

## **CHAPTER 6: Proposal of the Theology of caring**

### **1. Introduction**

The previous chapter examined the Integration of the Methodology of How to Care under the following headings:

- Analysis of Various Methodologies of Caring.
- Creating a Synergy of a Range of Methods.
- Integration of the Caring System Currently Available within the Pentecostal Churches.
- Natural Endowment with Force and Power to Sustain Life.
- Preliminary Conclusion.

The present Chapter will analyze the Proposal of the Theology of Caring. Before we even move to the last chapter, where recommendations will be submitted, a bird's eye-view will be presented in this particular chapter. This will deal with a topic related to the new territory of proposing a Specific Theology of Caring which will be meaningful and caring to the widows, the clergy widows within the Pentecostal Church, in particular.

The chapter will disclose the following topics:

- Analysis of Various Theologies As They Relate to Caring.
- The Commencement of a Potential Healing: Starting Within the Context of Any Given Family.
- Required Healing of the Surviving Widow.
- Dying Patient's Problems Come to an End.
- Family Problems Go On.

- Decreasing the Family Problems.
- Handling the Devastation of a Widow.
- Revolutionising Conventional Practices Related to Widows.
- Submission of a Considerable Theology for the Care of Widows.
- Preliminary Conclusion.

## **2. Analysis of various Theologies as they relate to caring:**

The author would love to make a submission which analyzes various theologies as they relate to caring. The ultimate aim of this endeavour is to be able to come up with the theology of care for the widows and the clergy widows in particular. It will be evidenced in this submission how widows are not only ignored, but are completely left in oblivion to be marooned in the chart of time, life and reality.

The intended theology will be analyzed under the following titles:

- The theology of social responsibility.
- The theology of power.
- The theology of proclamation.
- The theology of tending the flock.

### **1.1. The Theology of Social Responsibility**

The author considers the theology of social responsibility as an important subject in an undertaking to address the imperatives of instituting the theology of care, hence the discourse on this very theology. It is noteworthy to mention at this stage that ignoring the society in which the gospel is being preached will be suicidal to the intended purpose thereof. This will be a self defeating exercise to the aims of serving humanity with the Christocentric message of care. Campbell likens this

attitude to the one “who destroys the good fortune that he gave” (Campbell 1986:38). The author understands this underpinning principle to suggest that after the church had given the message of Christ to the people, in a contrary manner, the care is being destroyed by the carelessness of not caring for those who are hurting such as the widows after the death of their husbands. This becomes the very exercise of destroying the fortune already given to the people of God earlier on.

The first question to ask when interrogating the subject of proposing the theology of caring as a vehicle of the theology of social responsibility, is why is it necessary to establish such a theology? In an attempt to answer the foregoing question, the author immediately points to one authority that provides the following response: “One answer to that question may be found in what came to be called the Social Gospel movement, whose development closely paralleled that of the Emmanuel movement. Both movements had their origins in the rise of the social sciences during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the accompanying developments in theological liberalism. There was one primary difference between the two movements, which caused them to go in quite different directions.

Whereas the Emmanuel movement, along with the psychologists of religion, found its primary social scientific partnership with psychology, the Social Gospel movement was prompted by a developing dialogue with sociology. One might even say that, whereas the Emmanuel movement psychologized the gospel to the end of transforming the cure of souls into a scientific pastoral therapy, the Social Gospel movement sociologized the gospel to the end of transforming Christian social ethics into a scientific cure for society’s ills” (Gerkin 1997:57)

The transformation of Christian social ethics into a scientific cure for the society's ills is the exact focal point which the author is addressing in this subject. He is attempting to propose a theology which will look at the care of widows in a rather more sensitive approach. There is a voice which speaks to the same aspiration in the following way: "Justice in Christian theology has been seen as (in the Old Testament) the exercise of compassion and mercy to the poor; as a cardinal virtue along with prudence, temperance, and fortitude; and as a means whereby the requirements of love are distributed equally to all" (Elford 1999:153)

The opinion of social justice, especially in view of the oppressed, the orphans and the widows, is of paramount importance especially in Practical Theology. Hulme indicates in no uncertain terms that: "The church today has a two-pronged task: to minister to society in terms of social justice and to individuals in terms of their specific needs" (Hulme 1973:27). This submission by Hulme buttresses Elford's position. The two authorities do have a common understanding of the theology of caring. This common understanding serves as a hinge to bolster the desired theology for the care of the clergy widows. It is evident that social justice is a point of departure if the theology of care is to be credible both to the pastoral care practitioners and the recipients of the same service.

Finding parallel reinforcement in the above submissions is Murray who almost chastises the care-givers and the church at large as he cries out: "Too many Christians are not taking their faith out of the pew and putting it into practice in the daily lives" (Murray 1987:121). The author views this motion to take the faith out of the pew and putting it into practice in the daily lives as the very definition of the theology of social responsibility capable to help in the formulation of the desired theology of care for the widows. The author will now analyze the theology of

power and attempt to extrapolate how it can be instrumental as a tool to create a considerable theology of care for the clergy widows.

## **1.2. The Theology of power**

In order to establish any form of doctrine, teaching, methodology and or the theology for that matter, the author considers it extremely imperative to, first and foremost, apprehend the technical implications of the desired underpinning virtues. Such virtues manifest themselves in what the author views as an issue of power portrayed by Oates & Oates in the following manner: “We are creatures, but divine Providence has given us the privilege and responsibility of continually re-creating our lives. Thus God’s strength is perfected in our limitations and weaknesses” (Oates & Oates 1985:18).”

Oates and Oates apparently surrender to the reality that humanity has weaknesses and limitations. This indicates that there is a need incumbent upon humanity to solicit for a power base superior to theirs. In this way, there is a call which is spelt out in clear terms that speaks of the concept of powerlessness as articulated in the terms that indicate its inherent shortfall thus: “Why should this happen to me? Why now? What have I done to deserve this-it doesn’t seem fair” (Speck 1988:30)

This notion appears to present a systematic way of enquiring into the state of powerlessness and as such advocating for the theology of power. The author applauds the presentation by Speck which addresses the basis of the theology of power. Speaking of this theology in a manner which will be helpful in establishing the theology of care envisaged by the author, Pasewark reinforces Speck’s position by stating that: “The power of God is the power of God because it is used for us” (Pasewark 1993:197). Speck further indicates the damage of disempowerment in

the following manner: “Some people hate being dependent and will fight vigorously against it- sometimes to their detriment” (1988:13).

This shows that the helpful and therapeutic way in which the hurting can be best helped is by being empowered with the knowledge that would allow dependence at times. This becomes the automatic power base to heal the bleeding widows. What Pasewark suggests about the power of God being the power of God because it is used for us, is critically important because it serves as the foundational layer for the institution of the theology of care for the widows.

Having looked at the discourses by authorities on the theology of power and how this can present a new proposal of the theology of care, the author would love to agree with Speck that he seems to advocate for the same notion which he supports. He does, however, appreciate what Howe equally portrays as: “Certainly, pastoral counsellors must commit themselves to accept all counselees as persons of intrinsic worth and dignity. They cannot require as a condition for a counselling relationship that a counselee affiliate with any such community” (Howe 1995:13)

Empowerment is evident here in that the pastoral counsellors are encouraged to accept counselees as people of worth and dignity. This becomes the breeding ground for the submission of the theology of care for the widows.

Howe further explicates the theology of power by indicating that: “Being created in the image and shadow of God is a mixed blessing. ...the image of God is a representation of God’s nature by which God fashions us and by which we continue to fashion ourselves” (1995:33). The very knowledge that the image of God in us is the nature by which God fashions us and by which we continue to

fashion ourselves is empowerment enough to justify the theology of power which is capable of creating the desired model of care for the clergy widows. This ultimately serves as the basis of establishing the theology of caring especially for the widows.

This theology will help us enter into the space of the hurting widows, and to better understand their plight. In this way, a new theology of caring assuming power as the primary premise of reasoning, will be forged. Having dwelt in the theology of caring by form of the theology of power, the author will now move to the theology of proclamation.

### **1.3. The Theology of proclamation**

The author views the theology of proclamation as fundamental in as far as the submission of the proposal of the theology of caring is concerned. Proclamation is pronounced by Bartow through a fictitious character called Wilhelmina whose house is said to be clean. In this clean house of Wilhelmina, God's human speech is very vocal and clear as the lonely widow keeps herself busy in order to engage herself with only one voice, and that is the voice of God. This theology requires that there should be recognition of the emptiness within the widows as portrayed thus by Bartow: "Wilhelmina's house is clean and empty. Her husband is gone from it. Her children are gone from it. Wilhelmina has it all to herself. Her parties hold no joy for her. Wilhelmina's work holds no meaning. Wilhelmina's sleep, what she gets of it, is dreamless as the sleep of death. Wilhelmina's life seems hardly worth the living. Sometimes Wilhelmina wishes she could die. Pray for Wilhelmina. Wilhelmina needs your prayers" (Bartow 1997:163)

This gloomy picture of a lonely widow indicates that the proclamation of the prayers by the pastoral care-givers is an essential necessity. This exercise is the very proclamation which the author is addressing. It constitutes the very elementary basis of the theology which seeks to bring about healing to the widows through preaching or proclamation which Bartow further presents as: “Preaching, then, is first of all narrative discourse. It is performance of story” (1997:100)

The author views this proclamation theology as therapeutic as it gives a chance of a narrative discourse which is helpful to both the recipient of therapy as well as the one proclaiming it. This is further attested in the theological context submission by Murray who reasons in unambiguous terms that such a proclamation should happen in a conducive and hospitable context which he draws as follows: “The church is a place which brings many people from varied backgrounds and economic statuses together under one roof. Each of us must guard against the “keep-up-with-the-Joneses” nature of mankind” (Murray 1987:121)

The responsibility incumbent upon each pastoral care-giver is to submit a healing proclamation within the church environment which does not discriminate against the status of a person. From the interviews and the story shared by the co-researchers in Chapter 4, the author established a weakness that the care for the widows and the required proclamation was given on the strength and basis of the widows’ own statuses.

In the same breath, the discriminatory practice which the author strongly condemns with the contempt it deserves, is echoed by Howe in the following immortal utterance: “pastoral counsellors must commit themselves to accept all counselees as persons of intrinsic worth and dignity” (Howe 1995:13). Howe continues to



indicate that such a proclamation should take into account the state in which the broken counselees find themselves in as follows: “On behalf of the misled faithful today, pastoral counsellors can make available the towels needed by the few who may be ready to wipe clean their own abused foreheads” (1995:35). These abused foreheads resonate in all distinctness in the narratives which the widows shared with the author in Chapter 4. As each cried out, one could easily pick up the importance of the theology of proclamation both from the story-teller and the author who was availing a towel to wipe the abused foreheads of the widows through his listening skills.

In the light of the foregoing argument, the author cannot agree any further with Winter’s findings that portray conceptions of proclamation as a consequence of the widow’s own responsibility. He almost suggests that the respect attributed to the widow depends on her own lifestyle. This is a proclamation commensurate with the teachings derived from the early Pauline proposals provided as follows: “The ‘real’ Christian widow had an age qualification and was known for her faithfulness in marriage. She distinguished herself in her service as a Christian; she was ‘well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, relieved the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way’” (Winter 2003:123).”

The author’s own opinion on this subject states, categorically, the view that proclamation is a viable tool which is very essential for the establishment of the theology that speaks to the care of the widows in a most efficient and sensitive way. In so doing, the widows will equally be assured that they are cared for both by the pastoral care practitioners and the ecclesiastical gathering at large. They are equally charged with the responsibility to be hospitable, raise children and doing

good deeds in every way. The author admires this theology and views it as pursuing the sound intentions of recognizing the dignity of the widows.

This theology suggests as well as bring closure to the wound, pain and hurts of the widow through the ritual of proclamation. This is the system of caring which will help to demystify the demeaning attitude which sees the widows as carriers of misfortune. A proclamation which discredits such a fallacy is more required now than ever. The author will now move to discuss the theology of tending the flock and how this theology impacts on the desired proposal for the care of the clergy widows.

#### **1.4. The Theology of tending the flock**

This kind of theology requires as well as inquires how someone who is a pastoral care practitioner could enter into the space of the widow, the clergy widow in particular, who has suffered rejection. The desire to enter into such a space calls for the application of the therapeutic model spelt out by Lyon and Smith who state that: “The conviction that persons who are weak in faith should be welcomed but not subjected to controversial disputation undergirds an inclusive theology and biblical hermeneutics” (Lyon & Smith 1998:98). The underpinning principle requires that both the theology of care and biblical hermeneutics be inclusive. This suggests therefore that the widow who regards herself as weak as a result of the loss of her loved one be provided with an environment of care and love.

Lyon and Smith further indicate that: “Mourners may feel empty, yet fantasize a new freedom and novel adventures. In thinking of the dead, they may also recall fragment of a love-hate relationship with the beloved.... The mourner is enduring a double distress-the hurt of loss, and the pain of being mystified by an irrational

ambivalence. It hurts when he (sic) confronts the loss” (1998:61). The author views the thought of the loss displayed by the authorities as appalling yet so truthful. Understanding this feeling of the being mystified by an irrational ambivalence of the hesitation, pain and continued anguish, immediately necessitates a desire to search for the theology of care; the very endeavour which the author is presenting in this chapter even as espoused by Gerkin. The author applied Gerkin’s methodology of care in chapter 3. This subject addresses the very fundamentals of the theology of care presented by Gerkin whose view of tendering takes into account the role and importance of both the individual and the society in the following way: “At first glance the nexus of care for the individual and care for the community seem easily defined. Everyone knows what it means to be an individual or a family of individuals in this society” (Gerkin 1997:229-230).

The author agrees with Gerkin that the knowledge of an individual’s position in the broader society becomes like the spike of a bicycle wheel which revolves around a central nexus. This knowledge, therefore, assists the individual who is hurt to better tolerate and internalize the pain of the loss of the loved one without blaming other people for such a loss. In this way, the widow will be deriving the optimum healing anticipated. In this way, the theology of caring for the widow is also achieved in a remarkable way pronounced by Kirwen who states: “A widow (*nchilwa*) must choose the man who is to inherit her from among the brothers of her deceased husband if there are any.....The new option for the care of widows introduced by the *Sukuma* places the widow in a situation where she is neither considered a legal wife nor is she seen as free to remarry” (Kirwen 1979:116).

Whilst appreciating the beauty of communalism displayed as a caring theology presented by both Gerkin and Kirwen, the author is more comfortable with the

picture drawn by Gerkin since this does not disinherit the individual of the freedom of individualistic decision making. The individual is part of the whole community yet very autonomous.

On the contrary, the Afrocentric system drawn by Kirwen dispossesses the widow of her individualistic sense of independence. The author views this, therefore, as the violent force against the freedom of widows, hence a violation to the principles of caring portrayed by Gerkin.

There is yet another vocal voice on this subject which cries out with considerate concern as follows: “Family ministry focuses not simply on strong religious education, but on connecting the generations....Family life is the *raison d’être* of everything we do; it is absolutely fundamental to my conception of what a congregation is to be.... This theology leads to a family ministry that celebrates transitions of those in the community as places of encounter with the holy” (Lyon & Smith 1998:59). It is evident from the presentation by Lyon and Smith that tending should be viewed holistically and should be regarded as the model for a family environment. It means that the climate under which such a theology should be exercised should entertain the educational virtues which the family setting provides.

There does not seem to be a difference in the way Gerkin, Lyon and Smith conceptualize the theology of tending the flock. This reasoning presents the consistency which suggests that tending should be regarded as a holistic endeavour if the theology of caring for the widows is to be proposed and exercised efficiently. The holistic virtues are observed through the involvement of the individual, ecclesiastical body and the family.

Having analyzed the various theologies as they relate to the caring of the widows, the author will now move to present the commencement of a potential healing, starting within the family context.

## **2. The commencement of a potential healing: Starting within the context of any given family**

The initial stage in the required process of healing the surviving clergy widow is best illustrated in the encouragement to mourn. This in itself becomes the most difficult yet very necessary part of the minister which Oden puts as follow: “The pastor’s care for the dying begins not merely when serious illness occurs, but long before then, in assisting persons to reflect and meditate on their own vulnerability” (Oden 1986:164)

Like an old proverb which suggests that “charity begins at home,” the author equally conceptualizes that healing is intended to commence close within the family before it can spill off to other avenues of society. The widow has to be firstly healed together with her immediate milieu before she can even start thinking of touching other lives herself. She has to accept her vulnerability as well as that of her family. The stated proverb is further backed up by the provision of the principles outlined by Cueni, which suggest that the care-giver should attempt to observe such in the following way:

- *“Assume that members of the congregation are fellow strugglers in the Christian way.*
- *Assume people have progressed in their Christian journey.*
- *Assume people are more likely Christians who are hurting and in need of a healing word rather than pagans in need of punishment- We are called to be instruments of healing, not warriors on the ecclesiastical battlefield.*

- *Assume pastoral ministry means loving people into wholeness, not wining battles- Congregations in which people do not feel loved and appreciated are troubled” (Cueni 1988:42-43).*

Cueni’s principles of caring tally in harmony with Oden’s proposition in his submitted address on the kind of care which should be given to the ailing and hurting. It should be noted that the widow has a wound deeper than the visible scars and physical wounds in the body. Her family equally carries the scars and burdens of inexplicable inner wounds.

The loss of a spouse could even be interpreted as a curse or a punishment of some kind. In an attempt to submit a proposal for the care of the widows, it is relatable to echo Seibert’s position as he disputes the foregoing fallacy in the following way: “Jesus suggests that neither historical disasters nor physical infirmities should necessarily be interpreted as signs of God’s judgement” (Seibert 2009:200). The author agrees with Seibert’s proposition that this assurance submitted by Jesus argues in favour of the principles submitted by Cueni through his assumptions, which call for an acceptance of the holistic approach in considering the environment of the hurting. Such an acceptance will lead to the understanding of the theology which is required for the care of the widows as it seeks to obliterate fallacious beliefs which could otherwise devastate both the widow and her family by suggesting that the loss was as a result of a curse.

There stands, therefore, a requirement of healing this surviving widow presented in the following item of discourse.

### **3. Required healing of the surviving widow**

The required healing of the surviving widow is of paramount importance in the understanding of the theology of caring. In an attempt to present a proposal to influence such a theology, Wimberly is very vocal in elucidating the analogy of hospitality. It is in this kind of hospitality that the required healing of the surviving widow can be experienced. She uses the analogy of a ‘Welcome Table’ as follows: “...the sacrament of Holy Communion, also called the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist, is a highly revered ritual in the life of a black worshiping congregation because of its nurturing effects. Historically, the meaning of this liturgical event for black Christians lay in these persons’ discovery of the welcome of God through Jesus Christ that countered the repulsion and maltreatment they experienced in society. The event became known as the Welcome Table where no one is turned away and where the meal becomes the bread and substance of life or the spiritual food for the journey ahead” (Wimberly 2004:117)

In the world so full of pains, tortures and rejections of all sorts-both in the families and in the ecclesiastical settings, the analogy drawn by Wimberly becomes a beckon of hope. It becomes the lighthouse which provides courage where the widow feels dejected. Like in the picture of the ‘Welcome Table’ where no one is rejected, so is the need to welcome these widows in the society where such people feel rejected. They feel rejected through the traditional rituals, customs and beliefs. They live in the midst of a society which renders them vulnerable. There is new hope when she thinks that amidst it all, there is at least a place where everyone is welcome without prejudice. This knowledge becomes the cornerstone in articulating the healing required for the bereaved widow.

One would ask why healing is required for the surviving clergy widow. Providing an immediate response to the question at hand is Sinclair in the following way: “Pain is pain regardless of its source” (Sinclair 1979:68). It is in the light of the incurred pain that the widow needs this long awaited healing. The author views the need for this kind of healing as almost an immediate one which transcends the requirement to fulfil any other need. This state is essential as it constantly reminds the surviving widow that the deceased’s husband problems have come to an end, as observed hereunder.

This healing is further required in order to ascertain that the theology employed for the care of the widow was indeed a viable instrument of healing. It is the kind of healing which takes its roots from the Wounded Healer, Christ Jesus Himself, whose preaching was not divorced from His provision of care. Gnilka best puts this argument in the following way: “His help and healing are placed alongside his preaching, his offer of forgiveness, his liberating fellowship with humans” (Gnilka 1997:112). The author cherishes this presentation by Gnilka which recognizes that it is through the presentation of the healing message and the execution of the same that the care-giver’s own lifestyle and support can be instrumental towards the attainment of the theology of caring for the widows.

Augmenting this argumentation is Stienstra who portrays God as a husband. This portrayal of God as a husband suggests that: “the relationship between God and man (sic) is pictured as a marriage” (Stienstra 1993:97). This metaphor finds an equivalent maxim in the *SeSotho* (one of the official languages of South Africa) proverb which advocates that “*Modimo ke monna wabahlolohadi.*” The author supports both the *SeSotho* proverb and Stienstra who view God as a husband. It is



in this viewpoint a therapeutic model and theology of caring for the widows can be accomplished.

This very understanding of God as a husband was observed during the interviews as each of the co-researchers showed a sense of relief every time they mentioned the continues presence of God in their lives. The author could immediately tell that they found solace in the knowledge that God was their husband, and this knowledge becomes fundamental in enhancing the theology of care for the widows. The author would now discuss how the dying patient's problems come to an end as well as the relief such an end brings. Ultimately, this impacts on the theology of caring, especially for the widows.

#### **4. Dying patient's problems come to an end**

Whether the death of the spouse has happened as a result of sickness, natural causes or even an accident, the one point against which no legislation or force can argue is that, the deceased's problems have ultimately come to an end. This process has an educational lesson which the living can learn from. In the immortal enquiry by Oliver, the questions to consider are: "Does faith play a vital role in the alleviation of pain in the medical setting? Does faith bring a sense of healing to people in pain? Does faith have a practical role in the health care profession? (Oliver 1998:105). Whilst there does not seem to be an immediate answer to the questions posed, the author is of the opinion that the bottom line answer to all these questions rests in the very pillar interrogated by Oliver, namely; faith. Faith, here, becomes the element of healing which provides hope that the dead is no more and the only requirement is acceptance of the reality.

In the proposed acceptance of the reality of death, the widow will further find solace in knowing that: “The wounded heart is healed through relationships of trust with significant others, and through learning to trust God as Jesus did” (Hollins & Grinner 1988:26). Hollins and Grinner further indicate that: “All human beings erect barricades” (1988:26). The proposed theology of caring for the widows recommends that the widows should be encouraged to participate in trust relationships without the creation of barricades or even attempt to demolish such. One way of demolishing the barricades is by accepting that the death of their spouses has brought their problems to an end. In this acceptance one is empowered with the knowledge that: “We always need help- from God, from friends and family, from colleagues, and from others...The sum of all of us is more magnificent, more wonderful, than any of the individual parts” (Farrington 1999 :70)

The author agrees with Farrington is his view of collective collegiality which is instrumental in creating a theology of care and assists in the acceptance of the fact that the problems of the deceased have come to an end. This knowledge buttresses the proposition by Hollins and Grinner that all human beings have barricades. In accepting the reality about the death of the spouse, the theology of caring will be experienced first by the accepting widow, her family and the rest of the society which is out to provide such care.

An even better hope can be provided to the hurting widow by assuring her that beyond the problems of the dying which have come to an end is the transcendence which has occurred to the deceased as depicted by Badcock in the following way: “There is little talk of heaven in modern theology. In fact, the whole concept of transcendence has become something foreign to our intellectual culture; our

philosophy, our literature, and even much of our theology have been emptied of it” (Badcock 1998:84). The author applauds the call by Badcock as obligatory to the widow if a theology of caring is to be proposed. The author supports Badcock’s call to revisit the theology of transcendence as a proposal for the theology of caring and encouragement to the widows through encouragement and ascertainment that the problems of the dying patient or of their loved ones have come to an end. Though this knowledge is fundamentally therapeutic, the unfortunate reality which remains is that the deceased is no more, yet the family problems go on. The author will interrogate this subject in the next section and attempt to indicate how it contributes to the proposed theology of the care for the widows.

### **5. Family problems go on**

When all is said and done, the bereaved widow is left with an inexplicable and inescapable ordeal of reality. This situation confronts her with a painstaking reality such as that portrayed by Castle in the following way: “Grief’s intensity will lessen, but the widow will often feel vulnerable and overpowered by waves of emotion: sorrow, remorse, fear, anger, loneliness and pointlessness. Those who supported her will drift away” (*ed* Castle 1986:98). As mentioned by Mrs. Khambule, who had hoped to be supported both by the church and the relatives, it was noted that such a support did not happen, and as such she was overpowered by waves of emotion.

The truth emerged as; she realized that there was no more hope as she indicated in her story. There are various kinds of ceremonies intended at assisting the widow to forget her plight. Some take place before the funeral, others immediately after the funeral, whereas others happen throughout the mourning period. These ceremonies vary in forms, practices, rites, and complexity. Some are called ‘after

tears,' others are called, *ukuxhumanisa* (Zulu word for match-making). The latter is neither customary nor traditional but a rather fast growing notorious practice entertained by young urban, civilized, sophisticated and modernized widows.

This refusal to mourn is done either in the name of mockery, modern religious commitment such as *ubuzalwane* (a notorious religious practice masquerading under the cloak of Christianity) or under the contempt to avenge her pain to her in-laws. The situation presented here, immediately creates dissensions in the family and the problems go on instead of creating a healing platform.

When all these strange, yet, acceptable rituals and ceremonies in various communities are practised to the very end, the widow's problems go on. The family problems go on. Some of these problems actually complicate the situation and exacerbate the pain even further. One such a rite is the popular *ukungenela* (literally translated it means to enter), practice among the *Nguni* tribe of the South African people. In this practice the surviving brother of the deceased husband has a legitimate customary prerogative to take the late brother's widow as wife.

The complicating factor to the widow's plight resides in the reality that: "In some cases, culture demands that the widow should be the vulnerable mourner. In addition culture demands that she should remain silent and refrain from asserting her rights" (White; Kamanga; Kachika; Chiweza; Ohidyaonga 2002:28). This is unquestionably noticed in the traditional practices already discussed, a full picture of which is provided by the fallacious beliefs in Chapter 3 in point 4.4 which addresses the stigmatization accompanying widowhood.

The author would love to point out that the reflection presented by White *et al* is a painful reality in which the widows find themselves. This serves as a breeding ground for pain, anguish and sorrow. Whereas the church is expected to be an instrument of healing, it is equally found not empowered and without sufficient resources to provide a solution. It is also found to be without the necessary machinery in place to bring the family problems to an end as observed in Chapter 4 earlier. This situation, therefore, deserves to be unlocked in order to bring the family problems to an end. The author will discuss the importance of decreasing the family problems as a way of forging out the proposal for the theology of caring for the widows in the following item.

## **6. Decreasing the family problems**

One very important way to support the desired Theology of Caring for the ailing, heartbroken and devastated widows, is to assist her by minimizing the extent and impact of the family problems. How so? This can best be done by discussing such family problems way before the death, if the situation so warranties, especially when death was anticipated. The discussion on how to anticipate such a death and to discuss the potential problems as well as attempting to decrease such problems long before-hand is best illustrated by Kubler-Ross (1969:142) in her submission on decreasing the family problems.

Linking with Kubler-Ross is Switzer who states the following: “...the purpose of the family is to provide self-defining experiences” (Switzer 1979:35). The author is of an equal opinion that the first place to provide a platform of healing is the family environment. The most effective way to reduce the family problems is to provide the most conducive atmosphere which will enable the hurting widow an opportunity which provides self-defining experiences. This arrangement will

further enable the widow to speedily healing of the wounds caused by the loss of the husband.

Switzer further articulates that: “Studies of families demonstrate that the family is a system, a single organism in a sense, just as each one of us is a single organism” (1979:35). It becomes evidently convincing that the wholeness of the family structure rests upon the wholeness of the most hurting member; the widowed women who has lost her husband, in this instance. Her wholeness automatically reduces the family problems. It is in the reduction of the family problems that the sound Theology of Caring for the widows can be realizable.

This process which attempts to reduce the family problems commences with discussing their actuality before death. This finally becomes helpful in terms of mapping a way for the Theology of Caring. This proposed Theology revolves around what Stairs conceptualizes as soulful pastoral care in the following way: “Soulful pastoral care becomes visible as ordinary people seek together to be in full companionship with God Soulful pastoral care will:

- make soul-listening the primary agenda and initiating action of pastoral care
- attend to children as fully as adults and respect everyone’s innate spiritual potential
- listen skilfully, evocatively, and hospitably for the soul in all sorts and conditions of people and in all circumstances of life
- foster the spirituality of the faith community as well as individual development” (Stairs 2000:197)

It should be noted that there is no short-circuiting process that can address the problems of the widow. The clergy widow, in these circumstances, should be

treated not in isolation. If an effective Theology of Care is to be attained, she should be treated jointly with the family members. This should be done through the application of what Stairs alludes to as moving toward soulfulness in the following way: “The movement toward complementarity will keep us accountable, faithful, and in solidarity with our common quest to deepen our connection with God that manifests in a spirit-filled life and compassionate commitment to others” (Stairs 2000:196).

The author views this movement towards soulfulness as pivotal in that it demands that the care-giver should consider all family members with equal importance, including the children, in the counselling session. This very exercise will be instrumental in providing an appreciable Theology of Caring for the clergy widows, for whom such care is sought and as such assist in decreasing the family problems. The commitment to this bereaved family is a required act of compassion which defines the value attributed by the care-giver or pastoral counsellor to his/her work.

This caring practice is best portrayed by Miller-McLemore and Gill-Austern who see it not only as an individualistic endeavour but an activity that requires the whole community to be involved. They present this view thus: “When we turn to the notion of care by communities, we must immediately clarify that caring communities are not new-...they have been a hallmark of Christian values and identity” (Miller-McLemore & Gill-Austern 1999:46). In this way, the entire community takes the ownership of helping to decrease the family problems of the widow who happened to be in their midst. The engagement of the whole community is a helpful tool which automatically assists in handling the devastation of a widow treated hereunder.

## 7. Handling the devastation of a widow

There are various factors which are causal to the devastation of a widow, best presented in the following way: “The individuals, organizations and courts together construct widowhood and enhance the widow’s vulnerability so that she can be economically exploited. In this regard, the links between property dispossession, widowhood, poverty and legal pluralism constitute a synergy of causes for the poor enjoyment of the rights of women who are widowed (White; Kamanga; Kachika; Chiweza; Ohidyaonga 2002:28).

The author opines that it is extremely important to both understand as well as identify with the widow’s state of devastation as a care-giver if an effective Theology of Caring is to be proposed for the wellbeing of this broken woman. White *et al*, further propose that: “The solution to this problem may lie in such laws, institutions, cultural factors, gender equality and justice” (2002:29). These authorities present a reputable method suggesting an effective way of handling the devastation of the widow as: “However, perceptions and actions pertaining to these factors have to be examined from a feminist perspective” (2002:29).

The author would love to align himself with the rationale by the authorities in that the above suggest the requirement of a sensitive feministic approach which will serve the best interests of the widows from an informed feminine position. This will also be instrumental to assist in a more gender balanced philosophy created by the women for the women towards mapping a Theology of Care commensurate with the needs and requirements of the widows.

Almost in line with White *et al* Hakala presents an effective system of handling the devastation as founded and grounded upon empathetic listening of which he



reasons out: “Empathetic listening is one of the basic communication skills required in pastoral care. Its importance is stressed in most textbooks on pastoral care and counselling. Empathetic listening can be divided in to attending, listening and empathy. Egan defines attending as a means of being actively present with clients and expressing this verbally or nonverbally. Similarly, active listening involves listening to both the nonverbal and verbal messages of the client, as well as listening to oneself. Empathy includes attending, listening, and understanding the clients and expressing this understanding to them. Massey defines empathy as ‘an ability to identify with and experience another person’s experiences’” (Hakala 2001:95)

The author acknowledges that the reasoning by Hakala which invites a deep rooted attitude of listening towards solving the plight of the devastated widow, even more so through identifying with another person’s experiences. LaHaye reinforces the same notion in the following way: “One must simply ‘weep with those who weep’ (LaHaye 1990:18). The author agrees with both Hakala and LaHaye in that such care, identification and weeping with those who weep is an illustrious required practice which can enrich the desired theology of caring for the widows.

These approaches by Hakala and LaHaye indicate the importance for the task ahead of the pastoral care-givers who should constantly reaffirm the devastated widows with the exhortation that: “The possibility of being human- of being restored in God’s image as free, communal, and creative- is not just *a* possibility for our lives, but *the* possibility for our lives” (Stone 1994:97). It is the realization of this possibility which will always serve as a fuel to kindle the, otherwise, broken hopes of the hurting widows. At this point, the author would love to submit that in

the process of both acceptance and realization that one is being restored in God's image, the devastation of the widow will be ultimately annihilated.

The suggestion and submission here is, therefore, introducing a new theology of caring for the widows whose primary focus amongst others is to assist in handling the devastation of this unfortunate group of which Janzen spells out that: "In the Old Testament the movement from lamentation over the dead to cursing of the guilty appears also.... Johannes von Tepl lost his wife Margaretha, lamented her passing, and then turned against the last enemy, Death" (Janzen 1972:32)

The author supports Janzen by believing that widows should be encouraged to mourn even as it is illustrated in the Old Testament's mourning rituals as portrayed in Janzen's submission. This kind of a ritual is therapeutic in that it accords the bereaved widow an avenue to vent out her hurt thus creating a platform to handle her devastation. It is in handling this kind of ordeal and devastation that an informed theology of caring for the bleeding widow can be realized.

Having diagnosed the devastation related to the care of the widows, the author would love to develop the argument further by opening a territory which addresses the revolutionising of the conventional practices related to widows. All this is done with the intention to finally map out a new proposal for the care of the widows, the Pentecostal Clergy Widows, in particular, within which the research is undertaken. It is, therefore, very important to both understand and apply the principles of a sound pastoral care on the basis of handling the devastation of the widows, if a theology of caring is to be established effectively.

## **8. Revolutionising conventional practices related to widows**

The author would love to submit that in order to efficiently challenge the conventional practices related to widows, it becomes necessary to uproot even those beliefs enshrined in a people's belief systems, such as those mentioned in section 4.4 of chapter 3, dealing with the stigmatization accompanying widows.

The question to ask is why should conventional practices related to widows be revolutionized? As his point of departure in an attempt to answer the foregoing question, the author reasons out that the new proposal for the theology of caring proposes that the state of depression and the entire state of well being in which the widow finds herself have to be understood in minute detail. About this depression Gilbert says: "Depression is a very treatable illness, and we benefit from knowing as much about it as possible" (Gilbert 1998:33).

In order to create an informed theological proposal of pastoral care, Gilbert continues to advise as follows: "Most depressed persons develop sleep disorders. They previously may have been sound sleepers, but now experience difficulties in getting a good night's sleep....Sleep disorders (*insomnia*) of the depressed are usually one of three major kinds. The first is difficulty in falling asleep...The second form of sleep disorder is called *intermittent insomnia*. The person falls asleep, but awakens one or more times during the night, and may remain awake from thirty minutes to two or three hours each time. The third form is terminal *insomnia*. This is manifest through early morning waking and the inability to return to sleep, remaining awake until it is time to get up and prepare for work or school" (1998:11).

It is evident from Gilbert's advice that depressed people develop some unhealthy sleeping disorders. In the African context, particularly among the *Sotho* speaking people, this disorder is called *borokwana* (an equivalent to *somnambulism*). A person who has developed this behaviour is said to be under the curse of the ancestors; hence the saying: "*o foraletswe kebadimo*" (meaning the ancestors have turned their backs against her).

Some of these conventional practices related to widows require traditional means of providing care that she should entertain spending more time in bed resting than mingling with people, hence the development of *somnambular* to a larger extent. It is this very kind of practice which the author states that it should be challenged in an attempt to forge a new theology of caring. In order to heal this fallacious belief in an attempt to create a sound theology of care, it is important to consider the notion of challenging certain conventional terminologies such as those portrayed in the *Sotho* culture through intensive studies in a manner proposed as follows: "the study questions certain conventional terminology" (White; Kamanga; Kachika; Chiweza; Ohidyaonga 2002:29).

The author agrees that the conventional terminology should be questioned in the form of a theology which asserts that: "Doing theology of pastoral care can be understood either as applying theology to pastoral situations and developing theories of pastoral care or as doing theology pastorally, developing it out of the pastoral situation" (Hakala 2001:153). This system of caring is bound to be a desired instrument worthy of addressing the needs of the widows, especially in as far as handling their devastations are concerned. To this extent Stone presents the church as representative of the models and metaphors of "how we understand and do ministry" (Stone 1996:97). He further provides that: "Models and metaphors of

the church can be effective in keeping the church turned in on itself, focused on self-preservation and self-righteousness. Models and metaphors of the church can also be effective in liberating the church from itself and for God and the world” (1996:98)

Since the church is normally conceptualized as a bride, metaphorically, the author will love to entertain the metaphor of the church as a widow. If it is true that: “God who lives in his sacred temple cares for the orphans and protects the widows,” (Psalm 68:5), then it is only befitting to entertain the fact that his care for the widows is applied without prejudice, and any form of discrimination. Therefore, it is equally appropriate to consider the church as a loved and cared for widow by God. This conclusively endorses the revolutionary move and approach to the subject which requires that the stereotypes against the widows be obliterated; particularly within the church circles in an attempt to submit a new proposal for the care of the widows. Such a theology can be achieved if both the society and the church reject discriminatory practices against the widows with the contempt they deserve.

It is important to note at this stage that there is an inherent anger internalized by the widow resulting from the loss of a loved one. This anger needs to be tolerated if the practice of accepting the widows in their totality is to be entertained. By so doing, the forgiving attitude to the mood swings of the widows will be justified. Watts, Nye and Savage present this notion in the following way: “Working through the various stages of anger and guilt may require the help of a trained counsellor. At the same time the church has much to offer in helping a person work towards forgiveness of self and others, but this must not be rushed, lest it serve as a bandage over a festering wound” (Watts, Nye & Savage 2002:158). This support

mechanism ultimately fulfils what Costa conceptualizes as: “Change can occur, not simply by manipulation but from interaction” (*ed* Costa 1988:59)

The author observes a synthesis presented by Watts, Nye and Savage, and Costa. He agrees with this synthesis which speaks to the forgiveness of self and others, hence its potential to bring about an interactive change which is not manipulated. This state is exactly the position which defines the desired proposed Theology of Caring envisaged by the author for the clergy widows. This desired theology will automatically revolutionize conventional practices and biases relating to the treatment of widows. This stance is further supported by Rodd who sees the following need: “The other pressing need seems to be for some system of pastoral care to be organized ...” (*ed* Rodd 1985:173)

On this note, the author agrees with Rodd in that an effective and efficient Theology of Caring for the clergy widows can only emerge in fullness once the overhaul of the current system is entertained, exercised, introduced and uncompromisingly practiced. This system becomes the pivotal point which introduces what the author considers to be the move which will revolutionise conventional practices related to the care of widows.

At this stage the author will move to present a considerable theology for the care of widows. This theology is informed by both sensitivity and consideration of the person of a widow as discussed in the following section. It is worth noting that the execution of the envisaged theology of the care for the widows will not happen in a vacuum. It should find willing practitioners endowed with boldness and passion to champion the cause of the hurting widows in order to ultimately map a new theology which will care for the clergy widows holistically.

## **9. Submission of a considerable Theology for the care of widows**

The author would love to make a submission that in order to create a considerable theology for the care of the widows; such a theology should take the following into account:

### **9.1. Application of balm**

“You are applying balm to the broken hearts, so be tender” (Sugden and Wiersbe 1973:104)

### **9.2. Comforting truth**

“Your message should focus on one comforting truth” (Sugden and Wiersbe 1973:104)

### **9.3. Do not open old wounds**

“Bereavement has a way of opening up old wounds, or making people feel guilty” (Sugden and Wiersbe 1973:104)

### **9.4. Prepare people for the hour of sorrow**

“Your whole pastoral ministry is helping to prepare people for the hour of sorrow” (Sugden and Wiersbe 1973:104)

The author agrees with the submission of a considerable theology for the care of the widows which speaks to the deep rooted need espoused by Sugden and Wiersbe in their indication that the care-giver or pastoral counsellor should take into account the truism related to notions of the application of a balm, focussing on the comforting truth, sensitivity not to open old wounds as well as the ability to prepare the people for the hour of sorrow. The author does note with great care and consideration, though, that much as it is desired not to open old wounds, such is but an ideal envisaged utopia. In the practical sense of the word, it is inevitable not to directly or indirectly open a wound regardless of the measure of care and caution which was applied.

In addition to such a proposal presented by Sugden and Wiersbe come Strommen and Hardel with a perception which the author views as critical in his submission of the proposal of the Theology of Caring. They present it as a requirement to set up new rituals in the following manner: “Ritual gives them a sense of permanence amid a life that is often chaotic” (Strommen and Hardel 2000:142). The author believes that the ritualistic stereotypes and labels attached to widows, as proposed and discussed in earlier Chapters, need to be challenged by new rituals which will obliterate the age old ills of the past and the unbecoming discriminatory practices against widows.

Speaking on the subject of Theology for Liberation in an attempt to create a liberating vehicle for the downtrodden, Masango has the opinion that: “In order to understand liberation theology and the problems of the oppressed, we need to be able to hear the cries, stories, and voices of oppressed people” (Masango 1993:70). The author views this proposal by Masango as an equivalent expression to the need presented by Strommen and Hardel. This need for the ritual, which gives a sense of permanence, is very similar to the need for a theology which liberates the discriminated widows whose voices are almost unheard in the market and elsewhere. It is, therefore, very obligatory to establish a liberating theology which takes into account the cries, stories, and voices of the oppressed widows as evidenced in Chapter 4 which dealt with the stories of widowed women. By so doing, a new theology for the care of the clergy widows will be achieved.

Through the introduction of the plethora of new rituals the clergy widows, widows in general, the church and widows’ families will all be benefited by the new system of caring. This will be a relief to the heavy laden widows who live their lives with a pandemonium of new challenges since the death of their husbands. The author



further believes that in order to create the Theology of Caring for the clergy widows, the rituals should be contextual and not standard so as to be sensitive to the individual's own plight and chaotic circumstances she finds herself in. Rituals should include listening sessions to the cry of the widows. The following Chapter will delve much into the details of this subject by form of recommendations.

The submission of a new theology of caring for the widows takes into account the fact that: "The definitions of pastoral care have changed and developed along with the changing cultural and ecclesiastical contexts" (Hakala 2001:135). It is in understanding the dynamics involved, which have evolved within the ecclesiastical context that the proposal of the theology of caring, for the widows can be put into perspective and be submitted as credible. Such an understanding further requires that the pastoral care-givers should take into account the fact that: "Pastoral care can be given almost anytime and anywhere, whereas pastoral counselling occurs at a specific time in a designated place" (2001:135)

The author does agree with Hakala that pastoral care can be given almost anytime and anywhere, he does however disagree with the notion of a designated place for offering pastoral counselling. This is where the author strongly believes that an accommodative shift of mind and practice needs to be condoned. In the African context, a widow has to be in mourning for a certain period of time, a period in which she is not allowed to leave her location.

It is in this period that the rule of thumb in pastoral counselling related to the designated place has to be violated. By so doing the new proposal of the theology of caring which accommodates the Afro centric mourning beliefs will be credited. This in itself fulfils yet another premise by Hakala which suggests: "Generally,

pastoral care and counselling are considered to be conversational help given by trained professionals” (2001:36). The author, therefore, opines that if such practices are conversational, conversations both for the care and counselling can be held anywhere and anytime.

With the foregoing argument in mind, it is equally important to note that the submission of a considerable theology for the care of the widows recognizes that: “The Holy Spirit will magnify Christ. He will become central. This is what I call a theology of displacement. The difficulty of following Christ centers in a theology which demands that Christocentricity replace egocentricity” (Salter 1990:105). The author views this motive as essential to the delivery of the pastoral care service, namely; the motive of making Christ the focal point of the pastoral care service delivery.

In further augmenting the argument, the author views egocentricity as a way that hinders efficiency of the considerable theology of the care for the widows. In supporting what Salter proposes as a critical need of focusing on Christ as the centre of such a service, the author would love to draw on the proposition by Wilson, Poerwowidagdo, Mofokeng, & Evans where they categorically state: “Human dignity often depends on a relationship between communities and individuals” (Wilson, Poerwowidagdo, Mofokeng, Evans, 1996:24). The author agrees in no uncertain terms that in the submission of a considerable theology for the care of widows, it should be constantly noted that the widows exist within an ecclesiastical community which has an obligation to relate to them in such a way that their dignity shall be enhanced.

This attitude, acceptance and treatment towards widows will fulfil the requirements of an ideal desired considerable Christocentric theology for the care of the widows. In this theology, egocentricity has no room of existence, hence the sound pastoral care of the widows by the collective ecclesiastical community.

The submission of the theology of caring for the widows narrows to one focal point namely; caring itself of which Switzer cries out: “Caring and being cared for is essential for truly human in the world and our own caring for others has the impact of helping us find our place in the world’s scheme of things” (Switzer 1989:13). He continues to mention that: “Caring is both an organizing and unifying force in the life of the person who is caring, thus a contribution to the growth and actualization of the one who cares as well as to that of the one being care for” (1989:13)

This caring stems from the premise that: “All people have an operational theology that guides the formation of their value systems and their sense of purpose in life. For some, these theological groundings are hidden and unavailable to them. For others, they are very conscious and dynamic. Pastoral counsellors need to be conscious of the theological commitments that guide them in their ministries” (Neuger 2001:51).

The author sees caring as both a pastoral and theological tool necessary to bring about the desired new theology of care for the widows, if it is exercised with the consciousness of the operational individual’s theology as proposed by Neuger. The author equally endorses Switzer’s belief that caring is a two-pronged endeavour which empowers both the care-giver as well as the one cared for. The care-giver is empowered by the service which s/he is providing to those who dearly

need such service. The very knowledge that one is being of valuable service to the unfortunate widows, is an element of empowerment itself. The one cared for is empowered by the diligent service rendered to him/her. In this context the clergy widow is empowered by the committed service received from the care-giver.

The author will submit a preliminary conclusion hereunder, which is a way of recapitulating the content of the current chapter as a new chapter is introduced.

### **10. Preliminary conclusion**

In this chapter the author analysed the Proposal of Theology of Caring under the following headings:

- Analysis of Various Theologies As They Relate to Caring.
- The Commencement of a Potential Healing: Starting Within the Context of Any Given Family.
- Required Healing of the Surviving Widow.
- Dying Patient's Problems Come to an End.
- Family Problems Go On.
- Decreasing the Family Problems
- Handling the Devastation of a Widow
- Revolutionising Conventional Practices Related to Widows.
- Submission of a Considerable Theology for the Care of Widows.
- Preliminary Conclusion

The author provided in detail the concept of a theology of caring as a proposal if the care of the widows, in general, and the clergy widows, in particular, were to be observed and exercised with the dignity attributed to the concerned widows. He

expatiated on the proposal which spoke to the need of recognizing the position of the hurting in order to be enabled to apply the balm in the wounds. It was highlighted that the care givers and pastoral counsellors should consider not opening the old wounds, though this practice was found to be an inevitable endeavour.

The considerable theology of care for the widows further requires that the recipients of pain be told the truth about their circumstances and the realities around such. This truth should however be the comforting truth, in other words, it should be told with much consideration of the pain they had already encountered. The theology, furthermore, seeks to prepare people for the hour of sorrow. This is an inevitable hour of loneliness in which every widow needs a pillow to lean on. The theology of care becomes, therefore, this very required cushion.

In the next chapter, which is a concluding chapter, the author will present the findings and recommendations which he discovered throughout the research journey. He would love to point out that some of the discoveries were alarming, such as the observation of how some widows would refuse to be interviewed. He established that the fear to speak out resulted primarily from the loyalty the individuals attributed to their organizations more than to their own personal wellbeing. Some widows were willing to clothe the church with the false sanctity as though it was a perfect entity.

The findings to be presented are divided into findings resulting from observation as well as findings resulting from literature interrogations. Then the author would move on to submit various recommendations informed by the discoveries in the

form of findings. This chapter will address the presented items under the following headings:

- Educating the Findings.
- General Findings.
- Findings Informed by Tradition.
- Findings Informed by Observation.
- Specific Findings.
- Findings Informed by Literature.
- Findings Informed by Interviews.
- The Presence of the Deceased
- Recommendations.
- Basic Facts about Death.
- The Process of Mourning.
- Realities about the Deceased.
- Knowledge and Information Therapeutic to the Surviving Clergy Widow.
- Foundational Layer of the New Tool for the Care of the Clergy Widows.
- Proposed Mechanism (on how the church can be instrumental in providing the support system that ranges from emotional, spiritual, social, psychological circles).
- Conclusion.