphael 1989: 19-20).

It should be noted to the reader that Raphael's thoughts above is looking at a person that is thinking of his/her own death, no matter how sudden it might be. It must be mentioned here that in practical circumstances all the uneasy and undesirable feelings about and around death end at death itself. It can be pronounced that it is how the one dying approaches his/her own death, and that this happens independently from all other people without any consideration of the closeness of a relationship. The big struggle, the one pastoral care is handling at the present moment is about the appropriate journeying with those who are struck by this death all of a sudden.

Our South African constitution's chapter 2 is about the bill of rights. Very crucial among these rights is a clear and well documented 'right to life'. This is one aspect of our being that is currently under scrutiny. It is this right that is questioned against God in the event of any sudden death. Even in the hospital wards, many who are passing on and pronounced by medical

doctors to be 'naturally died', are not always seen as such by family and friends.

Hannelore Wass, picks up shortly a pronouncement of sentiments from two sciences represented by two people, Dr Rieux and Father Paneloux. At that time they both worked very hard, spending many long hours in the hospitals and other places where the risk of contracting plague was great. They came to a young boy who was suffering, and both their efforts --- prayers and the antiplague serum--- failed. Simply put: 'human might and wisdom came to an end'. It was after some exchange of heated words in argument when Paneloux said to Rieux:-

Then he shook his head. "No, Father. I've a very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture... but I'd rather not discuss that with you. We're working side by side for something that unites us---beyond blasphemy and prayers. And it's the only thing that matters". Paneloux sat down beside Rieux. It was obvious that he was deeply moved. "Yes, yes" he said. "You. Too, are working for man's salvation". "Salvation's much too big a word for me. I do not aim so high. I'm concerned with man's health and for me his health comes first" (Smith 2002: 176). "That is, sort of, revolting because it passes our human understanding. But perhaps we should love what we cannot understand". Rieux straightened up slowly. He gazed at Paneloux, summoning to his gaze all the strength and fevor he could muster against his weariness. Paneloux was in the face of this suffering boy till the boy's death, and was greatly changed in his perception of death. And shortly before his own death he preaches a sermon to his congregation, with a much changed perception to the one then known by the same congregation. He is quoted saying:-

"And, to tell the truth, nothing was more important on earth than a child's suffering, the horror it inspires in us, the reasons we must find to

account for it. In other manifestations of life God made things easy for us and thus far, our religion had no merit. But, in this respect, He put us, so to speak, with our backs to the wall.... My brothers, a time of testing has come for us all. We must believe everything or deny everything. And who, I ask amongst you would dare to deny everything? My brothers....the love of God is a hard love. It demands total self-surrender, disdain of our human personality. And yet it alone can reconcile us to suffering and the deaths of children, it alone can justify them, since we cannot understand them, and we can only make God's will ours. That is the hard lesson I would share with you today. That is the faith, cruel in human eyes, and crucial in God's; which we must ever strive to compass. We must aspire beyond ourselves towards a high fearful vision". (Wass 1979: 371).

What a portrait! That would be the author's first comment about the above argument as it does so much in pronouncement that much as we all are so pro life and claims the right to it by will and supreme law of our country, we must assimilate in our being a conscious knowledge of our 'right to death' of course, as a consolation, at the will of God. Whilst the church as a pastoral care community comes in for the help and protection of the vulnerable in the face of grief and bereavement, the church must also as its responsibility help them to face the death. In the event of disagreements and misunderstandings, either between/amongst the siblings or relatives, or between relatives and the church, or in any form or way, death can become not only a pain but also can strain all who are involved in almost every way.

Death, especially when sudden, forcefully pushes the bereaved and mourners into a journey into the unknown land, 'From life with the deceased person, to life without him/her.' The church needs to prepare them for this journey. The author asserts, that if the living may pause to consider the meaning of death to the dying and/or the dead, relative to the meaning of

the same to the mourners, the impact and pain it has on us, the living, would be alleviated in a way.

Veatch defines death as:-

‘a complete change in status of living entity characterised by the irreversible loss of those characteristics that are essentially significant to it’ (Wass 1979: 324).

Not in any dispute with Veatch, the author may pronounce, but realising that given the definition of death by Kubler Ross, all who tries to define it again do so relative to what they would like to say about the same thing. Agreeing as already said before by Kubler Ross saying that death is the final stage of growth, I also say not only growth occur during death, but also loss of everything is evident. But we are bound to ask a question ‘what is essentially significant to a human being’ so that we can understand Veatch’s definition. This question is in its nature a philosophical question--- having ethical and other values. But pastorally as well, when the same question is asked, it refers not to the dying or dead, but the bereaved and the grieving. Following this recognition the author picks up the following significances as those that are essential and actually characterize somehow, human life:-

- Flow of vital fluids.as an instance, breath and blood.
- Soul from the bodythat is the animating principle of life according to Aristotle.
- Capacity for bodily integration.
- Capacity for social integration.

It is striking to discover that all four essentials directly affect the dying and only the fourth one directly affects the mourners. The definition by Veatch also explains why death is so undesirable and viewed with all negatives; --- Death is a loss of life, both by the dying and the living/mourning. Facing up to it is a monumental task. It seems to be the worst thing that could possibly

happen, and that once the hope of a longer, healthy life has gone, there is nothing except despair.

Buckman concurs that, “despair, like anger, fear and denial, is a very common phase in facing the threat of dying. There is no magic formula that will instantly banish it. This word ‘despair’, really, means the loss of hope” (Smith 2002: 65).

I want to use these sentiments relative to the observations, and of course remembrances about our whole family during and after that time my own sister lost her husband and children in a tragic car accident that is already mentioned in chapter 1. I realise that it was, and still is, the journey she and all of us had to undertake into the unknown land and destination. I speak with clear conscience and experience that this can be a daunting prospect. But the following steps are worth emphasis by pastoral care givers, (they shall be stressed in the next chapter)

- Accept the way you feel. Do it without thinking who you are.
- Assess your needs. Clarify them from your wants.
- List your resources. Do it relative to all your aims and goals of life.
- Do not make big decisions rapidly. Even if we do not have a guarantee about the length of life, we are at least sure that loss of loved one through death is long term.
- Get help if you need it. Deceiving as life might be today, there is inevitable development in all its angles, and surely, human being and structure of assistance everywhere.

Be it as it may; death, more over when sudden, presents faith with its greatest challenge. People are torn apart in almost every way. Faith that has been received and lived with for a long time comes under threat of being abandoned. The people’s spiritual being is wounded to death as that of Jesus in Gethsemane. It is so because it suggests---there is nothing to

hope for, nothing to gain in journeying on, when at the end only loss, blankness and extinction is inevitable. Given and following Pauline account that, 'our life and bodies are just but earthly tents that are sometimes destroyed to usher our permanent state and dwelling place'. (2 Cor. 5: 1-10).

The author understands the term 'destroy' clearly, and its Paul's metaphor of likening human body to the dwelling, death has no other way of explanation in the mind that portrays it as to destroy a dwelling place---merciless, noisy, disharmonious and leaves a very uncomfortable gap. There is room to affirm, therefore, that the relationship between a human being and death is characterized by fear. One is bound to understand when Raphael goes on to describe this fear as: "fear of pain, of destruction, or mutilation, for example. It is the fear of the unknown, a fear of the annihilation of self. It may be a fear of the process of dying with loss of function, dependence on others, incapacity to tolerate the pain involved; or it may be a fear of being alone." (Raphael 1989: 21).

All that is said here culminates into one meaning: Death means a dead human body, the body that lacks breath, still, cold, having absence of response in all respects. Coming into face with this for a loved one brings pain that cuts to the core of personal experience. There are many deaths for many people, but only one death for each individual. Whether it is Raphael, Kubler-Ross, Lyall, Zurheide, Charles-Edwards, Nadeau, and all, I affirm their correctness in what they say about death, what it is and its effects on different people. But I also affirm, with crystal clear conscience, that they all see death from their own contexts. Death from here where I am, where one loses the loved one for no reason at all through sudden death and have to face all repercussions which include caring pastorally for stressed people responding in various ways, and others become severely depressed, is intangible, it is not imaginary but real. It stings human life to extinction at the time that it chooses to, and claims it as its own. No one

knows its structure but all know its effects. I knew it for a long time, but knew it better after claiming the life of my sister's husband and two children at once. In that angle 'death is the worst part of our life', a part of our lives where we are very vulnerable, and in serious need of accompaniment.

3.3. DEATH VIEWED BY PSYCHOLOGISTS

With the accompaniment of Bregman, we examine three psychological thinkers whose thoughts are greatly carried in the psychologies surrounding death. These are Ernest Becker, James Hillman, and Robert J. Lifton. They all distance themselves from Kubler-Ross' popular 'death-awareness' movement. The first two are implacable foes of ethical naturalism, and the third one is a serious critic of its simpler formulation. But all three of them rely explicitly on the Freudian, Jungian, and Existentialist legacies, seeking in the these sources an alternative to both American denial of death and the naturalist entering into an explicit use of 'mythic' language in order to express adequately their perspectives on death and its relation to the entire sphere of human life. The contextual South African settings will naturally be implied by inference into specific myths that are applied around death. The 'mythic' dimension is intrinsic, not accidental, to do their work. It suggests how death as a topic may lead spontaneously and inescapably to such language, and how the quest for an adequate mythology of death is part of the depth psychological heritage itself. These authors present the most challenging options for psychologists---as a springboard for rethinking their presuppositions about death---and for Christians who wish to integrate psychology and their own faith.

But the direct use of religious and mythic language by these three depth psychologists raises questions for the entire issue of 'integration'. For psychology as represented by these three, it is already so deeply and intrinsically in the myth-making business that the metaphor of 'integration' with Christianity, is partly misleading. Instead, one might follow Paul Ricoeur,

and speak of conflict of interpretations (Ricoeur 1970: 20), or even a conflict of myths, in order to underscore this point. Insofar as Christian is concerned, faith too makes use of 'myths' as a special form of thought, and cannot be consistently 'demythologised' without losing its central imagery and meaning, the hope for any integration with theories of depth psychology requires that we admit to the mythic character of both partners in the endeavour.

3.3.1. ERNEST BECKER

He wrote 'The Denial of Death' short before his death from cancer in 1974. The sense of existential crisis and urgency throughout the book makes this autobiographical tie-in seem more than poignant coincidence, although it remains unclear how much actual knowledge of his illness he (author) had when he began the project. The Denial of Death is a reinterpretation of Freudian depth psychology and existentialist perspectives by way of Rank et al, in their 'Life Against Death'. All of these sources, however, are subordinate to Becker's own polemical, passionate vision. It is impossible, he proclaims, to write an 'objective' and disinterested study of death. Becker's book appeared during the height of the human potential movement, with its rhetoric of health, happiness, and wholeness, of fully actualized potentials and self-enhancement through perpetual growth. For many readers, Denial of Death was a sharp reminder of how far away popular psychology is, and moved from its links with existentialism's more somber view of the human condition. Insofar as Kubler-Ross' popularity was intrinsically tied to the same rhetoric of wholeness and fulfilment---with death as 'The Final Stage of Growth'---Becker's vision is also a bitter critique of that 'healthy-minded' approach. Becker provides readers with a choice from the start: hear what is real, however terrifying, or flee into healthy-mindedness, into all comforting illusions about oneself and the human condition. The first path is heroic and authentic, and it allows for the

unmasking of all those pseudo-solutions that disguise our horror of death. The reader is incessantly aware of the author himself struggling with this choice, or at least the author's persona within the text. Egocentric, outraged, grandly masculine, but in some ways pathetic: this may not be the 'real Ernest Becker', but it is a self-presentation that emerges as a model for those who choose the 'morbidly minded' and courageous path. It is not Becker's empirical arguments that convince the reader, but the degree to which the latter can identify with the author's style of being human.

3.3.1.1. Death and Denial

Denial of death stems from the idea of death, the fear of it, something that haunts human beings like nothing else. It is a mainspring of human activity--an activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny of man. All childhood, in all cultures with their 'her-systems', and all of everything that humans do are fundamentally expressive of this is denial. Every nook and cranny of human existence is contaminated by death's terror. Clearly, death is not 'acceptable', and words such as terror, horror and fear can be repeated more and more. It is as if we, the readers, were always on the verge of slipping back into denial by mitigating the stark reality of death, and only such vivid verbal reminders could halt this process.

"Death is the constant dread presence discovered by Becker in every situation of vulnerability, humiliation, and violence. The task of all alike is to strip away the levels upon levels of desperate lies, which attempt to deny this reality. Becker claims to work from Freud in the light of existentialism. For Freud, as we saw, every situation is construed as a conflict between two psychic forces; Freud was happy to admit that he was forever a dualist. Becker is also very definitely a dualist. Yet unlike Freud, for whom instinct is both biological and psychic, Becker is a much more traditional Cartesian dualist. He splits person

into mind and body far more neatly and artificially than Freud. He assert that nature's values are bodily values, human value are mental values, as he claims for his own one of his chief themes of the existentialist legacy. Thus, Freud's duality of mythic instincts is transformed into mind/body relation of continuous warfare, which ends only at death when both mind and body lose, in simultaneous destruction. In contrast, Freud's death instinct is actually a way to say that mind-cum-body seeks its own ending, an idea Becker entirely rejects. Death remains an external horror unbearable to the mind that turns body into threat." (Bregman 1992: 73-74).

In some way or the other, Bregman through Becker's stance educates the author as she educates many about why the conditions of sudden death turns out to be as horrific as the happen to be sometimes, and affirms the truth that in dealing with matters concerning death when it is sudden, one should better understand the position of the bereaved.

But Becker's point is that ultimately nothing can reconcile the individual with the body and the death it bears within it. We may imagine that we might relinquish the heroic, and slip into a more 'natural' outlook, but this is an impossible dream. Human nature can never be 'natural' and it is not possible to live contentedly within our psychic means. At this point, the existentialist triumphs over the Freudian in Becker, for as we remember, Freud defended his 'conflict of instincts' model by an appeal to solely 'natural' evidence such as death in amoebas. When Becker derides 'nature' in this way, we can hear him sneering at those same hopes cherished by Kubler-Ross and others, that because death is 'natural' it couldn't be so bad after all.

Becker is a religious person who claims that the only sphere in which the human dilemma can even begin to find adequate expression, if not a true resolution, is that of religion. He surprisingly departs again from the

Freudian legacy with a more explicit and acknowledged departure. Surely, all cultural systems and religions religion are the least likely to appeal to Becker, who champions a hermeneutic of suspicion toward culture and symbols. Not only has religion generally advocated a life after death, the most transparent form of denial, but has also been the implacable enemy of the individual's *causa Sui* aspirations (drawn from Freud's view of Oedipus complex), the wish to be the ground for one's own existence. But Becker surprises us here because in his eyes all culture rests on denial of death, religion is not qualitatively different from the rest of it---something Freud would have denied, since for him science could offer sublimation and resignation to reality, unlike religion's widest possible stage, the cosmos itself. It provides suitable grandeur for our basic situations. The traditional antithesis between religion and absolute human freedom is also reinterpreted.

Becker continues in many instances to resort to the language of myth. He wishes to provide a religious vision unabashedly rather than merely covertly. He realizes that a psychology adequate in its apprehension of death's power over human life requires a larger theatre than this life, than normal psychologies focussed upon interpersonal relation and emotional adjustment. But in dealing with it in more and further details with Becker, one discovers that it remains yet to be answered:

Why has Becker re-evoked a style of religiousness that few of his sources would support?

What is Becker trying to say about the self and death?

Why are nature, matter, mother, and the body so horrible, so bound up with the imagery of violence, death and decay?

Why does he find in religion not the reconciliation to those realities, but the triumph of a disembodied self-justification?

It can be deduced that Becker found in humanistic psychology, including the healthy-minded ethical naturalism represented by Kubler-Ross, a superb target, against which his myth of disjunctive,

tragic estrangement between self and nature cries out. But at the same time, the focus at a deeper level, the myth of the Gnostic God and the heavenly self may be a profound and perennial response to certain agonizing failures in present cultural possibilities for meaning, heroism, and trust. Hence, it is part of that myth, which Becker adopts, to demote most of culture to the realm of the hopelessly inauthentic, the earthly and the bodily. The very one-sided quality of Becker's vision makes it all the more powerful and provocative, yet should and cannot be underestimated.

3.3.2. JAMES HILLMAN

His work expands on and considerably elaborates a distinctively 'Jungian' approach to death as psychic reality. Like Becker but far more forcefully, he is explicit in his use of mythic and religious themes. In fact, he occasionally reassures the reader that these are meant psychologically, and not as a call for new forms of worship. His writing is even more distant from conventional depth psychological discourse than Becker's. It is intrinsic to Hillman's re-visioning of psychology to break the illusory bond that has been forged between depth psychology and natural science, and re-establish the former's truer tie with myth. Here is a simple sample of Hillman passage, demonstrating how (as with Becker) style is not separable from subject matter: "We ask: what is the purpose of this event for my soul, for my death? Such questions extend the dimension of depth without limit, and again psychology is pushed by Hades into an imperialism of soul, reflecting the imperialism of his Kingdom and the radical dominion of death" (Hillman 1979: 31-32). This reference to Hades and the echo of the New Testament are central to Hillman's purposes.

The Jungian legacy gives Hillman several advantages. First and foremost, he is not burdened with a defensive view of symbolism, one that assumes (as was the case with Becker) that all symbols are fundamentally mystifications to screen or shield the symbol from the naked reality. Hillman insists that images, symbols and myths are the true stuff of psyche, and should not be denigrated as poor substitutes for a 'reality' stripped of imagery. Second, the Jungian perspective is not compelled to find in individual childhood the prototypes for all adult struggles. It is a relief when Hillman relinquishes the Freudian literalism of childhood origins along with many other literalisms. Hillman, however, rejects two central themes of the Jungian legacy: the balance model of "conscious" and "unconscious"; and the progressive individual process, culminating in the archetype of the Self. "The unconscious", as reified entity, Hillman believes, rests on a false hope that depth psychology can duplicate the structure of scientific theory, and on a falsely mechanical style of explanation. 'Balance' as psychological motif was always ill-served by such association. Thus, gone are all those geometrical diagrams that fill the pages of Jungian expositions. But the disappearance of the individuation process and the Self-archetype is even more central. Jung's own religious hopes were pinned upon this symbol, and the Self with a capital S dominates his equation of mandala, Christ, the alchemists' lapis, and other images of "the God within" toward which psychic transformation aims. (Jungian psychological language). The disappearance of Self-archetype brings us into the heart of Hillman's own psycho-mythology.

3.3.2.1. Hillman Mythology in a nutshell

Hillman, as in Bregman, holds that the proper starting point for psychology is soul, "a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself". Psychology, he believes, has

been everything but soulish, taking its norms and methods from biology, sociology, and even theology rather than from the psyche. Within soul, there are depths, death, dreams, and whole 'night side' of life, waiting to be discovered. And there are beneath all, Gods. These Gods are the personifications and the powers that have always haunted inner life" (Bregman 1992: 82). All these were rediscovered in some ways by Jung and renamed them in his own way. But the equivalent in Hillman's psychology to Becker's freedom-loving self is the 'heroic ego' that plays the role of the villain in Jungian thought, and especially in Hillman. Ego psychology is the dominant form of contemporary clinical psychology, Hillman says: "because ego mirrors the literalism and materialism of contemporary culture, its fear literalism and materialism of contemporary culture, its fear of misunderstanding of the entire realm of soul. The ego desires strength, light, height, one-ness, finds that Western monotheism has confirmed these aspirations, as has Western philosophy. Psychology simply perpetuates them. This is why, even when 'self' or 'spirit' is substituted for ego, all systems are suspected to be based on 'one-ness. Unification, the sublime integration of all opposites---this basically Jungian theme is discarded, by the equation of all such hopes with the triumph of the heroic ego. The ego represents an alien intruder into the realm of soul, a Hercules in the house of Hades, wielding a material sword against shades". (Hillman 1979:110). The evident question now is how does death come into this whole explanation and psychological view of the psyche as God-laden? But implication from closer dealing with the conviction tells that, the link between soul and death is firm, not because of any alleged immortality, but because through the soulish perspective death too is re-visioned. So, emphasis upon physical death corresponds to our emphasis upon the physical body, not the subtle one; on physical life, not psychic life; on the literal and not the metaphorical.

For Hillman, it is abundantly clear that our culture's ignorance and silence in relation to death are not norms, or attributable to any universal human nature. They are abnormalities of the ego's dominion, and the soul-loss this entails. Thus, dying out of life, the realm of the external, literal, material, and into soul: there is seemingly, no less metaphorical way to state Hillman's telos. Ironically, Hillman has rediscovered the most controversial aspects of the Freudian legacy, the theme of internally sought death, now stripped of its biological reductionism and set forth as a perspective of psyche itself. If we hope for a non-mythic alternative, we are still caught in the realm of the ego, like Freud with his speculations on death among amoebas. Instead, Hillman uses phrases such as "the radical dominion of death", "the Resurrection of Death itself": these are the terms that suggest this sinking down to the underworld, the realm of shadow, sleep, decay, and disintegration. The above cannot bring shock, but grasping the subject death as the having the kind of dominion, it has can in someway calm the soul that is impossibly troubled by sudden death that has just hit. But, as well, it is a truly soulish version of the Freudian instinct of how organic life should return to an inorganic state. Further more, like Becker, Hillman repudiates the hope and the imagery of the ethical naturalist. Harmony with the earth, natural cycles, and growth are not what 'soul' is about. 'Nature' Hillman insists, is not a given, but itself 'one of the fantasies of soul and itself an imaginable topography. Therefore, in one step, Hillman undermines both ethical naturalism and the intensified 'Gnostic' opposition between nature and spirit championed by Becker. But, like Becker, Hillman, takes the isolation of the individual as given, although internal plurality reigns, his world view makes no allowance for a plurality of souls. Family, community, and nations are all consigned to earth's surface, severed from inner life by the power of Hillman's own imaginable landscape. These realities remain thoroughly outside the proper range of a truly psychological

perspective until they are transformed into underworld images. Just as Becker ontologizes a specific historical conditioned style of selfhood by jumping into the language of 'universal human nature' so quickly, Hillman's surface/underworld imagery eternalizes an isolation of the inner self that just clearly seems a product of a certain specific historical situation.

Hillman's project aims at overcoming the 'balance' model of Jungian legacy, with its dualism of ego and unconscious. Yet his dualism of ego and soul, surface and underworld, thus ends by retaining this original Jungian motif, and tearing apart our experience. Although he introduces death into psychic life, he does so by re-dividing psychic life from ordinary life. Of course, a true Hillmanian's reply would see this complaint as a sign of the ego's insistence on 'integration' and 'unity' no matter what the cost. But a psychology of death ought to be prepared for the twenty-first century images of death, including the very worst images of death, and be able to trace their impact upon soul.

3.3.3. ROBERT J. LIFTON

The most comprehensive, balanced, and integrated psychological theory of death's roles and meanings is that of Robert Lifton. In 'The Broken Connection' he offers his solution to the issue discussed by Becker and Hillman: can psychology find room for death, and so acknowledge its presence throughout human life? Lifton differs from them in his direct inclusion of culture and history as factors in their own right, not automatically reducible to psychological forces. His use of the Freudian and existential legacies is mediated by the ego-psychological theories of Erikson. Lifton's outlook upon human beings appears considerably more 'healthy-minded' than of either Becker's or Hillman's. Where Becker sees nothing but tormented paradox and

Hillman only anthologising, Lifton finds conflict and resolution, suffering and renewal, death and immortality. Nevertheless, Lifton's moral outrage at contemporary culture's distortions of death goes at least as deep as theirs. The difference is in the ground for his ethical vision humanity.

Lifton begins his study of death and its meanings with a rejection of both Freud's 'Death instinct' and the common post Freudian view that death is unsymbolizable. Lifton believes the idea of an 'instinct' to be a confused intrusion of a biological force into a psychological theory. It is seen from the look at 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' that he is probably right. Yet from the same principle he does not conclude that the body will be merely an external, accidental factor in human identity. Lifton always finds the body as an element in human identity and the lifecycle; he is no dualist in Becker's style. For Lifton, the body is mediated and experienced in terms of psyche and culture, a fact that the language of 'instinct' thoroughly obscures. Every vision of embodiment is already psychic; what we experience as 'the body' cannot be severed from human capacity to symbolize.

As for the mind's supposed incapacity to symbolize death, this is simply inaccurate. Freud himself, Lifton notes, was pre-occupied with death fears, and did not interpret them as disguised castration anxieties. Lifton notes also how this version of Freudianism dominates the American scene, because it falsely legitimizes their cultural inability to symbolize death. Their own society may find death 'unimaginable', and they have misread Freud so as to justify this. Moreover, they have denigrated or misunderstood past cultures' attempts to symbolize death, automatically labelling these as defences against death's terror.

3.3.3.1. LIFTON'S PSYCHOLOGY

Lifton believed that a better understanding of death symbolism yields a more comprehensive sense of its power for a vision of life. He sees the symbolism process around death and immortality as the individual's experience of participation in some form of collective life-continuity.

There are three dominant claims in his assertion, namely:

- 1. When one speaks of humans psychologically, one should never omit our capacity as symbolizing beings. Human nature, so defined, is never stuck within what suffices to understand nonhuman organisms, and Lifton is able to treat spiritual and cultural capacities as if these were primary to our definition as a species. In this way, he supports exactly the position Freud explicitly denied when he refused to allow for a progressive instinct as an explanation for such achievements. Nor, as in some more simplistic versions of ethical naturalism, can nature be turned into a benevolent force pitted against culture.**
- 2. Lifton's nonsuspicious approach to symbols includes, particularly, symbols of immortality. No longer are these prime seen as examples of benevolent illusions. So deeply has depth psychology become associated with the hermeneutic of suspicion as a cultural stance, that it is hard even for Hillman to let go of this attitude with regard to such symbolism. Jungian when it comes to most images, balks at approving fantasies of resurrection and birth.**
- 3. The autonomous is replaced as the centre of meaning by a view of humanity as interrelated. Thus, for Lifton the individual's own death should not be confused with the end of everything. The whole purpose of immortality symbolism is to help apprehend and acknowledge those continuities and**

connections within nature, history, and the cosmos, that link each individual self to all other selves.

He continued to identify five modes of symbolic immortality patterns of symbolism. These are Biological, Theological, Creative, Nature, and Transcendence.

BIOLOGICAL---is expressed in the hope to live-on in one's children. This has always been the most popular way that human beings imagine their own continuity. Lifton's appreciative stance toward this hope has been shared by a few psychologists. Lifton insists that the underlying wish for continuity is a valid one. We are not 'causa Sui', that is, 'the fathers of ourselves'. This is not a tragedy but a built-in feature of the human condition of one of the auto biographers, Joan Gould, for whom the spirals of interrelated generations form the very texture of human life, and give meaning to individual deaths.

THEOLOGICAL--- is the belief in an afterlife and the concentration on the thought that 'the common thread in all great religions is the spiritual quest and realization of the hero-founder that enables him to confront and transcend death and to provide a model for generations of believers to do the same'. Thus, we see Lifton retaining some distance from traditional religious beliefs about 'survival', yet attempting to approach such traditions' ideas appreciatively. This is clearly a different reading of religious immortality than Kubler-Ross' caterpillar-into-butterfly imagery, in which personal survival of physical death is the sole focus.

CREATIVE--this requires connectedness with the future through some lasting cultural accomplishment. We may think of a giant artistic or scientific achievement here, but one can also imagine persons participating in this mode through self-identification with a major

cultural institution. For scholars, ideally, this mode of creative symbolism immortality should be particularly salient.

NATURE---this is the fourth mode of symbolizing connectedness with a world that will live on after one's individual death. Lifton, who relies on the Japanese examples throughout his book 'The Broken Connection' to compensate for the Western bias of most psychological studies and he notes that in Japan, continuities in nature have been given great spiritual significance. 'The state may collapse but the mountains and rivers remain' (Chinese proverb) meaning nature stays as it is, it stays independent of what may happen. This is a different use of nature than in Western versions of ethical naturalism. In the latter, nature legitimates individual death but does not offer strong images of continuity. Once again, Lifton is clear that nature is a symbolic concept, not just a 'raw given'. Thus, when situations go beyond possibility, in the event of sudden death, it becomes sensible to view it relative to the entire nature and assimilate the fact that death is a practical and natural fact.

TRANSCENDENCE---this is an altered state of consciousness, a breakthrough for a sense of abundant life in the midst of death. Transcendence is the foundation for all the four other modes. It liberates the individual into ultimacy, splendour surpassing what were thought to be the boundaries of the universe. It is the Liftonian equivalent to a moment in Becker's thought when the self, faced with the wonder and mystery of the cosmos, 'sees God and dies'. Paradoxically, it is in the moment of transcendence that the self feels fully alive. Because Lifton is not hostile to embodiment, he is willing to include sexual union as one of the potential vehicles for transcendence, alongside mystical states. Where Lifton differs from many recent advocates of 'transcendence', he sadly recognizes how it alone is not sufficient to guarantee a sense of immortality. It must be communicated in terms of

intellectually, emotionally, and culturally meaning sustaining framework. Pure, naked transcendence will not have more than private and temporary effectiveness. For this reason, transcendence has in the past invariably been linked to one of the other four modes of symbolic immortality.

Lifton believes that death as well as immortality can be symbolized:

‘Death is indeed essentially a negation---the epitome of all negations--
-but that does not mean that the mind has no way of representing death, of constructing its versions of death’. In fact, each individual learns to symbolize death, in analogies drawn from other experiences. Just as death is the opposite or negation of life, so is each experiential cluster of death-imagery that is actually a polarity of life/death symbols. (Bregman 1992: 81-92).

The same negation is actually the one element that is a core source of stress that trouble people. When the symbols converge in the mind of a person who cannot align them, sometimes due to how abrupt they occur, such as when death happens to be sudden, this can have far reaching effects that are a cause for concern to the church and her pastoral care.

The ideas drawn from Lifton, Becker and Hillman above, are just but a small sample of how psychology views the way death rests in the being of all people. Considered in all fairness, pastoral care can affirm the said situation as, rather, illusive. But practically, it yields a syndrome that was alluded to in chapter one---‘beyond my scope’--- syndrome that happens to be accompanied by a level of laziness by pastoral caregivers and the current church, which has robbed theology of her potential of the restoration of troubled beings of people. Their ideas can strengthen theological reflections and enrich pastoral counselling if they are taken side-by-side with all tools used by the church in dealing

with sudden death. It stands to reason, then, that we should deepen our theological reflections on death.

3.4. DEATH VIEWED THEOLOGICALLY

The attempt to cover up death during a funeral service is an unmitigated disaster for the church, preceded and prepared for by the church's failure to reckon with death in its own preaching and pastoral life. This has been exemplified a number of times where ministers and pastors fail to correctly claim a sinful and unnecessary death as what it really is, with the aim of either avoiding to harm the bereaved or wanting to appear or sound sweet to the hearers. The author remembers the proceedings during the death and funeral arrangements of the late 'Boitumelo' commonly known as Tumi (both not her real names), a young lady from Takeng village in Ganyesa. This woman died as a result of a minor squabble between her and her boyfriend. That same night it was reported to have been full of pathetic abuse of this lady, where she was found lying on the ground naked, and was beaten by this man until he stabbed her with something very thin and sharp behind her neck, which ended in her sudden death that was reported the next morning. Almost the whole village was moved with anger in hearing what had happened, and of almost everybody, kind of, wanted to revenge against this man he was in the hands of the police. This was impossible. Whatever the finer details of the story are, they are not the discussion now, but the messages that different preachers kept saying to the bereaved and the grieving---"please accept all that happened to your child, because it happened through the love of God"---more over, some preachers do this full of vim, reading and wrongly interpreting the scriptures to ensure that they say what they wanted to say. It is true 'everything happens at its own time as put forward by Ecclesiastes, and people might have their time to cry

as they have time to laugh. But it is disastrous to attribute selfish and devilish abuses that touch people's lives fatally to the will of God.

Many persons have said that they have never heard their minister take a clear stance and with certain term in a sermon the question of their own death. This state of affairs, once again, is not entirely the fault of the professional. People tend to expect from the church service an hour's relief from the demons that plague them during the course of the week. This refers to the Sunday church services that we attend. People come to these services having gone through a week that is full of many questions and concerns acquired through their normal life and their meditations about various issues. It is here, where in the event of someone having through bad thoughts or came across some horrendous experiences, that they feel having been in some shadows of devils and/or demons. These atmospheres sermons on death would seem intrusive and unsettling. Better to avoid them and protect this hour from everything that strains the nerves---even though the service comes to an end and the demons, sometimes practical concerns in one's life, must be faced once again next day, fully intact, unexorcized, and screeching. The melancholic effect of this arrangement is that the church offers a temporary sanctuary, a momentary respite, from one's secret apprehensions about death, but inevitably they take over once again, without so much as a candid word of comfort intervening.

To preach about death is absolutely essential if Christians are to preach about joy, God, such as when one has to consider the fact that 'there is only one God' and this God is the God of love to God's entire creation. Otherwise, they speak with the profound melancholy of men and women who have separated the church from the graveyard. They make a practical assumption that there are two Lords. First, there is the Lord of the Sabbath; this one is the God who presides over the affairs of

cheerful people while they are still thriving and in good health. Then there is a second Lord, the Dark Power about whom one should never speak, the Lord of highway wrecks, hospitals, and graveyards who handles everything in those corners of the universe. Under these circumstances, there can be no doubt as to which of the two Lords is the one of sudden death, and unfortunately the one commanding more power. The 'death-bringer God' already encroaches upon the sanctuary itself, inasmuch as people gathered there are so unsettled as to refuse to hear of his name.

The Christian faith, however, does not speak of two parallel Lords. The Lord of the church is not ruler of a surface kingdom. His dominion is nothing if it does not go at least six feet deep. The church affirms that the one Lord who went down into the grave, fought a battle with the power of death, and by his own death brought death to an end. For this reason the church must be unafraid to speak of death. It is compelled to speak of death as the servant of Jesus Christ, the Crucified and the Risen saviour, who has freed human beings from the power of this almost unmentionable one. But even when the church speaks about the subject, how does the church do it, is an important question? Is theological reflection on the subject of death itself a method of just sweeping over? Existentialism, after all, from Kierkegaard to Heidegger, has made human beings sensitive to the way in which objective discourse on the subject of death may be a way of escaping from one's own destiny as a creature that dies. This is inherent in the arguments from the psychologist already mentioned in this chapter. The condemnation of the Christian thought on the subject of death for placing, in effect, the theological screens before the eyes of the condemned cannot be overlooked. At the outset, it must be argued that Christian reflection, far from screening death from the view, actually tears away the screens and forces human beings to look at death and to look towards their own death. This is the unavoidable

focus of faith that has to reckon with the factual the dying of its Saviour. Even if human beings wanted to fear death, they cannot do so, or rather should not, if they look toward such a saviour for their rescue. In fact, it is the exposition of the flimsiness of the partitions that human beings raise in order not to have to consider death. The purpose of this comment is not to outdo the existentialist in pessimism but to lay the only sure basis for Christian hope, a hope that is not based on screens, mirrors, or sentiments. The one that based on the good news that 'human being does not have to go beyond Jesus for knowledge of death in its fullest scope'; and that death is not an additional realm alongside of Jesus terrorizing men and women from the side.

The point under argument here is the indispensable need of theological thought that should be brought to the bereaved in the event of sudden death for purposes of focus, and equally this need to those who may be taking stake and playing the role in the same event of death. The same need may be sounded when consideration of where the focal point of pastoral care should be in the midst of confusion caused every time when sudden death strikes.

Mills was spot on in his perspective on death that when he assets:

"In the light of Jesus Christ it is possible to explore the scope of death as it threatens a man in his three most fundamental identities as a human being. Death threatens a man's (sic) identity with his flesh, with his community, and with his God." (Mills 1969: 178).

It is by inference from the above that, first, a man (sic) is identified with his flesh. He is not a ghost. The body is more important to his identity than words to a poet. He both controls his world and savours his world, and reveals himself to others, in as through the living flesh. Part of the terror of death is that it threatens a human being with a loss of identity with his flesh, an identity which is essential to him in at least three ways. The aspect of flesh is becoming important in any consideration of sudden death because many such deaths are accidental, and in many accidents

especially, road accidents, the body/flesh of a person is badly affected. The spectacle of badly a damaged body of the loved ones signify the pain that the said person might have gone through, and out of sympathy, it breaks every wall of the person's emotions, and thereby cause the person to harbour stress that causes enormous problems to other people and pastoral care.

Human being's flesh is the means to his control of his world. Except as one uses his/her flesh instrumentally (feet for walking, hands for working, tongue for talking), one could not relate to the world by a way of mastery and control. When death, therefore, threatens to separate him/her from his/her flesh, it threatens him/her first with a comprehensive loss of possession and control of his/her universe.

Death meets him (sic) as the dispossessor (Luke 12: 15-21), even though one retaliates as best as one can against his/her loss of control with an assortment of insurance policies. Quite shrewdly, the medieval moralists saw a special connection between the capital sin of avarice and old age. Avarice is the special sin in which a human being focuses his/her life on his/her possessions. The closer a human being gets to the time of his/her dispossessions, the more fiercely s/he clings to what s/he has and the more suspicion s/he feels toward all those would disposes him/her with indecorous haste.

Secondly, a human being's flesh is more than instrumental, it is also the site for the disclosure of the world to him, the world which he will never be able to reduce to property but which is there for the savouring.

However, except as flesh is sensitive, susceptible, and vulnerable, a man could not be open to the world as it pours upon him a wild profusion of colours, sounds, and feelings. He could not fall under the spell of powers that threatens to separate him from the flesh it threatens but also to separate him from the property-less creation, the world which he may not control but which is his for the beholding in ritual, art, and daily routine.

Thirdly, flesh is more than instrumental and more than sensitive to the world; it is also revelatory. A human being reveals him/herself to his/her neighbour through the living flesh. S/he is inseparable from his/her countenance, gestures, and the physical details of his/her speech. Part of the terror of death, then, is that it threatens him/her with a loss of his/her revelatory power. The dreadfulness of the corpse lies in its claim to be the body of the person, while it is wholly unrevealing of the person. What was once so expensive of the human soul has suddenly become a mask” (Mills 1969: 178-180).

All threats mentioned above are once again threats that face the dying person. The struggle happens to be between dying and death itself, something that is in essence not the focal point of this discussion. The focal point under discussion now, is how the person who dies suddenly affects the bereaved and grieving. But relative to the dying person, this forms a basis for the denial and serious contest that a dying person meets at his/her time of death. It was explicitly noted by Kubler-Ross as she talked about the dying stages, until she concludes that the period happens to be the final stage of growth. The point under discussion is the question of death and how death affects those who are remaining in life, yet those who loved and lived in close connection with the dead. For all who had some experience of authentic pastoral care under the circumstances of death, they shall compare and note the commonalities of these threats. Much as Mills discovered the threats of flesh that are in onslaught to the dying, there is an onslaught of the same kind to the bereaved. This is substantiated by the reason that human beings live and make meaning of life dependent on those they are living with. Thus, whom we love and live with becomes our ‘special possessions’, possessions animated in the flesh mentioned above. In dying, such possessions are dispossessed of us. If such a dispossession happens suddenly, we feel the emptiness of being robbed of everything in a person, especially even an opportunity of wrestling with the dispossessor. We feel inadequate in the face of such death yet harbour convictions of

hope of victory, should we be given a chance. The fact that death cannot be undone happens to be one of the exclusive shots that sudden death shoots the human race with to a level of harmlessness, and projects the fragility of humanity in the face of such a fact. There is, therefore, a necessity to view death closure and to formulate a stance as to whether it is an enemy to all of us who become bereaved, or our friend. At this point, a lot might be known about the subject, but one thing that resonates clearly time and again in the mind of people is the fact that death is a robber that robs people of their loved ones. This robber quite often touches us in an unfriendly way, and leaves us helpless. A short journey with the subject of sudden death can empower us better to say whether this kind of death is an enemy or a friend to us.

3.5. SUDDEN DEATH, AN ENEMY TO THE BEREAVED?

The text:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4), is very commonly used in different circumstances of in various crises of life. The same text has become primitive to the level of almost losing its meaning and the courage it induces to people in such crises. Sudden death happens to be a personal matter when viewed by all who are stricken, and hence, all problems surrounding it must be solved by every individual. Nevertheless, there are areas we can walk together in our reasoning about human finitude and death. It is high time that we emancipate ourselves from the idea that death is the punishment for sins. Human beings have always been finite and will always be. Whether death can be brought about as a terminal disease, old age, criminal passion, war or an accident, it is not an absolute evil. We should sometimes think of the tragedy that would engulf us if we had to live forever in spite of sicknesses, senility or total paralysis. Clearly, death even if it may be sudden, is not an enemy of life.

Death terminates the activities of life which are dependent upon our physical body as was seen by Mills above. After death, there is no more seeing and hearing, no more walking and talking, by the same token, after death, there is no more pain, no sorrow, no hardship, no trouble, no suffering.

Death terminates many opportunities of living. Yet, if we are to rely upon reason and experience at all, if we are to be guided by the personalities who have lived and finished their journey, we need not fear that death will undo what we have done; that it will destroy the values we have added; that it will turn our personal existence into nonbeing; that it will change our creative participation with God into ashes and dust; that it will destroy our identity.

Death itself is great transformation; yet it is a transformation only within the framework of God's laws, God's power, and God's love. Death has no power which is not delegated to it by God. Clearly, the sting of death is in our separation from God, in our lack of faith and confidence in his goodness and love. The sting of death is in our spiritual decay, in our spiritual dying. As Paul has put it, "the sting of death is sin" (1Cor 15:56). It is guilt and sin and selfishness; it is anger, resentment, and bitterness; it is our inability to accept the limitations and the laws of life that fill our souls with terror and dread as our own death and dying. We all have fears of death. Yet, they can be expressed and overcome. When we are sure of God's forgiveness, when we are aware of his continuous presence, we then can exclaim with great rejoicing, "death is swallowed up; victory is won" (1Cor 15:54). We can then walk through the valley of shadow of death with courage and without fear of any evil. In an event of sudden death, there is quite often some 'imaginary' shadow that befalls the bereaved, and in this shadow there are many challenges. Some of these are possible to overcome some very difficult to do so. All these are caused by the evident necessity to mend and take up responsibilities that had been shouldered by the deceased. These responsibilities are making part of our African

being---commonly known to be Ubuntu--- of community. If by any way or fault, the bereaved family fails to meet the challenges, based on their own self, they can never feel fulfilled. In short, their humanity is challenged at its core. It vibrates in our being as Batswana due to the saying---motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe---. This literally means 'a human being is a human being because of other human beings'. Thus, the bereaved family must, and have got no way out but just to grow at the pains of death, and these pains can be excessive when death is of a very responsible person who, in some ways, have been holding various responsibilities that takes the family forward, and is sudden. The friendliness of death is next to invisible, and the enemy-hood of it is very conspicuous.

3.6. WHAT, THEN, IS SUDDEN DEATH?

Preachers, ministers, pastors and many people have defined death to be a thief that comes in the night. This has been done in line with the misinterpretation of equating death to the day of the Lord, and thus supposedly preached in line with the text that says:

“Now, brother, (sic) about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety, destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.” (1 Thess. 5:1-3).

A fair number of times as pastoral caregivers are endeavouring into caring for the bereaved, they have stressed the importance of being alert and always waiting for the unexpected, so to say expecting the unexpected. This does no way exclude fact that the expectation of death no matter how sudden it may be. Good and sound as the author might also subscribe to, this is better said than done. The same has well been misinterpreted to be the same thing Jesus said when he warned about his coming saying:

“it will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. So you must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Luke 12: 38-40).

It can be stressed that with a lot of preaching done during times of death and especially when death is sudden, it has gained a lot of misinterpretation. Whilst many think of death as the day of the Lord, others interpret it to be the coming of the Lord. And the fact that in both texts, and several others may be, the thief and night are mentioned, sudden death is abhorred as a thief that steals people’s lives and people’s loved ones. It is by this picture that sudden death, much as death ultimately is death, hits and hurts more badly. Sudden death is in that way differentiated from death. All death is construed to have a sudden kind of wing in the sense that nobody knows the time of death, and the fact that there is no half life. That is, when health deteriorates through illness and our loved ones are shifting bid by bid into being terminal, they still are alive and fully alive. The beloved family and relatives’ hope is not erased by ill-health.

But sudden death is that particular way in which one loses life instantly in some kind of accident or human being’s free will without having lost health in any way. A death unprepared for, shocks and shatters our beings to the core. This crafts a need to be handled with more care by all who happen to be affected from all walks of life.

3.7. SUMMARY

We have heard how psychologists define and argue about death and dying. This has also made clear how different the approaches of human beings are to death following their kinds of perceptions and ideologies. The author can confess here, that knowing all the ideas afore-mentioned does not address the effects of sudden death in a practical sense to the affected. However, the knowledge of the same by pastoral caregivers can add value to pastoral care in a general sense. It may be pronounced once more that the effects and the pain of being struck by sudden death of a loved one can only be known and felt by the self. In the next chapter we shall look into pastoral care, and what kind of such pastoral care these caregivers have in our practical circumstances. We shall explore what the church does today in the form of pastoral care to those who are affected in various ways by sudden death. We shall also make some enquiry in the practice of pastoral care on how possible if there is any possibility for the church, it is to re-claim her authority through skilful pastoral care and caring as a mission the owner and head of the church has commissioned her to do.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 PASTORAL CARE

4.1.1. A BRIEF REFLECTION

Pastoral Care in the context of stress that has reached depression through sudden death must be practiced with empathy. And empathy as seen by Oden is:

“the process of placing oneself in the frame of reference of another, makes one to end-up perceiving the world as the other perceives it, sharing his or her world imaginatively.” (Zurheide 1997: 51).

Thus empathy, in its most profound sense, might be seen as the grace ‘which is sufficient’ in Paul’s eyes. It is the way in which God communicates God’s power to us in the midst of tragic sufferings which is mourning and grieving the loss for our loved ones might be an example of.

If pastoral care is to be truly pastoral, it must focus on more than individual and societal concerns. It must focus on serious attention on the norms that emanate from the biblical and theological tradition. It is at this point that both young, inexperienced pastors and pastoral care veterans may often find themselves caught between in a dilemma when faced with the practicalities of sudden death. Shall one respond to an apparent invitation to share one’s pertinent biblical or theological wisdom and thus risk seeming to give authoritative or even authoritarian advice? Or shall one follow the admonitions of nondirective counselling and simply try judgements about one’s possible courses of action? Should one be implicit or explicit in one’s representation of the faith tradition? Somewhere between those two extremes lies the ground, undergirded by empathy and trust, where the pastor and the congregant can search together for the solutions

that consider the multiple facets of both the faith tradition that brings them together and the unique needs of the person who seeks help.

Gerkin confirmed the stance by Graham when he reckoned:

“The ministry of care is a particular context in which the suffering connected with symptomatic crises may be contained, their causes and meanings explored, and new patterns of relatedness fashioned. The ministry of care seeks to promote change. In general terms, change is understood as an effective increase of love, justice, and ecological partnership throughout the psycho systemic matrix. More particularly, the ministry of care seeks to promote a creative modification of power arrangements in the existing structure of things. It attempts to reorder the values that are contributing to symptomatic behaviours. It identifies destructive outcomes. Thus, for the pastoral caretaker, symptomatic crises are an invitation to be a participant in changing the fundamental fabric of personal and social reality and to reconstruct the environment” (Gerkin 1997: 142-143).

The time when people are destroyed by depression due to grieving over their loss through any kind of death vary widely, but they all share a common need of a care that shapes up their behaviours relative to the identified outcomes which might be destructive to themselves and possibly to the entire society. The pastor and the church, therefore, offer, or to the least must offer, a broad range of guidance to individuals and families, as well as to the faith community as a whole. This exemplifies pastoral care in many instances. It is done through sermons and stories, religious rituals, celebrations and crisis care. The pastoral care practitioner offers assistance to persons in his/her attempts to place all aspects of contemporary life within the meaningful framework of Christian language and imagery. This refers obviously to Christians because pastoral care in other religions would probably give meaning to life in the language of that particular religion. The

following is an example of how Paul animated the same assistance, and was also quoted in chapter 1.

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can
Comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we
Ourselves have received from God. (2 Cor. 1: 3-4)**

These words are extracted from our exclusive Christian text, the Bible, and they bear thanks to God for making us what we are. Whilst fragile to life situations including death, we also have the comfort we can use to help others under various stresses. And as pastoral care practitioners and givers, and also by the nature of our calling, we have to minister to all.

In the event of death, pain and suffering results, and this becomes a reality to many. Therefore, death yields wounds of their own kind. Any pastoral caregiver will, in giving pastoral care to the infected, deepen the pain to a level where it can be shared. Paul, above with his message to the Corinthian congregation on comforting those in any trouble with the comfort they (Paul and Corinthians) have received from God, concurs with Campbell. Pastoral care in all troubles should be defined through the footsteps of Jesus Christ, seen through the eyes of Paul in the text above, and through Campbell as the wounded healer in his book *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*. He, Campbell, commences by describing a wound as:-

‘An opening in the walls of our body, a breaking of the barrier between us and the world around us. James Hillman points out that such an opening is a passage through which we may become infected and also through which we infect others’

He continues to explain and say:-

‘Naturally, then, we view wounds with distaste and alarm. The sight of blood and of gaping flesh creates sensations of nausea and fear in us, because it warns of pain, permanent damage to the body and the spread of infection’ (Campbell 1981: 39).

It is already stated above by the author, that the various angles from which he attended many funerals, and thus he can claim witness from all these angles. Sudden deaths, in particular, open many wounds in the hearts and beings of all those who mourn. This wound is painful and infects all friends, relatives and the entire society. It has revealed the fine boundary between living and dying, and thus has made human life very precious and revered. Whist Campbell uses this analogy so perfectly in that he captures attention as fully as he goes on to warn against becoming morbidly and sentimentally preoccupied with blood, wounds and death when giving pastoral care, as though all these are themselves sources of healing. He says:-

“the pain of wounds can demean and destroy people, closing them off from hope in an in-tuned and seemingly endless agony. Death is not the only token of humanity. It is also an affront to our humanity, bringing fear, anger and loneliness in its wake. Wounds, and the vulnerability which they represent, lead to healing ONLY when they have been uncovered and dealt with, otherwise they are festering sores which destroy our health and the health of those with whom we deal. The practical consequence for the person who would help others is clear: ‘pay attention to own wounds to be service to anyone else’”.
(Campbell 1981: 41).

The gospel of St. Matthew alludes to this on two incidents that come to mind. The anointment of Jesus in Bethany--- where Jesus rejects the protest of his disciples that such a costly gift could be better used to raise money for the poor. His is the greater need, for His death is impending and this act

acknowledges in a sensitive way the suffering which is to come. This is an act of loving with enduring significance, ministering to the dying and the wounded one. (Matt 26:6-13). Though seen and interpreted differently, it is in itself an act which has a pastoral element. The whole story sends one into a voyage of silent thoughts and meditation when we consider the extravagance we see in and around our funerals today. But in a way, one can admit that it is by way of exercising our love to loved ones and facing the pain of loss we experience.

The second incident is the one where Jesus goes to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, overwhelmed by sorrow and longing for the release from the darkening future, he asks for support from his friends (the disciples).

‘The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me’. (Matt 26: 38).

Jesus knew his need well. As it turns out, his friends failed to respond to his need and he resultantly had to face the darkness, interceding alone with his Father. But he did not hide from his fear, and when he took the cup of sorrow it was with the tranquillity of the one who has faced his own terrible destiny. The pastoral care that we give should, in our life contexts and painful funerals, be a way of clarifying needs to the affected, which would prepare the bereaved successfully for the future which lies ahead. Campbell summarises it by saying:-

‘the wounded healer gains power by acknowledging weaknesses and by finding God’s healing force at the moment of deepest despair’
(Campbell 1981: 41).

The image and use of a SHEPHERD in pastoral care has always appealed to the author, and is advocated to do so in the hearts and minds of many of those who are hands-on in pastoral care. The circumstance of funerals, and more particular, funerals of the departed through sudden deaths, need the church to give proper pastoral care and pastoral counselling. The church as

an institution should be well resourced for its calling, and it should duly make use of its resources for the benefit of its members and the entire society.

Gerkin is also right in his view of pastoral care as being multidimensional in nature. The practical and natural situated-ness of the church is such that, she must benefit the quadrilateral schema he (Gerkin) discovered to be able to serve and shepherd in line with Jesus' ways as the founder of her faith. That is:-

- Care for individuals**
- Care for community**
- Care for tradition**
- Care for culture**

In the contexts of the funeral and the burying of loved ones, the very clear description of the entire state of affairs in view of the above is:-

A funeral is a situation where the church helps the individuals coordinate their efforts and collaborations with their communities to exercise their traditional and cultural rites to bury their dead. By so saying, it is said to mean, that it is one scenario which touches all the quadrants of the quadrilateral schema of a human being as viewed by Gerkin, and referred to in chapter 1 above. As a matter of fact, everyone will agree that a funeral for the dead is inevitable, 'what kind and service is the content of that funeral' is another discussion. It is also practical that the funeral is central to our lives and all our institutions. Thus, resulting in the obligation to look closer into the funeral service.

4.2. Funeral service

The funeral service is mentioned quite often in this discussion, not as a way of deviating from talking about pastoral care, but as a realization that it is or should be one of the cardinal vehicles of pastoral care in the event of any

death. This is a service where care has to be taken in its purpose and design, so that grief work is not inhibited. As alluded to the above and sequel to Gerkin's view of pastoral care, this is where rites and practices surrounding the process of mourning can help the bereaved engage all his/her feeling in the framework that makes them not only acceptable but also easily expressible. The group practices that make the person feel comfortable with his own deep feelings speed the normal work of mourning and help prevent those delayed reactions that are the product of unresolved grief feelings.

It is a ceremony, if well done, speaks of human needs, so that it becomes meaningful to the mourners. It has, however, to be noted, that this ceremony differs from culture to culture, from tradition to tradition and from one religion to another. South Africa as a country is growing by the day in its cultural and religious variety. But some people have retained a much richer set of responses and rituals to help them through the process of burying and caring for the grieving. Pastoral caregivers and Ministers must recognise both the value of all rituals and the range and variety of different rituals in the different groups of society. Charles- Edwards has a way of blaming the twentieth century population growth and technology for the unfamiliarity of death. He remembers clearly that:

“A funeral used to be held in local church, in the churchyard of which the body would then be buried. People went to the same place for rituals surrounding birth, marriage and death. Thus symbolically in the midst of life we encounter death and vice versa” (Charles-Edwards 2000:165). More shall be shared about rituals in the following sub-topic.

But the knowledge of Charles-Edwards needs to be complemented here with the reality that in the author's context and history, long before even the church became as it is today, kraals and alternative sites belonging to different clans were used for the same purposes. In such funerals basic needs were met namely:

- **Remove the dead body appropriately before it decomposes.**
- **Say farewell to the person or body in this life without mattering what death means.**
- **Honour the person who has died.**
- **Acknowledge and begin to come to terms with the reality of death.**
- **Provide a focal point for collective grieving and comfort for supporting those who are grieving the most.**

For the sake and guidance, given the context of this research scope, this discussion shall be confined to the African Barolong and blacks of Ganyesa.

Of great importance, the ultimate unison of purpose is that in all these varieties of views from all foundations, is that the funeral serves a common function of bringing survivors into intimate contact with the dead, with important friends, and it helps survivors and friends to terminate their relationship with the dead and to move forward with life. The best function of a funeral is, therefore, served when it bring relatives and friends into the best possible functional contact with the harsh fact of death and with each other at this time of high emotionality. In the competence of shepherding as a method of pastoral care, the church must provide interpretive leadership during those moments when it provides pastoral care. It was explained in the first chapter above about the natural origins of the shepherding and the flock, and how even the flock cares for one another.

Campbell sees that as ‘Steadfastness and Oneness in Pastoral Care’. He says the following in explaining it: “the carer and the cared for are not two sides of a divide which must be bridged by some form of expertise on the part of the one who cares. Pastoral care is grounded in mutuality, not in expertise; it is possible because we share a common humanity with all the splendour and the fallibility which that implies” (Campbell1981:52).

At its best, Campbell is right relative to the fact that all willing souls of the church is animated to put effort into lending a helping hand during the needy times of funerals, but right as he might captured pastoral care in its natural foundation, Campbell did not know or think that there was going to arise a picture to suggest an obligation on the side of the cared for then to accept anything no matter how unskilled and irrelevant to the situation it might be.

Thus, designed in all quadrants by Gerkin, the funeral contains in its purpose some or all of the following. It should lead mourners to:-

- ❖ Face the reality of death--- not avoid it.
- ❖ Provide a setting wherein the religious needs of the bereaved must be satisfied.
- ❖ Provide faith to sustain the spirit.
- ❖ Help them express their feelings.
- ❖ Free them from guilt or self condemnation.
- ❖ Direct them beyond the death of the loved one to responsibilities of life.
- ❖ Help them face the crisis with dignity and courage in personal ways.
- ❖ Provide an environment where loving friends and relatives can give the help needed to face the future with strength and courage.

All in all, the funeral service is, for the mourners and bereaved, a stepping stone towards the future. It is through pastoral care that all those affected should be helped to move on, and embrace their future.

4.3. PASTORAL CARE AND PASTORAL COUSSELLING

Historically, counselling within the Church has normally been an expression of the ministry of pastoral care. The emergence of a separate breed of specially trained pastoral counsellors is a comparatively recent phenomenon. An attempt has been made elsewhere to explore the differences and the relationship between these two ministries. But,

“Generally speaking, in pastoral care it is the pastor who makes the first approach, responding to perceived human need as part of an on-going ministry, while in counselling it is the parishioner or client who takes the initiative. Again, pastoral counselling is nearly always more structured with regards to both the place and the time compared to pastoral care. This means that pastoral counselling is characterized by the negotiation of an explicit contract, while in pastoral care any contract, if it exists at all, will be of a more implicit nature. Further, psychodynamic issues are handled somewhat differently. In a pastoral care relationship, the pastor hesitates before addressing the matter of resistance, while the more explicit contracts of pastoral counselling permit this to happen. Again, that transference and counter transference may affect the pastoral relationship; the pastoral counsellor should be much more skilled in dealing with these phenomena. It is comparatively easy to discuss this distinction in a theoretical way--much easier than to keep them separate in practice. What begins as pastoral care may soon develop into a counselling relationship (‘could we meet to talk about this at greater length?’). Then, the pastor needs to be aware of the changed dynamics of the relationship”. (Fosket and Lyall 1988: 108-112). This happens quite often in times of pastoral care to the bereaved through various deaths. The close of proximity of the entire church with those who mourn by pastoral caregivers from all walks of life leads to counselling of some kind. This, fortunately or unfortunately is where the mourners are either made or broken due to unskilled pastoral caregivers and counsellors the church has. It is the gap the church needs to fill to claim her stance and authority in the community the church operates.

In comparing pastoral care and pastoral counselling, it should not be thought that pastoral care is in any sense inferior or less important. Pastoral care has its own integrity. Patton, one of America’s leading authorities on pastoral counselling, in his ‘Pastoral Care in Context, An Introduction to Pastoral Care’, affirms the primacy of pastoral care as a ministry of the Church. He moves beyond ‘classical’ and ‘clinical pastoral’ paradigms to

what he describes as the 'communal contextual', emphasizing the caring community and the various contexts for care, rather than focussing upon pastoral care as the work of the ordained ministry. The emphasis in the classical model was based on the message of pastoral care, namely the love of God, and the focus on the clinical pastoral model upon the person involved in giving and receiving the message of care. The communal contextual model does not negate this emphasis but preserves the best feature of both in an approach which is less critically individualistic than previous models. It is truly arguable that one of the distinctive strength of pastoral counselling is that it takes place within the wider context of pastoral care with the potential support of the caring community. A good example of this is to found in the Bereavement care teams set up in some congregations. Few people depart this life without a funeral service conducted by a minister or priest. This can form a considerable proportion of the work for ministers especially in the Church of Scotland and the Church of England where people, even those with no involvement in the Church, look to their parish church at such a time. Most ministers would like to provide more support and follow-up their duties allow. Yet, it could be argued that the sensitive management of grief is one of the Church's main contribution to community' mental health. Increasingly, groups of lay people, appropriately chosen, trained and supported, provide support for the bereaved either concurrently with the pastoral care provided by the minister or in the following months. (Patton 1993: 4).

The African church and people do not differ much from the above mentioned people of Scotland because of the practical reality of having people who attends church and those who do not, yet all of them look to the church for support in all respects and burial of the deceased during the times of death.

The current load of work of pastoral care and counselling in the congregational context is an indirect cause to what is practically happening and creates conflict among a lot of people in as far as the two

are concerned. Given the schedules of ministers and the numerous deaths that happen in each individual congregation or community, churches and ministers are compelled to support and provide pastoral care with lay people concurrently. It has resulted from human nature that some of these caregivers engage in unhealthy competitions that make them perceive themselves as being better than others, an unfortunate circumstance that ends up forcing such people out of their congregations into either others, or even forming their own 'baby' congregations. They, therefore, continue without appropriate on-going training and support, and that brings the entire church message to a questionable nature which it sometimes finds itself in. In discussion of the current problem in question, the activity/activities and responsibility/responsibilities of the church in the context of sudden death, pastoral care will always go with pastoral counselling. These must be done with care and skill that protects the institution of the church today. It must be done with a critical focus on the comfort of the bereaved and grieving.

4.4. COMFORT AND COMFORTING

It is factual that pain and suffering has been known to human society from time immemorial. It is also a belief that it is God who comforts God's people as it is a scriptural promise. But most of the healing of bereavement takes place in the warmth of family life and friendship. Comfort is said to be one of the most basic of human responses to those who are grief-stricken and distressed. Raphael observes that,

"the appearance and behaviour of the bereaved person is usually such as to evoke caring responses from others. The head lowered, the shoulders hunched, the weeping, the agony in all the body language---all this says "Hold me, help my pain, I have been hurt---comfort me." The natural response is to hold, touch, and murmur sympathy to this person. When holding him/her, the comforter may rock gently backward and forward.

Frequently he/she will pat the person gently and regularly with one hand while holding him/her". (Raphael 1989:353).

She goes on to compare how the facial expressions of grieving people are like those of distressed infants abandoned by their mothers. It may be that such comforting responses are automatic, and in some senses, representative of the comforting of the mother to the child. The comforter may murmur gentle, non-specific sounds or words of reassurance. "there, there", he/she might say. Such comforting is offered automatically in empathic response to distress. Such caring for the bereaved may in other instances feel hesitant, not able to touch, because they fear it would break some personal barrier, suggest some intimacy or even assault. In these cases, the caring person may best offer comfort with his/her quiet and continuing presence, indicating he/she is prepared to stay with the bereaved until shock has been absorbed and the bereaved can in some way reintegrate his/her defences to cope with the life tasks required at that moment. Often, the bereaved may then be supported by family members or the relevant others. This comforting is usually most necessary at the acute times of loss, when the bereaved receives the news of terminal illness or the death, mostly sudden death, or when the reality of death and loss finally breaks through the initial shocked denial.

It is always a problem to those people who have been professionally trained to other models, because they find it difficult to offer comfort. This is due to reason that it represents the human side of their response, something they may have learned to detach or dissociate themselves in some therapeutic frameworks. For the bereaved, even the simplest touch may convey much more than formal words: the very humanity and empathy of the caring person's involvement with his/her pain is something that is vitally important to the bereaved at such times.

It was noted once again by Raphael considering this subject, that in the phase of acute acknowledgement of the loss or threatened loss, the bereaved's obvious anguish may be very great. It calls out to the kin to offer comfort. In most societies they will come together with the bereaved for this purpose. This is also a fact with the community the author comes from and is serving as a minister. The fact that there are caring professionals on the subject that goes about the effects of stress and depression to the people in need of comfort in times of sudden death does not mean everything is done and/or is adequate; people also need care from individuals as well. It is at this time that attempts are often made to deal with his/her natural distress by the techniques familiar to that of professional system, which are perhaps the very techniques inappropriate to the natural pain. It is here that most ministers and caregivers needed, and is never too late to help by a way of empowerment of any kind.

4.5. RITUALS

Rituals are different kinds of formal procedures and acts of observing rites. There are variously defined rites and these are practiced in different ways. These rites differ from culture to culture, from religion to religion, and from context to context.

Their actions are performed both intentionally and spontaneously, and are directed towards the maintenance of the holistic community. Africans goes as far as dancing as a rite to celebrate every imaginable situation---joy, grief, love, hate, to bring prosperity and avert calamity.

Africans sing and dance, and even hold joyful conversations to minimise tensions involved in their grief. This had an ultimate goal of spontaneously expressing their emotions for the sake of healing.

People practise rites for several reasons. For instance, for Africans and possibly many are nations, birth is the first rhythm of a new generation, and

the rites of birth are performed in order to make the child a corporate and social being. Initiation rites continue that process, and make him a mature, responsible and active member of society. Marriage makes him a creative and reproductive being, linking him with both the departed and generations to come. Finally, comes death, that inevitable and, in many societies, the most disrupting phenomenon of all.

There are many, complicated ceremonies connected with death, burials, funerals, inheritance, the living-dead, and the world of the departed, the visit of the living-dead to their families, reincarnation and survival of the soul. It is really no wonder that rituals connected with death are usually elaborate because they are something that concerns everybody in different ways and bring sorrow to family and community.

“The rituals and ceremonies for the disposal of the dead make death a public thing. The affirmation of its reality, the altered state of the dead person, can no longer be denied. One level of denial is relinquished when the dead is worked on through basic rites of death. A further engagement of reality is required to arrange the funeral and participate in it. Many bereaved people find that this is as a turning point where the full reality of the death hits directly home. It is a time when the numbness fades and the person seems to come out of the dream to an intensely painful real world. This is not to suggest that earlier the bereaved is out of touch with reality, but rather he/she is in some way dissociated, isolating the affect involved, holding at the same time a knowledge of the death yet a denial of its affect and implications.” (Raphael 1989: 37).

In total agreement with the above, Lendrum and Syne bring the ease of fulfilling these rituals by the extended family living in close geographical proximity, which also offer emotional support required in times of need exemplified many times by sudden death. They note that:

“many people nowadays are separated from their families, they may well not belong to the community where they live and may pay less heed to their own rituals. All this means that supportive networks and the concomitant rituals are frequently missing just when they need them most. Without the support of rituals and emotional connections we are much more prone to prolonged grieving if not breakdown. What is needed most of all is emotional support, for it enables us to talk. Where the expression of grief is not encouraged and where denial is given priority, then feelings is suppressed. This repression may well eventually manifest itself in physical or mental illness. The more a particular group in society is likely to repress or deny death, the more likely are its members to have difficulty with grieving.” (Lendrum & Syne 1992: 49).

The author takes the above as one of the observations that is spot-on in the general life of communities. Many people do practice rites because they are part of the heritage of their culture, tribe, or family. Religions, and with particular reference to Christianity here, give people a feeling of security because they believe that a divine power watches over them in situations they are faced with, whatever situation. These people often ask for the power for help and/or protection in their times of weaknesses during grief resulting through death, and they use these rites to usher this power in. In a way, rituals characterise people in their cultures and religions and give them the sense of individual fulfilment and meaning to their lives. This provides to many persons the answers to questions such as:-

- What is the purpose of life?**
- What is the final destiny of any human being?**
- What is the difference between right and wrong?**
- What are the obligations to other people?**

The funeral and funeral service are already discussed above. What it should be relative to the culture and custom of the deceased and the bereaved is

spelt out there. The common and practical practice by churches and pastoral caregivers today, is in a commendable dispute with some families and their cultures. The author discovers on a personal note that the current church does not really understand what some of the rituals which are practiced mean, and why families have to indulge in the same. Whilst the church in its pastoral care should be overseeing what the mourners do and their general protection, the church should be careful in prohibiting rituals that may not make sense to her (the church) but making sense to the mourner at that time.

As a result, there is a development of latent conflict in the ministry of the church and questions about what pastoral care offers. Many ministers practice what they do around funeral and burials as 'just habits' in their ministry, not really attaching any meaning to it. Pastoral ministry of the Christian church is in a moment of intense frustration, where nothing seems to work out well. The church is at a period where it should give up her habituated forms of ministry and pastoral care, and open up space to find new ways of ministering. The church must welcome congregants to lead in the times where they are hurt to say no and to take what the bereaved say seriously. It is through particular well practiced rituals that pastoral care becomes more faithful and true, more fulfilling and church ministry more meaningful.

“Rituals often take the form of dramatic presentations among African people. By means of objectifying their inner fears and perplexities the people are enabled to deal with them in a more meaningful and constructive way. In relative recent times this approach has been utilised in Western cultures as well by psychiatrists working with people in therapy groups” (Thorpe 1991:121).

The above quotation is in a way affirming that churches and all pastoral care givers must take note of the usefulness of rituals. They (rituals) have a

potential of helping a lot in the pastoral care that the church plans for the person facing depression. In coherence to Gerkin and relative to death and total pastoral care, it has to be encouraged and reinforced now and then to all ministers and pastoral caregivers, the importance of rituals in practice of care. This in itself makes the knowledge of various rituals practiced in distinct cultures that characterizes the congregation one is serving enhance ritualistic leadership.

4.6 A CLOSER LOOK AT AFRICAN VIEWS

It is difficult and actually next to impossible to finish talking about the African rituals of death without recapping in anyway about the Africans views of death. This is mainly because rituals are founded by people on what their understanding is about a specific subject. The author would like to refer to views of death and rituals by a few African tribes, the Ndebele and Abaluyia as seen by Mbiti, and then explore what the Barolong of Ganyesa subscribe to, as rituals meaningful in closing the chapters of the lives of their beloved.

4.6.1. DEATH AMONG THE NDEBELE

When a person falls seriously ill, relatives watch by his bedside. These relatives must include at least one brother and the eldest son of the sick man, because the two are the ones who investigate the cause of the illness, which is generally magic and witchcraft, and take preventative measures against it. If the sick man lingers on in pain, his relatives kill what is known as 'the beast of the ancestors'. This is generally an ox or a goat (for a poor man), and its killing is believed to hasten death. Attempts, however, may be made to revive the sick through pouring cold water over his body and making him inhale smoke from certain herbs. The presence of the eldest son at the deathbed is a sign that the dying person is nevertheless alive in his

children, and this assures him also that there is someone to 'remember' him, to keep him in 'personal immortality', when he has disappeared physically. The slaughter of the so-called 'beast of the ancestors' is also a sign linking both departed and living members of the family, and an assurance that the dying person will not go into foreign hostile country, but will move into a friendly (even festal) community. The living-dead are present at the death of the human relative, and may be asked, through the slaughter of their animal, to hasten the death of the sick in order to terminate his pain or suffering more quickly.

Immediately after death, the brother starts digging a grave in an uncultivated ground where other men join and help him. The corpse is wrapped in an animal skin (formerly) or blanket. If the person is the head of the homestead, his body is taken out of the fence that surrounds the homestead. It must not be carried through the door of the house or the gate of the homestead. This probably symbolises the belief that the deceased person has not 'gone' away from, or completely left the homestead: he is in fact still present.

Then follows the funeral procession... the men first, carrying the corpse, and then the women following behind. It is unfortunate for people to encounter such a party on its way, and they must avoid funeral processions. The grave has an east-west shape, presumably capturing the 'movement' of the sun.

The oldest son strikes the grave with a spear, and then the body is laid down, facing south: the man is put on his right, the woman on her left. A few personal belongings are put into the grave to keep animals (and possibly witches) from digging up the grave. The party now returns home where an animal is killed, known as 'the beast to accompany (the deceased)'. This is an ox for a man or a goat for a woman. The meat is roasted and eaten without salt, and all the bones completely burned. Ashes from the burnt

bones are gathered, and with them the medicine-man makes 'medicine' which all the people drink. When drinking this 'medicine', a person swallows the first mouthful and spits out the second. Then all the people go to the river, wash themselves and disperse to their own homes.

The brother and eldest son remain on the homestead if or the night. Two or three women relatives or friends also remain there and participate in the formal wailing which takes place the day after the funeral. These women remain there for a week or so. Early the next morning the brother and son visit the grave to see if it has not been disturbed. If no disturbance has occurred then it is assumed that the man died from natural causes; but if the grave has been disturbed, then a diviner is called to investigate the causes of death and to take counter-measures.

One to three months later, the burial party is summoned together once more to observe the rite 'to wash the hoes'. For this rite, beer is brewed, all the implements used for the burial are washed with it, and medicine is dispensed to the children in the homestead. A year later, another ceremony is performed, which is known as 'the ceremony of calling back the soul of the departed, to his own people'. This is done only for men and women who were married before dying. At the ceremony, all the relatives and friends are gathered for a big festival and dancing. Beer is made from grain grown after the man's death, and from seeds obtained outside the homestead. At this ceremony, all the restrictions hitherto imposed on the normal life of the homestead following the death the death are lifted and normal life is resumed.

Thereafter, the widows are free to remarry; the property of the dead man is divided; and a new animal is chosen to be the new 'beast of the ancestors'. This animal is normally a black ox, but never a sheep, and is thereafter

cared for by the main heir who is usually the eldest son. The ceremony ritually puts to an end all the interruptions of life caused by death.

We see a number of meanings in these funeral procedures. The spear with which the eldest son strikes the grave is a weapon of defence and protection, and when used for this occasion it neutralizes all danger on the way to and in the new country where the dead man is going. Personal belongings are buried with the body to accompany the deceased man, so that he does not find himself poor in the hereafter: these things are part of him, and he must not be robbed by the surviving relatives (or else he will visit them and demand what is his own). The animal killed afterwards serves, as it is called, to 'accompany' the deceased, to provide him with food on the way and livestock in the next world. Drinking 'medicine' made from the ashes of the burnt bones is a rite whereby the departed is mythically united with the members of his family and community who are still alive.

Washing in the river is a ritual act of cleansing from the pollution caused by death; and the same applies to the rite performed a month or two later, when the implements are washed with beer. During that ceremony, children are given protective medicine to drink, as a counter-measure against death.

The final ceremony is partly a symbolic way of 'reviving', summoning back', 'inviting back' the departed, and thus renewing contact with him in the next world; and partly declaring a formal resumption of life. It is a ritual celebration of man's conquest over death: for death has only disrupted and not destroyed the rhythm of life. It indicates also that the departed is not really dead: he is a living-dead, and can be contacted, invited back and drawn into the human circles. The new 'beast of the ancestors' symbolizes the continuing presence of the living-dead in the family and among his people. These ceremonies also show us the great religious importance of

marriage and procreation in African societies: the son plays a leading and continuing role in the ceremonies of the father's funeral, in keeping up his memory and in caring for the ox which mystically links the human world with that of the departed. An unmarried person is not given the final ceremony which in many ways is the most important and most meaningful in man's attempts to symbolize his conquest over death. This would mean that the unmarried is in effect conquered by death, he is not recalled, nor is he ceremoniously invited back into the human family.

The author has to hasten to warn that the rituals talked about above are old and almost original rituals as seen by Mbiti about thirty years ago. The reality is that, given the natural shifts among cultures and traditions, this might have either drastically changed or amended in a way, and thus this should not be judged misinformed in anyway. The same goes for the following tribe following to be talked about here-under.

4.6.2. DEATH AMONG THE ABALUYIA

When it seems fairly certain that death is coming, the sick man is placed in front or in the centre of his major wife's house and all the relatives are informed about the impending matter. Everyone must come, otherwise those who do not come will be suspected of having worked evil magic against the dying man; or the spirit of the man might later on revenge, as such absence is regarded as showing disrespect for the dying man. The brother or the son of the sick man kills a sheep or a goat at the family shrine (lusambwa) saying, 'all who have already died come and eat this meat! So and so, so and so ...' (mentioning the names of the departed). The meat is then eaten by the family, together with the dying man if he can. This animal is the final donation of the man to his living-dead, and the means of requesting them to receive him peacefully. He then bids farewell to the family and apologises for offences he and relatives may have committed unaware against the members of his family and have relatives. If the person

who used magic (bewitched) against him eats of this meat, it is believed that s/he would fall sick. The dying man gives instructions concerning the distribution of his property; and all the people sit around him, silently waiting, and he/she is joined by the sons, daughters and other men and women. The cry for a dead man is: 'ye, ye, ye-----; ye, ye, ye----! And for a dead woman: 'Wo'i, wo'i, wo'i-----; wo'i, wo'i, wo'i, -----! While wailing, the wife touches and rubs her husband's body. She then goes out, followed by other people, and continues to wail from homestead, from river, from bush to bush, as far as her natal home if it is near. The women put their hands on the back of the head, while the men beat grasses and bushes with sticks and clubs, and old men blow horns.

If the dead person is a young woman with up to two children or none, her body is returned to her parents' home and the marriage gifts are given back to her husband. Marriage is not considered complete until she has borne several children. Formerly, the body of a dead person would be kept inside the house for a day, but nowadays it is kept outside the house. The body is laid on an animal skin and covered with banana leaves; and if it is a distinguished man, a leopard skin is used. The body of a clan head is kept for two days, as a sign of respect to him and in order to please his spirit. The body of a child is kept for only a few hours before burial.

Since modern conditions send people to work in distant places bodies of the dead are kept for two days, to allow the relatives to come from afar. At night a vigil is kept over the dead, particularly, in order to look out for the witch or sorcerer who might come to see the result of his/her wicked doings. Neighbours and relatives bring beer and food; some play musical instruments, others sing funeral dirges and dance. This is intended partly to please the spirit of the dead person, and partly to comfort the bereaved family. If the widow has been a faithful wife, she dances with spears in her hands, singing the dirges; and if she has passed the childbearing age, she

puts on the garment of her dead husband, something which a young widow would not dare to do or else she would never bear more children.

On the day of the burial, the widow is led by an older widow to the river where she is painted with clay; and her children and relatives paint themselves with clay. The procession to the river is accompanied with crying, singing, wailing and dancing; and the clay is the symbol of mourning. On the way home, the party sings, jumps up, dances, brandishes spears and clubs and sticks and shields, and utters shrill cries. The widow praises her husband, saying, for example, 'My husband was very good to me; he gave me many children. He was a very brave warrior and he killed a lot of enemies'.

Meanwhile, four brothers or near clansmen dig the grave. No woman or uncircumcised person should dig the grave; and the father cannot dig a grave for his son or daughter, or husband for his wife. If a person has died through unusual causes such as lightning or suicide, then people fear to dig the grave for him as this would infect them with impurities; and his grave diggers must be paid a goat which they kill and wash the impurities with its blood. For the family head, the grave is dug inside his first wife's house; for a woman, unmarried son or daughter, or married man without children or with only up to two children, it is dug on the left-hand side behind the house; for the rainmaker, it is in the centre of his house; for a person who dies from an epidemic, it is dug at the riverside or in the bush so that he does not 'defile' the homestead; and for someone with a humped back or dying from suicide, the grave is in the back of the compound. The grave is rectangular; and grass or banana leaves are placed at the bottom, but for a clan head a cow skin is used instead.

The actual burial takes place in the early afternoon for woman or ordinary man, but towards sunset for a distinguished man. If the dead is a renowned

warrior, a clan or family head, or an elderly man, the burial is preceded by the ceremony of 'breaking the pot'. For this, a cooking or beer pot is ceremoniously broken by the grandson of the dead man, this symbolizing the loss incurred through death. The body is buried facing west, and completely naked just as the person was when he was born. This 'naked' state symbolizes birth in the hereafter. A deformed person or witch is buried without any ceremony; and if it is a barren woman, all unmarried person and those who have no children must keep away from the corpse lest they are infected by the same tragedy.

In some parts of the country, the grave now becomes the new shrine for the living-dead of the family. A goat is killed by the grave diggers, and its blood is sprinkled over the new shrine or the grave. The goat and the sprinkled blood are a token of returning thanks to the deceased man for the fame and wealth he has left to the family. For an elderly man or person of distinction, the ceremony of 'cattle drive' (shilembe) is performed on the day after burial. This is not, however, done for the one who has no son, even if other respects may be accorded him. For this ceremony, cattle are gathered and decorated with weed or grass; people paint their faces with white clay and wear war dresses of cow skin or leopard skin or of grasses, and bring spears, clubs, shields and sticks. Each clan drives, in turn, its cattle into the homestead, and sings and dances there. The songs include war songs, marriage songs, dirges, praises to the deceased man and appreciation of the contribution he made to his community. The people beat banana trees, bushes or the roof of the house; and the 'cattle drive drum' is beaten by two or three brothers of the deceased man. This ceremony is intended to drive away the spirit of the dead man, so that it does not linger around the homestead and cause misfortune.

The day following the cattle drive, the hair-shaving ceremony is performed. All those who came into contact with the deceased man, either in his death-bed or during burial, are shaved. It is believed that his breath causes impurities, and makes disease stick to the head of the one in contact with the dead body. The hair is hidden in case the witch gets hold of it, or a bird takes and uses it to build a nest. In the latter case, it is feared that the owner of the hair will thereafter have chronic headaches. The shaving of hair is done starting with the widow, then grave-diggers, sons, daughters and other people. A fowl or goat is killed, and those taking part in the ceremony share in eating the meat. Then people may leave the homestead.

Without going into a detailed interpretation of the coming of death and funeral rites among the Abaluyia, we may point out the underlying paradox that there must be continuing ties between the living and the departed. Relatives and neighbours come to bid farewell to the dying man and to mourn his departure, and yet there is continuity through his children and through the rituals which unite the two worlds. Death causes ritual impurity just as it interrupts normal life; but this is not permanent since it is cleaned and normal life is afterwards resumed. The grave is paradoxically the symbol of separation between the dead and the living, but turning it into the shrine for the living-dead converts it into the point of meeting between the two worlds. In these Abaluyia rites, we see also how the corporate group is involved in the death of the individual; and the whole community, including cattle, joins in 'sending off' the member who leaves for it is they who will receive the new comer. Stripping the corpse and burying it completely naked is a concrete externalization of the concept of death as birth into the hereafter. (Mbiti 1975: 149-155).

It came to the author's notice that Setioloane concurs with Mbiti, in fact, Setioloane is seen to have used Mbiti in his writing. Thorpe's ideas are also founded on Mbiti. Though Mbiti expresses what these African cultures did in

their indigenous customs and traditions, a lot has changed today. The author strongly feels that a lot of what has changed actually had to change when related to today's times and life. For instance, Mbiti keeps on referring everything he says to man. It is noteworthy that he is also baptized in patriarchal ideologies and this has made him also a patriarch, thus he subscribe to the same ideologies fully. However, the author is in total dispute with the way contemporary people neglect African rituals even those rituals which helped our people exercise pastoral care to those who were traumatised by various factors including death.

Moreover, Mbiti is only concerned about what these traditions did when they were faced with death in all the stages of this death. He is not really focussing on sudden death which is our subject at this point in time. He alluded to death through lightning and suicide, which are the only kinds of deaths that can fall within parameters of what we are discussing. But he goes on to speak about the rituals involved, which rituals are more concerned with the cleansing of the impurity of the dead and death itself, and not really concentrate on the bereaved in their grief on their loss. One may think that their healing sort of came co-incident with the knowledge that their dead is cleansed and therefore acceptable to the already departed.

4.6.3. DEATH AMONG THE BAROLONG OF GANYESA

The Barolong , with specific reference to those of Ganyesa, have the following views. There is a need at this point to indicate that Barolong is a clan of the Batswana people, maybe one of the biggest clans Batswana has. This follows that these Barolong differ here and there as one moves from place to place. Thus, the author refers to Barolong of Ganyesa.

They do not differ much with many African tribes and societies. They do have rituals for the sick in their sickness, and the various celebrations and

occasions. These include the birth of the child, the subsequent 'hibernation' of the mother and child for the time that differs from weeks to months, which is called 'botsetse' in Setswana language. This is a period when many rituals are done by the family regarding the mother and the newly born. The weaning of this child, the initiation, 'dithari', marriage, etc all are different sorts of celebrations until, ultimately, death and the funeral.

With the dawn of new age and the change of generations as stated by Chief AS Letlhogile, one of the elders of the Barolong of Ganyesa and of the members of the Chief's kraal (one of the main branches belonging to the chieftaincy), the Barolong like many African tribes have lost their customs and traditional beliefs, and have either 'contaminated or improved' them many foreign beliefs. This includes the gradual dissociation from the original forms and ways of some rituals out of obvious despise that followed with generations. Many rituals have naturally been extinct and are even unknown by the current Barolong, and is so worthy to state the purity of the confusion they have today relating to their own rituals. All caring Batswana see and pronounce this fact.

Many conflicts are caused by the same confusion of views among children of the same families, and also between and among churches and church denominations. Clearly, many rituals are looked down at and even the few who do attempt to follow them here and there, they do not clearly understand the same rituals, or they harbour different views about what should be done.

Let me focus on death and its rituals which many of the Barolong today argue against as they feel they do not really practice them. All the Batswana people view death as misfortune and sinful. This view and understanding guides and forms the foundation of almost everything that is

done by families and communities when they are struck by death of any kind.

For the Barolong, death especially when sudden, results from the evil works of the evil people (witches) either from same families or communities. These works may either be carried through by way of muti (African medicines and poisons), jealousy, or even evil wishes and thoughts about anything that refers to that person. Evil as death is for them; they also view it as contagious and should be protected from passing from one person to another. Thus, everything about death is represented by black. This is to signify the darkness of the misfortune of death.

Everybody who by anyway comes into contact with anything that makes any part of the funeral or its preparations of it, must wash before he/she does anything for him/herself outside the parameters of the home where death took place. This means that from the first recognition of the dead person, by accident; suicide of any kind; murder or anything what-so-ever, there has to be continuous washing of hands. They believe is that for one seeing a dead person for the first time, the person happens to be in the area of death and death situation, therefore the person is infected by death and should wash his/her hands before he/she touches anything out of that area. They believe that failure to do so will result in infecting others with death.

4.7. CAN DEATH BE CULTURAL

We certainly have to look on to the subject of death in the contexts of people and their culture because people believe in their own values, beliefs, norms, behaviours, and attitudes. At least for the Barolong of Ganyesa, the author knows about those who are rooted in their culture. This results in everything being evaluated against cultural basis, even if it is a

fact of life. For this purpose the author attempts a definition of culture by clinging to what was said by David Matsumoto that:

"Culture is a dynamic system of rules, explicit and implicit, established by groups in order to ensure their survival, involving attitudes, values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours, shared by a group but harboured differently by each specific unit within the group, communicated across generations, relatively stable but with the potential to change across time."(Matsumoto 2000: 24).

Death happens to be one of the facts of life that occurs to all people, all nations and traditions, but it is viewed through the eyes of culture as very often to ease the pain and impact of grief to the bereaved. The same can be drawn from the different cultures cited above. Though all are black and Africans, they perform various rituals for death in their different settings. Some even go to an extent of murdering other people, thereby increasing death, in the event of the death of Kings. All this is done by all those who affected by death as a kind of onslaught to death. This defines death by itself as an enemy rather than a friend.

Kubler-Ross and some of the dying persons especially those who were privileged to meet her wouldn't agree, given a host of experiences and some of the harsh realities they had to pass through. The author believes it to be there in every human being as a judgement. Whether death is an enemy or a friend depends on the situation people find themselves in, and deeply considering the situations of those who die. Very importantly, pastoral care and pastoral counselling have to be vehicles which should take such mourners from the devastation of sudden death which might either be seen as an enemy to the point of acceptance and closure by the bereaved. All this can be done through appropriate skill that guides appropriate and proper use of all resources at the disposal of the church.

4.8. Valuable Utilisation of Religious Resources

4.8.1. The Scriptures and Religious Literature

It is also kind of conventional that scripture or just the Bible is read and used during times of grief. There is continuous affirmation of this as a resource for ministers and pastoral caregivers to grief sufferers. However, the manner in which this is used is of critical concern.

It is also critical to note that religious literatures can be no substitute to offering oneself in compassion and concern. It is crystal clear, that some of our brothers and sisters in and out of the clergy have conducted so many funerals for so many years, such that the scripture and literature is kind of 'in their finger tips'. But the recitations and pronouncements of such words must be done with great care and evaluation of contents. The scripture should help the grieving persons face him/herself and God. Used pastorally, the scripture becomes a stabilising foundation upon which the mourner can attain perspective on ultimate issues of life, and more specifically, their own lives.

The scripture must at all costs be used pastorally. But what the pastoral use of scripture is, is a question needing guided answering. The pastoral usage of the scripture is the scripture that is used:

- Prescriptively
- Contextually
- Sparingly
- Verbally

4.8.1.1. PRESCRIPTIVE

The prescriptive use of scripture means the use of scriptural verses appropriately to the situation. These are those verses that offer comfort and assurance. For example:-

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Ps 46:1)

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, their departure was taken for misery and their going from us to be utter destruction: But they are in peace. (Wisdom 3:1-3).

He hath said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness.

Lo, I am with you always.

I will never leave you nor forsake you.

The pastoral care giver's own personal knowledge, experience and training should enable him/her to be fluent in giving some of these verses and many more with flair, but not limited to, the funeral. These and many more should be accompanied by the matured and resourceful ministry should have personal meaning to Christians in the time of crises of during bereavement.

4.8.1.2. CONTEXTUAL

Here the pastoral caregiver should learn about the context and the actual struggle which the bereaved are in as a family and relatives. It is in learning all this that the pastoral caregiver will be able to speak to the needs of the sufferer meaningfully. Ministers must refrain from exploiting funeral situations to meet their own needs thereby resorting to exhaustive recitations and readings. This shall be further discussed later in the research. This is in no way under mind the host of ways and points followed in preparations of sermons by preachers of different church traditions, but it is calling for

sermons addressing or at least attempting to address deep issues that the grieving are grappling with at that time. There are various examples in the whole theology of Paul and his experience until he came to his great praise said with clear conviction that 'nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus'. (Rom 8: 38; 39).

4.8.1.3. SPARINGLY

The time of grief should clearly be distinguished from time to demonstrate knowledge and height in qualifications in whatever sector of life. Pastoral scripture, used sparingly, is the scripture that is kept short and to the point. This is because the well chosen short passage of scripture carries, more spiritual and emotional impact upon grief-stricken sufferer than lengthy passages.

4.8.1.4. VERBALLY

As already stated earlier, words can comfort and words can destroy. Pastoral care givers in times of grief can skilfully use biblical words to remind the sufferers about the presence of God in their situation. This must be done through taking such a person seriously, whatever his/her religious orientation may be and whatever point he/she may spiritually be. This is one way of opening up doors to significant future experiences. To take a person seriously, or lack of it, is to move with the person from his/her own point of development or lack of it. This has always resulted in effective witness.

4.8.2. PREACHING AS FORM OF PASTORAL CARE

4.8.2.1. The Minister'/Pastor's Role

The role of a minister in any of our black communities and or congregations has always been seen from the role demonstrated by Jesus Christ, the founder and sustainer of responsibility and faith.

Isaiah brought an image of the servant as well. He describes this servant in his prophesy about Jesus Christ as 'someone acquainted with grief' (Isaiah 53).

He was despised and rejected by others;

A man of suffering and acquainted with grieve...

All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have all turned to our own way,

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:3, 6).

1. In the face of death, and particularly sudden death, the minister has to become someone really acquainted with grief. The minister pastors and functions from the faith that there is power that transcends human finiteness, and that is the power of God.
2. The minister's role in the time of grief should not be confined to institutional context, but should call forth a variety of religious responses.
3. I am, thus, in full agreement with Gerkin when he sees, amongst other images, the pastor as a ritualistic leader because at the time of grief, various rituals aiming at healing are to be performed and should be done with passion. A ritualistic leader as seen by Gerkin should not be like our ancestors of the Middle Ages who viewed themselves as controllers and the keys of the gate to salvation. The minister should

administer, carefully, the connections between liturgical practice and life experience. This in a way will preserve liturgical tradition.

4. It is true that religious rites, rituals and practices were long practiced in fortifying individuals against the stress of grief and during the work of mourning. But the minister should be in clear understanding of what he/she should do by any symbolic act in his/her administration at that crucial time.
5. The grief practice has developed out of the need to serve the full spectrum of mental life. Very often, the practices are interpreted as either racial or superstitious, especially given the fact that, not all congregations today have ministers and or pastors coming from their own race, culture, custom, tradition and so on. But it must be noted with importance that, at that time the service is to the bereaved and in their own context, and what is interpreted as racial and superstitious at the conscious level is often satisfying a deeper need of the being beyond the normal bounds of conscious mental activity. So, it is that the religious approach to the personality during the time of stress, due to bereavement is concerned with depth and heights as well as the breadth of understanding and dealing with the feelings of the individual. The minister or any pastoral care giver must give the above room and allowance.

Ministers today, are in times of serious dialogue with different institutions, formations and structures, and are often misconceived. Perceptions and misconceptions of people's ideas about a minister sometimes emanate from such people's relationship with the church. This can be a barrier between the ministers or pastoral caregiver's meaning to the bereaved and grief itself.

4.8.3. Preaching/the Sermon

The unique function of the minister in the eyes of the bereaved and grieving persons cannot be over-emphasized. Yet, it must be recognised that as unique as the minister's role and function might be, it does not guarantee that he/she will be entirely be adequate to the situation on every occasion. I need to state here that, no real minister feels completely comfortable or fully adequate in the face of grief of another person.

The real bereavement and the common grief especially that one which emanate from sudden death, leads one to ask a few questions relating to what current ministers are doing in such situations. The common expectation which they meet is, someone is dead; they have to prepare a sermon and preach.

The itchy questions at this point are:-

- ❖ Is it really necessary for the sermon?
- ❖ If it is, do our ministers do it with particular importance?
- ❖ What should this sermon say?
- ❖ If the sermon says it, do mourners really hear what it says?

On and on the questions keep surfacing as one considers all this.

The author has always confessed to have listened to too many of these sermons himself and really felt very much disturbed and mis-represented as a member of church first, and secondly as a member of the clergy. What is preaching in the first place, is the question to answer, and if that particular preaching should be used as pastoral care.

It is worth acknowledgement, at this point that, that sermon is words spoken to the minds and hearts of hearers choosing to. The preacher first speaks to the mind and allows this mind to maintain distance, speculate, rationalize and critique. Then also, this preacher' message, speaks either at the same time or thereafter to the heart and make the listener to individuate and spiritualize the message. Both the preacher and the listener subsequently

prepare themselves to respond to the message in concrete and actual life as responsible Disciples of Christ in the World.

Agreeing that these are words, I go on to remember how powerful. The Word of God can be. In the gospel of John it is said that the Word became flesh.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. (John 1:1).

Whilst talking about the word, one calls also to mind how the entire creation was called to being by the use of Word in the light of Gen. 1. The recurrent statement, 'then God said', only states the strength of the word that was there in the beginning, and the word that called the whole universe to being. The preacher in preaching is in many ways is animating the words of Thomas Swears saying:-

"Words are most important and sacred tools available to preachers for the accomplishment of this task. It is vitally important, both in preaching and in pastoral care, never to underestimate them. In the Bible, as in life, words are used to bless and to condemn, to wound and to heal, to delineate and to deceive, to loosen and to bind. They are deeds and they change lives. If words have no effect then how else, in this century alone do we explain the powerful influence of Adolph Hitler, Winston Churchill, or John F Kennedy?"

No, words are deeds and they do, in fact, change lives. Think for instance, at the first time you heard just these simple words, "I love you" spoken to you by someone you cared deeply about. Or imagine other simple words being spoken to you by someone you have cared deeply about for a long time and still do: "I don't love you anymore". How safe are simple words such as these? How powerful? How wounding? It simply isn't true that 'sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me'. Yes, they can, and often they do. Some of the deepest hurt and deepest joy both preacher and listener

will ever know, is experienced in the form of the spoken word and is rooted in its power to evoke response. (Swears 2000: 19).

It is the feeling of the author that Swears knew quite well how the preacher can be an instrument of building in an otherwise broken person. This is something a preacher should target in all pastoral attempts he/she gives on the words of preaching, yet if these are not correctly handled, the same preacher can be further wounding, hurting and completely destroying the listeners. It comes with clear diction to the remembrance of the author, and with deep lament how he was wounded and his faith actually challenged by the preacher who preached in the funeral of a child who drowned in the swimming pool--- a sudden death of such nature... Saying, to the young and promising family then, his theme being: 'God took your child so that you can accept Jesus as your Saviour'. Oh! As just an attendant of the funeral who had come to also pledge support to the 'wounded' and so deeply aggrieved, he found himself, in a way, also saying the same heretic words, something which was remote from him originally. An instant and sharp urge arose which compelled him to decide to leave the funeral immediately. But the questions kept coming to him as he left, asking as to what help does his departure give to family or the community? None, was the answer, but he kept on consoling himself by saying: "at least I am not in the company of what is said---so I am not 'a bird with the same feathers'". It is always a temporary answer and relieve.

But these are the kinds of messages that many preachers generally bring to the society and the grieving about deaths and one finds them to be critically unfortunate. Preaching in a funeral must strive to focus and refocus the bereaved into life. This has got to be done with absolute art. It is primarily a science, which through thorough hermeneutical and exegetical study, is bound to render a message that is accurate, meaningful and helpful.

It starts with the preacher him/herself commanding his/her role as the minister/pastor to the needy. The minister who presents him/herself as authentic as possible in his/her message and not presenting skill or his/her faith but the presence of Christ discerned by listeners to be present, active and communicated through skill and faith. This should be done with openness to mystery, to humility, and to humour. Batswana, including the Barolong of Ganyesa, have a saying: 'loso logolo ditshego' literally meaning 'a big or worst death yields laughter' but figuratively it means 'even in the midst of any great tragedy, laughter is still possible and this laughter heals'. This is so because the task of preaching is not the neat unassailable provision of answers but the opening of the hearts and minds and volitions of all those who are listening in order for them to form their own informed responses to the word and sermon delivered to them.

Matthew concludes his description of the Sermon on the Mount with this observation:

“now when Jesus had finished saying these things the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as the one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt 7:28-29).

The authority in Jesus here must be well and correctly interpreted as was understood by Matthew, not the kind of misinterpretation our preachers have, which consists of the earthly power geared at personal gains on special ways which they focus on. It must be borne in mind, that the preaching in the face of grief is delicate, and should be done with a clear thought and matured handling that projects and clarifies--- acquaintance with grief.

The minister/pastor would have known the family and even the community, and thus, the preaching pastoral care intervention should be done with the value of the listener in mind, and the sermon must be founded in its own context i.e. the context in which it is done. The message of the sermon

therefore, should be hopeful to the traumatised and grieving family. It can only be hopeful that when they can understand it, they can relate it to their life challenges. The message will have nothing to do with them if they cannot understand it, cannot relate it to the burning issues of their lives and they are left overwhelmed, confused and not equipped to deal with such issues than they were before. This is the kind of preaching and teaching that:-

- Deals with life issues of interest to ordinary people,
- Uses words and concepts that even the 'unchurched' people can understand,
- Uses story and contemporary illustration to make the point(s),
- Proclaims a strong sense of "Thus says the LORD",
- Uses warm humour (as opposed to sarcasm),
- Paints a picture of the positive possibilities for our lives,
- Unfolds the truth of Scripture plainly,
- Invites people to concrete behaviours and responses.

The preacher who aims at giving pastoral care completely avoids the presence of even just one of the following which handicap communication:-

- Dealing at length with insider issues, exegetical issues, or theological issues not of immediate interest to the average listener
- Uses insider language without explanation,
- Has too much theory with too little concrete illustration or no story,
- Is either without humour or the humour is mean-spirited,
- Focuses on how bad we are,
- Is not clearly related to the Scripture, which may have been read without explanation several minutes prior to the actual message,
- Focuses on issues that are overwhelming or politically complex,

- Stops short of offering practical help for daily living,
- Is read from a manuscript

The pastor/minister in his/her sermon should never forget that he/she is a servant of good news no matter how different in view the world might see the situation of death and grieve.

One is tempted to make a personal statement here. It hurts badly and every time when one listens to any one in his/her platform as a Minister/Preacher exercising pastoral care to the bereaved to sound like they are claiming any power and/or righteousness over death or life in any form. Whether it is him/her or his/her Church denomination. It hurts because any truthful mind knows it that it cannot be true in any way. It is just one of those denial states and mechanisms of the same in fear of many things known to him/her, sometimes even unknown. So, such persons build many futures for themselves. These include symbolic concepts of immortality. This was also noted by Raphael as she stated her discovery on the extent to which this fear of death influence the personality structure of some people.

In the face of death, grieve or bereavement, true humanity suffers greatly in many respects. It is one among many goals of pastoral care to liberate the affected. The church must therefore strive to light a new dimension of life under the circumstances.

Jones in his conceptualization of God, Christology, Eschatology and Christian Ethics stresses the importance of this liberation to black Christians. He does so with all the strength and vigour that all black theologians against the then state of affairs when white Christians were treating and taking themselves to be different to the blacks until he concludes: "...life of black Christians is one of courage in suffering and hope, and hope in courage and suffering. Hope is born from the faith that 'trouble doesn't last always'..." (Young 1986: 44).

Though Jones refers his argument to black Christians and many of their sufferings, the author considers and actually opens Jones' eyes to the fact that suffering is just suffering, and does not really matter what the cause might be, and this has no racial divide. Suffering is pretty much the same, especially when the cause is the same. Thus, death and sudden death happens and affect all humanity. This results in loss, and loss induces suffering to all human races. The skilful pastoral caregiver must know these facts, and in his/her use of preaching should encourage and give hope which might be lost.

4.9. POSSIBLE BEREAVEMENT MODEL

Usually on hearing about death, loss, or threat of loss, the bereaved person or family passes into a state of what has 'traditionally' been called shock. This will be exemplified many times by numbness and disbelief. This initial shock period is the one in which the awful reality of the loss is avoided, so that it may be absorbed and come to terms with the ego more slowly. Although there is an intellectual awareness of the reality, the emotional awareness breaks through only intermittently, evidenced by the cries of anguish, or gradually over ensuing hours, days or weeks, or whatever period it may be dependent on the individual.

The awareness of absence of the dead or loss to any person comes in mourning waves. The emotional experience related to this is one of separation: the pain of the person's absence. The finality of the absence is acknowledged intellectually or intermittently, but the emotional experience entails a painful separation. There is an intense and angry protest---"Why have this happened to me/to my loved one?", and a sense of being deserted by the person who has died. All this can be gathered from or heard from different people who have, one way or the other, come out of the stresses of having suddenly lost their loved ones through death.

The reactions might be perceived irrational by many people, and experience, again, will remind them of how anger is occasionally displaced onto the self or others. It is a time of intense yearning, pinning, and longing for the person who has gone, that was mentioned in chapter two above. It is an emotional pain and emptiness that would be relieved by the presence of the lost person.

Just as the infant responds to separation from his/her mother, it seems as though these two very basic responses of the bereaved are aimed at bringing back the lost presence. There is a very intense preoccupation with the image of the lost person. All energy is focussed into this relationship, and other previously equally important relationships are set side at least temporarily. The image is held with great yearning and longing as the lost person. This may occur so strongly that the person is mistakenly perceived to be there, seen or heard in familiar places, or that a face in the crowd is mistaken for his/hers. Each time the image seeks the real person and fails to be reinforced it, each time there is no subsequent interaction, but only the empty image, the reality and the finality of the loss are experienced. This gradually leads to a degree of acceptance of the finality of the loss and the commencement of the giving up on the relationship, the psychological mourning process. It is most important to remember, however, that there are no fixed and sharp distinctions between separation and finality, that they may be partial, or that there may be switches back and forth over the following months.

The meaningful rituals, of course, that differ from culture to culture, religion to religion, and maybe, also family to family will then come in to usher into them a reality that will stay. It is so unfortunate today, to note, how young people including some young ministers do not articulate various rituals owing to their lack of knowledge of their meaning, either in church or home. Schoenberg views it from his psychiatric background and says:

“When the bereaved has had an opportunity to see the body of the dead person, to gain a new image of him/her as a dead person---existing in a different state, not living and interacting---then this image can be brought forth to be held beside the image of the person as living and help in reinforcing the reality and finality of the loss. When this has not been possible or has been avoided, then there may be a very prolonged period of separation response, intense yearning, pining and longing that may become repressed and unconscious or continue unabated into chronic grief.”(Schoenberg 1980:145).

As there is growing awareness of this reality and finality of loss, the ego, faced by the needs of life, survival, and the future, must pass into the phase of giving up this lost relationship. Then its emotional energy must, again, be given to the outside world. As Freud has so vividly described it, the ego does not readily relinquish the lost one. It does not easily undertake the painful process of undoing those interactional bonds with their various associated images. The ties must be painfully taken away from each of the positive and negative bonds that bound the bereaved to the deceased and the affect associated with these must be released and dealt with. This process is associated with a very strong internalization of the complex image and an undoing of the bonds from it. It may be accompanied by an experience of memories of the person/relationship passing before the eyes like a moving picture. When the finality of the loss is realized, there may be an overwhelming feeling of despair and sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness. Life may seem totally disorganized without the deceased, who is now so much the focus for the bereaved person. Interactions, which were meaningful when the person was alive, now have no point. As the mourning process progresses, there is a great deal of diffuse inner, almost physical pain. From that, it may distil the whole spectrum of affect: anger, anxiety, guilt, despair, relief, sadness, joy, helplessness, elation over survival, hopelessness and depression. Although this wide range may appear, the

sad, angry, helpless, and guilty feelings reinforce certain affects or lead to emphasise one at the expense of all others.

The idiosyncratic use of words to describe affects ought to be taken into account. The anger is often not recognized, but irritation, frustration, and annoyance may be the bereaved's way to describe intense and almost overpowering rage. Sadness has been a little-used and less-understood word in terms of affects. Depression has tended to replace it, so that the bereaved rarely perceives or verbalizes sadness, but claims instead that he/she is depressed. This has important implications for treatment, for clients are often mistakenly treated for depressive illness, while the sadness and the need to grieve go unrecognized." (Schoenberg 1980: 149-150).

The words of Schoenberg must be pronounced on the ears of many pastoral caregivers as education but also as a warning to those of us who keep treating depression on individuals hit by sudden death without carefully taking them across a journey of their mourning, where they can express their grief and come to terms with the reality. The author remembers how impossible it had turned out to be the following morning when the family was faced with the responsibility of breaking the news of the death of his sister's husband and children to her. This is with reference to that traumatic incidence mentioned in chapter one. The impossibility was evident until we all gave the same responsibility to the medical doctor who was in that ward where she was admitted after the tragedy, to do it for us. She agreed to do it and as I observed her (the doctor) do it, it was as well shocking to all of us because she just came to her bed, and we assembled there as well, and she simply said to her "Do you know what happen to you yesterday so that you resulted to be here?" She said, "No". "And she (the doctor) said, "let me tell you now. You and your family had an accident, and out of that, only you are alive. Sorry!" and she walked away. Sitting and trying to question her method of doing it all, I only came to one final word; the sooner one knows the truth, the better. After-all this, was what she was asked to do.

There was nothing all of us could blame her for at that point. Well, general mourning naturally ensued.

The mourning process is sometimes reflected in outer behaviour, such as a bereaved woman's sorting through the clothes and possessions of her dead husband or toys and room of the dead child. The well-meaning friends who take away all such possessions may prevent the painful sorting through and, thus, interfere with important mourning processes. The reverse includes a person who leaves everything totally untouched the room and possessions of the dead person for many years may be denying the loss, avoiding the mourning, and keeping an open door for the lost person who is, somehow, expected to return sometime, something which is impossible.

The outer behavioural manifestations of the bereavement process vary according to social, cultural and religious sanctions and prohibitions, as well as the accepted rituals of bereavement. Thus, social values may lead to attempts to repress external and even internal manifestations of grief and mourning. This can be qualified as true by men from the author's background and congregation, who are expected to be strong, unemotional, and silent in the face of loss and who are often seen to be relatively unaffected by it. Hence, the common saying; 'monna nku o lelela teng', literally meaning 'a man is sheep, he must cry inwardly/silently'. But this is just simply prohibiting men to cry or express their feelings of sadness openly in the public.

4.10. A GOOD SHEPHERD IS A SKILLFUL COUNSELLOR

Drawing from the practical experience of what a shepherd of the flock is and does, one can relate with some good counselling sessions that some church denominations, ministers and pastors, have engaged in with families faced with sudden death and grief when they ushered-in healing to these affected members. One can state with certainty that one of the

characteristics of a good shepherd must be skilful pastoral counselling in the face of sudden death. Carl Rogers as studied by Aden, has a therapeutic approach which contains ingredients that can help the people traumatized and stressed by sudden death.

These are:

- Empathic understanding
- Unconditional positive regard and
- Congruence

Aden notes that:

First, each of Rogers' three ingredients tends to actualize a particular organismic attitude: empathic understanding tends to actualize increased awareness; unconditional positive regard, unconditional acceptance; and congruence and unconditional trust. In actuality, of course, the attitude and outcomes are an indivisible whole, but by analysis subject to correction by anybody. This helps to lift up and clarify the implicit value and potential significance of this Rogerian counselling for the ultimate concern of pastoral counselling. Since Rogers as a psychologist never developed the latent religious end points of his three ingredients, the formulations that follow emerge out of an attempt to conceptualize Aden's own experiential observation as a Rogerian-oriented pastoral counsellor.

The author believe that it can be a reasonable starting point and basis for many pastors and ministers who are serious about pastoral care in their interventions to the people stricken by sudden death. Used appropriately and reshaped to suit various contexts in which people find themselves often, pastoral care will be given an important boost in the right direction.

4.10.1. EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING

Aden in Oglesby explains:

“One of the essential conditions of a healing relationship is empathic understanding. By empathic understanding Rogers means a sensitive

attentiveness to the inner world of the client or, more specifically, a genuine and accurate attempt on the part of the therapist to grasp and communicate the moment-to-moment feelings and experiences of the client as the client him/herself sees and feels them. It is sensing of the client's inner world of private personal meanings 'as if' it were the therapist's, but without ever losing the 'as if' quality.

Empathic understanding is a direct antidote to man's basic malady. As Rogers sees it, human being does not affirm self unqualifiable. Instead he/she become immersed in a process of selective self affirmation in which he/she owns or disowns particular segments of him/herself according to whether or not they are in accord with his/her self-concept. Experiences that are discordant are either denied or symbolized in a disguised and inaccurate way. In either case, the surface of him/her extent that he is estranged from the deeper dimensions of his/her own existence. Rogers calls this duplicity, this state of inner disruption, incongruence between the self and organismic experiencing.

Empathic understanding addresses itself to this radical self alienation. As a serious attempt to grasp the contemporary experience of the client, it counters his/her inner world of feelings and meanings. Or as Rogers says, it seems 'crucially important in making it possible for a person to get close to him/self, to experience his/her most inward feelings, to maintain contact with his/her inner self-experiences, thus allowing for the recognition and resolution of incongruence'. Clearly, then, the chief consequence of empathic understanding is to reverse the individual's defensive stance toward life, making him/her more open to the panoramic totality of his/her organismic experience and thus making his/her perceptual relation to self and the world more adequate and realistic. He becomes more fully aware of his/her own inner reality, his/her feelings, attitudes, and desires, and at the same

time, he becomes more accurately aware of the reality that exists outside him/her.” (Oglesby 1969: 264-265).

In the event of sudden death and the pastoral care given by churches, the appropriateness of pastoral care cannot come before there is some amount of the understanding of empathy, talked about above. When the trauma of loss attacks the lives of people, their life comes into disarray, and loses meaning to a great extent. When pastoral care enquires and explores the inner world and gets to sense the private and personal meaning to the bereaved, a skilful pastoral caregiver addresses the need in a more appropriate sense. The pastoral care shepherd comes closer and closer to the bereaved, not as a monster who can do all or any person actually abusing the situation for more fame attraction of members to his/her church denomination. In the event of proceedings there is increased awareness, which can be of decisive importance in the individual's relationship with God because it tends to deepen both the individual's perception and the individual's valuing. On a perceptual level, it represents an organismic plunge into the depth of oneself, a plunge in which the individual may gain a deeply existential knowledge of his/her predicament. During the early stages of counselling, the individual tends to have a shallow and rigid understanding of his/her plight. He/she denies or distorts the most undesirable aspects of his/her condition so that he/she tends to feel that his/her plight, and therefore his/her rescue, is connected with the doing or the realization that his/her estrangement and guilt are pervasive qualities having to do with the whole interior of his/her life.

In optimal pastoral counselling that is inherent in shepherding, the individual's recognition of this situation of sudden death may approach what is commonly called, theologically, an awareness of sin, even though the individual him/herself may not attach that label to it.

Increased awareness may serve a second purpose on the perceptual level of the human beings' spiritual life. It tends to make a person's perception of and response to God more adequate and realistic. In the early stages of

counselling, the person tends to have a vague and faulty notion of God. He/she may even create God in his/her own self-image, primarily by denying or distorting those aspects of God which are inconsistent with his/her own self-structure. The most common distortions of God is to experience God as a punitive judge who requires full restitution for all sins, but even during the less distorted perceptions, the person will tend to possess an inadequate notion of God's love and forgiveness. It is very unfortunate to note that there are many of our brothers and sisters in various church denominations who preach this to the people who happen to be struck by death of any kind.

Increased awareness helps to correct the situation primarily because the person begins to perceive in an extensional rather than in an intentional way. It is decisive in the individual's relationship with God in another and more basic way, for it has a salutary effect not only on what the person perceives but also on what he/she values. Rodgers gives psychological expression to this point when he says that 'man (sic) has two different valuing systems: the one, a function of his total being, evaluates experience in terms of whether or not it maintains and enhances his total life; the other, a function of his self-concept, is attuned to the individual's defensive need to gain a positive regard of self and others.' As pastoral counselling deepens the individual's openness to experience, the individual moves away from the parched desert of self-valuing, that is, he/she moves away from a narrow and inadequate fulfilment toward a genuine and expansive fulfilment. The persons who once was struck by sudden death in our communities and churches becomes resourceful and important enrichments to our societies because of their experiences because they are acquainted with grief and can better journey with the traumatized and the distressed.

4.11. UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

Aden continued to note that the Rogerian fall into radical alienation through selective self-affirmation is a consequence of ‘a natural and tragic development in infancy’.

“As the infant develops, he (sic) gradually comes to recognize a portion of his (sic) total being and function as ‘I’ or ‘me’. In a word, he comes to possess a self or self-concept. Concomitantly, he develops what is called a ‘need for positive regard’, that is, he must feel that his presence and existence make a positive difference in the world of the significant other, that he is respected, cherished, and loved. Consequently, he becomes attentive to the response of others and begins to evaluate his feelings and desires according to their negative or positive reaction. Gradually, according to Rogers, this whole is internalized so that the individual takes on the values of the significant other and cannot regard himself positively unless his experience is in accord with these introjected values, these ‘conditions of worth’”. (Oglesby 1969: 267-268).

This is a psychological consideration of how far self worth can be developed in the life of some persons who happen to be destroyed by sudden death. Having developed from infancy, the concept that the one who happened to have died suddenly in an accident is the root of his/her worth, maybe because of their closeness, in their upbringing or he/she happens to be the bread winner, the person loses worth and inwardly the person dies in many aspects almost instantly. Unconditional acceptance can be of decisive importance in the person’s spiritual life because it tends to release the person from the bondage of self-justification. The person who lives by and measures self against what Rodgers calls conditions of worth is living a life in which he/she tries to make him/herself acceptable to self, others and God. The person happens to be in an endless and futile process of taking matters into his/her hands and attempting to be the source of own acceptance. The condition of this kind of bereavement handicaps the

person so much that he/she becomes even not acceptable to self. Therefore, the counselling will indicate that this person's attempt at self-justification can manifest itself in at least two interrelated ways. On the one hand, it can manifest itself on an interpersonal level as an insatiable attempt to win love and acceptance of significant others by living a life of ingratiating behaviour. It means the person lives and does things to fulfil the conditions of worth of others and thereby hopes to receive some genuine measure of their positive regard. On the other hand, it can manifest itself on an intrapsychic level as a constant attempt to deny or distort those feelings and experiences that are inconsistent with the self-concept and with the conditions under which the individual can maintain an undiluted measure of positive self-regard. In either case, the individual becomes ensnared in a tenacious bondage of self-justification. All these must be known and borne in the minds of skilful pastoral caregivers who are approaching a scenario of persons stricken by sudden death. As discussed by Aden, the concepts were not used in the context of stress and trauma through sudden death, but they (the concepts) happen to unpack the psychical standing of human beings and such reactions to conditions of life. Relative to the subject under investigation, like any condition that is regarded by self unworthy, in many ways, sudden death is and is a fact in our lives. It questions one's worth in the face of life challenges without the person who happen to have suddenly departed, and actually compel some self judgements in such conditions. All this yields stressful results needing grounded character to face and continue with life.

4.12 CONGRUENCE

Empathic understanding without the warmth of unconditional acceptance can be a cold and ruthless instrument, while unconditional acceptance without the clear vision of empathic understanding can be a shallow and sentimental affair. Both ingredients are essential at any moment of Rogerian

therapy, and yet by themselves they are not sufficient to constitute an efficacious therapeutic relationship. Oglesby was spot on in detecting that, “They can become very hollow and artificial unless they are rooted in and proceed from a third ingredient, namely the integrity and authenticity of the therapist”. (Oglesby 1969: 270).

This third ingredient was named to be Congruence by Rogers, and he believed that to be the most basic of the three conditions.

The mature pastoral intervention by the any pastoral care giver to a person struck by sudden death can not simply be the pastoral care giver’s stance towards the bereaved alone, but it is also certain stance the pastor/minister takes towards him/herself and the deeper levels of his/her own organismic experience. It is a stance of openness and honesty, a willingness to tear down concealing facades in order to be a whole and more harmonious person. It is supposed to be an accurate matching of experiencing and awareness, not in an absolute fashion but in this particular moment of this immediate relationship with this specific person and situation. Efficacious congruence induces in the person being counselled, the feeling that the therapist is dependably real and trustworthy. In other words, genuineness, or unconditional authenticity, in the therapist or the pastor tends to elicit confidence, or unconditional trust, in the client so that the latter is able to place his/her life unqualifiably in the hands of the therapist. Also that the organismic assurance that the therapist is what he/she appears to be. It would make more sense if this is put once more in exact words of explanation by Oglesby, that:

“in optimal counselling, especially in optimal pastoral counselling, the individual’s increased relatedness may approach what Christian theology calls faith. That is, the individual moves out of himself (sic) and is able to relate more fully and to give himself more completely to the ultimate and underlying structures of life, to that Reality which ‘sets the bounds and (sic) infinitely at the same time that it fulfils him completely. In

theological terms he is drawn out of himself and empowered to trust in and accept God's love and forgiveness as a pivotal fact in his life. In other words, the gratuitous and unconditional acceptance of God becomes an organismic truth in the individual's experience, enabling him to affirm himself unqualifiable in spite of the extent to which is still an estranged and guilty person" (Oglesby 1969: 271-272).

The author understands Oglesby to be reiterating the basic grounds of pastoral care by regarding congruence as paramount to even the first two. It is a reshaping the pastoral care by all pastoral care givers into a holistic kind of intervention that refocusses the grieving into their own faith in an attempt to draw courage. When the current practice and pastoral care by the church is analysed side by side with this model, one picks up mistakes by some of those whom the church entrusts pastoral care. That very often, and in events of sudden death God has been presented as that punitive judge mentioned. This has been done with the unfortunate flaw of the lack of clear understanding of the bereaved inner world.

Put simply, the time of sudden death, more than anything is a time to take a journey to self by the grieving, and the time for the pastoral caregiver to listen attentively and sensitively to the expressions of their realities, feelings and attitudes in the midst of such a tragedy. It might not be a very easy thing to do especially with church schedules which are packed with activities and responsibilities but must be worked towards. At this time of grief, some values learned from history are important to be recalled to memories, and possibly to practice. This is one reason that authenticates pastoral care and compels the remembrance of the original and primitive pastoral care which is Christ-like, the kind of care that was seen in the eyes of Gerkin and Hiltner, and was discussed in chapter one above.

4.13. SUMMARY

We have explained pastoral care and its need in the face of sudden death this chapter. We have time and again pointed out the openings which the church should be using to enter the world of the bereaved in any event of grief, and we have pronounced how the church has failed over a number of occasions. Accepting that grief and mourning may yield stresses of different kinds and responses; we have also enquired from the psychological world the actual situation of the psyche in different people in times and their responses to stress through sudden death. As much as it is the usual and common claims that some stresses are out of reach through pastoral care, it can be pronounced once more that such stresses are not impossible in the face of well aligned and grounded skilful pastoral care. In the next chapter, we shall relook into the church today and propose the model to reshape church as far as pastoral care is concerned, and apply pastoral care to a few victims.