

## 1:0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background to the problem, states the problem, objectives, assumptions, significance of the study, and limitations of the study. It also defines and explains important terms used on the document. Included are the research Gap and preliminary conclusion.

### 1:1 BACKGROUND

The researcher in this study is a minister of religion. He was born in Zimbabwe and grew up in Zambia where he did his primary and secondary education. After his secondary education, he was employed by World Vision International in Zambia, where he worked as an accounts clerk. While there, he responded to God's call to ministry. He then did his theological studies at United Theological College in Zimbabwe and a Bachelor of Science degree in Counseling with Zimbabwe Open University. He later did his postgraduate studies in Trauma Counseling with the University of Pretoria in South Africa where he did a research on "Suppression of the grief process among males that leads to death."

In this research, the term author will be used interchangeably with researcher along with the pronoun 'our' as a passionate way of identifying with the issues that reflect his personal experiences. For example, in chapter three, the researcher illustrated how his absence affected his son's class performance. This came to light in the process of the research; therefore, it was not part of the motivation to the study but a benefit drawn from the research journey.

The researcher has worked with young people as a youth Pastor in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Therefore, in this study, he wants to assess the impact of absence on black African adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

The research focuses specifically on black African adolescents in Marondera district. Marondera is in the Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe. It is one of the provinces that suffered a lot of political violence leading to and post the 2008 presidential elections. Men had been leaving the country ever since 1998 because of the harsh economic and social challenges in Zimbabwe. A lot of men, after losing hope in economic recovery due to the 2008 political violence and drought, left the country in large numbers. This is a year the author became a Zimbabwean billionaire. The inflation rate of Zimbabwe had become second worst in the whole world (see appendix D). With his billions, the author could hardly feed a family of six for a day. Compounded with a drought period, many people competed for food with animals while others went for days without food. The details on the causes of migration will be covered later in chapter four (in item 4.3 on the conditions that made men to migrate).

The political and economic environments affected many lives in Zimbabwe. For example: hungry, desperate and poor people destroyed trees, killed animals for meat in game ranching farms; hence presenting a no rule of law scenario. The Author was concerned with the future of children who are exposed to political violence and growing up in the absence of fathers at such an early age.

The author discovered that in his congregations many mothers were missing from Sunday church services towards the end of each month because they had gone to neighboring countries such as South Africa or Botswana to collect food and money from their husbands.

Secondly, some children whose fathers were absent no longer attended church regularly and had little interest in church activities. This made the author to wonder as a narrative researcher. Narrative researchers are concerned with stories of marginalised people or stories that people give little attention to. It seemed the church and the author himself had not noticed that children were missing their fathers. It might be that they unconsciously thought that these children were better than those with resident fathers. The resident father is represented by the example in the above situation where the author as a Zimbabwean billionaire was unable to fend for his family. Therefore, the author wanted to understand how children were growing up in the absence of their fathers. He further wanted to find out from their experiences and how those experiences affected them. Having thought of adolescent children in general, the author decided to carry out a study specifically on adolescent males.

### **1.1.2 Justification for targeting adolescent males**

The author wondered how a boy child in an urban environment can grow up into an adult male in the absence of a father. The author is also aware of how difficult it is to bring up a boy child even in a family where both parents are present. He became more concerned because he grew up in an environment where a father is respected and feared more than the mother. Moreover, whenever the author's mother wanted to stamp her authority, she would evoke a sense of fear by reminding him of his father. Growing up with his parents helped the author to form a gender identity drawn from his parents' influence. Today as an adult, he still recognises his father's teachings and influence. For example, his father told him to be a person who should not depend on gifts from people for his living. He used to say 'work

hard, do not depend on other people for all your needs, otherwise you will hate them for their sweat.’

As a minister of religion who has worked with young people for two decades, he sought to understand whether absence of fathers is traumatic to adolescent males among the Shona people in Zimbabwe. The findings would help the author to understand some of the behaviors that adolescent boys exhibit as he cares for them. Secondly, it will help him to work with the children to find a model that would be of benefit to the children in risky environments. Chapter six discusses what a risky environment is. It is not the aim of the study to specifically deal with the detailed effects of the father’s absence except to discover whether the deficiency is traumatic. This is because there are many factors that cause individuals to behave in the way they do. The experiences of absence of fathers may however disturb the process of human development at a period that a child forms an identity.

It is also important to find out what the children are experiencing as they cross from childhood into manhood. It is therefore essential to know how to care for them during this crucial period in their lives. The author, through a survey, has discovered that many adolescent males are involved in drug abuse, premarital sex, provocative utterances or violent activities. He further realised that girls are less likely than boys to engage in many activities that destroy them.

His interactions with young people form the background to the motivation of the study on the trauma that adolescent males go through in the absence of one parent. The author also recalls how he grew up under the guidance of his parents. In his journey into adulthood, he learnt what it means to be a father and what a good wife is like from each of these very

special people in his life. The pains and joys that he experienced as he journeyed with his parents are part of his life today. The author grew up in a society that believes in distinct gender roles. For example, only women are responsible to wash clothes and cook for the family. However, his father would help the author's mother with most of the duties that are expected to be done by women. This may be because as a young man he had worked for Mr. Brand, a white farmer in Kwekwe. While he was a gardener, he was also on several occasions requested by Mrs. Brand to assist with the cooking and other household chores.

Despite the fact that what he did was a deviation from what the society expects of men, his influence on the author has an impact today. The author himself finds it important to help his spouse and children, to wash the dishes and do other house chores together with his sons during those times when they are around; especially on Mondays. The reader has to be informed that the clergy in the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe do take a day off each Monday. Monday is a day the author has set aside to be with his family. The life of the author's father impacts on him so much in his ministry of caring for the family and Christian community. In his position as the head of the family, he moulded and fostered the development of skills necessary for successful adult adaptation into the social and physical world. Out of these experiences, came the inspiration to carry out a study on the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males as they grow into adulthood without their father's influence and guidance.

Many adolescents are living on their own or with house maids, because their parents are out in search of greener pastures in order to sustain their families. In order for fathers to avoid poverty, they decide to leave their male adolescents at the time they need them most.

In the past, men used to migrate to South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia from Malawi to search for jobs in mines and farms while others, like the author's father, worked in the gardens and kitchens within the SADC region. This can be seen by the number of people of Malawian origin in many mines and farms in the SADC or Sub-Saharan region. These migrants left their families behind for many years before they returned to them. Some of these men did not return to their families as can be evidenced by the author's grandfather who did not return to Malawi when he had migrated to Zimbabwe. Whilst there, he married the author's grandmother and thereafter went to Zambia where he later died.

The present circumstances the author wants to deal with focus on the effects from absence of fathers from adolescent males when these (males) parents migrate to other countries. Absence, especially of parents, poses challenges in the development of children today in Africa, particularly in the SADC or Sub-Saharan region. This is because in African culture children should be guided by their parents who make it possible for the whole extended family and neighbors to raise them.

However, migration has made many of these children to grow up without adult supervision, unlike in the past where the mother and the extended family took up the role of the absent males. The children are now growing up without role models; especially where maids and strangers are left with the children. The village, in the past, was mandated by the elders to look after and discipline children as opposed to the present way of bringing them up where most children are not reprimanded by someone who is not their parent.

Consequently, the courts, through the children protection act or the legal framework outlines how children should be cared for. Therefore, the raising of children has become nightmarish for many parents since the legal frameworks have dictated for the society how

the children should be raised. Parents now fear to control their children because this can be construed as child abuse. The fright has caused anxiety everywhere to the extent of it penetrating to all facets of the community life that must nurture the child. This has made many caregivers and guardians in the urban setting to loosen up or compromise their role.

The father's absence can produce anxiety in a boy child who is looked upon as the future head of the family in African cultures. While talking to Mr. Astonishment Mapurisa on 22 June 2007, who is the National Director of Methodist Church in Zimbabwe Children Homes, it became apparent that when male children have no male role models,

‘.....disillusionment kills their spiritual lives and destroys their future marriages and creates uncertainty in their jobs, and other relationships.’ (Discussion between the author and Mapurisa)

This may be because they do not have a supportive community during the period their fathers are absent. The boy is socialised to be strong and to be a leader. In this case, he is seen as a leader without any traditional training or formal orientation. He is to lead as a father, charge lobola (bride price) for his sisters or looked up to when making major family decisions in the absence of the father. This is why he would be allowed to go to places of entertainment with little or no supervision at all. Unlike the girl child who is closely supervised lest she be abused by boys and men. Unsupervised behaviors are very common on a boy child whose parents are in the Diaspora. In Zimbabwe, guardians, in many instances, compromise their roles towards these children because they depend on the material support from their parents in the Diaspora.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some Social scientists such as Erikson, 1968, Furniss, 1994 or even a layperson knows that an issue is generally studied when a problem has arisen. The Bible tells us that prophets of the Old Testament (Exodus 3:7-10) and our Lord Jesus Christ (John3:16) were sent by God to nations to address a particular condition in society. Therefore, questions such as these are asked: What is the problem? Why does the problem arise? What are the conditions in which the problem arises? In this study the questions asked are: How can an adolescent male child develop a male identity in the absence of the father in Zimbabwe? Are African adolescent males affected when their fathers are absent in Zimbabwe?

This study seeks to assess whether the father's absence causes trauma on adolescent males. These men migrate to other countries with or without proper immigration documents due to socio-political and economic challenges in Zimbabwe (see chapter four (item 4.7). Absences, especially of fathers, pose great challenges in the lives of adolescent males today in Africa, where socialisation of the male children is the responsibility of the fathers and male adults in the extended family and society.

Our society has transferred part of the affectionate needs of its children to mothers and strangers because many modern families no longer live in their original rural homes. Consequently, most Africans have lost contact with their pedigree and children have become like "Potted plants" or "Fish in the pond" due to mobility caused by poverty, disease, death, the change in lifestyles and violent political environments. The mobility of male members of the extended family makes it difficult to develop the kind of relationships which one would depend upon during crucial times. As a result, children lack adult stories, supervision and warmth unlike in the past where the grandfather and other male relatives



would take up the role of the absent father in imparting family values. The adolescent males are growing up without adult male role models due to some of the reasons mentioned earlier on.

It is also unfortunate that courts as government machineries and the western influence have dictated for parents and society how children should be raised. Gerkin cites Lasch in the following way.

“Lasch was highly critical of the way in which the professionals in the field of childcare had invaded the homes of America, subtly undermining the authority of parents and setting themselves up as the “experts” on family life. The result, said Lasch, was a host of American parents who did not trust their own judgments: a state that can easily lead to frustration resulting in violence” (Gerkin, 1997:233).

This has led the males in the extended family relax or compromise their role by becoming passive onlookers. The fathers are not sure of what their roles are in this modern society. The father’s absence has also created anxiety during this very crucial period of adolescent development. The adolescent males are looked upon as the future heads of the family and breadwinner in the African culture; therefore, there is need for proper guidance within the African family structure. During the father’s absence, the mother plays the role of the father by teaching an adolescent what a man should do to be a father. This is a very unfortunate way of helping males to be men in a society that expects males to be leaders in the family. The boys need adult males to socialise them to be strong and to be leaders. Consequently, male adolescents make life difficult for their mothers; (see chapter 5 item 5:2).

The reader should note that in Zimbabwe there are some initiation ceremonies that were previously carried out for the boy's passage into adulthood. At present these ceremonies are sparingly being done in some cultures. The success of these ceremonies depended upon men. Regrettably, men who are supposed to explain and initiate these ceremonies to adolescents are not in attendance. In addition, children do not regularly visit their rural homes to be guided by male relatives, particularly when the father is absent. In some Zimbabwean towns, some men have "Men's Forums" (called Padare) which are being thinly attended by selected boys and men. Its main focus is not the upbringing of boys but empowerment of African men.

As a result many of the Diaspora fathers have materially supported their children in an effort to compensate for their absence (see item 5.3.1), exclusive of an enabling environment that assists the adolescent to develop into adults. It is in these children that societies are supposed to depend upon and entrust with its values. In Africa parents find meaning in life by investing their values and wealth children since they (children) are expected to look after them when they are in need and old. It is also because most Africans believe that they work for their children's future who in turn are expected to put all that is left to them into good use after their parents pass on (are no-more). According to African tradition, this implies that success has meaning only if the is a successor a well behaved and responsible male child.

In general, adolescence period is regarded as a transition between childhood and adulthood. Children during this period undergo physical, emotional, social and spiritual developments. Therefore, the role of a father is significantly valued at this point, as adolescents push for autonomy and search for identity. This is discussed in detail in chapter three (item 3.5).

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to assess the impact of the father's absence towards the bringing up of adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

This is because the way boys are brought up is crucial in helping society maintain its cultural values and curbing violent behaviors against women, children, themselves and their environment. Putting it in the words of Edward Wimberly on 16 August 2010 at Alexander contact class with post graduate students, "a hurting person hurts other." Therefore, a loving person loves others and himself. In both statements the father becomes important in guiding a boy child in all matters of life. For example, when children are growing up, they start making major decisions on various issues of life; like choosing a career to pursue, who to identify with, where to live and who to marry, therefore the father's guidance is extremely valuable during this period. Moreover, the bible recognises that parents are God's appointed authority over children in the following way;

"My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life" (Proverbs 6: 20-23).

The above quotation makes the author ask the questions: Who is guiding the male adolescents when the fathers are absent? Is it possible for an adolescent to keep the teachings of an absent father? The author further wonders whether the church and society are aware of the repercussion of the absence of fathers in the lives of their male adolescents in Zimbabwe. The incidents of absence of fathers due to migration challenged the author for failing to minister to the male adolescents whose fathers have migrated. While, Gerkin

further challenged the author on the role that the Christian tradition played in the lives of the people of God in the following way;

“For the prophets that meant confronting the people with their deviation from the will of Yahweh. For the Priests it meant faithful and reverent observation of worship and cultic practice. For the wise men and women it meant practical moral guidance in the affairs of living together as a community” (Gerkin, 1997:24).

The above quotation challenged the author to carry out this study in order to empower adolescents in the absence of their fathers, the Church and Pastors in ministering to the boy child in the society that seem to have over-looked his need for support and guidance.

It seems the adolescent male has been made to stand in the shadow of those who obviously need help. This becomes traumatic because he suffers in silence as he deals with the unfinished issues of adolescence (see item 5.9).

The African family depends on its males during the times of crisis. Males are expected to make major family decisions. They initiate and conclude funeral and mourning periods, give guidance and approval to wedding and other major ceremonies in the extended family. This indicates that the male's role is important in bringing back the family to its healthy status during in times of crisis. Moreover, the social and physical changes that are taking place in the adolescent's life need the father's presence. The birth of a boy child, therefore, brings a lot of happiness in every African family for it promises growth, maintenance of the family name and values.

While the author was leading a funeral service on 10 January 2008, a father had this to say about the passing away of his son;

“I thought my son would be the one who would make our family grow since I don’t have any brothers.....” (the speech by a bereaved father at a memorial service of his son which the author was leading).

This simply shows how and what most Africans feel and believe about the family, its growth and how patriarchal Zimbabwe is, and yet the fathers who should mentor these young men are absent. The above bereaved father’s speech is understood by what Fuchs states about culture;

“Each culture had its ways of making males principal custodians of what is most valued in the culture, and of assigning to adult males the primary responsibility for inculcating in their sons the values and the rules of the culture enforcing and defending those values and rules against outsiders” (Fuchs, 2000:19).

The author, therefore, is challenged to understand the trauma that adolescent males inhibit as they grow to manhood when the fathers are absent; since fathers hold the key to the responsible behavior of their male children in Zimbabwe. Moreover, the bible recognise the duties that parents have in the education of the children when it emphasises the role of parents in every God fearing family in the following way,

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your Children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands

and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

The Bible informs us that fathers were present for their sons and their presence was purposeful. They moulded their sons and taught them about life. The process helped a boy child to become a man through this intentional relationship or presence with males of integrity. The process prepared a son to be a leader or take over the family when the father passes on. There is no other way that fathers can help their sons grow into men other than that which Deuteronomy gives. In spite of the new challenges that parents face, sons have to be supervised and guided by their fathers. But, alas, no one sits down or walks with these adolescents to teach them since fathers are in the Diaspora. The author having realised that many fathers have been forced to migrate from Zimbabwe due to the economic and socio-political situations, seeks to answer the following questions;

- ❖ Is the absence of fathers due to migrant work traumatic for adolescent males?
- ❖ What challenges do the African adolescent males face as they grow to manhood without their father’s guidance in Zimbabwe?
- ❖ What challenges do the adolescent males pose to the extended family, society, environment and to themselves when fathers are absent?
- ❖ What do these children miss in their fathers during the transitional period to manhood?
- ❖ How would the adolescent males be helped to grow into adulthood in the environment in which their fathers are missing?

It is through the above research questions that the objectives and aims of the study are formulated in order to guide the study on: Absent fathers due to migrant work: its traumatic impact on adolescent males in Zimbabwe.

### **1:3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The principal objective of this study is to assess the traumatic impact of the absence of fathers on their adolescent males. Although the causes and socio-economic consequences of migration to the home countries of emigrants may generally be suggested, it is difficult to determine in great depth its impact on African adolescent males as they grow into adulthood without such a research. The study will therefore:

- ❖ Explore and identify the impact absence of fathers has on adolescent males/or whether absence of fathers is traumatic in children?
- ❖ Explore and identify the pastoral role of the church in caring and guiding adolescent males whose fathers are absent.
- ❖ Investigate whether the impact would lead to mischievous and rebellious behaviors among adolescent males.
- ❖ Search and develop a methodology that facilitates pastoral care for adolescent males and to create awareness among migrated parents of the tragedy of their absence toward adolescent males.

### **1:4 THE AIMS OF THE STUDY**

- ❖ To help the adolescent males to draw their strength from the males in the community of faith in their journey to adulthood the absence of their fathers.

- ❖ To empower the adolescent males to create the image of a ‘good enough father’ (positive image of a father) through group discussions in order for them to be males as they grow to be adults and fathers.
- ❖ Make appropriate recommendations to the Church, community leaders and political leaders on caring for adolescent’s males whose fathers are absent?

The objectives and aims of the study lead to its significance and assumptions below.

### **1:5           SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The Study findings are expected to benefit the following:

- ❖ Give the church, an opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their support systems on caring for adolescent males in their changing environment.
- ❖ The church as it will identify opportunities for complimenting the fathers and extended family’s efforts in supporting the adolescent males whose fathers are absent.
- ❖ It will benefit the adolescents by empowering them to live positively in the absence of fathers.
- ❖ It will benefit the society by building a healthy society with responsible fathers.
- ❖ Adds knowledge to the academic world on how absences of fathers impact the development of children into adults.

### **1:6           ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE STUDY**

The study is guided by the following assumptions:



- ❖ The church is the most appropriate instrument in helping the adolescent males whose fathers are in the Diaspora. Denton (1986:26) articulates Freud in the following way:

“Only religion is able to answer the question of the purpose of life. One can hardly go wrong in concluding that the idea of a purpose in life stands and falls with the religious system” (Denton, 1986:26).

Additionally, Santrock subscribes to the role that religion plays in the lives of adolescents when he states that;

“Researchers have found that various aspects of religion are linked with positive outcomes for adolescents. For example, in one recent study of 9,700 adolescents, going to church was linked with better grades for students from low income-backgrounds (Regnerus, 2001). Religion is often an asset to the communities in which adolescents live” (Reams and Savin – Williams, 2003 in Santrock 2005:294).

Religion is integrative, both for the individual and society. To the individual, it provides a sense of meaning and an orientation to life. In the community, it binds people together and creates a communal way of seeing reality in accordance to shared values. The reader should be informed that despite its influence, religion can be harmful when it fails to be interactive within a wider community where the adolescents exist. The author cites Yancey to illustrate how a misunderstanding of some religious practices can be harmful to individuals and society.

“Historian and art critic Robert Hughes tells of a convict sentenced to life imprisonment on a maximum-security island off the coast of Australia. One day,

with no provocation he turned on a fellow prisoner and beat him senseless and killed him. Authorities shipped the murderer back to the mainland to stand trial, whereupon he gave a straightforward, passionless account of the crime. He showed no sign of remorse and denied having held any grudge against the victim. “Why, then?” asked the bewildered judge.” What was your motive?”.....The prisoner replied, “Well, I figure it’s this,” said the prisoner. I’m a Catholic. If I commit suicide I will go straight to hell. But if I murder I can come back here to Sydney and confess to a priest before my execution. That way, God will forgive me” (Yancey, 2008:161).

Nonetheless, the church is well placed in the society to give substance to Christian values of caring. It has the opportunity to motivate its members to take Christian values seriously. Through its structures, it influences the society to care for adolescents whose fathers are absent. Practical theology provides a basis for the interpretation and analysis of the situations in this study within the Zimbabwean context in order to create a caring model for the church.

The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe has served as an important resource and support system not only in spiritual matters but in the development of social network as well.

Cultural pride is enhanced through the roles carried out by family members and the community as they help individuals and families cope with adverse socio-economic conditions, therefore;

- ❖ Adolescent males are affected by the absence of male parents.

- ❖ Funds will be available to carry out the research from the World Methodist church office in England.

## **1:7                    LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following challenges and shortcomings limit the study findings:

- ❖ Self-report method (interviews) would be used to collect the data thus, some participants would respond to please the researcher.
- ❖ The interviews may open the wounds of some of the adolescents who have been injured by the absence of fathers and who may not be taking their fatherly role seriously.
- ❖ Descriptive statistics will be used to analyse the data, thus limiting the value of the findings.
- ❖ Only adolescent males from Methodist church will participate thereby limiting the generalisation of the findings.

## **1:8: 0                DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS**

The terms below are defined and explained in order to help the researcher and reader understand the process and content of the research within the Zimbabwean context.

### **1:8:1                Attachment**

According to Bowlby (1969) attachment is an enduring emotional bond a person develops towards another person, object, or institution. It is one of the basic needs of people. The need to be attached is important among boys whose parents are absent in Diaspora. This is

because they seem to share common aspects with regards to the absence of parents. Their situation creates a strong bond which may put an adolescent at the risk of substance abuse or protect him/her against destructive behaviors. On the other hand, he is less likely to begin to use drugs and more likely to stop using them if his attachment figures are against their use or are not using them. This depends on the nature / calibre of group members that the child attaches himself to.

An adolescent is more likely to engage in using drugs if he is connected to peers who promote the use and the abuse of drugs. Adolescents do not simply move away from parental influence into decision making world all by themselves. It is psychologically healthy for them to be attached to their parents. Secure attachment to fathers by adolescent males can facilitate the adolescent's social competence (Santrock, 2005:327).

### **1:8:2 Culture**

Kottak, 2002; Triandis, 2000, in Santrock states that Culture is the behavior, patterns, belief and all other products of a particular group of people that are passed on from generation to generation. The product results from the interaction between groups of people and their environment over many years.

The understanding of culture in this research helps us to appreciate the impact of absent fathers towards African adolescent males in Zimbabwe. Santrock articulates it well when he stated that;

“By understanding the behavior and values of cultures around the world, we can interact more effectively with each other and make this planet a more hospitable, peaceful place to live” (Santrock, 2005:245).

This is an indication that the people's way of life differ and their situations should be dealt with and interpreted in the light of their culture.

### **1:8:3 Child abuse**

Child abuse or neglect is the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 years by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances that indicate that the health or welfare is harmed or threatened. The schools psychological studies (1999) illuminates this view by defining child abuse as "the act either of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development" additionally, Browne, K.D., Davies, C and Stratton, P (1988) in Chiremba & Makore-Rukuni (2003:6) defined child abuse "as either active or passive." The reader should be informed that the causes of child abuse are numerous.

### **1:8:4 Neglect**

It occurs as not providing food, clothing, education, safe environment, health care or time for and attention to the children. Neglect can be a result of poverty, mental illness or ill health in the family. The Oxford Paperback Thesaurus Dictionary 2006 defines neglect as to "fail to look after, leave alone: pay no attention to, let aside, not attend, to be remiss about, be lax, leave undone." While the schools of Psychological Studies in Zimbabwe (1999) states that "Neglect is an act of omission, which occurs when the care giver fails to give physical care and supervision, or fails to care for the developmental needs of the infant of child..." (Chiremba & Makore-Rukuni 2003:10). It is likely that fathers who have left the country did not prepare a conducive environment for the proper development of their

children due to poverty and lack of human resources that include relationship with the extended family members.

### **1:8:5 Trauma**

It is defined as a Psychic injury caused by emotional shock, which continues to remain, unhealed and sometimes dissociated from the conscious memory, often resulting in behavioral and emotional disorder (Bell-Gadsby and Siegenberg, 1996).

### **1:8:6 Migration**

Migration is an important population event, which can be defined as a change in residence by people. “Immigrants are people who cross national boundaries to take up permanent residence in countries in which they are not natives. They come to settle, work, and live in a new home land and usually, but not necessarily, become citizens in due time” (Corsini and Raymond 1994:130) This movement of people which can be both internal and international changes the size of population and the rate of growth of the two areas involved. In most cases, migration is rarely permanent, but may take a long period in order to justify the risks and costs involved in moving to work abroad. In Zimbabwe, most migrants are young adults. By this the author means men and women between 18-55 years of age.

### **1: 8:7 Motivations for migration**

The common factors for migrating by Zimbabweans are economic and political that is; the desire to earn a better living. Fariyal Ross-Sheriff states that “Historically multiple emigration patterns and complex economic, social and political factors have resulted in the dispersion of Africans to other parts of the world.....” in Corsini and Raymond (1994:131).

In this study, migration is when the fathers temporarily or permanently move to another country which is not of their origin in search of improved living standards. The causes of migration vary. However, in this research, people from Zimbabwe migrate for socio-political reasons, while others are attracted by the opportunities in more affluent cities of the world. In some cases, skilled young people migrate by official invitation, though more often than not, it is the illegal exodus of professionals and skilled and unskilled men and women who go to developed countries.

### **1:8:8 Risks involved in migration**

Many people who migrate find it difficult to acquire required documents that may allow them to reside in foreign land. There are some requirements that one has to meet before he or she crosses the boarder. The migrants may also find it extremely difficult to go to some of the countries of their dreams, due to some immigration restrictions of those countries.

The conditions in which the migrants live in may not allow them to support themselves and their families. Their inability forces them to take the risk of crossing the boarders illegally or as irregular migrants. An irregular migrant is a person who lives or works abroad without the correct documents. The illegal and irregular migrants face the risk of exploitation and mistreatment, deportation and dangerous discrimination such as the 2008 xenophobic wave of attack by the South Africans to foreigners where some foreigners lost their lives. Therefore, most of these people will either have fake documents or be doing a different job than that which is specified in the work permit. As a result, the illegal immigrant's stay in these countries restricts their movements and activities-

Migration has negative aspects to a nation because of the movement of professionals and skilled workers to neighboring and overseas countries. While the effects of migration are many, the author seeks to focus on how migration by African fathers has created a vacuum in the bringing up of an African adolescent male in Zimbabwe.

### **1:8:9                      Validity**

It is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure ‘in general Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of specific inferences made from a test score’ Pedhazur & Schmelkin (1991:30) in Makore- Rukuni (2001:67). The categories should have the face value or content validity; i.e. bear relationship to the purpose for which they have been devised. In addition, a validity technique measures what it is supposed to measure. In this study, it measures the impact of absent fathers on male adolescents. This is why a pilot test is conducted in order to give assurance to the author on the dependability of the instrument used.

### **1:8:10                      Reliability**

It is the main quality of a content analysis classification must possess. It is also the condition in which repeated observations of the same phenomena with the same instrument yield similar results. According to Babbie (1998), ‘reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time’ Makore- Rukuni (2001:67). In qualitative research methodologies reliability can be influenced by observer’s characteristics, such as perceptions, motivation and attitudes or characteristics of the co-researcher.



## **1:8:11 Random sampling**

A sample is a limited number of observations from a population chosen in a way that allows that every possible observation (each member) has equal chances of appearing in the sample. Its purpose is both to save money and time. Random sampling was generated by selecting adolescents by chance or haphazardly using a table of random numbers (Bloom & Ottong 1987:54).

A list of names of adolescents from four urban Methodist Church in Zimbabwe congregations was compiled. The researcher chose the starting place arbitrarily and, the fourth person in the sample was the starting point in order to come up with a total number of boys for this research.

## **1.8.12 Social Integration**

It is the ability to interact and make friends with other peers and be accepted by them.

## **1.8.13 Identity Confusion**

This means that a person is not sure who he/she is because that individual is caught between two conflicting social systems upon which his/her definition is based on. It occurs when adolescents are indecisive about themselves and their roles (Erik, Erikson, 1968, Santrock, 2005). They cannot integrate the various roles, and when they are confronted by contradictory value systems, they neither have the ability nor the self- confidence to make decisions. This confusion causes anxiety as well as apathy or hostility towards roles or values (Meek, L et al, 2005: 426).

#### **1.8.14                      Superego**

It acts as the governor, the social controller in the tower, which brings behavior within culturally acceptable limits. The superego operates as the moral arbitrator within the adult personality; it represents society's view of right and wrong. It judges and punishes in the way that the parent would. (Kissen, 1995).

#### **1.8.15                      The Developmental Stages of Children**

The chronological periods that define the stages between infancy and adolescence have to be understood in order to deal with the separation of adolescence with their biological fathers. These stages might be different to what others in different cultures might practice : For example among the Ngoni of Malawi, the Shona of Zimbabwe and the Tonga of Zambia communities in the pre- colonial days ,Children up to five years were still breast feeding because they were perceived to be 'infants.' Moreover, in the African Culture a person remains a child until he dies.

For example, a fifty year old married man or woman would be referred to as Mukomana (boy) or musikana (girl) by their parents and Jesus at one time called his disciples children. These developmental stages help the reader to have a general understanding on why Zimbabwean adolescents require special attention in their journey to adulthood. It also reveals to the reader the developmental limitations that society should be aware of. Below are the developmental periods from early childhood, middle age and late childhood (Adolescence) as stated by Capuzzi, D and Gross G. 1991, Santrock 2005).

### **1.8.16 Infancy period**

According to Santrock (2005:20), infancy extends from birth to eighteen, or twenty months. This is a period that the child goes through cognitive developmental stages during which they learn to accommodate and assimilate information from the environment: (Piaget 1952, quoted Mussen, Conger, Kagan, & Huston, 1984). Physical knowledge is accumulated from one's outside world through sensory integration or experience. For example; smell, taste, colour, visual tactile, social knowledge from the environment, culture and society's general rules of conduct and behavior such as greeting people: The parent is very important at this stage of development. The infant requires emotional bonding with parents in order to develop socially. This can be attained through their primary social context- the family, which provides them with; a) A sense of safety (security, stability, predictability). b) A sense of being positively valued. c) A sense of personal competence (Downey, in Woolfe & Dryden, 1998, Makore – Rukuni 2001, Santrock 2005:20).

### **1.8.17 Middle Childhood period**

This period is crucial in the life of every human being. It stretches between twenty –four months to five or ten years Santrock (2005:20). The presence of parents who take parenting seriously is of great value to every child. Middle childhood period is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. At this stage, children go through biological, cognitive and socio- emotional changes. They more often use logic and reason to explain their feeling. They are no longer infants although they are limited in their ability to explain their emotions because they tend to blame others for their behaviors except in intimate relationships where they blame themselves

### 1.8.18 Adolescence

This is a period that those children from the middle childhood period are ushered into. The term adolescence derives from the Latin verb *adolescere*, meaning ‘to grow up’ or ‘to grow to adulthood’ (Gouw and Kruger 1995:3). In this study, these are children who are between 10 – 22 years of age. During the adolescent stage, children experience puberty, career interest, explore their identity, their relationships with peers and, parents are obviously changing, becoming more advanced and at times confusing. At this stage, children experience social and physical changes that can be traumatic to some (Newton, 1995). Their perception about self also undergoes change. For example; issues of identity loom large in adolescence when they want to know who they are and understand the changes that are taking place in their bodies and minds.

They are inquisitive about everything and at times are in conflict with parents. They even question the values they held in their middle childhood period. This can also be traced from Luke’s gospel which shows how the boy Jesus sat down with the Jewish teachers in the temple during his adolescence (at the age of 12) to listen and ask questions (Luke 2:46). Since the adolescent period is of great importance to developing children into healthy adults, the definition of adolescence requires a consideration not only of age but also of socio-historical influences in order to identify development to be just as central a prerequisite for accomplishing the adolescent developmental tasks in the company of caring male models.

### **1.8.19 Minister of religion**

The term minister in this study means a person trained in theology, who is consecrated to administer sacraments and take care of the congregation that he/she is assigned to by his/her church. The term is used synonymously with Clergy, Pastor and Shepherd. According to Waite et al, (2006) the term refers to clergyman, clergywoman, cleric, ecclesiastic, pastor, vicar, rector, priest, parson, father, man/woman of God.

### **1.8.20 Steward**

Refers to a lay leader of the Methodist church in Zimbabwe who is responsible for the local church. He/she is a link between the minister and the church members. According to Waite et al, (2006) it refers to an overseer, custodian or caretaker.

### **1.9.0 Literature review**

The research for literature on this research topic began with the United Theological College in Zimbabwe libraries and the University of Pretoria in ATLA Religion database + ATLAS; Journals of Pastoral Counseling and narrative therapy on parenting among children and adolescents were carried out. A hand search and pre –designed strategy based on the Pre-selected list of key words was employed as a way to ensure that other researches of this nature were carried out, particularly on the research context under review.

Literature from the internet was looked at, but treated with caution. Matowa in one of the Zimbabwean national Newspapers; the Herald, states that;

“This is because Internet does not edit, censor or verify the validity and accuracy of the material facts posted on the internet. The web is becoming the platform to legitimize information as long as it is on the internet...” (Matowa, 2009:3).

Literature on the impact of the absence of fathers has revealed that adolescents generally respond to the absence or loss of love in various (differently) ways. Individual children’s responses to the absence of fathers will largely depend upon the emotional closeness of the adolescent to the father. Fathers have been identified by Lamb as having great influence on adolescent life of the children in the following way;

“Evidence suggests that father’s absence may be harmful not necessarily because a sex- role model is absent (sic) ,but because many aspects of the father’s role – economic, social, emotional go unfilled or inappropriately filled. It is essential to recognize the father’s multiple roles as breadwinner, parent, and emotional support for partner in order to understand how fathers influence children’s development” (Lamb, 1987:15).

Contemporary literature has indicated that boys are raised (and expected) to be strong and in control of their situations, confident about their world; courageous even in times of adversity; and be able to accomplish tasks, and endure stress and pain and be providers, but they are not given permission to openly, express fear, feel insecure or express loneliness, sadness or depression (Cook & Oltjenbruns 1998:109). The researcher, however, wonders how this can be learned by boys when those who should mentor them are absent.

## **1:10 Research Gap**

While literature on migration has noted the economic circumstances of the families left behind, the challenges of the event (migration), the human resources which the family possesses at the time of the event and the family and community's perception of the event toward the upbringing of the adolescent males, has not been discussed from a practical theological perspective in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the psychological, social, emotional and spiritual impacts that the father's departure has on the adolescent male has been ignored or overlooked.

Adolescent males are growing up as silent sons because society has little or no patience with them. For example; when boys seek help, one would hear nurses, police officers and other members of the society telling them to respond like a man (to think quickly when making decisions), and telling them to be strong and not to behave like women. This adds to more problems of withdrawal shyness and anxiety (Horne 1988).

Information on parenting has revealed that in both western and African cultures a boy child is raised differently from the girl. It is, however, noted that the differences between the African and Caucasian boys is in their upbringing and nature of society. This is because of the nature of responsibilities assigned to them and their mode of perception or conceptions, arising from different languages, physical circumstances, traditions and values.

Literature search in Journals on the international studies and the University of Pretoria database and World Wide Web (though the quality of material has no quality control) shows that a research of this nature has not been carried out on adolescent males in Zimbabwe; a Sub-Saharan dominant masculine society. Moreover, most literature on

parenting and migration was written from a western and Asian perspective as can be evidenced in the bibliography.

## 1:11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter outline is the summary of what the author intends to do in the research on: The traumatic impact of absent fathers toward urban African adolescent males in Zimbabwe due to migration.

**Chapter One:** Provides the introduction background, aims and objectives, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations and limitations, definition of terms, literature review, research gap and preliminary conclusion.

**Chapter Two:** Provides the research methodology to smooth the progress of data collection techniques through personal interviews. Qualitative, quantitative and a survey method will be used. The development of research questions for the adolescents will be discussed.

**Chapter Three:** Discusses the whole question of adolescence development across the diverse field in social sciences in which the stages of development by Erik Erikson will be employed. Erikson's eight stages will help the author to understand the challenges or impact the adolescent males face when the father is absent. The researcher will also assess the challenges that the Zimbabwean adolescents face along the road to adulthood (the traumatic entry into adulthood).

**Chapter Four:** The focus in this chapter will be to identify the roles played by fathers and the impact fathers have on adolescent males. The "good enough father" will be discussed from a Zimbabwean context. The absence of a father is an underestimated tragedy of our time and yet a father is there to provide masculine aspects to the adolescent male which the



young men internalise in preparation for his outer world. Osherson articulates the author's view in the following way:

“If the fathers are not there to provide a confident, rich model of manhood for his sons, then the boy is left in a vulnerable position, having to distance himself from his mother without a clear and understandable model of gender upon which to base his emerging identity. Such a conflict can create in a young boy the inability to deal with personal (identity) authority and relationships to the outside world” (Osherson, 1986:18).

In Zimbabwe adolescent males are guided by their fathers and other male elders of the extended family and village in order for them to enter into adulthood. In more emotionally close families the absence of the father would be taken care of by the males in the extended family which include the elders of the village. But today, many males have left the country living the children with mothers or by themselves; hence posing the challenge to the upbringing of the adolescent males.

**Chapter Five:** The author will engage with the adolescents by listening to their stories on the impact of the absence of their fathers. The roles played by, the church, the extended family and the society in helping the adolescents whose fathers are absent will be discussed. These experiences with other perspectives are integrated in order to develop a therapeutic perspective leading to concluding thoughts. Fowler's stages of faith and Gerkin's shepherding models will guide the author in developing caring congregations (fellowships) for the adolescent males. “In a caring congregation its members will be offered the opportunity to care and be cared for” (Matthew S. & Lawson K 1995:115).

**Chapter six:** Focuses on the significance of the research journey to the researcher and makes recommendations and conclusions of the study. The author is aware that it is not possible for the society to go back to its traditional way of negotiating the rites of passage to adulthood for the adolescents. Therefore, a “Pastoral Care Model” will be designed for adolescents at risk and those who are wounded by the absence of their fathers. Group therapy will be measured in dealing with adolescent males who are acting out as they are not sure what of it means to be masculine. The model will prepare them to be adults and fathers in the community that expects boys to be leaders and males of integrity.

### **1:12 Preliminary conclusion**

The success of the research will depend upon the willingness of the co-researchers to share their painful experiences with the researcher and the researcher’s positive regard and ability to explain and observe the ethical ground rules in the research.

The aim of each chapter is to help the researcher in coming up with recommendations (in chapter 6) that will empower the adolescent males whose fathers are absent to draw their strength from group counseling. The church workers and the Christian community will also compliment the extended family counseling practices.

The next chapter is the methodology that guided the researcher in carrying out the study on the traumatic impact of absent fathers toward adolescent males in Zimbabwe. The chapter will spell out the tools that will be used when conducting the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the theological design and methodology that will help carry out the research on “**absent fathers due to migrant work**” is presented. Qualitative, quantitative and survey research methods are described. The task of practical theology as a theoretical undertaking and its relationship with pastoral care is discussed and the interdisciplinarity dimension is recognised and valued in order to guide the process of carrying out this research.

#### **2:2 AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN**

A research design designates the logical manner in which individuals or other units are compared and analysed. It is the basis for making interpretations from the data. The purpose of a design is to ensure a comparison that is not subject to the alternative, but lays the foundation for conducting a study effectively and efficiently. In a broader sense, the term refers to the plan for data collection, data analysis and interpretation in all types of research in order to enhance the eventual validity of the research findings (Wilson 1989; Mouton & Marcus 1988:33).

From these definitions, it is clear that research designs are instruments which are used to collect and compare data.

“The choice and the elaboration of the research design can be seen as an explicitation of the empirical- theological question that the study is to answer. The nature of the questions will imply certain choices with regard to the population and

the sample, the data to be collected, the timing of the study, and the operational and analytical research methods. The research design is a comprehensive research strategy that covers all of these necessary methodological and organizational decisions” (Van der ven, 1993:127).

Basically, in this study. both the quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in combination as a frame work to collect and analyse data on a complementary basis. While the author has some knowledge of the subject, he cannot claim to understand what the children experience until they share their experiences with him. For example, in chapter 6, the author’s reactions to the experiences expressed towards adolescents gives evidence to this affirmation (refer to item 6:2).

It is through the qualitative and quantitative research processes that new insight will be revealed. This will help the adolescents to deal with unique experiences of their situations or what Michael White et al call “Unique outcome(s)”, which in narrative therapy refers to “.... ‘facts’ or events that contradict the problem’s effects in their lives and relationships” (White & Episton 1990:56). The reader has to note that what ‘fact’ means in this context of the research is that the research process will help the adolescents to understand their world and themselves better. The understanding will further help them to modify whatever ideas they held about themselves, their fathers and the world.

### **2.2.1 Quantitative Research**

It is a research that deals with the quantity of things that involve measurement of quantity. Quantitative research deals with numbers and anything that is measured for that reason tables such as those used in chapter five and these findings are utilised to present and

measure the phenomena and their interaction. Therefore, the chief apparatus in quantitative research are physical things and processes.

According to Barker, Pistraing Elliot (1995:54) cited in Makone and Rukuni (2001:98) that the quantitative, hypothetic approach relies on empirical investigation where the researcher would observe, then draw conclusions after a series of observations, and the predictions based on the findings. The experience and knowledge gained through that process leads the researcher to draw conclusions.

### **2.2.2 Qualitative Research**

This is a research which is not linear, which means that ~~is~~, it does not focus on cause and effect, but is discovery oriented. It is the research where data are not transferable to numbers and not comparable with statistical procedures. Rather it is, “processes of systematic enquiry into the meaning which people employ to make sense of their experiences and guide their actions” (Mcleod 1994:78). Macleod further states that qualitative research aims to describe and interpret what things mean to people which quantitative research require the use of numbers, where the researcher asks questions such as: How much? How many? From the above discussion, qualitative research helps to clarify the meaning of social action and situations. In this research, both the quantitative and qualitative research methods are employed as a framework to collect data and analyse it.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in order for the research interpretation of empirical stories, theological and interdisciplinary literature, and the Co-researchers’ interpretations, to develop into an alternative understanding. These research methods have their strengths and weakness For example, quantitative research technique

has its distinctive strengths and weakness. It yields normative scores, but will not give access to the richness and complexity of personal experience.

Face to face interviews generate sensitive qualitative data that are influenced by personality or interpersonal style of the interviewer. The researcher has, therefore, decided to balance these methods against each other's strengths and weakness in order to understand the trauma that adolescents go through. Therefore, a survey method was used.

### **2.2.3 A Survey Design**

The survey method consists of establishing a descriptive and explanatory inventory by systematically questioning the adolescents about what impact the absence of their fathers has on them (Van der ven 1993:127) and then such questions were asked. In this research, a survey design was adopted for the study because the researcher wanted to identify and understand the rate and reasons for migration, and its effects on adolescent male children. According to Malhotra, a survey method is based on the questioning of the co-researchers (Malhotra 1999:178). In this research, co-researchers were asked questions as contained in the appendix A&B. The research design helped the researcher in obtaining the necessary information needed to deal with the research problem in practical theology.

Practical theology reflects critically on what happens in the congregation and on the religious actions of people, both within the church and in society at large (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:12, 13). An analysis of the church's action by the leaderships with regards to the emotional experiences of adolescent males, will guide its praxis in the society.

The researcher was also mindful of doing research on the participants rather than with them as to avoid taking the participants as subjects but as co-researchers who are trying to find a

solution to a problem together with the researcher. The researcher valued ‘the importance of dialogue in helping’ (Egan 2002:65), which leads to an outcome that benefits the participants.

Therefore, a survey is an instrument used to study social phenomena. Wortman and Laftus (1988) defined it as an attempt to estimate the opinions, characteristics and behaviors of the particular population through the investigation of a representative sample. In this study, a survey is simply a method which is used to collect data from adolescent males. Descriptive survey accurately looks at the phenomenon of the moment and precisely describes it.

According to Leed (1988), the descriptive survey design is used in describing the nature of existing conditions to make intelligent plans to improve them. A plan will be reached together with the co-researchers in order to deal with their existing trauma within the discipline of practical theology. This is because practical theology studies religious praxis, in order to reflect on the people’s praxis in their encounter with God as they search for meaning in the situations they find themselves in. In this study, a survey is simply a method which is used to collect data from adolescent males.

### **2.3 WHAT IS A THEORY?**

A theory is based upon a hypothesis and backed by evidence. It presents a concept or idea that is testable. Therefore, a theory is not merely a guess, speculation or a hunch but a fact based framework to describe a phenomenon that provides a model to understand human thought, emotions and behavior. Its two major components are that it describes a behavior and makes predictions about the future.

According to McWhirter & McWhirter,

“.. theory is a hypothetical explanation of observed events .....Which should lead to predictions of future events that have the same sort of behavior” (McWhirter & McWhirter, 1991:71).

This suggests that a theory is an explanation of occurrence in nature. A theory helps counselors to verify or confirm through empirical evidence the activities they do in their relationship with clients.

Additionally Nelson-Jones states that

“....theory is a formulation of the underlying principles of certain observed phenomena which have been verified to some extent” (Nelson-Jones, 1997:5)

This means that the researcher observes some occurrences in nature and systematically organises the information in order to confirm whether there are general rules that govern the occurrence.

### **2:3:1 The Function of theory in a research**

A theory in any research helps the researcher to organise and understand data collected from the field. The author has tabulated some of the important functions of a theory in his research process in order to allow him to organise data into some pattern and to be more precise in what to look for: Below are the functions of a theory;

- ❖ It provides the language that helps us communicate to each other the meaning, importance of our observations and the method of doing a research.
- ❖ It assists the counsellor to describe how helpful and unhelpful behaviors of the individual are acquired.



- ❖ Theory helps us to explain how behaviors are maintained, and how to help the client to change and consolidate the desirable behaviors that have been changed.

Theory helps the counselor to avoid drawing conclusions based on opinions or untested assumptions; thereby, creating distorted images (Rukuni & Maunganidze, 2000:6-7).

## **2:4 THE ROLE OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY THEORY**

The theoretical undertaking that builds on praxis makes practical theology central in assessing the impact of absent fathers on adolescent males. It is a theological theory of action with a methodology that is linked to social sciences. Practical theology is also referred to as a theory of crisis (Heitink 1999:4). The Christian faith in its praxis cannot escape the crisis or human conditions in Zimbabwe; where practical theology stands in between the politics and religion of the people as a theory of praxis because its horizon is beyond the Church.

Adraanse suggested that one part of theology should deal with the agenda (meaning things that must be done); while another should deal with the ‘credenda’ which means things that must be believed (Adraanse et al. 1987:89). This simply means that faith without good deeds is dead. James in his epistle warns the Christians that faith without works is dead for it does not benefit anyone (James 2:14). Therefore, Practical theology should be understood as an empirically descriptive and critically constructive theory of religious practices with reference to society and culture, and the church and individuals.

Practical theology has an empirical orientation for it chooses its point of departure in human experience; the current state of faith and the church (Heitink 1999:6). A practical theology which chooses its point of departure in the experience of people and the state of church and

society is indeed characterised by a methodology that takes empirical data seriously (Heitink 1999:6), for it keeps them in mind as it develops its theory.

## **2:5 Theory and Action**

A lot of the confusion regarding the unique object of practical theology has to do with the distinction between Christian faith and the modern society. The Christian tradition has for centuries influenced the praxis of the society in Africa through educational, health institutions and other divergent developments within the society. In this study, Christian faith is (praxis 1) in the praxis of modern or contemporary society (praxis 2).

According to Hawkes, theory and praxis are intimately and inextricably connected in practical theology, (Hawkes 1989:29), Pieterse simply states that practical theology monitors the relationship and interaction between praxis and theory (Pieterse 2001:9). Therefore, the relationship between theory and praxis is considered to be central in practical theology because practice and theory inform and support each other in the mediation of Christian faith in both the church and society.

### **2.5.1 The Mediation of the Christian faith (Praxis 1)**

Practical theology is focused on the mediation of Christian faith. This mediation has to do with the core of the Christian conviction; God's coming to humanity in the world (Heitink 1999:8). The mediation of Christian faith takes place within certain structures of the church, family and society. Practical theology studies how these processes take place, and how these structures can be adapted so that there can be a real transmission of Christian tradition.

## **2:5.2 The praxis of modern society (Praxis 2)**

In the praxis of modern society, one looks at the description and explanation where the society would be described and explained as a praxis or a domain of action.

This is where individuals and groups that are motivated by their personal ideals and are driven by varying interests to make specific choices and to pursue specific goals in their daily experiences within the society. In this domain of action, one finds intentional actions with ethical implications, regardless of whether they are based on specific religious convictions or worldview (Heitink 1999:8). The word praxis is, therefore, broader than practice. It refers to theory because of the values, norms and interests involved (Heitink 1999:8).

## **2:6 THE ROLE OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**

The mediation of Christian faith (praxis 1) has met a lot of challenges in modern society (Praxis 2). Modernity has created considerable and almost insoluble problems for the church as the community that is entrusted with a tradition. Modernisation solves and creates problems. In spite of the challenges faced in the mediation of Christian faith, Practical theology continues to reflect on the people's praxis from the view point of God's revelatory praxis in a way that is as scientific as possible (Van der Ven 1994:29).

This is because there is a link between theory of crisis and theory of action in practical theology. This makes it to be active by either being progressive or conservative in every human situation. It can never be neutral just as the writer of revelations when he warns the church of Laodicea for its lukewarm status (Rev 3:14). Instead, it (practical theology) is

aimed at the adaptation of people to existing conditions, or the emancipation of people to new situations.

Therefore, practical theology should find its point of departure in the existing praxis in its efforts toward improving concrete conditions in the society and in the church. It should manifest itself in the critical study of reality (Lammermann1981:51), for it equips the pastoral caregiver with the skills to help those people who are in various needy situations.

### **2:6.1 Pastoral Care as a discipline of Practical Theology**

Pastoral care, like preaching, instruction, celebration and service, is one of the five sub-disciplines of practical theology (Heyns and Pieterse 1990: 12). Pastoral care has been part of the ‘action story’ of the people of God which involves a response to human experiences. Gerkin emphasises the importance of pastoral care on an individual and community in the following way;

“Pastoral care involves not only the care of the individuals and families, but also the care of the community itself. Pastoral care also entails the thoughtful reinterpretation of the tradition that shapes Christian identity as that tradition is brought into dialogical relationship with contemporary culture and its impact on the community of Christians as well as its individual members” (Gerkin, 1997:118).

This simply means that although the human experiences have changed with time and differ in context, pastoral care practices still engage with people in their environment. Pastoral care as a discipline of Practical theology then becomes relevant for members of the church as it will be addressing every day realities of the people of God. In that way, its impact is also felt by others in the society.

## **2:7 A PASTORAL CARE METHODOLOGY- (Charles Gerkin 1997)**

Pastoral Care involves both the care of the Christian community and the care of persons within this community. Its functions are healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciliation. Pastoral care promotes change or growth in all aspects of human life. This change should be understood as an effective increase of love, justice, and ecological partnership throughout the psycho-systemic matrix. Pastoral care involves the responsibility to facilitate the maintenance and to the further development of the Christian community's story and its dialogue with its tradition, on the one hand, and for facilitating the growth and creative development of particular life stories, on the other (Gerkin, 1997:113).

## **2:8 THE PASTOR AS A SHEPHERD**

In the history of pastoral care, the psychotherapeutic paradigm dominated. Pastoral care was problem centered. It should, however, be noted that the shepherd is alert for the evidence of human pain and joys where he/she is available to people as they share their human stories or situations with him /her.

The shepherd in Pastoral care interprets the conflicts and pressures, the contradictions and pitfalls of people's everyday encounters in the church and society. The shepherd further facilitates the dialogue between life stories and the Christian story in order to help them understand how life is to be lived in both environments. Samuel Park in his article recognises the Pastor as the;

“Guide of the interpretive process” explains both the Christian narrative tradition and the contemporary living situations encountered in ordinary lives. The transformation of life takes place when the pastor assists individuals, families, and

communities to transform and reinterpret their core stories in dialogical interaction with the primary images and themes of the biblical and Christian story” (pastoral psychology Vol. 54. No. 1 September 2005:58).

This shows that the shepherd’s task in the community or field is to think,-think ahead and influence his or her followers to make decisions and take actions that improve their quality of life.

Pastoral care has increased the awareness of problems that people go through such as child abuse, pollution, health issues, family life, politics; some of which have been hidden from us for long time. This is why the role played by a pastor cannot be ignored or overstated in caring for the church that should care for adolescent males in Zimbabwe whose fathers are absent.

## **2:9 Stages of faith development– (James Fowler 1981)**

In practical theology, the object of study is people’s faith in God. God is not the object of study. It is how people relate their existence in light of God’s revelation that gives them a view of themselves and their world. According to Fowler, communities of faith are communities of shared interpretations. The stages of faith are not identical with and cannot be reduced either to cognitive or moral stages, or to some mixture of the two (Fowler, 1981:99) as conceptualised by Piaget and Kohlberg. Unlike Fowler, Piaget and Kohlberg have conceptually separated cognitive or knowing from emotions or affection by condensing it to logical inquiry.

According to Fowler (1981), conflicting situations are important on the growth and development of faith which result from life’s crises, challenges and all kinds of disruptions

that theologians call revelation. Each of these things brings disequilibrium and requires changes in our being in faith (Fowler, 1981:101). Conflicting elements are the very essence of life. Where there are no conflicts, there is no energy; therefore the experience of tension in human beings is universal.

It is important to note that in human development the adolescent stage has challenged many parents so much that they have hated the process of bringing up adolescent into adulthood. One would hear Shona people say *zera iri rinonetsa* (meaning children at this stage are a problem). There is a need, therefore, for parents to be prepared for the developmental challenges that children go through. It is crucial for parents to accord adolescents space and to understand their strengths and weaknesses. In this way, the probability of journeying together with less conflict will be high.

James Fowler (1981-1996) proposed a theory of religious development that focuses on the motivation to discover meaning in life, either within or outside of the organised religion. Fowler proposed six stages of religious development that are related to Erikson's, Piaget's and Kolberg's theories of development (Torney –Purta, 1993).

**i. Stage 1. Intuitive – Projective faith (early Childhood).**

At this stage, infants learn to trust their caregiver (Erikson's formulation) and they invent their own intuitive images of what good and evil are. As Children move into Piaget's pre-operational stage, their cognitive world open up a variety of new possibilities. Fantasy and reality are taken as the same thing. Right and wrong are seen in terms of consequences to the self. Children readily believe in angels and spirits.

**ii. Stage 2 Mythical – Literal faith (middle and late Childhood).**

As children move into Piaget’s concrete operational stage, they begin to reason in a more logical, concrete, but not abstract way. They see the world as more orderly. Children interpret religious stories literally, and they perceive God as being like a parent figure that rewards the good and punishes the bad. What is right is often perceived as a fair exchange.

**iii. Stage 3. Synthetic-Conventional faith (transition between Childhood and adolescence, early adolescence)**

At this stage, adolescents start to develop formal operational thoughts (Piaget’s highest stage) and begin to integrate what they have learned about religion into a coherent belief system. According to Fowler , although this stage is abstract than the previous one, young adolescents still mainly conform to the religious beliefs of others and have not yet adequately analysed alternative religious ideologies. Someone’s behavior that involves a question of right and wrong is seen in terms of the harm it does to a relationship or what others might say. Fowler believes that most adults become locked into this stage and never move on to higher stages of religious development. The faith of adolescents involves a personal relationship with God. God is thought as “always there for me”. At this stage, guidance is important in form of spiritual role models (spiritual fathers or leaders).

**iv. Stage 4. Individuative –reflective faith (transition between adolescence and adulthood, early adulthood).**

At this stage, individuals are capable, for the first time, of taking full responsibility for their religious beliefs, often precipitated by the leaving home experience. Young people begin to



take responsibility for their lives. Young adults now start to realise that they can choose the course of their lives and that they must expend effort to follow a particular course.

Individuals come face to face with decisions such as these: “Should I consider myself first, or should I consider the welfare of others first? Are religious doctrines that were taught to me when I was growing up absolute, or are they more relative than I was led to believe?” Fowler believes that both formal operational thoughts and the intellectual challenges to an individual’s values and religious ideologies that often develop in college are essential to developing individuated- reflective faith.

**v. Stage 5. Conjunctive Faith (Middle adulthood)**

Fowler believes that only a small number of adults ever move on to this stage, which involve being more open to paradox and opposing view points. This openness stems from people’s awareness of their finiteness and limitations. (Whatever you call it, it exists).

**vi. Stage 6 .Universalising faith (Middle adulthood or late adulthood)**

Fowler says that the highest stage in religious development involves transcending specific beliefs systems to achieve a sense of oneness with all beings and a commitment to breaking down the barriers that are divisive to people on this planet. Conflictual events are no longer paradoxes. Fowler argues that very few people achieve this elusive, highest stage of religious development. Among those who attained this stage are Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther king jr, Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu. Fowler (1981:105) as cited in Santrock summarises the stages in the following way;

- ❖ It means a commitment to take our previous decisions and actions to shape our character, as do the stories and images by which we live.
- ❖ It means a commitment to take seriously the fact that we are formed in social communities and that our ways of seeing the world are profoundly shaped by the shared images and constructions of our group or class.
- ❖ It means that faith development requires that faith must be a theory of personal knowing and acting.
- ❖ It means a commitment to relate structural stages of faith to predictable crises and challenges of developmental eras and to take life histories seriously in its study (Santrock, 2005:295-296).

The author will apply the stages of faith development that are coined by Fowler in assessing the trauma that male adolescents experience in the absence of their fathers. The approach should illuminate and clarify their patterns of faith during that period, though the stages only tell part of the story in their journey to adulthood. Rites of passages in Africa help adolescents to shape their lives through particular images, beliefs, symbols and themes of their faith; for they mark a qualification or identity in one's life. Gerkin and Fowler help in the understanding that as the Christian community cares for adolescents, it must take note of the level of one's faith; which is important in facilitating growth and change.

In order to engage the co-researcher with a sense of worth, a narrative approach is of great benefit for adolescents to recount their stories.

## 2.10 A Narrative attachment theory- Approach

According to Gerkin (1997), a narrative approach points us toward a recognition that in the long story told by the people of God, the metaphor of care has multiple origins. Its meaning embraces many roles within the historic community and varying emphasis, which from time to time have asserted themselves as being primary to the care of God's people in particular situations Gerkin (1997:25). Narrative gives adolescent males whose fathers are absent, a sense of worth, respect of their past and life as they recount their stories.

“Narrative therapy seeks to be a respectful, non –blaming approach to counseling and community work, which centres people as the experts of their own lives. It views problems as separate from people and assumes that people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives” (Morgan 2000:2).

According to Morgan, it is clear that each story on peoples' lives is unique even if the circumstances may be the same. It also means that people within the same context experience a particular event differently. For example; the absence of fathers is viewed negatively by some children while others see it positively based on material benefits. The author sought to find the impact of the absence toward the adolescent's development into adulthood.

While Holmes notes that:

“Attachment Theory has shown that self knowledge in the form of narrative is associated with a core state characterized by secure attachment. Narratives turn

experience into a story which is temporal, is coherent and has meaning” (Holmes, 1993:150).

This shows that when personal history is re-told, it helps the adolescents to link the past with the present and the future. The previously fragmented and broken stories are brought to mind and mended; thus making a person feel secure (Holmes 1993:150). John Bowlby (1989) argues that secure attachment is an important foundation for psychological development later in childhood, adolescence and adulthood; while insecure attachment is related to difficulties in relationships and problems in later developments. Similarly, in light of what has been advanced in the preceding statements, Willows et al, asserts that listening and telling stories can provide opportunities for both the revelation and the healing with merit. This can be summed up as follows:

“Practical theology has consistently given voice to the fact that listening to stories lies at the heart of all human experience and forms part of the fabric of Practical theology task” (Willows et al, 2000:15).

The author also realises that Jesus interpreted the activities of the people of his time through stories that revealed the beauty of the kingdom of God. One of the benefits of narrative therapy is the unpacking and unstuffing of emotions that lead to an improved feeling of well being, both physically and mentally.

## **2.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data collection was done through an interview Schedule and through Audiotape. Participatory (narrative) and depth interviews were used in order to assess how the context and experiences are informed by tradition and theology. In this research, the co- researchers

were the church stewards, youth pastors and male adolescents. The co- researchers were informed of the purpose of the study and the use of audiotape during the interview. The use of audio tape reduced the interruption which arise from notes taking, thereby, created a ‘Good dialogue’ that led to an outcome that would benefit both the respondents and the researcher (Egan, 2002:65). The researcher allowed the adolescents to express their feelings uninterrupted and helped them to cope with their inner and outer worlds more creatively (Egan, 2000:192) because a ‘good dialogue’ was expected to ‘Challenge the Predictable Dishonesties of Everyday Life’ (Egan, 2000:192).

### **2:11:1 Co - researcher**

In this study, the adolescents and the church stewards are considered as co-researchers. This is because the research is a shared activity in which the author and the adolescents want to understand the world and themselves better. As such, the author in this research embraces a narrative approach that “strives for participatory interaction” (Muller, Van Deventer & Human, 2001:78) with the adolescents in order to understand the facts or events in their environment and lives. The adolescents and the author will together create a model that will help the boys to deal with the trauma of growing up in the absence of fathers. However, Kotze’ & Kotze’ warns and reminds researchers of the pitfalls of research processes when he states that;

“Research too often becomes an intellectual activity with researchers obtaining degrees on or receiving acknowledgement based on the suffering of others-with the latter most likely not to benefit from the research. We are committed.....to participatory action research that will primarily be to the advantage of the participants” (Kotze’ & Kotze’, 2001:9).

If this research is to be of value to the co-researchers, it should promote the welfare of the adolescents. This is only possible when adolescents see themselves as experts when participating and are involved in the process of creating a model that guides their lives.

## **2:11:2 The use and benefits of Interviews**

The author chose to use an interview method to collect data in order to gather information of greater depth. As stated by Seale;

“The interview is a more flexible form than the questionnaire and, if intelligently used, can generally be used to gather information of greater depth and more sensitive to contextual variations in meaning” (Seale, 1998:128).

Therefore, the researcher listened to the co-researchers’ verbal and non-verbal messages because verbal language alone was incapable of expressing their inner feelings. In addition, several open-ended questions were used for probing purposes and recording spontaneous answers to ensure that all questions are understood and answered. Daily taped interviews were used to transcribe major views on the scoring sheet and descriptive statistics were employed to analyse data. Data was analysed as it was gathered in order to sensitively alter the kind of questions that were asked to those who participated later in order to accommodate what the researcher had learnt from earlier participants.

A survey design was adopted for the study because the researcher wanted to identify the current level of the impact absent father presented on adolescent males. Twelve co-researchers were sampled during the school holiday in the urban congregations. This is because most adolescents of this age are still at school. The age group of: 10 – 22 years was sampled for interview in order to identify how each adolescent male feels about their absent

father. The author also interviewed the “connexional” youth pastor, Rev Adam Nyawo, in order to have an appreciation of the challenges that are posed by the absence of fathers in caring for the adolescent in his role as a shepherd of young people.

The researcher discussed the data collection methods and ethical requirements with the co-researchers. Structured interviews were put together after a thorough literature review, and discussions with various interested people in the area of this research were held. Structured interviews were preferred because the literacy levels and language performance of most co-researchers were unknown and varied.

Two versions of the interview schedule were designed; one in English and another in Shona and two experts in these languages were asked to check the content validity of the schedules. Two theologians checked whether the interpretations represented the Christian language that constituted a theological dialogue. Both versions were pilot tested with people who were not part of the research (in the Sample).

### **2:11:3 Pilot tests**

The purpose of a pilot test was to check on the value of the instrument to be used in order to produce valid data and to check to see whether any questions are ambiguous and interpreted differently by different adolescents (Seale, 1998:118). It was also to help the researcher to assess the amount of time that was assigned to each participant for the task, and expenses of coding and analysing the resulting data. In qualitative research, reliability and validity are very important tools that assist in ensuring consistence and accuracy in the way data is collected and analysed.

## **2:11:4 Acknowledgement of interdisciplinarity**

In this research, interdisciplinarity is acknowledged for its interactive form of cooperation between theology and social sciences. Van der ven (1993) articulates this interaction in the following way; “The difference between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity is that the second concept (interdisciplinarity), unlike the first (multidisciplinary), stresses the interaction, i.e. reciprocity, between theology and social science. Multidisciplinary is characterised by a sequential relationship, interdisciplinarity by a cooperative relationship between the two disciplines. Or, to put in yet another way, multidisciplinary consists of a series of monologues, interdisciplinarity in a number of parallel dialogue (Van der ven, 1993:97, 98).”

The purpose of the interdisciplinary dialogue is to systematically explore, analyse, critically evaluate and justify the research data in order to come up with an informed interpretation on the situation.

Practical theology belongs to theology as well as to social science and constitutes an interdisciplinary dialogue between them and the person of the practical theologian. This means that the object of practical theological study is approached by one and the same person but using two different sets of paradigm, methods, techniques or so (Nipkow 1971 in Van der ven 1993:98). This is because such hypotheses are both social scientific and theological in nature (Van der ven, 1993:98).

The research and selection of literature was based on the general ideas on the impact of the absent fathers through personal observations, experiences, conversations and reading materials in the context of the research. Therefore, a critical thinking provided by theology



and social sciences influenced the study and enabled the researcher to formulate important themes and aspects in the research.

The research took cognisance of the social sciences and theological views of personality development because theology, Social science and Anthropology cannot survive without this interdisciplinary dialogue Clinebell (1972). Above all, the adolescent male is in psychotherapy at some point as he searches for answers on the meaning of life and wonders why the father seem so unloving, and runs head on into the religious questions to explore fundamental questions related to the nature and destiny of man ;and his ever present existential anxiety and guilt Clinebell (1972).

Therefore, both Erikson's psychosocial theory in human development and Gerkin's pastoral care model of ministering to the individual and community will be used in order to offer an understanding on the impact of fathers' migration has on adolescent males. Fowler's stages of faith and Gerkin's shepherding models will guide the author in developing a model of a caring congregation (fellowships) for the adolescent males. Matthew et al captures the above understanding by stating that;

“In a caring congregation its members will be offered the opportunity to care and be cared for” (Matthew et al, 1995:115).

The above quotation is further emphasised among the Africans in Zimbabwe when they say “*Chirere chigokurerawo*”. This means that, when parents have cared for a child, he/she will in turn care for them in their old age. Moreover, it is also true that as children grow, they also help us to grow in particular areas of our lives or, to put it in another way, as children develop in particular areas, parents develop an alternative understanding of them and life.

Equally, as the church cares for the adolescents, they will in fact be the beneficiaries of the positive outcome. Group therapy would be considered in an effort to find a model of helping adolescent males whose father's are absent to draw strength from group discussions.

#### **2:11:5 Co- researchers' Positive self - regard**

This refers to the value co-researchers allocate to themselves which the researcher will uphold in the research process and no conditions of acceptance should be set.

The worth and self- respect of the co-researchers were upheld, they were not manipulated directly or indirectly in the process. The author was also aware that the co- researchers are different and as a result, each member has different perceptions (own interpretation of their World), needs, fears and aspirations. Therefore, each individual's point of view was taken as a contribution to the resources for understanding the situation in this research (Winter, 1996, Maunganidze & Rukuni, 2001:124).

#### **2. 11:6 Random sampling**

A sample is a limited number of observations from the population chosen in a way that allows every possible observation (each member) to have equal chances of appearing in the sample. Its purpose was both to save money and time. Random sampling was generated by selecting adolescents by chance or by haphazardly using a table of random numbers (Bloom & Ottong, 1987:54). A list of names of adolescents from the Methodist church adolescents within four urban congregations was compiled. The researcher chose the starting place arbitrarily and the 4th person in the sample was the starting point in order to come up with a total number of boys for this research.

The research will focus on male adolescents from the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's urban congregations located in the high density areas of Marondera because most of these adolescents have parents who are lowly paid or unemployed. This reduced the risks of universalising the particular or, equally heinously, particularising the universal (Willows & Swinton, 2000: 72).

The following characteristics were considered from the respondents under this study: The age group of between 10-22 years with parents who are absent, and all respondents were to be African males. Twelve respondents were sampled from a population of 70 adolescents. The researcher was mindful of adolescents in single parent families during his selection of the co-researchers.

#### **2.11: 7                              Executing the Sampling Process**

The minister and church steward under the study were contacted. The process was successfully completed a week before the interviews took place.

#### **2.11:8                              Challenges encountered**

Two adolescents indicated that their fathers are no longer communicating. These adolescents think that the silence was leading to their parent's divorce. They wanted the researcher to break the silence between them and their fathers. These were special cases that led the researcher to engage in counseling. This also reminded the researcher of what his grandfather did in item 1.1 when he did not return to his family.

## **2.12.0 SCORING**

Daily taped interviews were transcribed on the scoring sheet highlighting major views. The information collected will be kept safely at the University of Pretoria for fifteen years before it is destroyed.

### **2:12.1 Instrument used**

Data was collected through an interview schedule and audio tape recording. Two versions of the interview schedule were designed, one in English and another in Shona. The Structured interview items were put together after a thorough literature review and discussions with various interested people in the area of this research. They were (Structured interviews) preferred because the literacy levels and language performance of most respondents were unknown.

The interview schedule comprised of ten items which were both in English and Shona (see Appendix A & B; Appendix C is the Informed Consent Forms). Experts, in English and Shona, who are based in Zimbabwe, were asked to check the content validity of the interview schedules. Both versions were pilot tested with people who were not part of the study.

The results of the pilot test revealed that the interview schedule could be used with ease, after reframing two questions which the respondents had sought some clarifications. By carrying out a pilot study or a testing of the proposed questions, the most common errors in doing a research were avoided and the formulation of the research problem was directed (Mouton, 2001:103 ., Devos et al., 2002:210) .

## **2:12.2 Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the research data. According to Mouton (1996:163), descriptive statistics organise and summarise the data to render it more comprehensible. The age of the respondents and their relationship with the parents were considered.

## **2.13 Preliminary conclusion**

This chapter discussed how data was collected, scored and analysed, and how the research sample was also identified and justified. The role of practical theology and pastoral care in the research were laid down. The respondents were told the reason, for the interviews and they gave their own consent to be interviewed. Qualitative and quantitative research methods and an interdisciplinary model were adopted in order for the empirical stories and the co-researcher's interpretation of their situation to be understood. The research focused on adolescent males from one denomination (the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe-Schools), in order to reduce the risks of universalising the particular and particularising the universal (Willows & Swinton, 2000:72). The next chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives of Adolescent males.