A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION –

A WEDDING OF STORIES :

A NARRATIVE APPROACH

BY

CORNÉ WILHELMUS DU PLOOY

SUBMITTED FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

IN THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PROMOTOR: PROFESSOR JULIAN MÜLLER

OCTOBER 2004

There is probably no history; only biography.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

. . . the narrative metaphor proposes that persons live their lives by stories – that these stories are shaping of life, and that they have real, not imagined effects – and that these stories provide the structure of life.

Michael White

Our prevailing narratives provide the vocabulary that sets our realities. Our destinies are opened and closed in terms of the stories that we construct to understand our experiences.

Harry Goolishian

Every time we ask a question, we're generating a possible version of a life.

David Epston

There are some questions that linger in the minds of clients for weeks, months, and occasionally years, and continue to have an effect.

Karl Tomm

But it is illusory to believe that a man and a woman are two separate people who come together to form a more perfect union. They are simply scapegoats sent out by their families to reproduce their kind.

Carl A. Whitaker

Marriage is the only war where you sleep with the enemy.

C.M. Ward

Unhappiness in marriage is not planned; for some, it comes naturally.

Campion

When I got married I was looking for an ideal, but I married an ordeal, and now I want a new deal.

Acknowledgements

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man [friend] sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

Whatever sharpness there is in the pages that follow is a result of discussions, challenges, suggestions and support of friends and colleagues. I would therefore like to acknowledge, with thanks, the role people have played in the production of this narrative :

- Professor Julian Müller for his guidance, insight and friendship. This story travelled numerous times by e-mail between South Africa and France until it came into its current form. Thank you for opening new doors in Pastoral Care and Counselling.
- The English Bible study group of Montpellier for their encouragement and prayers for the completion of this research.
- Sophie, my wife, for her motivation to pass the last stages and completing the final touches of this research study.
- Linda Berning and Jill Ferrieu, for the proof reading of the manuscript, especially since it has been written by an "Afrikanerseun".
- Leon Tait, thank you for your friendship through the years and all the administrative tasks that you have been doing for me in South Africa.
- A special thanks for the contribution that has been made by those who came for premarital conversations and, thus, made this study possible. It is their knowledges and skills that shape, in significant ways, the practice of Pastoral Care and Counselling.
- My supporting Dutch Reformed Congregations in South Africa and supporting friends in England for their patients with me and the possibility to continue and finish this study.
- The National Research Institute for their initial financial support. No opinions contained in this research or conclusions made by the researcher are that of the Institute.
- God, my Father the Director of my life, for this opportunity to serve Him in this way.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER THREE: A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE

CHAPTER FOUR: STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS

CHAPTER FIVE: A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE

CHAPTER SIX: THE JOURNEY FORWARD - A PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

APPENDICES

_____

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH ORIENTATION

> *Is this work better defined as a worldview?*
> *Perhaps, but even this is not enough.*
> *Perhaps it's an epistemology, a philosophy,*
> *a personal commitment, a politics,*
> *an ethics, a practice, a life, and so on.*
> *Michael White, 1995:37*

1.1 MARRIAGE TODAY

Is it really possible to prepare someone for marriage? What do you tell them? I was asked these questions by a counsellor during a visit to London in October 2000. Writing about this subject would "logically" lead to a positive answer. But the answer is not a simple one. I agree with Friedman (1989:134) and Stahmann and Hiebert (1987:18) that the decision to marry and the timing of a wedding is far from random or accidental. Friedman has found, for example, that many couples either meet their spouse or decide to marry within six months of major change in the family of origin of one of the partners. Anderson and Mitchell (1981:88; Schoen 1992:281) even argue that when couples who have lived together for a long time suddenly decide to marry, the reason is frequently that the one or the other senses an impending break-up and wants to use marriage as a bond for the relationship - which it may have been in the family of origin (see also Randall 1979:57-58). On a more positive level, the couple's decision to marry could also represent their hopes for the future. The premarital conversation can provide an opportunity to mobilize the strengths of the couple for the purpose of improving the prospects of success in marriage and personal development.

I agree with Cartledge (1998:1) that it is often believed in the Christian tradition of marriage preparation that if correct biblical information is passed on to Christians (or non-Christians), they will become obedient, and behavioural change will take place automatically. While this may appear to be good theology and a healthy move towards true spirituality, but the belief is neither good theology nor healthy spirituality, because practically it does not work! Some other marriage preparation programs seek to provide practical information to couples in the hope that this alone will safeguard relationships. Practical theology seeks to understand by practice, and then seeks to practise by

understanding.   Practical theologians don't formulate a certain theory and afterwards apply it.

Marriage is the closest bond that can occur between two people. Therefore, the choice to marry is one of the most important decisions in life, yet many people do not invest time and energy into preparing for their marital relationship. Who, though, is really prepared for the demands of living together in such a way that needs are met, dreams are fulfilled, harmony is attained, and God is glorified through the relationship ? Couples typically spend more time preparing for their wedding ceremony, the festivities afterwards and the preparation for their honeymoon than investing in the understanding of the storying nature and meaning of their relationship.

A reason that is usually mentioned to motivate marriage preparation is the high rate of marital dissatisfaction, marriage breakdown, and family dissolution.   Couples contemplating marriage have found that changes in contemporary marital and familial relationships render observations of parental models insufficient in providing information or experience in coping with the complexities of present day intimate relationships. Also, the pace of modern urban life frequently leaves couples with little time to consider thoroughly the many aspects of marital relationships such as parenting, economic management, relations with friends and family, ways of managing conflict, communication styles, and so on.   The result can be a failure to reconcile conflictual ideas and expectations prior to marriage (Russell and Lyster 1992:446).

In a general sense, a couple is not required or it seems that they are not expected to complete marriage preparation. Anyone may marry provided he or she fulfils the meagre requirements of state law. This is usually less than what is expected to obtain a driver's license, sew, dance, or engage in sports. The prospective bride or groom may know practically nothing about marriage or its responsibilities, but that does not prove to be an impediment to getting married.   When it comes to interpersonal relationships, such as marriage and family living, and the influence of socially constructed realities involving these relationships, it is considered by many as an invasion of privacy, brainwashing, experimentation, conditioning, and otherwise harmful to provide learning contexts through which people can gain some understanding of the meanings and values governing our humanity not only for entering into a close interpersonal relationship such as marriage but also for maintaining that relationship over time.

_____

Enticing a couple to consider the mundane aspects of future living together when compared to their immediate aura of romantic love is not at all easy. And as Irvin Yalom (quoted in Wood and Stroup 1990:112) has pointed out:

> *Therapists do not like to treat a patient who has fallen in love. Therapy and a state of self-merger are incompatible because therapeutic work requires a questioning self-awareness and an anxiety that will ultimately serve as guide to internal conflicts. The person who has fallen in love, and entered into a blissful state of merger, is not self-reflective because the questioning lonely "I" (and the attendant anxiety of isolation) dissolve into the "WE". Thus one sheds anxiety but loses oneself.*

Wood and Stroup (1990:112) also found in their practice that during the first year of marriage, a blueprint is formed for the pattern of the marital relationship. This blueprint is based on each person's participation in a family system. Without intending to develop the permanence of a pattern, the couple establishes ways of dealing with each other, with in-laws, and with friends. Organization evolves in every area, whether it has to do with religion, household affairs, holiday rituals, habits of work, money, social life, and even affection and sex. This happens, in part, by design, and in part by default, resulting in additional patterns of behaviour by which the relationship may operate well or poorly for the entire duration of the marriage.   Fowers and Olson (1986) find support in an empirical study that marriages that are distressed within the first three years contain the seeds of that distress from the very beginning.

It must also be kept in mind that marriage is changing. It is adapting to the new needs of our society. Its traditional utilitarian functions are diminishing in importance, while its role in providing intimacy, warmth, and emotional security - which we so sorely need in our impersonal world - is rapidly increasing. We are switching from the hierarchical, institutional marriage pattern that has now become a creaking anachronism to the "companionship" marriage. It could be stated that we are now in the awkward process of swapping horses in midstream, and a lot of people are falling into the river and getting wet. Why have we been so slow in developing the new pattern? Because, while it is more rewarding than the old, it is also much more difficult to operate. It depends on the skilled management of interpersonal relationships and competence (Mace 1975:10).

_____

The difference between the traditional marriage and the modern marriage could be summarised as follows (Rice *in* Alpaslan 1994:3-4):

Traditional marriage	Modern marriage
• The marriage is a means to a goal, example to create a stable environment for the raising of children. • The marriage is institutional. The main focus is on the extended family or group. • The focus is on self denial and the fulfilment of the extended family - and group expectations. • A higher degree of security and less freedom is experienced. • Autocratic management style. The woman is subservient to the man. • Minimal emotional and personal involvement and almost no open communication. • Rigid roles. Husband – outward focus. Wife - inward focus. • A static relationship. • Sexual intercourse for the purpose of procreation. • Sex is seen as the privilege of the husband and the obligation of the wife towards the husband. The wife is not expected to enjoy sexual intercourse. • Large families. Family planning is not the major priority, and when family planning methods are used, it is seen as the responsibility of the wife. • The extended family is actively involved with the choice of a marriage partner. • Divorce is unacceptable for many. • Expectations of marriage are low, and so also the possibilities for failures and disappointments.	• The marriage is the goal itself, i.e. for companionship and the satisfaction of the emotional needs of the married couple. • The marriage is personal. The main focus is on each of the marriage partners. • The focus is on self development, self fulfilment and self actualisation. • Less security, but more freedom and creativity are experienced. • Democratic management style. The husband and the wife are equals. • Maximal emotional and personal involvement and open communication. • Flexible roles – the husband as well as the wife move inward and outward. • A dynamic, developing relationship. • Sexual intercourse as an expression of love and for pleasure. • The need and desire for sexual intercourse are acknowledged by both partners, and the focus is on the satisfaction of the sexual needs of both. • Small families. Family planning is seen as an important priority and the use of family planning methods as a joint obligation and responsibility. • The choice of a marriage partner is a personal matter. • Divorce is seen as a legitimate alternative in the case of an irreconcilable marriage. • Expectations of what marriage ought to be are high and so also the possibilities for failures and disappointments.

This development and establishment of the modern form of marriage compared to the already existing traditional marriage necessitates premarital conversation for the following reason: if one of the marital partners, for example, has been raised in a family

_____

where the traditional form of marriage was exercised and he/she was committed to that model and marries someone who, as a result of socialisation, supports the modern form of marriage (or facets thereof), chances are very high that their own expectations, those of each other, and of the marriage will differ (Alpaslan 1994:5).   Wright (1981:11) is in agreement with this when he says the following:

> *The two basic causes for trouble in marriage (are): not finding in marriage what one is expected to find, and not expecting what one actually finds.*

One of the goals of the premarital pastoral conversation therefore is to accompany and help a couple to work through the process where there are these different expectations as described above, and to help them to make the necessary adaptations to accommodate each other.

Mace (1983c:37) advocates the need for premarital pastoral care and counselling based on the fact of "marital illiteracy".

In the following I shall from time to time make a comparison between the modern and post-modern (or more specifically narrative) approach to research. We cannot ignore modernity, i.e. we cannot go back in time as if Descartes and Newton had never existed.

I shall now explain the nature, demarcation and purpose of this study. I shall do this by the orientation of the study and by my positioning towards the study. The purpose of this is to justify and to order the study methodologically. The two terms *orientation* and *positioning* function like two lenses that, on the one side, give a clear picture of the field of action, and, on the other side, help on a preliminary basis as a guide to plan the direction of the field of action.

The *orientation* focuses on the title and the *why* of the study. In this section I shall also describe the *habitus* of this research, the *modi* of research interaction and the possible research expectations.

1.2 A *PREMARITAL* PASTORAL *CONVERSATION*

Contrary to traditional terminology for example *premarital preparation* (which could imply that someone has the right information about marriage to share with some

uninformed objects) or *premarital counselling* (which could imply a certain pathology and a "know-how-fixer" exercising his power), I am opting for a *premarital narrative conversation.* With this in mind I would also like to invite you, the reader, to take part in this conversation.

When I employ the term *conversation* I am not referring to making small talk or talking about the weather. Neither am I referring to certain people who have the talent to lead conversations and tell interesting stories and captivate audiences (story tellers). This approach could make people sceptical about a narrative conversation in the sense that it is tóó simplistic. Nor am I implying that one should be an expert in literature analysis to be able to make use of a narrative conversational approach.

A narrative conversational approach envisages an open-ended interaction in which the pastor and the couple are led by the (unexpected) possibilities involved in the couple's story.

Working from this narrative stance, one also becomes aware of one's own story, one's own narrative conversation and the extent to which one is a part of that which is being presented. Hence my reason for including in this dissertation a short chapter on my life. Michel de Montaigne writes in the foreword to his *Essays* that -

Je suis moi-même la matière de mon livre (I am myself the content of my book).

What I am presenting here are *my* perceptions of a premarital narrative conversation. But, at the same time, this being a research study a critical reflection and conversation will be undertaken with other viewpoints and theories. The "my" refers to the subjective choice and creative going about with these other viewpoints and theories that might be different from somebody else's perception of the subject at hand. Saying this does not subjectivize the meaning of life or the biblical interpretation. Interpretation is not a point on a subjectivism-objectivism scale, but a process through which we try to grasp the objective meaning as we understand it.

I made certain punctuations and choices out of my own story – including the overlapping of my story with other stories and *The Other Story* - to present this approach to you,. This does not mean that one falls into subjectivism, but that the information drawn from the Bible, Christian tradition, theology and culture could be understood

_____

differently and presented in a different way by somebody else - who could have made quite different choices out of his story. Critical realistic reflection stays a part of any research. This is also evident from the questions that I chose to ask my co-researchers, i.e. the couples, as their stories unfolded during these premarital narrative conversations.

The idea of a "conversation" is also linked to the methodological approach of this study, i.e. a narrative – which is alternated with the term "story". I believe that people are born into stories; their social and historical contexts constantly invite them to tell and remember the stories of certain events and to leave others unstoried. Even while you are reading this manuscript you are not only busy reading *my* story. You are at the same time busy using *your* story and this new story that you are reading in storymaking. What you are making of this story says as much about yourself as it says about me, or even more. The story of another reader would probably look different. In this way we become co-authors of *our* story.

A number of authors (Foucault 1980; Hare-Mustin 1994; Lowe 1991; Madigan & Law 1992; Weingarten 1991 *quoted* in Freedman and Combs 1996:42) suggest that *discourse* is a useful notion for understanding how this happens. Rachel Hare-Mustin (1994:19) defines a discourse as

> *a system of statements, practices, and institutional structures that share common values.*

She (Hare-Mustin 1994:20) suggests that discourses sustain particular worldviews, pointing out,

> *The ways most people hold, talk about, and act on a common, shared viewpoint are part of and sustain the prevailing discourses.*

Madigan and Law (1992:33) add that -

> *discourse can be viewed to reflect a prevailing structure of social and power relationships.*

_____

Discourses powerfully shape a person's choices about what life events can be storied and how this should be storied. This is as true for pastors as it is for the people who consult them.

Our stories about premarital conversation have been shaped by a variety of discourses. To name a few, discourses about pathology, normative standards, and pastors as "experts" are quite prevalent. These discourses are propagated by the content of religious education, as well as by the structure of our theological institutions and socialization processes.

These discourses also shape and are carried by practices outside of our field: Freudian "archaeological" metaphors about the "deep, unconscious truth" have permeated our culture so thoroughly that we often don't notice their influence. These metaphors invite us to listen not for the person's meaning, but for the connoisseur's meaning hidden beneath it (Freedman & Combs 1996:43). The marriage preparation programs that will be outlined could also be added here.

The analysis of discourse can be used as one method in research. The analysis of discourses, or discourse analysis, is not or should not be a "method" to be wheeled on and applied to any and every topic. Rather, it involves a number of approaches.

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary concept drawing on linguistics, cognitive psychology, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies, and is used in a variety of ways. However, this in no way suggests that discourse analysis is a "free-for-all" where anything goes or that any method can masquerade as discourse analysis. As Van Dijk (1997) indicates, all approaches to discourse analysis involve rigorous methods and principles of "systematic and explicit analysis" (1997:1), although the methods and principles may differ according to the approach to discourse analysis that is adopted:

> An analysis of discourse is a scholarly analysis only when it is based on more or less explicit concepts, methods or theories. Merely making "commonsense" comments on a piece of text or talk will seldom suffice in such a case. Indeed, the whole point should be to provide insights into structure, strategies or other properties of discourse that could not readily be given by naive recipients (Van Dijk 1997:1).

_____

What then are the key features of any analysis of discourse? Discourse analysis is underpinned by the -

> *notion of language as a meaning constituting system which is both historically and socially situated* (Cheek & Rudge 1994:59).

Texts, whether they are books, articles, newspaper reports, interviews, observations or drawings, are embedded within discursive frameworks. They are constructed by the understandings of particular discourses and in turn they construct understandings in keeping with those discursive frames.

> *Meanings, as they occur in … text[s] are the product of dominant discourses that permeate those texts. Not only do powerful discursive frameworks provide meaning for the text, they actually frame the text itself in the first place* (Cheek & Rudge 1994:61).

In discourse analysis then,

> *text is not a dependent variable, or an illustration of another point, but an example of the data itself* (Lupton 1992:148 quoted in Cheek 2000:42).

Discursive analyses of texts are thus not simply descriptions or content analyses; rather, they are critical and reflexive, moving beyond the level of common-sense.

Furthermore, discourse analysis situates texts in their social, cultural, political and historical context. Questions that may be asked include "Why was this said, and not that?" "Why these words?" and "How do the connotations of the words fit with different ways of talking about the world?" Texts are thus interrogated to uncover the unspoken and unstated assumptions implicit within them which have shaped the very form of the text in the first place.

_____

1.3   A PREMARITAL *PASTORAL* CONVERSATION

The word *pastoral* gives this study a particular colour.   This study is being conducted in theology, meaning that the existence and presence of God in our world is accepted, taken for granted.   The reading of the human story is read, interpreted and understood in light of THE STORY in which Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God to mankind.   In this way, Pastoral Care is understood as a process of pastoral involvement. This process facilitates mankind's search for meaning by guiding him in the light of the Gospel and in association with the church.   Thus, meaning is not given, but the search for meaning is facilitated.   Through the *pastoral* process the pastor introduces the "road(s) less travelled by" to the participants (Heitink 1984:75; Müller 1996:27-28).

By adding the adjective *pastoral* to the title of this thesis, I am giving an important focus to this study: A premarital *pastoral* conversation is particularly conducive to a depth dimension.   Apart from the vertical and horizontal dimensions, a pastoral approach also calls for a height-depth dimension.   It is not something that is done separately or afterwards, but it is a sort of infra red light which focuses on the context of the couple/family and which brings forth totally new perspectives (see Müller 1996:85).

The particularity of a premarital *pastoral* conversation is that the narratives that are told during the premarital conversation are continually reviewed against the background of the Biblical narrative.

The challenge for the pastor during the premarital conversation is to find points of contact between THE STORY and then to integrate them into the other story/stories so that a new story can be created (see Müller 1996:85).

The title of the study *premarital pastoral conversation* refers to the process by which the human story is reviewed against the background of the Biblical story with the purpose of facilitating the construction of a new story.   According to Gerkin (1997:113) the task of Pastoral Care involves responsibility for facilitating the maintenance and further development (through deconstruction = CdP) of the Christian community's story and its dialogue with its traditions, on the one hand, and for facilitating the growth and creative development of particular life stories, on the other.

_____

1.4 A WEDDING OF STORIES – A NARRATIVE APPROACH

Becoming married is a wedding of many stories. It is a continuation of the particular story that began when the couple first met. Because many people live away from their home of their origin before they marry, each individual also has his or her own unique narrative to unfold into the common story that is being formed. Those who have been married before will have memories of a relationship that did not endure to include in the new story that is being written. Finally, there is the legacy from each family of origin that is a major factor in forming a new family story.

This legacy from our family of origin is kept alive by many kinds of stories. They are the foundation for our future. Most of the stories families tell are about ordinary events like holidays or birthdays or vacations or dinners that come to have special meaning in their remembrance. We tell stories about the birth of a long-hoped-for child or the death of a significant family member.

During a Summer camp Victor told me the following touching story about his birth:
I was the only child born to my parents after several years of marriage. My mother had an extremely difficult labour and an even more difficult time giving birth to me. I was in a critical condition with a variety of injuries from the complications of the delivery. So was my mother. I was baptized shortly after birth. After three days, both of us had made enough progress that we were taken of the critical list. It was then that I was named "Victor" by my father. This story is regularly told on my birthday. I am grateful to be alive. At the same time, I am reminded again and again of how much it cost my mother to give me life. Sometimes I wish we could forget the story.

The power of family stories to shape our attitudes and reinforce our obligations is illustrated by Victor's remembrance. The stories we tell are modified over time as the pain or the shame recedes. For Victor's mother, however, the pain of his birth was still vivid on his fortieth birthday. So was his sense of debt to her. In rehearsing this story in preparation for his second marriage, Victor finally determined that he needed to tell of his birth in a new way in order to be free to marry.

When families do not tell stories, it may be because they are very private or because communication is not a dominant part of their portfolio. However, some families do not tell stories because there are secrets to be kept. The secret may be about a grief

_____

that was too great to bear or so shameful that it must remain hidden. Even though some secrets may be several generations old, they continue to be a negative influence on a family's interaction in the present. Secret-keeping patterns diminish and limit the kind of intimacy that storytelling creates. If those assigned the role of preserving the secrets are skilled at their task, others in the family may not even know that there are stories to be told. All they know is that their family does not tell stories or talk about itself.

> *Somewhere I read the story of Jean :*
>
> *My great-great-grandfather was a priest who was a strong advocate for the cause of the proletariat during the class struggles of 1848-1850. Beyond making speeches and preaching in that cause, he contributed his time as a volunteer in many social actions. While in the service of that social cause, he contracted dysentery, and became so sick that no one expected him to live. He was, however, sent back home by boat, and his elder sister nursed him back to health against all odds. He lived for more than forty years after that. It was not until I read the diaries of his sister that I learned that my sainted great-great-grandfather had been a morphine addict for those forty years.*

In order for Jean's family to preserve the mythic character of the great-great-grandfather and the story of his heroic deeds, his vulnerability had remained a secret. It was not altogether surprising that Jean discovered several other secrets in the attic when the home that had been in the family for five generations was finally sold. Once she made the discovery about her great-great-grandfather, Jean also understood more clearly why her family never told stories. She also knew better why being vulnerable was so difficult for her.

Families tell stories in order to maintain their foundational beliefs, sustain their unique identity, and reaffirm their common values. Even when we come from families that do not tell stories, every family has a history that is itself a narrative which reveals its values and beliefs. When two people marry, they embark on a new story that incorporates the narratives from their past. Knowing and telling our family stories is a way of claiming our particular legacy. It is also a way of bonding, because marriage is a wedding of stories. White and Epston (1990:10) claim that in -

> *… striving to make sense of life, people face the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a*

_____

coherent account of themselves and the world around them. … This account can be referred to as a story or self-narrative.

If becoming married is a wedding of stories, then a premarital conversation must be an invitation to storytelling. When one's family of origin has a history of storytelling, it is relatively easy to engage the bride or groom in identifying the legacy that he or she brings to this wedding of stories. When there is resistance to storytelling for whatever reason, then it is more difficult – and more important – to help the bride or groom recover the stories of the family. Telling family stories is a critical part of the process of becoming married because it is a way for the couple to weave together their new story while at the same time preserving the thread of each separate narrative.

1.5   MY REMEMBERING CONVERSATION AND THIS PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION

The purpose of this thesis is to invite the reader into the world of Narrative Pastoral Care. It is an invitation to accompany me on a tour of an area of ministry that includes the important and, at times, difficult work that the Christian pastor has to do. This area of pastoral work is multifaceted and full of surprises, unexpected problems, and opportunities for profound insight into the human situation. It is the arena within which the pastor is privileged to be with people where they live and breathe, succeed and fail, relate intimately and experience alienation. It is the down-to-earth world of human living.

Touring the world of Narrative Pastoral Care means considering the caring task of the pastor in relation to individuals and to communities. Those communities include not only families living together and groups of people who work and play together, but also, more significantly, communities of faith who live and worship together as they seek to be faithful disciples of Christ in the world. Touring that world will cause us to encounter the inevitable tensions involved in providing pastoral care for individuals and for congregations.

Conversation between writer and reader

Writing or reading a book/thesis is in many ways not only like going on a tour, but also like participating in a conversation. As writer/researcher, I want to converse with the

reader, even though she or he may be unknown to me. I want to share what I have come to know, and the ways I have come to think about the art and science of the practice of Pastoral Care within the Christian community and its tradition. As the reader, the person who begins this book wants to converse with the author, at least to the extent of entering into the world of the author's thoughts to learn more about Pastoral Care.

If we are to think of the writing and reading of a book as a conversation, it is important to recognize that neither author nor reader come to the dialogue empty-handed. Both bring certain preconceptions to the conversation. Both bring a history that is linked, albeit often in tacit or unacknowledged ways, to the subject matter of the book, and both bring unique ways of thinking about their history.

There is no doubt that this is particularly the case with a thesis on a topic such as Narrative Pastoral Care. The experience of care is such a significant part of living that all readers of pastoral care books have some preconceptions of what Pastoral Care might be. Thus in reading a book about Pastoral Care, both the writer and the reader seek to form a link between their prior experiences of care, including Pastoral Care.

What you bring as the reader

As we begin our tour of the world of Narrative Pastoral Care, I invite you first to pause and reflect on your prior experiences of receiving and giving care, particularly Pastoral Care. What were those experiences like, and what did they mean to you? It may be useful to focus on a specific experience of Pastoral Care you have received. What was it about that experience that made it an experience of care for you? What, if anything, about the experience identified it as *Pastoral* Care? What associations does the word *pastoral* conjure in your memory and imagination? Is it significant to you that the care you recall was offered by a *Christian* pastor? If so, why was that significant?

Some readers, of course, have read other books or heard others speak about Pastoral Care. What these readers remember about those experiences will also play a part in what they bring to this author-reader conversation. You may find that what comes to mind is not at all well organized, but seems rather more like a collage of images, themes, half-formed ideas, and impressionistic notions. This collection of memories and ideas comprises the preconceptions you bring to the reading of this book. These preconceptions will enter into the imaginative conversation you have with me as author/researcher and will influence considerably the interpretations you make of what you read. Allow these

_____

memories and ideas to interact freely with what you read so that your reading may evoke interplay between what you bring to the reading and what you find in the book/thesis. Thus, in your imaginative play, you as reader and I as author may converse.

What I bring as the researcher/author

Because I have asked readers to begin the reading of this thesis by reflecting on their own past experiences of giving and receiving Pastoral Care, I want now to reciprocate by sharing something of my own experience of Pastoral Care that I bring to the writing of the book. I begin with a brief autobiographical sketch of my involvement in the work of Pastoral Care, because all reflection about the meaning of human experience and of care for persons begins from where we are. I think that a significant element of ministry is to remind ourselves, and others, of how important it is to pay attention to what is happening to us. The events of yesteryear, even yesterday, are part of a drama called ourselves. Keeping track of this drama - both the good and the bad - is to understand it (ourselves) for what it (we) is (are). This story is our secret and I not only have my secrets, I am my secrets. And you have your secrets. Our secrets are human secrets, and our trusting each other enough to share them with each other has much to do with the secret of what it is to be human.

Since my first real contact with Pastoral Family Therapy in 1993[1] I have been travelling the landscape of therapy and have heard many voices - sometimes they are clear, and at other times vague. Sometimes it felt as if I were walking in a forest, at other times through a desert and on some occasions in a well designed city with clear sign posts directing the way.

This writing underwent many different little rebirths. It took shape not at all as I imagined it would when I set out. Initially, I wanted to develop a marriage preparation program which pastors could use in their churches in France moving away from the more traditional educational approach of the Church. This causes me to think of the image Anne Lamott employs about watching a Polaroid develop:

_____

[1] Although Pastoral Care is a part of our theological training, I didn't get a "real" understanding and "feeling" for the subject during my theological studies before 1993.

> *"You can't - and, in fact, you're not supposed to - know exactly what the picture is going to look like until it has finished developing. First you just point at what has your attention and take the picture . . . maybe your Polaroid was supposed to be a picture of that boy standing against the fence, and you didn't notice until the last minute that a family was standing a few feet away from him . . . Then the film emerges from the camera with a greyish green murkiness that gradually becomes clearer and clearer, and finally you see the husband and wife holding their baby with two children standing beside them. And at first it all seems very sweet, but then the shadows begin to appear . . ."* (1995:39-40).

As the journey continued, the images became clearer and I arrived at the landscape of *Narrative Therapy*. What attracted me first to this practice is its post modernistic approach and its ideas involving social constructionism. Since we are living in *this* age, it seems logical that we should work within the framework of current worldviews. Of course there is a "but". Since I am a professing practising Christian (typical French terminology[2]) believing in Jesus Christ as the *only* Saviour and the *only* God (Acts 4:12; John 14:6), I do not embrace the postmodern worldview to its extreme conclusions. I am convinced that the Bible as the revealed and incarnated Word of God, having withstood many different and diverse theological and philosophical schools of thought over the centuries, is able to withstand the current radical application of postmodern thought. I do not reject postmodernity, but, at the same time, I am not embracing it fully. My concern is to remain true to the continuity of the Christian witness whilst responding anew to the challenges of the present age. I see this as a very exciting endeavour, since one of the symptoms of postmodernity is a resurgence of the sacred.

I will be taking the living context of people as my point of departure, bringing them into story with the Bible, Christian tradition and contemporary theology. This will not be a dualistic approach between theory and practice, and, yet, it will take into account the contextuality and pluralism of postmodern women and men.

In the following story I will use fiction writing as metaphor for research. An idea which was proposed to me by Julian Müller (see also his article *Therapy as fiction writing*, and the unpublished article *Fiction writing as metaphor for research: A narrative approach* by Müller, Van Deventer and Human). The Masters and Doctorate programmes

---

[2]   I have been working and living in France since October 1995.

for Pastoral Family Therapy of the Department of Practical Theology at the University of Pretoria have for the past few of years been involved in discussions in this area. As I have been residing in France since September 1995, I could not personally participate in these discussions, but I have received input through professor Julian Müller.

I began to find it more and more difficult to reconcile the "traditional" approach of the writing of theses[3] with a narrative approach. The issue of "power" (which will be discussed later) comes into play here. When one enters the culture of the professional disciplines one is confronted with a shift in what constitutes for knowledge. The culture of the professional disciplines is a culture which produces particular, highly specialised, and formal knowledges. When combined, these knowledges provide systems for the analysis of a person's expressions of life, and which in turn are constructed in terms of behaviours. It is claimed that these systems of analysis provide, for professional workers, privileged access to the objective truth of these expressions. In this culture, those ways of knowing the world that relate to the more popular and more local discourses of "lay" communities are marginalised – often categorised as quaint, folk lyric or naive – and frequently disqualified. It is thus not uncommon in therapy training, for example, for a person to be subject to systems of understanding that are pathologising of the significant relationships of their lives, and especially in family relationships (and, more often than not, the mother/child relationship) (White 1997:11-12). Müller, Van Deventer and Human (2001:1-2) talk about the *use and abuse of research*. We should be researchers who do not "pathologize or victimize our narrators". Therefore, we should rather choose not to use language such as "research objects", or "research population", but rather refer to people as *research participants* or *co-researchers*. It is important that our research should not primarily serve our own objectives as researchers, but be of value to those participating in the research. The aim of research is thus not to bring about change, but to listen to stories and to be drawn into those stories. While the modernist researcher has objectivity in mind and tries to be an observer from the outside, the narrative researcher has subjective integrity in mind and look for participatory observation. A narrative practice is experienced as effective when the participants beginning with somewhat different perspectives, are able to close the gap as the narrative conversation progresses. The narrative practice might be seen as a cross-cultural experience in which two life stories are drawn closer together and each life trajectory is altered by the meeting.

---

[3] Formulation of the problem, goal, strategy, explanation of theoretical principles and their application to a specific practical situation. See also Mouton and Marais 1990. *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences.*

_____

This (narrative) approach leads us to think about people's lives as stories, and it leads us to work with people's stories to enable them to experience their life stories in ways that are meaningful and fulfilling. Using the metaphor of social constructionism leads us to consider the ways in which each person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed through interaction with other human beings and human institutions and to focus on the influence of these social realities in people's lives. This I find extremely useful when working from a Christian perspective in France, as the average man (sic) in the street has a very vague-philosophical view, based on the ideas and analyses of (atheist) philosophers and psychoanalysts, as to the meaning and relevance of the Biblical narrative for this third millennium.

Furthermore, this approach enables me to make sense of how people's lives are constructed by the dominant norms of the society within which they have grown up. It is when they feel out of step with the dominant culture that they blame themselves, and this is what often brings them to counselling. Often it is this cultural alignment which creates the problem rather than there being something innately wrong with the individual.

In the description of my research orientation I will begin by describing the field of action of this study, the modi of the research interaction and my research expectations.

1.6 FIELD OF ACTION (HABITUS)

1.6.1 First level of action

In their article Fiction writing as metaphor: A narrative approach (2001) Müller, Van Deventer and Human adopted the writer Anne Lamott's model for fiction writing to explain research with a narrative approach. According to these researchers her model of fiction writing provides a useful process for the development of a narrative based research project.

Anne Lamott (1995:62) refers to Alice Adams' formula ABDCE when writing a short story, i.e. *Action, Background, Development, Climax* and *Ending.* They were struck by the idea that the writing metaphor puts an emphasis on the wholeness of the research process. It has the development of one consistent story in mind (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:1, 2).

_____

According to the above formula "you begin with action that is compelling enough to draw us in, and makes us want to know more" (Lamott 1995:62). The field of action into which I want to draw the reader is a *premarital pastoral conversation* seen as a *wedding of stories*.

According to the more modernistic approach, the emphasis is on the problem and the correct formulation of the problem. The problem being in this case, for example: according to current statistics in France (Toulemon 1996:675; INED) the number of couples getting married has declined by 40% during the last 21 years. Other current estimates also show that one out of three marriages end in divorce (Pasini 1995:10), and of these one out of two are in the big cities (Krieger 1999:9). Divorce has become an accepted cure for ailing marriages. In spite of the high divorce rate and the decline in the number of marriages and commitment to marriage, marriage still continues to be popular. Berscheid and Campbell (quoted in Fowers and Olson 1986:403) remark:

> *Ironically, at the same time that close relationships have become substantially more vulnerable to disruption and dissolution than they were just a generation or two ago, close relationships are seen by most people as being the prime source of personal happiness.*

In a more narrative approach we would like to put the emphasis on the action, and not on the problem. The narrative researcher has a deconstructive agenda. Stories need to be unpacked and alternatives have to be explored. According to this approach, not only the problem areas of life, but every action, has to be researched with a possible alternative story in mind (Müller, Van Deventer, Human 2001:2). This means that the reason for a premarital conversation is more than the high divorce rate, or the lack of commitment, or the search for different styles of living together. The fundamental issue is the NOW of the story. We must learn to stay in the now - "not the last now, not the next now, *this* now" (Lamott 1995:47). According to Lamott (1995:48) the question to be asked is: "what holds the ectoplasm together - what are the person's routines, beliefs".

The "now" is never fixed and it never acts as a premise as a curse. In the narrative approach the now is action, and therefore dynamic in nature. To take the action seriously and to have it told is to open up a possibility, to create a new now for tomorrow (Müller, Van Deventer, and Human 2001:3).

_____

Furthermore, this study will be an *exploratory study* since no research could be found that proposes a narrative approach to marriage preparation / premarital conversation.   Because exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of accurate and replicable data, these studies frequently involve the use of interviews, the analysis of case studies and the use of informants. Hypotheses tend to be developed as a result of such a research, rather than the research being guided by hypotheses. The most important research design considerations which apply here, are:

- to allow an open and flexible research strategy, and
- to use methods such as literature reviews, interviews, case studies, and *co-researchers*, which may lead to insight and comprehension.

The best guarantee for the completion of an exploratory study is to be found in the researcher's willingness to examine new ideas and suggestions and to be open to new stimuli.   The major pitfall to avoid is allowing preconceived ideas or hypotheses to determine the direction or nature of the research (Mouton & Marais 1994:43; Huysamen 1996:10; see also Cheek 2000:69).   This is supported by the fact that theoretical and practical principles of this thesis have changed at least three times since this study was started, as a result of the discovery of new ideas, developments and suggestions.

The "success" of this research will only be known after the follow-up of several couples over a period of several years.   What is proposed here are the results and understanding of an exploratory research.   Narrative research has to do with the NOW of the action. The aim of narrative research is not to bring about change or to develop value assumptions that are valid for all contexts and for all times, but to listen to the stories and to be drawn into the stories of co-researchers, and the "Co-researcher". We can say that there are different communication lines: there is the communication line with myself, with God, and with the other(s). In this way they become companions on the journey. By bringing these different communication lines together meaning is created in this reality. In this way we try to perform research as a form of practical wisdom, which values the stories of peoples and communities. Instead of working with hypotheses of what should be, we would prefer to understand the *habitus*, "which refers to a kind of practical knowledge within which human social action enacts and constructs culture – synthesis of structure and agency: a 'system of structured, structuring dispositions … constituted in

_____

practice and …always orientated towards practical functions' " (Pierre Bourdieu *in* Graham 2000:109).

It should be stressed that the philosophical-ethical understanding of these phenomena falls beyond the boundaries of this study and requires a study of its own. However it needs to be said that the failure of marriage has sparked of a wave of defeatism, even cynism about marriage. It is being described as an obsolete institution that is destined to be replaced by "alternative lifestyles" (Mace 1975:9), such as *union libre*[4], *cohabitation*[5] and *le Pacs*[6]. Interestingly, when the trend of cohabiting prior to marriage started, the assumption was that this would be healthy for a marriage relationship. Research results now show just the opposite, i.e. that cohabitation increased rather than decreased the risk of marital dissolution. Furthermore, it was found that cohabitation is selective of men and women who are less committed to marriage and more approving of divorce (Wright 1992:55; Axinn & Thornton 1992; Thomson & Colella; DeMaris & MacDonald 1993. The latter gives a list of research regarding this issue).

Carl Rogers (1972:11), a pioneer in the field of counselling, made the following statement 30 years ago:

> *To me it seems that we are living in an important and uncertain age, and the institution of marriage is most assuredly in an uncertain state. If 50-75 percent of Ford or General Motors cars completely fell apart within the early part of their lifetimes as automobiles, drastic steps would be taken. We have no such well organized way of dealing with our social institutions, so people are groping, more or less blindly, to find alternatives to marriage (which is certainly less than 50 percent successful). Living together without marriage, living in communes, extensive child care centers, serial monogamy (with one divorce after another), women's liberation movement to establish the woman as a person in her own right, new divorce laws which do away with the concept of guilt - these are all*

_____

[4] Two people living together without any legal agreement.
[5] According to French civil law, a factual union, characterized by a common life presenting a character of stability and of continuation, between two people of the opposite or same sex, living as a couple.
[6] *Pacte Civil de Solidarité* : *Pacte*: a convention, agreement between two people. *Civil*: that concerns the citizens. *Solidarité*: responsible, mutual dependant, state of 2 people showing solidarity, a feeling of mutual help, obligation for each person to settle the totality of a common debt in case of fault on the part of one of the debtors. Reciprocity, association, interdependence, emotional ties.

_____

groping toward some new form of man-woman relationship for the future.   It would take a bolder man than I to predict what will emerge.

Furthermore, couples see marriage as society's interference in their private lives, and, in some cases, even as a yoke. They do not accept that society should prescribe to or make demands from the outside, of an individual's commitment through some abstract norms (Hoareau & Hoareau 1995:5.14).

Evelyne Sullerot then makes the following interesting remark (1984:18 – translation CdP):

For love and for pleasure, for ardour, and for happiness, for the best, for the choice of a partner, for living arrangements as a couple and the birth of a child – all these are private matters, which don't concern the State (and definitely not the Church – CdP)*.*

The couple does not want to feel obligated to hold a ceremony, choose witnesses, or make promises, of informing the community and, subsequently, of celebrating their participation in the community in their new role. But for security, for the bad days, for the worst, for the moments of solitude and the difficulty in the education of the child – it is the community that is expected to provide more and more regular support and assistance.

The average length of a marriage is only four to five years (INED), and many of these relationships can be assumed to have had the seeds of an eventual break-up from the very beginning (Fowers and Olson 1986:403). The fact that so many couples experience serious marital conflict early in marriage shows that couples are not prepared to deal with the challenges of marriage.

1.6.2 Second level of action

There is also a second level of action involved, and that is the *inter*action of the researcher with the activity that is being researched. The action of research consists of an interaction with people and their transactions. In understanding research from a socio-constructionist approach, through our interaction with the action we become part of these actions (Müller, Van Deventer, and Human 2001:3). Being part of the action means that

our interpretation of the transactions involved and the meaning that we describe to them are also contextually grounded.

I would like to see this relationship between researcher and co-researchers as a relationship of empowerment. The reason for this is to move away from the investigators' "problems" to *co-researchers* problems; specifically, their efforts to construct a coherent and reasonable world of meaning and to make sense of their experiences. The effort to empower respondents and the study of their responses as narratives are closely linked. They are connected through the assumption that one of the significant ways through which individuals make sense of and give meaning to their experiences is to organize them in narrative form (see Mishler 1991:117-119).

1.7 MODI OF RESEARCH INTERACTION

In order to research the above mentioned field of action and to reach deeper understanding in the field of premarital conversation, applicable literature was read, television programmes touching on the subject were watched, semi-structured interviews were held with married and engaged couples, and also with pastors and priests involved in marriage preparation in different contexts; week-ends and evenings with groups were also attended, and a questionnaire was completed.

The modi of this research interaction is closely linked to what is called *participatory action research* (PAR). According to Reason and Rowan this -

> *New paradigm research involves a much closer relationship than that which is usual between the researcher and the researched : significant knowledge of persons is generated primarily through reciprocal encounters between subject and researcher, for whom research is a mutual activity involving co-ownership and shared power with respect to both the process and to the product of the research* (quoted in Babbie & Mouton 2001:58).

This approach emphasises the necessity of involving those persons who are the supposed beneficiaries of research in the entire process. The knowledges of these beneficiaries should be taken seriously. In research their claims and the consequences of their knowledges should be evaluated. This process can help us explain and understand

meanings, allow us to respond more appropriately, empower in a liberating way, and reveal links between everyday reality and the structural logic that produces and reproduces that reality.

Later on I will refer to Foucault's description of **local knowledges** (as opposed to global knowledges). Regarding this, the PAR principle of participation or collaboration has important consequences, particularly in the way in which knowledge is perceived. Local knowledge (also referred to as insider, traditional or popular knowledge), the participant's common sense, wisdom, and expertise are valued and respected – even honoured, celebrated, and praised (Babbie & Mouton 2001:320). From a narrative practice point of view this could, for example, be done by means of letters and rituals.

This means not only that participants are considered knowledgeable and intelligent, but also that their local knowledge – as well as their perspectives on their situation and environment – are relied upon and incorporated into the research process. PAR not only recognizes the validity of this local knowledge, but it also aims to promote and reinforce it, so as to restore its status. The aim of this is to empower the participants by enabling them to recognize the value of their own knowledge. Furthermore, participation allows for the incorporation and faithful representation of participants' perspectives of their situation and environment. Participants have been seen to produce new insights and provide much more valid data and useful interpretations than would be the case if only academic knowledge were represented in the research (Babbie & Mouton 2001:320).

I will now turn Michael White's view of research with his reference (1997:15) to Geertz who juxtaposes "thin description" and "thick description". *Thin descriptions* of a person's actions are descriptions that exclude the interpretations of those who are engaging in these actions. Thin descriptions are also those descriptions that exclude the particular systems of understanding and practice of negotiation that make it possible for communities to arrived at shared meanings in regard to these actions. Thin descriptions are typically arrived at through "observations" made by those considered to be outsiders who are studying the lives of other people and the communities in which these people live.

Conversely, *thick descriptions* of persons' actions are descriptions that are informed by the interpretations of those who are engaging in these actions, and that emphasis the particular systems of understanding and the practices of negotiation that make it possible for communities of persons to arrive at shared meanings in regard to these actions. A thick

_____

description of an action is one that is inscribed with the meanings of the community of persons to which this action is directly relevant.

White (1997:16) also refers to Barbara Myerhoff who makes use of these metaphors, and who reflects on the actual practices that take place in communities of persons who contribute to the generation of thick or rich descriptions:

Private and collective lives, properly Re-membered, are interpretive. Full or 'thick description' is such an analysis. This involves finding linkages between the group's shared valued beliefs and symbols, and specific historical events. Particularities are subsumed and equated with grander themes, seen as exemplifying ultimate concerns (Myerhoff quoted in White 1997:16).

To the question of how thick or rich description is generated, Myerhoff's partial response is that this is the outcome of the identification of the historical events of one's life with "shared valued beliefs and symbols". But Myerhoff also provides an account of the processes by which this is achieved. She proposes that it is through engaging with a community of persons in the telling and re-telling of the preferred stories of one's history and of one's identity that lives are thickly described. It is in this context that the stories of persons' lives become linked to shared values, beliefs, purposes, desires, commitments, and so on. It is in the context of telling and re-telling of the stories of one's life that meta-texts, and texts that are meta to these meta-texts, are generated.
The outcome of this is the production of lives that are multiply contextualised. It is the multiple contextualisation of life that contributes to the generation of narrative resources, and thus to lives that might be well read. These narrative resources contribute significantly to the range of possible meanings that persons might give to their experiences of the world, and to the range of options for action in the world. And, in that this range of options for action would not be available to persons whose lives are poorly read, these narrative resources are constitutive of life – they contribute to the shaping of life; they make up life (White 1997:16-17).

1.7.1 Literary study

In view of this research, a literature study was made, first of all, to investigate the availability of literature on this subject and, second, to establish whether such a study was viable and justifiable. The researcher checked the card and computer catalogues of the University of Pretoria, the University of South Africa and the University of Provence (France). The library assistant of Theology (University of Pretoria) undertook a search on the different computer networks. The bibliographies of some of these reference books and articles were also consulted.

The website of Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, Australia (www.dulwichcentre.com.au) was consulted and additional website references were given.

As a result of the above, it was concluded that no research has been done in this field, i.e. the integration of narrative principles with marriage preparation. Very little research material for marriage preparation or premarital counselling from a theological or pastoral perspective could be found in France.

For this study, and because very little written material for the French context could be found, material from overseas was used, but reinterpreted and adapted to the French context. The narrative approach lends itself to a "universal" or intercultural practice. The social construction of realities and deconstruction are most helpful in this regard.

The study of this literature was necessary for the clear formulation of the research problem and the demarcation of the field of study, with reference to the following: the narrative approach, marriage preparation, marriage, pastoral care.

1.7.2 Personal experience

The association *Mission Vie et Famille* (MVF) ("Family Life Missions", an interdenominational international Protestant evangelical association, founded by Walter Trobisch) has developed over a period of 15 years of ministry in France a more educational approach to marriage preparation. Marriage preparation weekends are organized and complement that which is done by the pastor. Depending on the needs of the participants the following subjects (as outlined in their publications - *Que ton oui soit oui* - Let your yes be yes) could be addressed:

- A wife of noble character
- The wife of your covenant
- Man will leave his father and his mother
- And he will be united to his wife and they will become one flesh
- Does marriage have any advantages ?
- Husbands, love your wives, wives love your husbands
- Love and sexuality
- Children
- Conflict
- Fruits of the Spirit
- The marriage ceremony

The *Reformed Church of France*, the *Independent Evangelical Reformed Church*, the *Church of the Confession of Augsburg* and the *Reformed Church of Alsace and of Lorraine* have each published a booklet which they give to couples planning to marry and which can be used as a starting point for discussion. The marriage preparation itself consists mostly of a theological explanation of marriage and the preparation of the marriage ceremony. The material of MVF is also used from time to time. The length and content of the course may vary according to whether the couple are Christians or non believers and if they are known by the pastor or not. The personal approach of each pastor varies.

The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has a national association, the *Centre for Marriage Preparation.* Couples lead these sessions, assisted by priests, and are required to complete 160 hours of training. This training consists of three modules :

Listening and communication skills (includes group leadership skills)
- Including a module on *Living our faith today for young people*

Life as a couple (Sexuality, children, married "for ever")
- Including a module *Living and growing in faith : ethics and the Christian life*

Families lives (Youth and marriage, families and societies)

- Including the modules *Living marriage as a sacrament* and *Life and the making of memories.*

The sessions of the RCC (in the Montpellier area) usually consists of 3 evenings, or 2 evenings and a Sunday, or a week-end (Saturday afternoon and evening and Sunday late morning and afternoon). Since most participants are non-believers (although most may consider themselves Christian) much time is spent talking about the Christian faith, the Church and marriage (why marriage and marriage as sacrament). Through general discussions certain subjects are dealt with (eg. parenting). The meetings of the RCC take place in group discussions. Thus, the problem of confidentiality and just how far story investigation can go sometimes arises. Some couples consider these sessions as being imposed on them by the Church. Others feel that it is the obligation of the Church to accept the request for a marriage in the Church without questions being asked – it is one of the reasons Churches are there (other reasons being for baptisms and funerals). And still others get married in the Church because of parental preference as illustrated in the example below :

Jacqueline: If I don't get married in church, I think my parents (silence) *. . . I don't know what they will do to me, in any case, they won't come to the wedding.*

CdP: You think so?

Pierre: Yes, sure! You really have to know them! For my parents, it is a little bit different. They are a bit less strict. But deep down, they won't appreciate it. They will be ashamed in front of their neighbours.

CdP: Did you talk to them about this possibility?

Pierre: No, not at all . . . But I'll tell you, if it only depends on me, I won't get married in the church. But it doesn't bother me, if we can please our parents, why not?

CdP: Of course . . .

Jacqueline: For myself, I'm attached to religion. And of course ther's the blessing[7]. I'm not superstitious, but I would like to have the blessing of God on our life together …

CdP: What does this blessing mean to you ? What does it entail?

Jacqueline? Mmm . . . as I said, I'm not superstitious, but I think it gives me some security and it links our life to another reality.

CdP: How did you begin thinking this way?

---

[7] In France people don't "get married" in the Church, they only receive a blessing. They "get married" in front of the magistrate.

_____

> *Jacqueline: Until I was 12 years old I went to catechism class . . .*

Through the researcher's membership in the association MVF and participation in the marriage preparation sessions of the RCC's *Centre de preparation au marriage* in Montpellier, France, various information was gathered, used, tested and altered over a period of three years.

Conversations were conducted with married couples in order to ascertain what they thought would be relevant for a premarital conversation, with reference to their own experience.

That which is proposed in this study came to light during these premarital narrative conversations. All of these aspects were not and probably would not be used systematically with each couple. They can be adapted according to the particular needs of the couple(s) concerned and the time available. Sessions with individual couples are preferred. 98% of the couples attending the sessions of the RCC and of the Reformed Church were already cohabiting before marriage.

Thirty couples completed a questionnaire (see Appendix), but I will make only brief references to this questionnaire. The reason for this is that the questionnaire was not initially written from a narrative perspective and questionnaires do not form part of a narrative approach. Questions asked concerned views on cohabitation, commitment, relationship satisfaction, children, and general autobiographical information. How these opinions were formed, and constructed, were unfortunately not considered in this questionnaire, and neither were they questioned about how their personal stories were culturally constructed.

I will describe the conversations that will serve as examples in a subjective way that portray my experience of the particular pastoral situation. This is also valid for the verbatim descriptions of the conversations. Care should be taken not to view the verbatim account of a conversation in a positivistic way, i.e. that presupposes a division between pastor and participant. In this way I will give a more accurate expression of the underlying epistemology of this study.

1.8 RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

When we go on a journey of discovery we have certain expectations of what we would like to see and discover. This is closely linked to the reasons why the journey is undertaken. Since we are working from a postmodern narrative perspective it is more appropriate to refer to research expectations than research hypotheses. Hypotheses call to mind the modernistic perspective that underlines objectivity, certainty and domination.

The expectations underlying this research can be formulated as follows:

- The narrative approach provides a theoretical basis for Practical Theology and Pastoral Care.
- A narrative pastoral approach provides possibilities for premarital conversations.
- A narrative pastoral approach enables couples to examine their life narratives, their family legacy and their role in it, themselves, their partner, and their relationship in order to re-evaluate, confirm and strengthen their belief that this is indeed the person they want to marry.
- A narrative pastoral approach to the premarital conversation facilitates the process of deconstruction and story development of meanings and values concerning marriage that are socially constructed.

It should be kept in mind that these expectations have (had!) their point of departure in the field of action.

Furthermore, the expectations that one has have to do with the climax of the research project, i.e. with the final goal(s) of the study. But there is a difference. The climax is determined by the co-researchers (main characters) of the story – not in advance by me, the research initiator. It might take a long time to reach the climax, i.e. the moment when things are really different for the characters, different in some real way (Lamott 1995:62). Referring again to the writing formula of Alice Adams (ABDCE) quoted earlier (page 16) by Anne Lamott (1995:82-83), the latter writes the following about the characters. This could also apply to the researchers in research.

When you write about your characters, we want to know all about their leaves and colours and growth (in the precedent paragraph she talks about people

_____

that are like trees in winter). But we also want to know who they are when stripped of the surface show. So if you want to get to know your characters, you have to hang out with them long enough to see beyond all the things they aren't. You may try to get them to do something because it would be convenient plotwise, or you want to pigeonhole them so you can maintain the illusion of control. But with luck their tendrils will sneak out the sides of the box you've put them in, and you will finally have to admit that who they are isn't who they thought they were.

Formulating certain objectives in advance could result in trying to understand too quickly, with the possibility of not understanding at all. It could also be about the desire to control – I will decide where the conversation will lead to. Then the question could be asked, "Why am I doing research if I already know the answer?"

Lamott (1995:85) says that her students assume that well-respected writers, when they sit down and write their books, know very well what is going to happen because they have outlined their plot and that is why their books turn out so beautifully. She then makes the remark that she does not know anyone fitting this description. Everyone she knows flails around, stretching and growing despondent, on the way to finding a plot and structure that will work. Further on in her book (Lamott 1995:114) she refers to a metaphor used by a friend of hers:

If you're lost in the forest, let the horse find the way home. You have to stop directing, because you will only get in the way.

Putting it into another metaphor, she writes (Lamott 1995:121):

. . . we (writers) need to align ourselves with the river of the story, the river of the unconscious, of memory and sensibility, . . .

If you start with your agenda, your objectives, you might miss the story of the people and the meaning they find therein. Otherwise you are not respectful.

If you look at people and just see sloppy clothes or rich clothes, you're going to get them wrong (Lamott 1955:97).

You may perhaps just envision a temporary destination, but you must allow your "characters" to develop from there in their own way towards the end (Müller,

Van Deventer, Human 2001:7).

Reading through the above-mentioned objectives and different points of view concerning the goal of "marriage preparation" can influence one's judgment.
For me, a climax will be reached when people (Christian and especially non-Christian) become enthusiastic about and have a better understanding of their different stories and The Story influencing their lives. In this postmodern age most people have lost contact with the relevance of the Christian story for today and for their lives. One climax would be if a contact could be made. In this process my honesty and integrity towards these co-researchers would be essential. To do this, I have to stay in touch with them, follow their life stories, make sure that I understand and hear them properly. So many times people's stories are marginalised, often disqualified, and displaced by the formal and expert knowledges (theologies) of the professional disciplines. These people are the main characters of my story and they should have the full possibility to be involved in this process and to express themselves. In this way I am drawn into the action and I don't remain an outside observer.

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In this first chapter I have outlined why I chose the title *The premarital pastoral conversation – a wedding of stories: a narrative approach*. I explained the different aspects of the title and how the new paradigm of understanding of postmodernity opens-up new horizons.

In describing the field of action I outlined different aspects which demands further investigation in this study. In further defining my study, I outlined my research strategies and research expectations.

In the following chapter I will give a brief overview of the development from a premodern, postmodern and narrative worldview, and then I will briefly reflect on the implications of these developments for marriage.

I will then go on to describe a narrative hermeneutical pastoral theological response to these worldviews. The contribution of Crites and Ganzevoort of how narrative is linked to our life stories and our identity will be examined. The importance of hermeneutics in

_____

these life stories will also be discussed with reference to Paul Ricoeur, Gadamer and Gerkin, and Müller's choice for a pastoral narrative involvement.

These insights will lay the foundation for the interpretation of marriage and premarital conversations (Chapter four). This will be done by giving some biblical portraits of marriage. A reference to cohabitation will also be made.

A narrative approach to a premarital pastoral conversation is then proposed. Taking the field of action as point of departure, conversations and life stories can be deconstructed and new stories can be written. The externalization of events and different mapping tools are used in this process. It will also be shown how the story of faith can play a significant role during this conversation.   Through this premarital pastoral conversation new discoveries are made through which new meaning is given to a significant life changing event.

_____

CHAPTER TWO:

SCIENTIFIC-PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONING

A story is not just a way of conveying information,
it is a way of interpreting facts.
Ruard Ganzevoort

FROM PREMODERNITY TO POSTMODERNITY TO A NARRATIVE WORLDVIEW

In this chapter I will *position* myself by briefly describing some of the developments in the sciences over the past centuries. The purpose is to better understand our current context and the choices made in this study.

2.1 PREMODERNITY

This brief overview of some of the developments in the sciences over the past centuries will give us *an* understanding of *why* we are today where we are, and of how our understanding developed from a "premodern", to a modern, to a postmodern worldview.

Before the 1500s the dominant world view in Europe, as well as other civilizations, was the notion of an organic, living and spiritual universe. People lived in small cohesive communities and experienced nature in terms of organic relationships, characterized by the interdependence of individual needs and those of the community. The scientific framework of this worldview rested on two authorities - Aristotle and the Church. In the thirteenth century Thomas Aquinas combined Aristotle's comprehensive system of nature with Christian theology and ethics and, in doing so, established the conceptual framework that remained unquestioned throughout the Middle Ages. The nature of medieval science was very different from that of contemporary science. It was based on both reason and faith and its main goal was to understand the meaning and significance of things, rather than prediction and control. Medieval scientists, looking for the purposes underlying various natural phenomena, considered questions relating to God, the human soul, and ethics to be of the highest significance (Capra 1983:37-38). According to Erickson (1998:15) the -

pre-modern understanding of reality was teleological. There was believed
to be a purpose or purposes in the universe, within which humans fit and were to

_____

be understood. This purpose was worked out within the world. In the Western tradition, this was the belief that an omnipotent, omniscient God had created the entire universe and the human race, and had a plan that he was bringing about. There had to be reasons for things, and these were not limited to efficient or "because of" causes, but also included final or "in order that" causes. This understanding was carried over to the interpretation of history. There was a pattern to history, which was outside it.

2.2 MODERNITY

The medieval outlook changed radically in the sixteenth and seventeenth century when the essential outlines of the Western world view and value system were formulated and replaced by that of the world as a machine. This metaphoric view was the result of the revolutionary changes that took place in physics and astronomy, represented by the works of Copernicus, Galileo, Descartes and Newton (Capra 1983:38).

The Newtonian worldview supports the following suppositions:

- Scientific knowledge is "true" and "absolute" knowledge (Auerswald 1974:328).

- The world consists of structure and phenomena, according to which objects have the status of primary reality. Objects have absolute characteristics that are indicative of their nature (Naudé 1990:29). In order to understand a phenomenon or object, it needs to be reduced to its most basic elements which are simpler, easier to understand, and often measurable. Once these building blocks and their characteristics are known, an understanding of the whole can be reached by recombining the elements (Fourie 1991:1).

- Seen in terms of time and space, the epistemological suppositions are essentially linear. Following that, knowledge is accumulated through a set of parallel linear efforts based on inductive or deductive exploration of linear cause and effect relationships (Auerswald 1974:329).

- The world is structured according to rational, understandable rules or laws. In this way the whole universe was set in motion, and it has continued to run ever since,

like a machine, governed by immutable laws. The mechanistic view of nature is thus closely related to a rigorous determinism, with the giant cosmic machine completely causal and determinate. All that happened had a definite cause and gave rise to a definite effect, and the future of any part of the system could - in principle - be predicted with absolute certainty if its state at any time was known in all details (Capra 1983:52).

- The world of phenomena can, with the help of scientific method, be objectively described without taking into account the role of the human observer. The world "out there" is apart from the world "in here" (Fourie 1991:2; see also De Jongh van Arkel 1991:64-65).

In short, using Lines' (*in* De Jongh van Arkel 1988:224) summary:

> *The classical science worldview was mechanistic in analogy, reductionistic in method, disciplinary in research, deterministic in outlook, static in perception, entropic in direction, dualistic in practice, and positivistic in determination of truth.*

2.3 THE NEW PHYSICS

At the beginning of this century physicists began to realize that it was not possible to apply a Newtonian way of thinking to phenomena that were more complex (example, subatomic phenomena) than those with which the classical physicists had to contend (Zukav 1986:46, 52, 73). This questioning (although their initial idea was rather to confirm than to question) of the Newtonian presuppositions started with Max Planck (quantum theory) in 1900 and was continued by Albert Einstein (theory of relativity) and Heisenberg (uncertainty principle). This resulted in a totally new way of looking at the world. Emphasis was now placed on wholeness, patterns and the connections between parts. This world view is characterized by terms such as *organic, holistic* and *ecological* (Auerswald 1985:4; Fourie 1991:2-3; De Jongh van Arkel 1988:225, 1991:66; Capra 1983:66).

These newer ideas in physics oppose the Newtonian notion of reductionism, linear causality and neutral objectivity. In the world of the "*new physics*" (Capra 1983:66; Zukav 1979:70, 96) the image of the universe as a great machine is replaced by a view of the

_____

universe as an invisible whole, whose parts are interrelated and can be understood only as patterns of an ongoing process.

While the natural sciences were struggling to come to grips with this view of the universe, the social sciences were eager to establish themselves as scientific disciplines. In this attempt they embraced Newtonian thinking because of the order and rigor it had brought to the natural sciences. The social sciences, in true Newtonian fashion, studied human behaviour by reducing it to what was supposed to be its elements. These elements were seen as interconnected via cause and effect and as uninfluenced by the process and context of the study. Often these elements were hypothetical constructs which were thought to have particular characteristics and which were then treated as if they were semi-concrete entities. This process of reification by such eminent theorists as Bateson (1980) and Sarbin and Coe (1972 *in* Fourie 1991), resulted in the wide acceptance of the existence of entities such as the "ego", "the unconscious", "defence mechanisms", "intelligence" and "hypnotic susceptibility" (Fourie 1991:3).

As more and more fields of scientific enquiry encountered problems of increasing complexity, the inadequacies of a Newtonian way of thinking became increasingly clear. As Gestaltists had long ago realized (e.g. Perls 1969 according to Fourie 1991), often one cannot understand the whole by means of a synthesis of its parts. Criticism of the Newtonian epistemology of science has thus come from the natural sciences (e.g. Capra 1983; Prigogine and Stengers 1984), biology (e.g. Maturana 1975; Varela 1979), anthropology (e.g. Bateson 1972, 1979) and various branches of psychology such as counselling (e.g. Cottone 1988 & Ford 1984 according to Fourie 1991) and family therapy (e.g. Keeney 1979, 1982).

Two developments played a central role in the movement away from the Newtonian thinking. These were the exposition of general systems theory and the emergence of second-order cybernetics (Fourie 1991:3).

2.4 GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY

The idea of a *General Systems Theory* was first formulated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, orally in the 1930's and later in numerous publications after the war (Von Bertalanffy 1975:153). In the 1950's, when the focus shifted from elements to organized wholes, the wholes were considered as systems made up of elements and the interrelationships between them. Von Bertalanffy (1950) proposed a general theory which

_____

could account for the behaviour of all systems, be they mechanical, chemical or human. He himself applied this theory to psychiatry (Von Bertalanffy 1974) and family therapists were quick to follow suit. Some of the general notions of general systems theory are the following :

1) Systems consist of smaller sub-systems and larger supra-systems.

2) Systems, sub-systems and supra-systems are separated from one another by invisible boundaries through which information flows. Here the focus is on open systems.

3) Behaviour inside these systems normally remains within certain boundaries. This balance is known as *homeostasis*.

4) The principle of feedback of information between open systems forms part of this approach.

5) In human systems a particular state of functioning can be achieved in different ways. Similar states of functioning can result from completely different initial states of functioning and different states of functioning can result from similar initial states of functioning. This is the principle of *equifinality* (Fourie 1991:4-5; Naudé 1990:40-41; De Jongh van Arkel 1988:229).

The *General Systems Theory* is closely connected with the science of *cybernetics*, the development of which began around the middle of this century. This is a theory of interaction between open systems, supra-systems and sub-systems. Two models that are especially important for family therapy and that are constructed according to the principles of cybernetics, are the strategic model of Haley, Watzlawick, etc. and the structural model of Minuchin.

In this approach emphasis during a pastoral conversation is placed on interaction between family members and on the fact that the therapist is a power broker. In the strategic approach, relationships were viewed as either symmetrical (equal) or complementary (with one person in a more powerful position than the other). In the structural approach, power hierarchies between sub-systems, formed the basis of conceptualisation. The description of the problem and the family are seen as objective; the observer is seen as standing completely outside the observed system (Fourie 1991:4-6; Matthysen 1993:2; De Jongh van Arkel 1991:66-67; Hoffman 1990:6-7; Bateson 1980:192-193).

_____

2.5 SECOND-ORDER CYBERNETICS

From the aforementioned it is clear that cybernetics / general systems theory furnished a way to describe the functioning of systems. These were mostly descriptions of interaction. Implicit in such descriptions was the presence of the *observer* who made the descriptions. This person was considered to be objective, that is, outside of the system being described. However, in the case of living systems it soon became clear that it was impossible for such an observer to be objective. On the one hand, the very act of observation influenced the behaviour of the people under observation. On the other hand, the observation was coloured by the observer's way of observing and his/her epistemology or way of thinking. The observer is, therefore, part of the world that he is observing. Subsequently, any description of the system had to account for the observer as much as for each of the members of the system being observed. This, of course, implies a higher order of observation, i.e. observation of observation.   The study of such a higher order of observation was called cybernetics of cybernetics or second-order cybernetics (Hoffman 1985; Keeney 1979:118, 1987:76ff; Dell 1985:9; Fourie 1991:6-7).

Constructivism is an important aspect where realities are constructed.   This, however, does not mean that any reality can be constructed, a kind of "anything goes" approach. This is not the case. "Anything goes" is solipsism[1], not constructionism. The reality which is constructed in a system cannot be just anything, it has to fit in with the ideas which the participants have about themselves, about each other, about the problem and about the world in general (Fourie 1991:8-9; see also Keeney 1979:117ff; Auerswald 1987:324; Van Huyssteen 1986:170 and De Jongh van Arkel 1988: 226, 227, 228-229).

In other words, such a co-constructed reality exists in the domain of shared meanings. Maturana (1975:316-317, 1978:47) called this "consensual domains" whereas Bateson (1972:xvii) used the term "ecology of ideas" to refer to the way in which ideas are interlinked in (family) systems. For this reason a second order perspective is called an ecosystemic approach by theorists such as Keeney (1979) and Auerswald (1987). This term combines the focus on systems and on *ecology* and emphasizes the complicated, interlinked and ever-changing networks of ideas and meanings existing within and between systems.

_____

[1] A philosophical position (referred to also as subjective idealism) holding that the only real world exists within the consciousness of the individual. Everything outside the individual's consciousness is an illusion, since human consciousness can only be aware of what exists within consciousness itself (Deist 1992:240).

_____

These human networks exist in *language*. This means that when humans explain language as a biological phenomenon, they use the properties of the phenomenon to explain the phenomenon (Maturana 1978:50ff), therefore, any observer is an observer in language. Language could possibly be described as akin to the way living structures produce substances to "protect" themselves (Le Roux 1987:52). Semantic values, then, are not properties of the interaction, but features of the description which an observer makes as if it exists irrespective of individual structures.

The diversity of language is an indication of the subtle flexibility, not of language, but of human systems and their ability to create meanings and meanings of meanings and meanings of meanings of meanings in language. Language is the consensual playground of human beings (Le Roux 1987:57). And since all problems are in language, all solutions should, therefore, also be in language.

In the therapeutic situation this means that the pastor can only use distinctions in language that arise from the pastoral conversation. The therapeutic session starts with the language of the family and their view of the problem - expressed in language. By examining the descriptions of the differences (through questioning, listening, playback of feelings, circular questioning), the pastor discovers the language of the system. In this process the pastor is part and parcel of the family system and plays the role of facilitator. During the therapeutic process the pastor can submit a variety of new ideas and distinctions that could probably fit the family members. These proposals are presented in language and can open up new possibilities for the family. In this way the pastor and the family construct a reality together by using language.

From this point of view, *systems* are seen as constructs that are used to order the world; systems are co-depent and relative to the observer (Naudé 1990:42). A system is also a cybernetic network that processes information. The therapeutic situation can be seen as a system. For this system, the cybernetic network refers to the context of complexly intertwined human relationships in which the relevant information processed includes symptomatic and therapeutic communications. This type of system is referred to as an *ecological relationship system* (Keeney 1979:119-120).

Furthermore, each system consists of *organisation* and *structure*. The organisation of a system defines itself as an entity, which must remain the same for the system to

_____

maintain its identity. If the organisation of the system changes, the system becomes a different entity (Maturana 1975:315-316; 1978:32; Simon 1985:36).

The structure of a system determines the space in which it exists as a composite unity that can be perturbed through the interactions of its components, but the structure does not determine its properties as a unity. Whenever the structure of a unity changes without change in its organisation, the unity remains the same and its identity stays unchanged (Maturana 1975:316). But whenever the structure of an entity changes so that its organisation as a composite unity changes, the identity of the entity changes and it becomes a different composite unity (Maturana 1978:33).

These ideas are based especially on Wiener's principles of cybernetics. His theory implied a new approach to systems, according to which information is fed back to form a closed system of control - this was called feedback.

Another aspect of second order cybernetics is the concept of *structure determinism*. This refers to the organisation of living structures in terms of how, through constant self-referral processes, they maintain themselves and, therefore, it is argued that the changes which they undergo, are determined by their own organisation and structure. The structure of the system determines the domain of structural changes it may undergo without disintegration. Structural change with loss of organisation (that which specifies a system as a unit) is disintegration (Le Roux 1987:36).

The implication this has for pastoral care is that families react to an intervention according to their own belief systems. The structure of a family determines that risk can be defined linguistically in various ways, depending on the context in which they find themselves.

Following on from the aforementioned, regardless of how boundaries are drawn, human systems always exercise their *autonomy* in terms of structure determinism. A live system cannot be alive if it does not form a closed, organised unit. Organised, closed systems are autonomous (Dell 1985:6; Keeney 1987:82-83). Despite the diversity amongst the living, autonomy is the common organisation which living systems implicitly recognise by calling them living (Maturana 1980:73).

As an autonomous structure a human system constantly finds itself embedded in a context (environment, medium).   This implies that, in the case of interpersonal

_____

interaction, participants serve as mutual medium for one another. Each participant is, therefore, both subject and object simultaneously (Le Roux 1987:46).

A family, when defined as a cybernetic system, is a social organism, the whole pattern of organisation of which is stabilised through the changing of different parts. The purpose of family therapy is then to change the way in which the problematic social context maintains its organisation through the processes of change.

According to Bateson (1980:76) all adaptive change requires a source of the random. Keeney and Ross (1983:377) call this source of the random "meaningful Rorschach" or "useful noise". Not just any *Rorschach* will do; the client assumes that there is meaning or order to it. His search for meaning will then generate new structure and pattern. Part of a pastoral conversation must always include meaningful *Rorschachs* which clients (and sometimes pastors) believe to contain "answers" and "solutions". These Rorschachs may be constructed from family history, cultural myth, psychobabble, religious metaphor, stories about other clients (fictional or not), and so forth. The explanations clients propose or request usually provide a clue to what form of Rorschach will be useful.

Stability refers to the stabilisation of a cybernetic system's wholeness or autonomy and change refers to the construction of different patterns and structures which serve to maintain the whole system (Keeney & Ross 1983:378).

2.6 POSTMODERNITY

I will only briefly discuss postmodernity since I will describe it in more detail and the implications thereof in the next section concerning a narrative worldview. The latter being especially important for this study.

Moving now to a postmodern worldview, to my way of thinking, this is a different "movement", and not simply a further evolution of Systems Theory. It is a discontinuous paradigm, a different language. In its broadest form this paradigm has been referred to by many labels, of which "postmodernity" is properly the most commonly used label.

According to Anderson (1990:6) there are three major processes shaping this transition to a postmodern worldview:

_____

1) The breaking down of old ways of belief throughout this century. The result of this breakdown is a kind of unregulated marketplace of realities in which all manner of belief systems are offered for public consumption.

2) The second process is the emergence of a new polarization, a conflict about the nature of social truth itself; epistemology joins the old family favourites – class, race, and nationality – as a source of political controversy. This polarization is evident in battles over education – especially moral instruction – and in several intellectual disciplines.

3) The third process is the birth of a global culture, with a worldview that is truly a *world*view. Globalization provides a new arena (or theatre) in which all belief systems look around and become aware of all other belief systems, and in which people everywhere struggle in unprecedented ways to find out who and what they are.

The reasons for the above mentioned processes are the following :

1) *Intellectual* know-how (and its resultant technology) has failed to deliver the good life and has revealed itself not only as ambiguous but also as potentially lethal in its consequences. What seemed good has turned out to be enormously ambiguous in its fruit.

2) The *political* promise of the Enlightenment has failed to bring peace and has led to powerful tyranny sustained by ideology.

3) "Salvation history has collapsed". Gilkey (cited by Brueggemann 1993:7) observes that with Western culture as the barrier of good in its struggle with evil, "a good case can be made that the spiritual substance of the Enlightenment took its shape *against* the Hebrew and the Christian myths or salvation history. Said another way, the claim of "progress" has not worked out at all convincingly.

4) Confrontation with world religions has shaken the monopolistic claim of Western religions that are closely allied with the Enlightenment and with its forms of domination (Brueggemann 1993:6-7).

In contrast to modernity, of which objective certitude and settled hegemony are common attributes, postmodernity makes mastery and control much more problematic – if indeed master and control can any longer be our intention at all. Brueggemann (1993:8-9) summarize this new intellectual situation as follows:

1) Our knowing is inherently *contextual*.

2) It follows that contexts are quite *local*, and the more one generalizes, the more one loses or fails to notice context.

3)   It follows from contextualism and localism that knowledge is inherently *pluralistic*.

Postmodernity brought with it a new way of understanding history, as Erickson (1998:18) says –

In history, there is a new historicism, in which history is not merely the objective discovery of the past, but actually creates it.

Postmodernity can be summarized as follows:

Tenets of postmodernity
1.   The objectivity of knowledge is denied. Whether the knower is conditioned by the particularities of his or her situation or theories are used oppressively, knowledge is not a neutral means of discovery.
2.   Knowledge is uncertain. Foundationalism, the idea that knowledge can be erected on some sort of bedrock of indubitable first principles, had to be abandoned.
3.   All-inclusive systems of explanation are also questioned, whether metaphysical or historical, are impossible, and the attempt to construct them should be abandoned.
4.   The inherent goodness of knowledge is also questioned. The belief that by means of discovering the truths of nature it could be controlled and evil and ills overcome has been disproved by the destructive ends to which knowledge had been put (in warfare, for instance).
5.   Thus, progress is rejected. The history of the twentieth century should make this clear.
6.   The model of the isolated individual knower as the ideal has been replaced by community-based knowledge. Truth is defined by and for the community, and all knowledge occurs within some community.
7.   The scientific method as the epitomization of the objective method of inquiry is called into question. Truth is not known simply through reason, but through other channels, such as intuition (Erickson 1998:18-19).

2.7 A NARRATIVE WORLDVIEW

> *… narrative and story appear to provide a cure, if not a panacea, to a variety of Enlightenment illnesses* (Hauerwass & Jones 1989:1)

The concept of narrative is very similar to postmodernity in that is just as difficult to define and there are numerous opinions about what exactly narrative thinking is all about.

Flowing from the above discussion about postmodernity the following ideas can be associated with a narrative worldview. This description of a narrative worldview will be especially focused on narrative therapy, since my narrative pastoral conversation comes from the principles associated with this movement. Later on I will give a description of narrative theology.

2.7.1   Realities are socially constructed

The metaphor of social constructionism leads us to consider the ways in which every person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed through interaction with other human beings and human institutions and to focus on the influence of social realities on the meaning of people's lives.

The main premise of social constructionism is that the beliefs, values institutions, customs, labels, laws, definitions of labour, and the like that make up our social realities are constructed by the members of a culture as they interact with one another from generation to generation and day to day. That is, societies construct the "lenses" through which their members interpret the world. The realities that each of us takes for granted are the realities that our societies have surrounded us with since birth. The realities provide the beliefs, practices, words, and experiences from which we make up our lives, or, in postmodern terminology, constitute our selves (Freedman & Combs 1996:16).

According to Hoffman (1990:2-3) *social constructionists* place far more emphasis on social interpretation and the intersubjective influence of language, family and culture, and much less on the operations of the nervous system as it feels its way along (as in the case of constructivism).

Hoffman favours social constructionism because, instead of seeing individuals as

stuck in "biological isolation booths", it -

> *posits an evolving set of meanings that emerge unendingly from the interactions between people. These meanings are not skull-bound and may not exist inside in what we think of as an individual "mind". They are part of a general flow of constantly changing narratives* (1990:3).

According to Griffith and Griffith (1992:6) social constructionism describes -

> *how meaning is negotiated within different domains of social discourse. These meanings, expressed in the metaphors, idioms, and other linguistic forms in which we relate to one another, mould our perception of the world into the consensual realities that we know. Social constructionism analyses our traditions, languages, and institutions to discover how they shape our social discourse, thereby governing the kind of world our language permits us to know.*

We could ask further: What is the origin of these stories or narratives that are constitutive of persons' lives? The stories that persons live by are rarely, if ever, "radically" constructed - it is not a matter of them being made-up, "out of the blue", so to speak. Our culturally available and appropriate stories about personhood and relationships have been historically constructed and negotiated in communities of persons, and within the context of social structures and institutions. Inevitably, there is a canonical dimension to the stories that persons live by.

Thus, these stories are inevitably framed by our dominant cultural knowledges. These knowledges are not about discoveries regarding the "nature" of persons and of relationships, but are constructed knowledges that are specific to a particular strain of personhood and of relationship. For example, in regard to dominant knowledges of personhood, in the West these establish a highly individual and gender-distinct specification for ways of being in the world (White 1992:124-125).

2.7.2 Realities are constructed through language

When experience is regarded as text, conjointly interpreted in community, then language plays a critical role in showing the distinctions that bring our world into being. We use language to give meaning to our experiences. Using the words and grammar

available to us; we interpret our experiences. These are stories, since interpretations can only be made if connections are drawn between things, and this is done within a time-frame. As soon as you do this, namely interpreting experiences and connecting them to time, you create a story. The experiences are raw and meaningless, until we use words and concepts to give meaning to them. Language allows us to reframe the past events into usable experiences. If the language is limited, the story is limited and hence the interpretation is hamstrung and less useful (Müller 1999). I found this especially true in writing this dissertation in English, my second language, along with the fact that I have had to learn French as a third language. Just to learn new vocabulary is not enough. Language should be used to make new interpretations. New connections need to be made and only then is a new liberating language brought into being. In this way people make meaning out of their life events; meaning is not made for us. Meaning is not carried in a word by itself, but by the word in relation to its context, and no two contexts will be exactly the same. Thus the precise meaning of any word is always somewhat indeterminate, and potentially different; it is always something to be negotiated between two or more speakers or between a text and a reader (Freedman & Combs 1996:29).

Language, then, cannot properly be considered in isolation from culture because language inevitably originates from a cultural milieu, and is typically construed as the feature that most clearly differentiates cultures (Paré 1995:6). White (1992:124) describes how each of us enters a world where particular distinctions embedded in language and culture have been granted truth status:

> *These practices and knowledges have been negotiated over time within contexts of communities of persons and institutions that comprise culture. This social formation of communities and institutions compose relations of forces that, in engaging in various practices of power, determine which ideas, of all those possible, are acceptable - they determine what is to count as legitimate knowledge.*

The critical implication of the link between language and culture, and a conclusion implicit in the quotation above, is that cultures - including influential institutional forces within cultures - propagate values. And so cultures do not create their realities through language in a neutral way; rather, the language distinctions that cultures make are inherently ideological.

_____

Knowledge can be viewed as -

that which is represented in linguistic propositions,

and therefore -

not something that people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather something people do together. Languages are essentially shared activities.

Viewed from this perspective, -

the performative use of language is in human affairs.

This also implies the possibility of giving new meaning by means of new language. Narrative therapy depends on the meaning-giving power of language and stories. Whenever a shared language-construct functions in a conversation, new language can be linked to an event and in this way the experience can be re-interpreted. This shared language-construct, naturally, includes a shared culture and world view. The way that understanding occurs is through language-constructs by which meanings are shared with each other at a selected moment.

Therefore we can refer to the pastoral situation as a language system. This is an "in-language"-event. In the process of this language-event, a vocabulary is constructed which is functional in the situation.

It is extremely important for the pastor to be able to understand and communicate his participant's language, since this language serves as the metaphor through which the participant expresses his experiences. The participant's words, language and meanings interpret the happenings in his/her life. Therefore the pastor's primary task is to be a diligent listener who is slow to come to an understanding. The quicker a pastor "understands", the more the likelihood of true dialogue is diminished, and the potential for misunderstanding is enhanced (Müller 1999).

2.7.3 Narrative and reality

If the realities we inhabit are brought forth in the language we use, they are then kept alive and passed along in the stories that we live and tell. The central role of

narrative in organizing, maintaining, and circulating knowledge of ourselves and our worlds has been stressed by many postmodern writers, for example:

> *. . . whether you get your literature from deconstructionist critics and university-press novelists, or from the latest item in the airport bookstore, or from the daily news, you are likely to get a similar subtext about the human condition : a message that life is a matter of telling ourselves stories about life, and of savoring stories about life told by others, and of living our lives according to such stories, and of creating ever-new and more complex stories about stories – and that this story making is not just about human life, but is, human life* (Anderson 1990:102).

> *. . . we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on* (Bruner 1991:4).

> *. . . narrative can provide a particularly rich source of knowledge about the significance people find in their work-a-day lives. Such narratives often reveal more about what can make life worth living than about how it is routinely lived* (Rosaldo 1986:98).

> *In striving to make sense of life, persons face the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of themselves and the world around them. . . . This account can be referred to as a story or self-narrative. The success of this storying of experience provides persons with a sense of continuity and meaning in their lives, and this is relied upon for the ordering of daily lives and for the interpretation of further experiences* (White & Epston 1990:10).

When therapists listen to people's stories with an ear to "making an assessment" or "taking a history of the illness" or "offering an interpretation," they are approaching people's stories from a modernist, "structuralist" worldview. In terms of understanding an individual person's specific plight or joining them in their worldview, this approach risks missing the whole point. Lynn Hoffman (1991:12-13) makes a similar observation when, referring to Gergen's (1991a) work, she says that traditional therapists believe that there

are "essences" in the human experience that must be captured in some kind of narrative and offered to clients in place of their old, illusory narratives. Going in, the therapist already has some idea of what these "essences" are. Postmodern therapists do not believe in "essences." Knowledge, being socially arrived at, changes and renews itself in each moment of interaction. There are no prior meanings hiding in stories or texts. A therapist with this view will expect a new and hopefully more useful narrative to surface during the conversation, but will see this narrative as spontaneous rather than planned. The conversation, not the therapist is its author.

Within a social constructionist worldview, it is important to attend to *cultural* and *contextual* stories as well as to individual people's stories. According to Mair (1988:127), -

> *Stories inform life. They hold us together and keep us apart. We inhabit the great stories of our culture. We live through stories. We are lived by the stories of our race and place.*

White (1991) writes that cultural stories determine the shapes of our individual life narratives. People make sense of their lives through stories, both the cultural narratives they are born into and the personal narratives they construct in relation to the cultural narratives. In any culture, certain narratives will come to be dominant over other narratives. These dominant narratives will specify the preferred and customary ways of believing and behaving within the particular culture. Some cultures have colonized and oppressed others. The narratives of the dominant culture are then imposed on people of marginalized cultures.

Whatever culture we belong to, its narratives have influenced us to ascribe certain meanings to particular life events and to treat others as relatively meaningless. Each remembered event constitutes a story, which together with our other stories constitutes a life narrative, and, experientially speaking, our life narrative is our life.

A key to this therapy is that in any life there are always more events that don't get "storied" than ones that do – even the longest and most complex autobiography leaves out more than it includes. This means that when life narratives carry hurtful meanings or seem to offer only unpleasant choices, they can be changed by highlighting different, previously un-storied events or by taking new meaning from already-storied events, thereby constructing new narratives. Or, when dominant cultures carry stories that are

_____

oppressive, people can resist their dictates and find support in subcultures that are living different stories.

So, narrative therapy is about the retelling and reliving of stories. As people retell their stories in therapy, they often "notice that they have already experienced participating in an alternative story" (Zimmerman & Dickerson 1994a:235).   Bruner (1986a:17) writes, -

> . . . retellings are what culture is all about. The next telling reactivates prior experience, which is then rediscovered and relived as the story is re-related in a new situation. Stories may have endings, but stories are never over.

But it is not enough to recite a new story. In order to make a difference, new stories must be experienced and lived outside of the four walls of a therapist's office. Bruner (1986a:22-25) goes on to say, -

> . . . we are not dealing with culture as text but rather with culture as the performance of text – and, I would add, with the reperformance and retellings. . . Stories become transformative only in their performance.

2.7.4 Narrative and truth

When we say that there are many possible stories about self (or about other aspects of reality), we do not mean to say that "anything goes." Rather, we are motivated to examine our constructions and stories - how they have come to be and what their effects are on ourselves and others. Spence (cited in Vitz 1992a:14) claims that this construction that describes and summarizes the client's past has narrative form. The mind, in which memories are found, is actively interacting with and changing the understanding of its own past.
As Jerome Bruner (1990: 27) has written, -

> Asking the pragmatist's questions - how does this view affect my view of the world or my commitments to it? - surely does not lead to "anything goes." It may lead to an unpackaging of presuppositions, the better to explore one's commitments.

Richard Rorty (1991b: 132) puts it this way:

> *The repudiation of the traditional logocentric image of the human being as Knower does not seem to us to entail that we face an abyss, but merely that we face a range of choices.*

These authors seem to be saying that a postmodern worldview makes it *more* necessary to examine our constructions and to decide carefully how to act on them, not less. The issues of deciding, of choosing, and of examining the effects of our choices are central to the kind of therapy that we practice. Not only do we carefully examine the beliefs and values that we choose, but we invite the people who come to see us to examine their beliefs and values as well.

To this end, we make beliefs and values grist for the therapeutic mill. We try to understand the beliefs that support people's problems. We inquire about where those beliefs come from and what processes of social construction have recruited people into those beliefs. We try to be "transparent" (White 1991) about our own values, explaining enough about our situation and our life experience that people can understand us as people rather than as "experts" or conduits of professional knowledge.

Even if we wanted to foster a value-neutral, "anything goes" reality, we couldn't. One cannot make up and inhabit a completely new social reality overnight. It took several generations for the beliefs, practices, and institutions of our fledgling society to take on the weight of reality. Instead of implying "anything goes", the expressions "everything is contingent" is maybe closer to reality. It is not as if there are no rules, but that the rules that do exist are decidedly "historically and culturally situated" (Gergen 1985:273), rather than understanding that essential truths are metaphysically located, and as such are eminently prone to potentially endless revisions.

While, as Berger and Luckmann (1966: 86) write, "in any developed society there are many subuniverses of meaning," these subuniverses are not infinite in number. The reifying and legitimizing influences of our cultural institutions constrain us very effectively, leading us to see certain possibilities as desirable and completely blinding us to other possibilities. As Joan Laird (1989: 430) puts it, -

_____

>. . . sociocultural narratives . . . construct the contextual realms of possibility from which individuals and families can select the ingredients and forms for their own narratives.

But some people have readier access to a wider range of sociocultural narratives than others, and some narratives are dominant while others are marginalized. Laird (1989: 431) reminds us of this when she goes on to write of -

>. . . the politics of story making or mythmaking. Clearly there are both obvious and subtle differences in the power individuals and particular interest groups possess to ensure that particular narratives will prevail in family, group, and national life. Not all stories are equal.

Social realities may not be "essentially true," but that doesn't stop them from having real effects.

Furthermore, accepting a narrative approach as normative for arriving at human meaning doesn't signal an end to controversy or apologetics, and so on – far from it. Today's intellectual world is dominated by narrative and hermeneutic theory that is secular and atheistic. Indeed resent theory (e.g. the Deconstructionists) is so thoroughly nihilistic as to strongly imply that the modern secular understanding of narrative has exhausted and destroyed itself and come to an end. This should be seen as an opportunity for the revival of a more traditional understanding of narrative – an understanding more typical of premodern thought, more involved in the oral and less in the written narrative (Vitz 1992b:26).

Regardless, to take a narrative model as a new paradigm in the social sciences makes the Christian position more plausible, at least in the sense that the Christian understanding is then no longer qualitatively different from the type of model accepted as normative by others. Whether non-believers will come to accept the Christian story as better is, of course, another issue. In the same line of thought, Carson (1996) holds that although confessional Christianity cannot wholly embrace either modernity or postmodernity, it must learn certain lessons from both. He decries the hubris that attributes perfect knowledge to humans, and affirms the need to recognize that all human knowledge is in some way culturally bound and that all interpreters have a cultural location. Yet Carson would be first to concede and insist that these premises ultimately

_____

have scriptural legitimation. Human beliefs are indeed shaped in part by language, culture, and community. That is not all there is to be said, however. Carson has observed that in the realm of knowing, we join the experts of deconstructionism and of the new hermeneutic in insisting on human finiteness. What is more, we go further and insist on human sinfulness. The noetic effect of sin is so severe that we culpably distort the data brought to us by our senses to make it fit into self-serving grids (Carson 1996, chapter 3).

Le Roux (1996:17) argues that relativism is not concerned here, because a playful interaction with the text does not lead to fixed truths which are recognizable for everybody. What actually happens is that we look at the text in a different way each time and we can play with different possibilities of meaning. This is not a form of relativism, but rather real understanding. We only really come to understanding of the text when the playful interaction with the text leads to new and other possibilities. To play with the text is not the undermining of the truth of the text. In the playful struggle with the text new meaning grows. It is simply different. It is not a truth that is accessible and acceptable for everybody. It is a truth that is not empirical clinical and which can be abstracted and described to everybody's satisfaction. This truth is a truth-for-me. Even persons who believe in external truths that transcend human knowledge have difficulty denying that the way individuals shape perceptions of these objective truths is significantly affected by the uniqueness of their experience with the environment and cultural context in which this experience takes place. Thus, there is rather the recognition of multiple perspectives, assuming instead plurality of understandings for any aspect of social reality. Postmodern thought suggests a subject that is "socially and linguistically decentred and fragmented (Cheek 2000:18-19).

The idea is not to describe a portrait of marriage, for example, but to go about with an open mind and searching spirit together with my co-researchers with their stories and The Story. The pastoral therapist has the responsibility to facilitate the maintenance of further development as well as the deconstruction of the participant's life story. The conversation takes place within her/his tradition on the one hand, and facilitates the growth and creative development of particular life stories on the other hand. The fact that we quote Scripture during a premarital pastoral conversation does not make it pastoral. When Scripture is used, it should be in terms of contextual interpretation, i.e., an interpretation reached through conversation to which all participants subscribe to. The search for *truth* as a member of a certain community/society is to seek to *be true* to the

_____

primary narrative that structures the community's way of being in the world.   This approach acknowledges both cultural unity and cultural plurality.   While recognizing the power of language and culture to shape individual lives, it nevertheless invites intercultural dialogue and the opening up of traditional ways of ordering life to new experiences (Gerkin 1997:110).

In a narrative metaphor, people are seen as organizing their experience in the form of stories (Bruner 1990).   Clearly, any one story cannot capture the range of people's experience;   therefore, there are always experiences that lie outside of, or do not fit or make sense of any given story.   Stories become a context in which certain information or experiences fit but not others.   In a narrative metaphor, the therapist looks for experiences that are not currently being storied, which do not fit into the dominant (problem) narrative.   Questions can be asked that invite clients (*sic*) to develop an alternative story around these experiences.   It is not the specific experiences but, rather, its potential meaningfulness to the alternative story that is important (Zimmerman & Dickerson 1994b:234-235;   see also Parry 1991:39).

2.7.5 The politics of power

One of the attractive things to me about Michael White's writings has been the way in which he addresses the politics of power.   He (1991, 1993, 1995; White & Epston 1990) argues for a "constitutionalist perspective," which proposes that while we as human beings can know no essential truths, the experiential truths of our daily lives are constituted by the stories we live.   He (White 1993:125) writes:

> *The constitutionalist perspective that I am arguing for refutes foundationalist assumptions of objectivity, essentialism, and representationalism. It proposes . . . that essentialist notions are paradoxical in that they provide descriptions that are specifying of life; that these notions obscure the operations of power.   And the constitutionalist perspective proposes that the descriptions that we have of life are not representations or reflections of life as lived, but are directly constitutive of life; that these descriptions . . . have real effects in the shaping of life.*

In order to understand White's handling of differences in power, it is necessary to understand a little about the work of Michel Foucault (1965, 1975, 1977, 1980, and 1985).

Foucault was a French intellectual who studied, among other things, the various ways in which people in Western society have been categorized as "normal" and "abnormal." He examines madness (Foucault 1965), illness (1975), criminality (1977), and sexuality (1985) as concepts around which certain people have been labelled as insane, sick, criminal, or perverted, and describes various ways in which they have been separated, sequestered, and oppressed on the basis of that labelling.

To Foucault, language is an instrument of power, and people have power in a society in direct proportion to their ability to participate in the various discourses that shape that society. The people whose voices dominated the discussion about what constituted madness, for example, could separate the people *they* saw as mad from "polite society," sequestering them in mental institutions where their voices were cut off from polite discourse. He argues that there is an inseparable link between knowledge and power: the discourses of a society determine what knowledge is held to be true, right, or proper in that society, so those who control the discourse control knowledge. At the same time, the dominant knowledge of a given milieu determines who will be able to occupy its powerful positions. To Foucault, power is knowledge and knowledge is power (Freedman & Combs 1996:38). In putting power and knowledge together in this way, Foucault rejects a formulation of power and knowledge that would suggest knowledge only becomes problematic when it is wielded by those in power to suit their own ends. Instead, he argues that, mostly, we are all acting coherently within and through a given field of power/ knowledge, and that, although these actions have very real effects, they cannot be identified with specific motives. Here Foucault is not talking about all forms of power, but about a particularly modern and insidious form of power.

Foucault thus dissuades us from a concern with an "internal point of view" for the explanation of the operation of power, challenging any preoccupations we might have with who controls its effects and how it is exercised. Since we are all caught up in a web of power/knowledge, it is not possible to act apart from this domain, and we are simultaneously undergoing the effects of power and the exercising of this power in relation to others. However, this does not, by any means, suggest that all persons are equal in the exercise of power, nor that some do not suffer its subjugating effects very much more than others.

> *Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what*
> *they seek, of what their overall strategy is. Let us ask, instead, how things   work*
> *at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and*

_____

> *uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc. In other words . . . we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects* (Foucault 1980:97).

Foucault's conception of the inseparability of power/knowledge is reflected in his confrontation with those who argue for the ascendancy of particular knowledges over others. He would ask: What alternative knowledges would they disqualify and which persons or groups of persons are likely to be diminished through the success of such arguments for ascendancy?

Foucault maintains that it is the isolation of specific knowledges from the discontinuous knowledges that circulate around them that invests their discourses with the effect of power. This isolation is essentially achieved by the development of "objective reality" discourses that qualify these knowledges for a place in the hierarchy of scientific knowledges. Foucault traced the history of these knowledges that were accorded this status, investigating their effects, their limitations and their dangers (White & Epston 1990:22-23; Cheek 2000:22-24).

Foucault's conception of the inseparability of power and knowledge is reflected in his confrontation with those who argue for the ascendancy of a particular brand of knowledge over others (Foucault *in* Madigan 1992:269). For example, the discourse of pharmaceutical medicine, propped up and supported by a powerful industrial lobby, often overshadows the talk of lesser known, yet sometimes safer and more effective alternatives of naturopathic medicines.

Foucault suggests that alternative knowledges are often silenced through their disqualification. Foucault calls these *local knowledges* in contrast to those cultural knowledges which survive and rise above others: the latter he calls *global knowledges*[2].

The "privileging" of specific cultural practices over others also acts to disqualify whole groups of people, who through their actions are viewed by the culture as different.

---

[2] In his descriptions of "global totalitarian" knowledge practices Foucault suggests two types of subjugated knowledges : *erudite knowledges* are those which have been excluded from written history, *local knowledges* are those that, although currently surviving in particular cultural discourse, are denied the space to be adequately performed (Foucault *in* Madigan 1992:269, *and in* White and Epston 1990:25-27).

_____

These groups, who for instance practise a different sexual preference, fashion, diet or spiritual orientation, are quite often marginalized. Arguments for the ascendancy of one idea or practice over another promote the rhetorical position that actual "truths" exist. Foucault (1980:93) writes:

> *There can be no possible exercise of power without certain economical discourses of truth which operate through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.*

Foucault differs from traditional perceptions of power which regard it as negative. He claims that power does not come from above, but rather, from below (the subject) where cultural knowledge claims are internalized and produced in every social interaction. It is therefore not exercised negatively from the outside, although negation and repression may be some of the effects. Once an individual becomes part of society's discourse, certain cultural "truths" are then integrated and privileged, thereby restraining the construction of alternatives. To participate in these "truths", certain less dominant, less scientific, or perhaps lesser accepted "truths" are subjugated (Madigan 1992:270; White 1991:137).

I would like to clarify that when Foucault is describing "truths", he is not subscribing to the belief that there exist objective or intrinsic facts about the nature of persons, but is refering instead to constructed ideas that are given a "truth" status. These "truths" act to set standards of "normalization" and influence how people are to shape or constitute their lives. It would appear that the primary subjugating effect of power through "truth" and "truth" through power is the specification of a form of individuality, and this in turn is a vehicle for power (White & Epston 1990:19-20; Madigan 1992:270).

A knowledge practice viewed as "truth" within cultural discourse sets standards for the behaviour of the individual, around which the individual shapes his or her life (Foucault 1984a). For example, certain specified body weights for women have shaped societies' perception of good and bad body shapes; many Western women exercise, diet, and even fast, as part of an obsession with getting their bodies to match certain privileged body specifications.

_____

Foucault suggests that the cultural construction of power is not repressive but rather acts in such a way as to subjugate other alternative knowledges. He proposes that persons become "docile bodies" and are conscripted into performances of meaning which lend support to the proliferation of both "global" knowledges as well as techniques of power (Foucault 1980). Foucault parallels a postmodern anthropological position, as he does not propose that there are global knowledges that can be universally accepted as truth. Thus, dominant narratives tend to blind us to the possibilities that other narratives might offer us (White & Epston 1990:20; Madigan 1992:270).

Foucault (1980) specifies that knowledges which make global truth claims are supported through knowledges of modern scientific disciplines. He writes that as both participants and subjects of this power through knowledge, we are -

> *Judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertaking, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power* (1980:94).

White (1991:14) argues that people come to therapy either when dominant narratives are keeping them from living out their preferred narratives or when -

> *. . . the person is actively participating in the performance of stories that she finds unhelpful, unsatisfying, and dead-ended, and that these stories do not sufficiently encapsulate the person's lived experience or are very significantly contradicted by important aspects of the person's lived experience.*

Foucault was especially interested in how the "truth claims" carried in the "grand abstractions" of modernist science constituted a discourse that dehumanized and objectified many people. He was interested in finding and circulating marginalized discourses that might undermine the power of modern scientific discourse. He (1980: 80-84) wrote of the "amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular, and local criticism" in bringing about a "return of knowledge" or "an insurrection of subjugated knowledges." "We are concerned …," he said, -

> *with the insurrection of knowledges that are opposed ...to the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours.*

Michael White argues that even in the most marginalized and disempowered of lives there is always "lived experience" that lies outside the domain of the dominant stories that have marginalized and disempowered those lives. He and David Epston, along with others, have developed ways of thinking and working that are based on bringing forth the "discontinuous, particular, and local" stories of individuals and groups and providing meaning to those stories so that they can be part of an effective "insurrection of subjugated knowledges," an insurrection that lets people inhabit and lay claim to the many possibilities for their lives that lie beyond the pale of the dominant narratives (Freedman & Combs 1996:38-40).

This analysis of power is difficult for many persons to entertain, for it suggests that many of the aspects of our individual modes of behaviour that we assume to be an expression of our free will, or that we assume to be transgressive, are not what they might at first appear. In fact, this analysis would suggest that many of our modes of behaviour reflect our collaboration within the control or policing of our own lives, as well as the lives of others; our collusion within the specification of lives according to the dominant knowledges of our culture (White 1991:139).

We see this for example when diagnosticians who use criteria such as those in DSM-IV behave as if they possessed, instead of research tools, a set of descriptions for real, homogeneous, mental disorders that hold true for all people across all contexts. Or when genetics and pharmacologists, as well as clinicians that rely on their studies, behave as if they are in possession of "the truth" about the causes and cures for DSM-IV disorders. Or when people within the managed care movement seem to believe that it is possible to develop standardized methods that will produce predictable, effective results with all psychiatric "illnesses" in a specified number of sessions within specified intervals. Foucault (1982) calls this the turning of human beings into objectified subjects through *scientific classification*. He also shows how, at different stages of history, certain scientific universals regarding human social life were privileged; through this privileged status certain scientific classifications have acted to specify social norms (Foucault 1984). Hence, socially produced specifications and categorizations of normal and abnormal behaviour evolved which were perpetuated and which Foucault calls *totalization*

techniques (culturally produced notions about the specifications of personhood) (Foucault 1982).

With further reference to Foucault, Madigan (1992:267-268) mentions another commonly used practice of classification, i.e. the documentation of lives which become available through the invention of files. The file enables individuals to be "captured" and fixed in time through writing, and its use facilitates the gathering of statistics and the fixing of norms. The file can be used as an instrument to promote the construction of unitary and global knowledges about people. This turning of real lives into writing is viewed by Foucault as yet another mechanism of social control.

The professional disciplines have been successful in the development of language practices and techniques which imply that it is these disciplines that have access to the "truth" of the world. These techniques encourage persons in the belief that the members of these disciplines have access to an objective and unbiased account of reality, and of human nature.

What this means is that certain speakers, those with training in certain special techniques - supposedly to do with the powers of the mind to make contact with reality - are privileged to speak with authority beyond the range of their personal experience (Parker & Shotter 1990:7).

According to Madigan (1992:266), Foucault called this a mode of objectification of the subject by means of a *dividing practice*. These dividing practices are social and usually spatial : social, in that people of a particular social group who exhibit differences can be subjected to certain means of objectification; and spatial, by being physically separated from the social group for exhibiting differences. The actions of dividing practices are tolerated and justified through the mediation of science (or pseudoscience) and the power the social group gives to scientific claims. In this process of social objectification and categorization, human beings are given both a social and a personal identity.

These language practices introduce ways of speaking and of writing that are considered to be rational, neutral and respectable, emphasizing notions of the authoritative account and the impersonal expert view. These practices disembody the perspective and the opinions of the speaker and the writer. The presentation of the knowledges of the speaker and writer is devoid of information that might give the

respondent or the reader information concerning the conditions of the production of the expert view.

When we treat people with this kind of "objectivity", regarding them as objects, we invite them into a relationship in which they are the passive, powerless recipients of our knowledge and expertise. Addressing this, Kenneth Gergen writes, -

> . . . the post modern argument is not against various schools of therapy, only against their posture of authoritative truth (1992:57).

Postmodernists believe that there are limits to the ability of human beings to measure and describe the universe in any precise, absolute, and universally applicable way. They differ from modernists in that exceptions interest them more than rules. They choose to look at specific, contextualized details more often than grand generalizations, difference rather than similarities. While modernist thinkers tend to be concerned with facts and rules, postmodernists are concerned with meaning. In their search for an examination of meaning, postmodernists find metaphors from the human sciences more useful than the modernist metaphors of nineteenth-century physical sciences (Freedman & Combs 1996:21).

2.7.5.1 Deconstruction of practices of power

In therapy, the objectification of these familiar and taken-for-granted practices of power contributes very significantly to their deconstruction. This is achieved by engaging persons in externalizing conversations about these practices. As these practices of power are unmasked, it becomes possible for persons to confront them, and to counter the influence of these practices on their lives and relationships.

These externalizing conversations are initiated by encouraging persons to provide an account of the effects of these practices in their lives. In these conversations, special emphasis is given to what these practices have dictated to them about their relationship with themselves, and about their relationships with others.

It is through these externalizing conversations that persons are able to:

- appreciate the degree to which these practices are constituting of their own lives as well as the lives of others,

_____

- identify those practices of self and of their relationships that might be judged as impoverishing to their lives, as well as to the lives of others,

- acknowledge the extent to which they have been recruited into the policing of their own lives and, as well, the nature of their participation in the policing of the lives of others, and to

- explore the nature of local, relational politics.

It is through these externalizing conversations that persons no longer experience these practices as representative of authentic ways of being with themselves and with others. They no longer experience being at one with these practices, and begin to sense a certain alienation in relation to them.   Persons are then in a position to develop alternative and preferred practices of self and of relationship – encounter-practices.   In therapy, one then challenges various practices of power, including those that relate to -

> *the technologies of the self – the subjugation of self through the discipline of bodies, souls, thoughts, and conduct according to specified ways of being (including the various operations that are shaping of bodies according to the gender specific knowledges), the technologies of power - the subjugation of others through techniques such as isolation and surveillance, and through perpetual evaluation and comparison* (White 1991:140-141).

2.7.5.2 Deconstruction of knowledge practices

Pastors can contribute to the deconstruction of expert knowledge by considering themselves to be "co-authors" of alternative and preferred knowledges and practices, and through a concerted effort to establish a context in which persons who seek therapy are privileged as the primary authors of these knowledges and practices. Some of the therapeutic practices that are informed by this perspective follow. These by no means exhaust the possibilities.

First, pastors can undermine the idea that they have privileged access to the truth by consistently encouraging persons to assist them in the quest for understanding. This can be achieved by giving persons notice of the extent to which the therapist's participation in therapy is dependent upon feedback from persons about their experience of the therapy. It is acknowledged that the person's experiences of therapy are essential

_____

to the guidance of the therapy, as this is the only way in which pastors can know what sort of therapeutic interaction is helpful and what is not.

Secondly, this can be further emphasized if pastors engage persons in some inquiry as to why certain ideas that emerge during the interview are of more interest than others. What is it that persons find significant or helpful about the particular perspectives, realizations, conclusions, etc?   What preferred outcomes, for persons' lives, might accompany the particular perspectives, realizations, conclusions, etc?

Thirdly, pastors can challenge the idea that they have an expert view by continually encouraging persons to evaluate the real effects of the therapy on their lives and relationships, and to determine for themselves to what extent these effects are preferred effects and to what extent they are not. The feedback that arises from this evaluation assists pastors to face squarely the moral and ethical implications of their practices.

Finally, pastors can call into question the idea that they possess an objective and unbiased account of reality, and undermine the possibility that persons will be subject to the imposition of ideas, by encouraging them to provide feedback to her/him about the interview. In response to this, the pastor is able to deconstruct and thus embody her/his responses (including questions, comments, thoughts, and opinions) by situating these in the context of his/her personal experiences, imagination, and intentional states. This can be described as a condition of "transparency" in the therapeutic system, and it contributes to a context in which persons are more able to decide, for themselves, how they might take these pastors' responses (see White 1991:144).

2.8 CONCLUSION

After describing my research orientation in CHAPTER ONE, I gave in THIS CHAPTER an overview of the scientific-philosophical positioning of this study. This involved in giving an account of the development from a premodern worldview to a postmodern worldview. The narrative worldview, which forms part of postmodernity, was describe in more detail, since it will be the position from which this study will be conducted. The following chapter will examine the theological response to this new worldview.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   65
_____

CHAPTER THREE:

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE

"I cannot play with you," said the fox. "I am not tamed." …
"I am looking for friends," said the little prince.
"What does that mean – 'tame'?"
"It is an act too often neglected," says the fox.
"It means to establish ties."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The little prince

In this chapter we shall be journeying along the road of a narrative conversation. This will be a continuation of the conversation that we had in the previous section, but narrowing it down to the implication of narrative for Practical Theology and Pastoral Care. I will not give an overview of the historical development of narrative in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care, since this has been done elsewhere. Instead I will describe the approach of certain proponents of this movement that are important for this study. The use of narrative to create a new understanding of the human story can be a useful element in the development of a premarital narrative conversation. The (biblical) narrative should meet, and not fuse with, the human narrative in its concrete situation. The purpose of the biblical narrative should not be seen as just bringing a correction to the human narrative, but should open new horizons of understanding.

Concerning the field of study of Practical Theology, the term *narrative* contributes to a better understanding of the idea of *communicative actions*. When communicative actions are studied in Practical Theology from a definitive and purposeful narrative perspective, this approach is much more inclusive and it refers to the whole ecosystem in which the communication processes take place (Müller 1996:4). Within the human sciences the narrative developed into a perspective through which cultural and individual experiences can be placed in an understandable (hermeneutical) context (Paré 1995:7).

3.1 THE LIFE-STORY AND LIVED CONVICTIONS

Stephen Crites' article, <u>The narrative quality of human experience</u> (1989:65-88 - originally published in 1971), was one of the earliest pieces in Narrative Theology and has proved to be one of the richest and most suggestive. He argues, by making use of a "homemade" phenomenology, that one of the conditions of being human is the possession

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   66
_____

of the capacity for having a history, and –

>   *that the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative*
> (Crites 1989:65-66).

In this way, there is a move away from the modernistic perspective with its emphasis on reason and objective observation to a post modernistic perspective. The latter takes seriously the subjective observation of human experience as it is expressed in narrative. Narrative is the form consciousness assumes in its experience of the world, which suitably expresses "the tensed" unity of the three modalities of past present and future (Crites 1989:76-77).

In order to understand the primordial status of narrative in human experience Crites makes a distinction between *sacred stories* and *mundane stories*. Sacred stories-

>   *not so much because gods are commonly celebrated in them, but because men's sense of self and the world is created through them*

and they –

>   *orient the life of people through time, their life time, their individual and corporal experience and their sense of style, to the great powers that establish the reality of their world* (Crites 1989:70).

These are powerful stories which are never directly told because they shape consciousness rather than being an object of consciousness (Stroup 1981:76).

Mundane stories are stories -

>   *that are told, all stories directly seen or heard* (Crites 1989:70)

stories that people recite, stories which are set within a determinate world (*mundus*) and frame of consciousness and by which people explain where they have been, why things are as they are, and so on (Crites 1989:70-71).

Hence, the *narrative quality of experience*, as Crites describes it, has three

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   67
_____

dimensions:

> *the sacred story, the mundane stories, and the temporal form of experience itself: three narrative tracks, each constantly reflecting and affecting the course of the others* (Crites 1989:81).

The encounter between the Biblical Story and the human story (to which I referred earlier) is expressed in Crites' claim that all stories are imbedded in sacred stories:

> *From the sublime to the ridiculous, all a people's mundane stories are implicit in its sacred stories, and every mundane story takes soundings in the sacred story* (Crites 1989:71).

An important aspect of Crites' article is found in the *mediating form* that exists between the sacred stories and the mundane stories -

> *the form of the experiencing consciousness itself* (Crites 1989:72).

According to Crites, the form of active consciousness, i.e. the form of its experiencing, is in at least some rudimentary sense narrative.

Through Crites' article new possibilities of meaning are given to the role of narrative in the expression of human experience.

3.2 NARRATIVE AND UNDERSTANDING

For our present study the hermeneutics of **Hans-Georg Gadamer**, as outlined in Wahrheit und Methode (1986), is particularly interesting.

Bons-Storm (1989:86) divides Gadamer's work into the following three steps:

1) There is a distance between the author (couple) and the reader (pastor). The pastor must become aware of his own *Vormeinung* or *Vorverständnis* with regard to the text (the person, couple, family, community, society). This *Vormeinung* or *Vorverständnis* takes on the form of prejudices, or preconceived ideas (*Vorurteile*) (Bons-Storm 1989:86;

_____

see also Tracy 1984:80). Gadamer (1986:273) then asks how one can be freed from this *Bannkreis* of prejudices or preconceived ideas. They seem to be unavoidable, since each person is formed by his own socialization process and culture. Each pastor carries the burden of his tradition with him. The solution is to expose oneself to one's prejudices so that one can be aware of them, but it does not do away with the fact that one has prejudices.

It is essentially unconscious prejudices that prohibit openness towards the text (couple) (Bons-Storm 1989:86; Müller 1991b:187; Gadamer 1986:274).

2) The second step is that the pastor must open himself to the stimuli of the text. The text stimulates the reader and the pastor should allow himself to be influenced by the text. The stimulation of the text can have different effects on the pastor: interest, resonation of feelings, rejection or shock. These reactions are important, because it brings prejudices to the level of the conscious. The pastor should him-/herself also be convinced by the uniqueness of the message. This process can be risky since it may demand change from oneself. The natural reaction is therefore to avoid the stimuli from the text (Bons-Storm 1989:86; Müller 1991b:188), a possibility of which the pastor should be aware of.

3) Only when the pastor has opened himself to the text can real conversation take place between the pastor, with his more or less conscious prejudices and openness, and the text (couple), with its theme.

Tracy (1984:84ff) adds two steps to those of Gadamer:

1) Tracy wants to apply a *hermeneutics of suspicion*. He wants to focus his suspicion on the unconscious purposes that exist in the conversation between the pastor and the text (couple). Furthermore, he wants to trace methodologically the ideological and the psychological distortions in the opinions and contributions of the persons involved in the hermeneutical conversation (Tracy 1984:86). In the process of the communication process one should be aware of the distortions brought about by ideologies, education, sexism, sexual prejudices, etc. In the interpretation of the text these distortions, which exist in both parties, should carefully be taken into consideration to ensure good communication (Bons-Storm 1989:87; Müller 1991b:189).

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   69
_____

These distortions have to be exposed. It is of great importance that the pastor should be suspicious not only when listening to the other person's story, but also when he is listening to his own story.

2) Finally, Tracy (1984:87) adds that the pastor not only has to deal with the subject of the text, but with an "informed" text (couple). That is, a subject or theme that is packed in the form and structure of the text. Thus, the pastor and the couple find themselves in a particular context.

Another important figure for Practical Theology is the French philosopher **Paul Ricoeur** (born 1913). His work went through different stages of development with influences from phenomenology, existentialism, language theory, psychoanalysis, structuralism, deconstruction, textual theories, metaphor and narrative. He follows the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition of which explanation (*Erklären, Auslegung*) and understanding (V*erstehen*) form a central part. He overcame the dichotomy of these two aspects that was maintained by Dilthey (Ricoeur 1981:49, 92, 149-152, 165; Heitink 1993:138). Explanation was understood as part of the natural sciences, while understanding was considerede to belong to the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaft*) (Ricoeur 1981:36). Interpretation takes place between text and reader; it is the dialectical process that takes place between structural analysis on the one side, and self appropriation on the other side (Ricoeur 1986:111-112, 145-146, 153). Ricoeur's *hermeneutic of suspicion* (Ricoeur 1965:40-44) represents his attempt to retain both science and art, whilst disallowing either an absolute status. Hermeneutics seems to him to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience. The first addresses the task of 'doing away with idols,' namely, becoming critically aware of when we project our own wishes and constructs into texts, so that they no longer address us from beyond ourselves as "other." The second concerns the need to listen in openness to symbol and to narrative and thereby to allow creative events to occur "in front of" the text, and to have their effect on us (Thiselton 1992:26). It seems to me that Ricoeur's insight here is an essentially valid one. It is simply too easy when reading a (biblical) text, especially one that we are familiar with, to do so with a rigidity and complacency that tends to "freeze" its meaning irrevocably. To approach the text with suspicion - to query whether what the text appears to say really does correspond with its true message - seems to be both a valid and necessary hermeneutical process. I need to apply suspicion to myself - am I imposing a meaning upon this text ? And a suspicion to the

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   70
_____

text - is the text really saying this? Both poles of suspicion are valid and necessary if we are to hear afresh what God may seek to communicate to us. Ricoeur is in a way merely reminding us, in a startling manner no doubt, of the reality of the hermeneutical circle. We must approach the text critically and suspiciously in order that its message may truly be heard, and so that our own pre-conceived understandings and certainties do not mask the truth.

Ricoeur concentrates on the challenge that the text represents in spite of the cultural distance and foreignness of the text. As a believing philosopher he stands critical towards faith, which he considers as a post critical, rational and interpreting faith searching for a second naivety. We live in an age of suspicion in which the immediacy of faith escapes us. We have lost a certain simplicity of faith and we try to find a second naivety through a process of interpretation. A post critical faith does not mean that we do away with faith, but it implies an interpreting rediscovery of faith. This means that the cultural distance and distance of meaning between the reader and the text must be bridged. We approach a text with our own preconceived ideas and the text also influences our preconceived ideas (Ricoeur 1986:101-133).

Understanding, according to Ricoeur, is not placing oneself subjectively in the shoes of the author of a text and understanding the historical context of the text, but are those events which take place between the reader and the text. Texts are autonomous and the meaning is found within the text. Because the interpretation is "subjective", an element of "objectivity" must be brought into the process of interpretation. This is done through structural analysis of the text (Vos 1996:25, 29-30, Pieterse 1993:87).

The hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition originated and developed out of the interpretive approach which emphasises the subjective dimension of the living context of people in reaction to the objective reality of the positivistic approach (Pieterse 1993:71). With this theory he joined the interpretation of the text with the social reality (Heitink 1993:138). Proceeding from this data, which emphasises the meaning of the whole, and the data that the process of understanding is for Ricoeur primarily a creative activity, he places particular emphasis on the meaning of the narrative and the metaphor (Vos 1996:24).

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   71
_____

Ricoeur establishes a link between the methodology of text interpretation and human actions by understanding human actions as analogous to those of a text. Spoken communication is put down in writing. Communication of actions is laid down in fixed socio-cultural structures bound to time. The writing down of human actions forms social patterns. These social patterns can be interpreted as documents (it reminds one of Anton Boisen's "living human document"). Meaningful human actions have, as texts, meaning only after the moment of the action. They have a content which has to be identified and interpreted. As a text, human actions have an influence on its reader-participants. Like texts, meaningful human actions also have unintended consequences, they have their one life, and can be interpreted differently in different contexts. Meaningful human actions, like texts, are addressed to anyone who can read, i.e. interpret. They are open for practical interpretation in each historical context and situation. Consequently, human actions can be made the object of (scientific) interpretation (Ricoeur 1981:203; see also Pieterse 1993:87-88).

This methodology developed by Gadamer and Ricoeur is of great importance in Practical Theology as a theological science of action in terms of studying Christian actions of faith as scientific model.

3.3 PASTORAL CARE AND A NARRATIVE UNDERSTANDING

Tieleman (1993:25-26) claims that it is in the interest of pastoral care to dispose of an anthropologically orientated language of faith which gives expression to life and faith experiences. In this way, these experiences are clarified through the question of meaning. The story is not just about meaning, but about the coherence that is experienced and which is brought into expression. The coherence and interconnectedness between the understanding of one's own life narrative and the symbols of faith must be brought to the surface in the pastoral conversation.

According to Heitink (1990:123) the giving of meaning forms an inherent part of Pastoral Care. In this meaning process the hermeneutical process plays an important role. The pastor acts as a guide in this process and together with the couple search for the meaning of their life narrative in the light of God's narrative. Pastoral Care then means accompanying people as they come to understanding in the light of Christian faith (Veltkamp 1988:229).

_____

The great challenge of Pastoral Care is how to listen theologically to the story of people in the pastoral conversation. The purpose is indeed to seek a way to come to understanding and to change in the light of the Story (Veltkamp 1988:198-199). Thus a theological analysis should take place, bringing together the story of people with the Story of God. Bons-Storm calls this a hermeneutical adventure (1989:85). She illustrates schematically this search for points of contact between the human narrative and the narrative of God as follows (Bons-Storm 1989:63):

Man's field of experience   The Christian tradition,
                                                        the Word of God

First hermeneutical process   Second hermeneutical process

X = the pastor in dialogue with the other
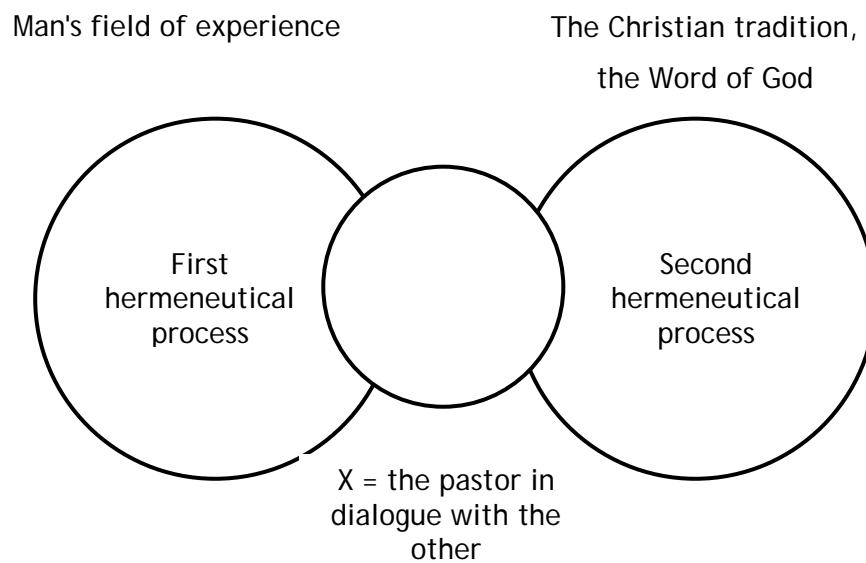
According to this the pastor positions himself in the point X. We consider that the point X represents the point of contact between the traditions concerning God and the world of experience of a couple. But at the same time, we cannot simply except that point X represents the biblical point of view, because we make a specific choice out of the story presented to us. We could have chosen other aspects of the story and made other conclusions (Bons-Storm 1989:69). Thus, this point X represents a specific representation of God (Bons-Storm 1989:70). This specific image of God is culturally constructed through our theology and anthropology. Pastoral care could be described as the analysis of narratives. The story of a Christian is always one part self analysis (how man understands himself within specific events), one part the analysis of the other (how he understands other people), and one part analysis of the Story of God (how he understands God). Pastoral Care, as the interpretation of salvation, is as theological hermeneutics concerned with the listening process in which the pastor guides someone to an understanding of himself in the light of the Story of God. During this listening process the pastor should pay particular attention to the images and concepts of God in the story in order to see if the

_____

person's understanding of God is positive and constructive or restraining and destructive (Louw 1993a:84-85).

The pastor and the couple sit next to each other as living human documents, as life stories that must be read, analysed and understood. In the pastoral context a certain meeting and a fusion of stories should take place. The pastor and the couple must not be absorbed by one another, but they should touch each other, and should bring each other into movement (Bons-Storm 1989:113).

Without having the pastoral situation specifically in mind, Stroup (1981:91) explains this as a collision of stories when he says -

> *the narrative of the Christian confession or autobiography emerges from the collision between individuals and their personal identity narratives and the Christian community and its narratives.*

The challenge of pastoral care and the pastor is to make this 'collision' fruitful. The pastor finds himself on the cross roads of the hermeneutical circle (Bons-Storm 1989:63). Allowing for a connecting of stories to take place, and not a fusion, is not an easy task. It takes more than technical competence with the Bible and prayer. He can only facilitate this process if he himself as a person has an authentic experience of the coherence of his own narrative and the symbols of his faith. Occasionally the pastor is able to create a totally new dimension to the pastoral conversation through a semantic shift. This requires a sensitive and creative spirit on the side of the pastor (Philippians 1:9). This is where pastoral care is more than just a science. It is also an art - an art that can only be mastered by somebody who stands in an authentic and continuing relationship of faith with God.

An example of the use of a biblical story as possible intervention can be found in the story of Nathan and King David (2 Samuel 11, 12:1-15). Often such interpretations are intended to clarify a dilemma or difficulty faced by the client. David noticed the beautiful Bathsheba bathing : He looked, and he wanted her. Learning that she was married to Uriah, the Hittite, David had Uriah sent to fight for Israel in one of its on-going border wars. David made sure that Uriah was sent to a dangerous part of the front with orders to the commander to make sure that Uriah would be killed. David's plan succeeded, and upon

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   74
_____

the death of Uriah, David took Bathsheba as one of his wives. Nathan, David's advisor and counsellor, who had observed all this, came to the king and told him a story:

> There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.
> David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You   are the man !…" (2 Samuel 12:1-7, NIV).

The power of this and other stories (of faith) told over the centuries means that it will be useful to identify the sources of power in stories. The psychologist Kilpatrick (1986) has summarized the sources of power to change people – transform people's lives both morally and emotionally – that exist in narrative. Using the story of Nathan and David, as well as other examples, I will review the contributions of Kilpatrick.

> **1. Transport.** *The first and perhaps most essential service which a story provides is transport. To enter a Story we must leave ourselves behind, and   this, it may be argued, is precisely what is needed to get a proper … perspective on ourselves* (Kilpatrick 1986:88-89).

In many aspects, this point is diametrically opposed to rationalistic and cognitive forms of therapy. These approaches assume that the autonomous, self-conscious self is the legitimate centre from which to approach psychological change. A story, through the mechanism of transport, causes one to suspend this self and its autonomy, in order to empathize with or psychologically join with the characters in the story. It was because David did this that Nathan's story was able to have the impact it did. If Nathan had directly brought up the moral issues or relevant abstract principles, he probably would have aroused David's defences and perhaps his wrath.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   75
_____

2. **Normative Standards.** *Enduring literature is concerned with enduring standards of conduct. Either implicitly or explicitly characters in stories are judged by these norms. Although great literature does this without being didactic, it cannot seem to do without the norms … Unless there are moral codes which are taken seriously, the violation of these codes can produce no dramatic tension* (Kilpatrick 1986:89).

Here, Kilpatrick identified what appears to be a cultural universal: the existence and support of moral codes as a necessary structure against which the action of a story takes place. Many of these codes are the same across cultures. One consequence of this is the universal dramatic tension caused by betrayal, murder, adultery, rape, lying, greed, cowardice, unfaithfulness, theft, and so on.   It is precisely David's violation of such standards that gave Nathan's story its impact.

3. **Revelation.** *Characters in stories regularly fall away from these standards and often need the assist of a revelation (not necessarily religious in nature) to realize how far they've fallen. Although the norms are available for everyone to see, it sometimes requires a dramatic incident for us to see them. Consequently, the revelation often comes in the form of an accident, an illness or some other misfortune. One of the great possibilities of the story is that the hearer or reader [or viewer] of it may also have an experience of self-recognition* (Kilpatrick 1986:89).

It is important to note that this revelation - or illumination - is not the result of a cognitively rational deduction nor the result of arriving at a more cognitively consistent set of moral principles.   Nor is it the result of deep or complex psychological insight dependent upon psychological theory or concepts. In this context, Kilpatrick noted that "I once was blind, but now I see" is more than just a line from an old hymn. Such a sudden seeing, insight, or revelation can often lead to transformation. From David's subsequent actions, it is clear that he had a sudden revelation of what he had done.

4. **Transformation.** *Radical character improvement is a common motif in formative literature. That is, character change is often viewed in terms of transformation rather in terms of development. Moral [and psychological] growth is not perceived as upward progress through stages but as the result of*

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   76
_____

more sudden or dramatic shifts - a change of heart or a change of vision (Kilpatrick 1986:89).

Kilpatrick gave the example of Scrooge; he noted that moral improvement is often understood (by ordinary people) as characterized by such sudden changes. It is a result of suddenly seeing things in a different light. Obviously, from this perspective, stories, art, myths, and other mediums are a good way to challenge people to psychological and moral change. David's transformation was expressed in his response to the story. He said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13), and he repented.

5. Images. *Not the least important element in great stories is simply the presence of powerful images, images striking enough to be lodged in memory and retrieved in moments of crisis and confusion : a prodigal son scrambling for his food among pigs; … a Sydney Carton [in* A Tale of Two Cities*] giving up his life for others. In short, the moral imagination, like any other form of imagination, is engaged by images* (Kilpatrick 1986:90).

Fairy tales often contain many such powerful images : an example is the image in *Snow White* of the wicked queen's vanity, symbolized by "mirror, mirror on the wall." Kilpatrick's emphasis on images links his approach to the tradition of the "moral imagination".

6. Identification. *Stories allow us to identify with models of virtue and courage in a way that study or discussion does not … Identification allows for a kind of ethical action which, although vicarious, seems crucially important for moral transformation. We can make an analogy here to athletic training. One becomes good at sports not simply through receiving instruction [nor even just by practice] but also through identification and imitation. We need pictures and stories of heroes from the world of sports because training is difficult, and we need constant reminders that what we are trying to do can be done* (Kilpatrick 1986:90).

An example of the power of such identification is reported in the life of Teresa of Avila, the great Spanish mystic of the 16th century. As a child, she read the stories of the early Christian saints, mostly martyrs. These popular reports included many famous examples of women who gave their lives for the faith. At the age of seven, Teresa and her

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   77
_____

younger brother left home together and set out for Islamic territory with the purpose of becoming martyrs. Fortunately, they were turned back by adults.

The importance of identification is supported by psychologists who recognize the importance of transference, identification with the aggressor, or of direct modelling of the behaviour of others. Nathan's story shows this with his dramatic "you are the man" (2 Sam. 12:7).

> **7. Personalization**. *Stories personalize moral issues, removing them from the level of abstraction to the level of immediacy. Tolstoy's Ivan Illych, finds there is a great difference between his placid acceptance of the formula "all men are mortal" and his dreadful realization "I am going to die."* (Kilpatrick 1986:90-91).

Obviously, David responded to Nathan's personalized story. Within the counselling session, such personalization has a much greater capacity to influence than talking to the client about the *DSM-IV-R* diagnostic category.

> **8. Narrative understanding**. *Stories encourage a narrative understanding of the self. An implicit assumption underlying the character ethics tradition is that life is not unlike a story and we not unlike characters in a story. That is, however difficult to elucidate, there is something like a point, purpose or plot to life. One of the great services which a story may render, then, is to help us explain what that point might be. In addition they help us to locate ourselves within a tradition of people who have been tested as we find ourselves tested or who have acted as we hope to act* (Kilpatrick 1986:91).

The value of viewing one's life as a narrative has been held up by many besides Kilpatrick, but the emphasis on how stories locate a person in a tradition is one that contemporary commentators have often overlooked. For example, the young Teresa of Avila setting off for martyrdom was quite aware that she was acting in a tradition. Finding and reinforcing a strong story-based tradition for the client therefore is an important contribution of narrative therapy.

_____

3.4 A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH

Gerkin (1986:22; see also Gerkin 1991) argues that the Practical Theology to be constructed is, methodologically speaking, best termed a *narrative hermeneutical practical theology*. This approach to Practical Theology assumes two aspects as being of primary importance:

(1)   Meanings attached to situations involving humans and human actions (*communicative actions of faith*) in these situations are always grounded in some narrative structure. They emerge from some structure or cluster of stories as to why things happen and what they mean.

(2) Questions concerning how those situations involving humans are interpreted are therefore of primary importance in understanding and responding to any human situation. Interpretation connects the particularity of presenting situations with the long story that tells how situations are to be understood. Interpretation not only precedes human action; human actions are themselves expressions of interpretations.

With reference to the hermeneutical aspect of Practical Theology we have no alternative but to begin with our present situation. Pieterse (1991a:44) calls this the *reality* and the *praxis* of God. It is God who takes the initiative in this *present* situation. Through his grace and love He turned/-s towards man and revealed/s himself as a living, acting, revealing and speaking God. He did this especially through Jesus Christ and the Bible. Revelation and the Bible should be connected, and it is through the Holy Spirit that the Bible as the *Word of God* is revealed and interpreted. In the pastoral context all the role players are in a *hermeneutical service* between Bible, Christian tradition, pastor and participants.

The hermeneutical questions, the questions of meaning and value, as well as the questions of decision and action, are presented to us in terms of the present. We ask the hermeneutical questions because we seek a way ahead in our situation that is consistent with who we are, as defined by our appropriation of the foundational Christian story of our existence. We also seek a way ahead that is responsive to the actions of God upon us. Thus we do not go to the narrative tradition empty-handed. We go with our questions and our needs in our present situation. If we faithfully retrieve the images and themes of the

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   79
_____

tradition, we are reminded afresh of who we are in the light of those images and themes. But we must do our retrieving search with appropriate suspicion - suspicion of ourselves and the distortions of our interests, and suspicion of tradition's interpretations of the foundational story of the people of God. Thus each time we go to the narrative tradition, seeking a fresh understanding of who we are and who we are called to be, the tradition is put at risk, tested against our experience as we are tested against it.

Our hermeneutical inquiry is not, however, confined simply to retrieval from the tradition. It also involves our effort to respond to and appropriate in our actions the redemptive activity of God in the present, as God, by the power of the Spirit, acts on our behalf to draw us and all created life toward the realization of His promise in the Kingdom. It is in response to this redemptive activity of God that our search for interpretations of our present situation finds those openings of possibility that would not otherwise be available. This can open a new way ahead for us. Here our perception of the possibilities of divine transformation of our situation is tested against our realistic appraisal of what is possible, given our situation and who we are in it. Here our memories of God's action in the past remind us never to rule out the element of surprise.

Through our hermeneutical inquiry in both directions, i.e. toward the past and the future, we are enabled to see our present situation through new lenses. We are enabled not only to see more clearly the normative imperatives that the Christian story presents to us, and not only our covenant obligations that direct our actions, but also to receive a fresh vision of our future as made possible by the redemptive action of God.

We want to suggest that our human praxis, personal or corporate, is both an outcome of our hermeneutical reflective inquiry and a new situation calling for continued practical theological inquiry, decision and action. The purpose of Christian action is to enable us to move ahead in our individual and corporate lives under the guidance of the Christian story of who we are, who we are called to be and what the God of that story is bringing about.

The process of practical theological thinking is a never-ending one. Our situation is an ever-unfolding one. It is in the midst of this story set in time that we discover the unfolding of the story of God (Gerkin 1986:72-74).

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   80
_____

With reference to already existing definitions, especially that of Müller (1996:5) and of Gerkin (1986:54, 61), and in the light of the direction that this study will take, the following definition is proposed:

Practical Theology is the systematically, empirically structured and critically reflective, ongoing hermeneutical process which attempts theologically to clarify and transform human actions as narratives both within and without the Christian community of faith, in accordance with the Christian Gospel, in order to open the future of that story to creative possibilities. By faith that means nesting the individual and corporate human story finally within the biblically grounded narrative of God who is both transcendent of the human story (God's "otherness") and active within that ongoing story (God's suffering, gracious, redemptive presence). This narrative hermeneutical perspective involves a process of the interpretive fusion of horizons of meaning embodied in the Christian narrative with other horizons that inform and shape perceptions in the various arenas of activity in which Christians participate.

3.5 THE PRACTICE OF HERMENEUTICS IN THE PASTORAL CONTEXT

After explaining the importance of hermeneutics and narrative, I will now look more closely at the role of hermeneutics in the pastoral context from a narrative perspective.

The question could be asked from what position does a pastor speak or listen in a story-telling universe where all tell stories and all stories are valid though not necessarily true, because no one speaks from a transcendent vantage point. In such a universe, the best he can hope for lies in the avowal of the position he takes. By doing so, the pastor can make himself aware through questioning and challenging the beliefs and assumptions that influence the selecting processes.

The process of Pastoral Care is one of questioning and challenging the unacknowledged assumptions and beliefs of persons held in the grip of life problems. The practice of asking story-connecting questions challenges every level of story that the persons involved have been assuming and experienced during the course of their lives. To question and challenge a story, even as one listens respectfully to it, is to introduce unrealized or forgotten connections between that story and the stories and events which,

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   81
_____

though seemingly unconnected have left the person experiencing guilt or powerlessness as they attempt to make their story proceed according to their intentions.

An approach of questioning and challenging within an attitude of validating the person's point of view comprises the hermeneutic stance of the pastor. Intrinsic to the validating role of the pastor with respect to the person finding his voice, is that of offering within a series of challenging, yet respectful conversations, words that give voice to hitherto inchoate experiences. Such words are never imposed from some "knowing" point of view, but put forth as if only to demonstrate that such experiences can be described and shared through the "magic" of language. In the give-and-take of such conversations, the person may gain the confidence to find her own words to her experiences. If such pastoral care is to be understood as a literary genre, it could perhaps be called conversational autobiography.

Hermeneutics, as already explained, has to do with the point of view with which one examines a given text to elicit the beliefs and assumptions that have influenced the selection of the material included. Hermeneutics stems from the realization that in a universe every conscious agent perceives his world from a certain vantage point from which he can never escape. Any examination of a text to determine the limits necessarily imposed by a certain stance requires that the textual critic seeks to be aware of and avow the point of view from which he himself perceives and critiques the stance of the text in question. In short, the hermeneutical stance represents an acknowledgment that in a world in which there is no privileged or absolute vantage point, everyone has is his view as he deals with a universe of view points. A hermeneutic appropriate approach to the practice of Pastoral Care in such a universe is one that affirms the validity of all points of view as possibilities - even in dealing with a conviction that excludes the validity of other points of view. A therapeutic hermeneutic would not reject or disallow such a conviction, but it would question and challenge the viability and the consequences of a person's seeking to maintain relationships with others on the basis of such a conviction. It is a hermeneutical stance that validates all points of view, insofar as they are points of view as opposed to objective or revealed truth. Such a stance is derived from the therapeutic observation by means of which a person is thrown into doubt concerning the validity of his opinions. Once thrown into that position, he is virtually forced to defer to the opinions and descriptions of others regarding not only what he perceives but regarding himself as well.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   82
_____

Accordingly, let us propose a hermeneutics of Pastoral Care as one that questions and challenges the tendency of a point of view to become mistaken for the "one and only", even as it validates other opinions. It seems, after all, to be the inexorable tendency of any given vantage point from which a person experiences the world, to settle into a constellation of beliefs and assumptions of how the world is and of one's place within it. Hereby one's own particular perspective falls back into a formative role in relation to consciousness and, as such, is taken for granted. Taken for granted means unquestioned, unexamined. Once a perspective stops being questioned or examined at, it tends toward the objectification of what it perceives.

A narrative paradigm would, furthermore, look for evidence and signs of such formative beliefs and assumptions not so much in affirmative statements such as "I believe such and so about myself and about the world I live in." Rather, it would look for the footprints of beliefs in story form. Such stories are what are meant by myths. A myth, in this view, represents that which embodies or encodes a person's, or even a people's, unquestioned beliefs about the way things are. A myth constitutes the limits of the possible or the attainable in the eyes of its believer. As encoding a person's fundamental beliefs and assumptions about given circumstances, a myth influences the selecting process concerning which events are highlighted as the stories the person includes as summing up herself and her life. This, then, is the "hermeneutical circle" referred to earlier, according to which our beliefs determine our understanding and our understanding determines our beliefs.

The hermeneutics of narrative therapy challenges the power of any received text, the tendency of a person's received story to become taken for granted as the truth of her life. A narrative therapist seeks to raise into the foreground of the person's attention alternate stories, unexpected interpretations of prevailing stories with the person's own experience of given events, in order to challenge the received text or life-story in its constraining role.

Aichele (1988:459) refers to stories that question established beliefs, and which have taken on a mythic power to define, as "anti-mythic," paradoxical stories. He calls them fantastic stories because they challenge in a fundamental way our most unquestioned beliefs. They re-introduce that which had been excluded from our understanding of reality, which was so far removed from our consciousness that we had forgotten that we

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   83
_____

had ever excluded it.

In other words, it may not be by directly challenging a person's constraining beliefs that this hold is loosened. Instead, beliefs may best be subverted though the discovery of events or stories that are inconsistent with the received text of the life story to date. Such stories are almost endlessly present, to be drawn from out of the vast realms of unremembered, neglected, minimized, and even repudiated events in a person's live.

Finally, the recognition that we are characters in each other's stories reminds us that the only way we have of transcending the limits of our individual vantage points is through imitation and curiosity. These enable us to appreciate through a glass, darkly to be sure, the stories that others are enacting from their various vantage points. Imagination and curiosity enable us to enlarge our individual perspectives and go beyond them to the degree that we choose to connect ourselves to the plots of those larger epic stories of our communities, our cultures, our humanity, and of the great story of our survival itself, the The Story. By connecting our individual stories to these larger stories and The Story, we can enrich our lives and make them more meaningful by choosing to act as active agents that forward these stories.

We can only continue performing these feats of story-connecting by resisting the tendency to harden for any perspective, even the most encompassing and enlarged ones imaginable, into an unquestionable perspective. We can do this by continually questioning one "hardening" story with another. It is precisely because stories are the way we make known our experiences to each other, that they are the primary means by which we understand each other. As such, their magic is precious. It can only remain magical rather than imprisoning to the extent that we remember that a story always remains only a story. It is ours to invent, to tell, to live (see Parry 1991:51-53).

According to Ganzevoort (1993:285), there are at least five advantages for using a consistent hermeneutical approach in pastoral practice and research.

The *first* one is the expertise of theologians as interpreters of stories in which the most fundamental questions of faith and meaning come to the fore. Over many decades, pastoral counselling has gained many new insights from psychology and psychotherapy. Notwithstanding this profitable input, we are still amateurs in the field of psychology. Therefore pleas are held to focus on our own professional interests and skills, not to deny

_____

the insights of psychology, but to be a valuable partner in the cooperation and integration of psychology and theology. Theologians are trained in literal and structural exegesis and therefore, by the very nature of their profession, they are hermeneutists. When pastoral theologians develop hermeneutical methods, this can offer a fresh input to both theology and psychology. Pastoral hermeneutics might be an important perspective which integrationalists are looking for.

The *second* advantage is the possibility of resolving the tension between proclaiming (kerygmatic) and client-centred approaches, a tension very apparent in Dutch literature because of the influences from both American and German writers (Bons-Storm 1985; Heitink 1984). Most efforts to solve this tension are compromises between an emphasis on God and his word and an emphasis on the counselee. In contrast, a hermeneutical point of view makes it possible to see both the individual and the Word of God as stories that interact with each other. In this communication, the stories merge and influence one another. Rewriting the person's story then becomes possible. Therefore a hermeneutical theory can clarify the relationship without overemphasizing either side.

The *third* advantage is the fact that a hermeneutical approach gives the partners in dialogue a fundamental uniqueness as interpreters of their own lives. He or she is not an object of care or research, and therefore a real encounter is possible. This also means that pastoral workers or researchers are involved in their work in a comprehensive way, not only professionally, but as whole persons with life stories of their own. This insight helps to prevent biases, but it also leads us to the conclusion that the experiences and interpretations of the counsellor can be of value in a counselling setting. The partner in the pastoral encounter is in similar ways unique and involved. This means that the activity of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the contribution of the pastor. Both counsellor and counselee can be the channel through which God influences the pastoral encounter. Therefore, the story of both partners can be changed and enriched by the encounter with the Third. This fundamental reciprocity and spiritual openness is an important advantage of a hermeneutical approach.

The *fourth* point is the possibility of evangelizing in a pastoral context. This point has been criticized in many ways, mainly because it seems to be an attempt to influence an individual when (s)he is temporarily vulnerable. The thin line between witnessing and manipulation is difficult to discern. However, in a hermeneutical approach, we can allow

_____

for an evangelizing component. The meeting of the stories allows for mutual influence. This approach takes into account the individual's right and task to interpret his or her own life as well as the right and task of the pastoral worker to represent the Christian tradition and to connect the stories of life with the Story of God.

The *fifth* and perhaps most important advantage is that a hermeneutical approach allows us to better understand why persons (including ourselves and our partners in dialogue) act and think the way we do. Understanding a person's life story is understanding the meaning of action and thinking. Capps (1984:29) says:

> *Understanding a given human action involves identifying the meaning system's inner structure.*

As has been stated above, hermeneutical approaches imply reciprocity and equality. Therefore, understanding in counselling includes understanding ourselves as pastoral counsellors. A hermeneutical approach may not provide new methods and techniques, but at least it offers a fresh understanding of pastoral work. Hermeneutical theories provide insight into the process of counselling and assist counsellors in gaining understanding of what they do as they conduct their work.

3.6 NARRATIVE, LIFE-STORIES AND IDENTITY

Why did you come specifically to France? What are you doing in France? Where do you come from in South Africa? I have been asked these questions many times over the past couple of years. In answering these questions about myself, I recite a narrative to identify myself to other people. I recite dates, times and places, family constellation, calling, etc. I give preference to certain events in my history. But my identity narrative does not include all or even the majority of the events that have taken place in my life. These events are recited in a chronological order that includes the past, the present and the future. For certain reasons I select certain events out of this chronological order of my personal history in which the meaning of the whole and hence the identity of the self is constructed on the foundation of a few basic events and the symbols and the concepts used to interpret them.

_____

Therefore, we can say that a story is not just a way of conveying information, it is a way of interpreting facts. Every story attributes a certain meaning to the events it relates. Sharing a story from my past is an attempt to construct my future. We construct our lives with stories. The stories stored in our memories form the framework of our attempts to discover meaning in life. It also aids our approach to the future. Stories are therefore not merely ways to describe our lives. They are much more than simple descriptions. Our stories give form to our lives. With such form we organize our lives and try to provide handholds which will help us step-by-step to cross the unstable rope-bridge towards our future (Müller 1999).

Ganzevoort (1993) contributes an important aspect to the formulation of the personal narrative and narrative identity. The personal narrative is concerned with the "core narrative" of the individual:

> *People tell stories. They do so not only in daily life, but even more in pastoral counseling setting. In fact, they have to, because a story can express what cannot be said otherwise. These stories together form a pattern that we call the personal narrative* (Ganzevoort 1993:277).

In this process of interpreting, every individual develops a narrative identity. That is, in telling the stories of our lives, we create a central character in the story. This is the image of our identity we strive to construct and maintain. Through all the different life stories, there is a continuity, a certain pattern that we can call the personal narrative that frames the interpretation. Therefore, we define life-stories as narrative patterns of interpretations whereby we seek to discover sense, meaning, and value of life and of the events that are occurring. The personal narrative is the central story or core narrative within the different life stories of the person. The stories of life are used to order experience and to answer the fundamental questions: Where am I? What am I? Who am I? The narrative identity answers the question: Who am I?, whereas the other questions and answers contribute to the central story line of the personal narrative (cf. Ganzevoort 1993: 277-278).

In this whole process, the exercise of memory plays a decisive role in the construction of our personal narrative. It is through memory that we select certain events from our personal history and then we use them to interpret the significance of the whole.

_____

The claim that we as humans are inextricably tied to history simply means that we search for meaning and unity of self in some pattern of coherence in our personal narrative (Stroup 1981:104-105).

> *Personal identity is always a pattern or shape which memory retrieves from the history of each individual and projects into the future* (Stroup 1981:105).
> *Personal identity is a hermeneutical concept which depends to a considerable extent on the use of memory for the interpretation of the past* (Stroup 1981:107).

The historicity of our personal identity means that we are in the process of becoming, and, consequently, the interpretation of personal history and personal identity is an unending process. This process is never finished because the future is an open horizon toward which one's personal history is moving (Stroup 1981:107).

In the course of a single life a person's identity may undergo severe changes. While personal history does not change, the interpretation given to personal history may undergo radical changes. Concerning this, Bruner (cited by Webb-Mitchell 1995:220) argues that the self is not a static thing or substance, but a configuring (and reconfiguring) of personal events into an historical unity, which is not only what has been done, but what is happening, and what is anticipated to happen.

In this theory of personal narratives, there is a strong emphasis on the individual interpretation and attribution of meaning to situations and events. However, it is not an individualistic approach, because we do not write the personal narrative in a relational vacuum. For every individual there is a range of relationships within the social context. The personal narrative of one touches the narratives of others. The way this social context influences the personal narrative may be understood in terms of a narrative public, which we address in telling our stories. The public is formed by those (real or imaginary) persons to whom we are responsible. We try to tell our stories in such a way that it will be acceptable to our listeners. Their voices are incorporated into our story, so that we can legitimize ourselves in our narratives. We play a role in each other's stories, and we contribute to a shared story, especially in a community of faith; this shared story is then communicated to our children (Ganzevoort 1993:278).

_____

The point of departure and the basis of the narrative approach is that a unity exists between the past, the present, and the future, and simultaneously contains an inherent tension. We try to express and work with both the unity and tension between past, present, and future through the telling of our stories. A narrative approach to dialogue and therapy is about mining these stories, continuously being told by people, so that eventually they can be reformulated into stories that would give new meaning and impetus to life.

The meaning of the future and the unity of the human story which encompasses the whole "journey", is a discovery which offers wonderful possibilities for better understanding human living. Walter Brueggeman (1993a:120) described the Christian life as "telling a past and dreaming a future". This also suffices as a description of our whole existence. Our stories contain elements of telling and dreaming. The greater the gap between the "telling" and the "dreaming" becomes, the more the tension will increase, and the more the likelihood of pathological behavior. On the other hand, where harmony exists between yesterday, today and tomorrow, there will be integrity, wholeness and maturity.

The storied approach leads to the re-discovery of the unity of human existence over time. The powerful influence of the future is a particular discovery. The discovery showed that the future is not something that will happen somewhere in time to come with no effect on people now. In our hopes, in our fears, in our planning, the future is already alive and therefore part of our present time (Müller 1999).

3.7 A PASTORAL NARRATIVE INVOLVEMENT

Müller in his book <u>Om tot verhaal te kom. Pastorale Gesinsterapie</u> (1996) develops a model of a *pastoral narrative involvement* (1996:96-187). I will give a brief overview of this model, because it contains valuable elements for Pastoral Care from a narrative approach, and, therefore, is also useful for a premarital narrative conversation.

This model consists of five movements that serve as a basic guideline and attempt to come closer to the narrative approach by placing the emphasis on conversing and not on technical conversation. The methods consist of subjective choices, but they haven't just been randomly selected. An attempt was made with these methods to promote the third tool, namely conversational questions. These methods which will be discussed, narratively speaking, can be incorrectly applied. They can be applied in a non-narrative structuralistic way. Much depends on the not-knowing position that the pastor assumes. If

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   89
_____

this position is not taken seriously, then no method can ensure a healthy narrative approach.

In narrative pastoral work, the story is not only seen as a means of releasing information, but rather as a means of self awareness. This is why people are led to tell and re-tell their stories in such a way that re-interpretation and re-construction can eventually happen. New stories need to be constructed on the basis of which a new future can be envisioned.

This opens up a very natural place for **The Story.** God's story can help a person or family to re-formulate both the story of the past, as well as the story of the future in such a way that new meaning can be found in the present. We can re-interpret our stories using God's story. A painful story of the past can now be reframed to produce a rock under water in the stream, on which one can find secure footing and new hope to reach the opposite bank safely.

We do not work with change techniques in this model, whether psychological, sociological or theological. It is assumed that a story which flows from the past to the future, possesses the necessary change potential.

Müller then proposes a model with five movements (an *Agenda*). The movements alluded to in this model, are not comparable to steps or phases. This is a dance-model and not a strategic one. He considers it logical to move from one to five, but concedes that any other order is just as acceptable. The emphasis falls on circular, rather than on a linear movement. The dance-metaphor gives direction. It begins somewhere and ends somewhere, but is always free and asks for a creative engagement. In this sense, it differs greatly from a strategic phased model.
The therapist's task is therefore to carry out five movements:

1. Help the companion (s) to tell the story of need as fully and broadly as possible.

<div align="right">(This is the story of need)</div>

2. The story of need has a history, which must be told. The stories of the family (family of origin) are normally an important part of this story of the past.

<div align="right">(This is the story of the past)</div>

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A NARRATIVE HERMENEUTICAL PASTORAL THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE   90
_____

3. The next step is to discover, together with the companion (s), a future story in the story of the past. The stories which they tell from their past and their childhood years, can be "translated" without much effort into a darkened story of the future. "Need" always consists of a darkened story of the future and with a bit of creativity, the therapist can facilitate a situation within which this story of the future can be discovered in the story of the past.

(This is the **story of the future**)

4. The story of the past must be re-interpreted. This includes the reframing process. The therapist, with his or her creative artfulness, can invite people to construct new stories on the same framework of facts. By suggesting different themes to the problem-saturated themes, people are invited to begin to create new stories of the past.

(This is the **re-authored story of the past**)

5. The re-interpretation of the past by itself becomes an invitation to imagine a better future. Whenever the therapist invites his or her companions to converse about the future and dreams about the future, these stories of the future take on form in a natural way.

(This is the **imagined story of the future**)

Within these five movements he identifies *procedures* which consist of a number of methods and techniques coming from a variety of sources : the circular story (a multiple description of the family system through circular questions), the chronological story (the life cycle model), the graphical story (the genogram, the life time line, the ecomap), the ecosystemic story (seeing the story in the light of The Story), the externalized story (the externalization of the problem), the story of faith (an anthropological orientated story of faith – use of Scripture and prayer), the hypothetical story (the formulating of hypotheses – circular in nature), the ritual story (symbolic communication), and taking responsibility for the story.

The key concept of these stories of this narrative approach to Pastoral Care, is *involvement*. Involvement has to do with the listening and reaction of the pastor to the story of the other, but also it has to do with the extent to which the other person accepts ownership of the events that are described in the story.

This approach of Julian Müller offers a variety of uses in the context of Pastoral

_____

Care, including a premarital pastoral conversation (see next chapter). The concept of *involvement* sheds new light on the relationship between the pastor and the conversational partner.

3.8   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have sought to open for the reader the rich resources to be tapped for pastoral theological thinking from a narrative perspective. The mode of opening up these resources has itself been hermeneutical, a process of interpretation. It is now time to use these resources as we to turn to different stories of marriage and of premarital conversations. In this way a narrative hermeneutical pastoral theology can be constructed and made viable in relation to concrete situations encountered in pastoral care, and in this way pastoral work may be undergirded by the recovery of Christian modes of interpretation.

_____

CHAPTER FOUR:

STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS

> *Extraordinary people visualize not what is possible,*
> *but rather what is impossible.*
> *And by visualizing the impossible,*
> *they begin to see it as possible.*
> *Cherie Carter Scott*

In this chapter I will briefly describe certain biblical *portraits* of marriage and certain approaches to marriage preparation. I deliberately chose the word "portrait", because it portrays the gap between the portrait and that which is portrayed. A portrait is not a photo image, but a representation of certain understanding and perception of reality – "ways of seeing". A portrait stimulates its viewer to engage imaginatively with what is beyond adequate representation. When this happens, insight may occur and portraits may begin to be appropriated in new ways.

Describing these different portraits is not easy, mainly because nowhere in Scripture do we find an ordered and systematic discussion concerning marriage – as is the case with justification by faith for example. Different aspects of marriage, from Genesis to Revelation, come to us in little bits and pieces, somewhat scattered and often illusive. A synthesis of all of these elements requires a minimum amount of analytical and theological reflection on the part of the reader. In this discussion I will refer to some of the main portraits of marriage in the Bible, and this is by no means *all* the possible references to biblical portraits of marriage.

4.1 BIBLICAL PORTRAITS OF MARRIAGE

Over the centuries the Church has in different ways formulated a pastoral theological approach towards marriage and the family. Everett in his book Blessed be the bond (1985) makes the following interesting remark:

> *The churches' attention to these issues has either dwelt in the lofty ideals derived from faith positions or enthusiastically grabbed on to whatever recent therapeutic device might seem to help people struggle through their difficulties or*

_____

maximize their marital or familial happiness (1985:xi).

Boszormenyi-Nagy (1986:333) writes that marriage -

> *is probably society's most vulnerable institution . . . Whatever its limits, marital life functions as modern history's most steadfast and reliable forum, the place in which people most readily invest their efforts in trying to reach tolerable and sometimes creative balances between individual freedom on the one hand and long-term comfort and security on the other.*

It is Gerdes (1988:184) who describes four ways in which society defines and formulates marriage, namely legally (see 2.9.2), according to religious beliefs and practices, socially and psychologically. He (1988:194) goes on to identify three typical marriage models (the term "model" is employed by Gerdes) namely the traditional model, the companionship model, and the egalitarian model. The imposition or use of these models in order to identify and describe a marriage is problematic. Each model has its strengths and weaknesses. For example, the egalitarian model confirms the full worth and personhood of each partner, but such a marriage could also lead to unhealthy competition within the marriage and a fear that one is putting too much into the marriage while at the same time not receiving enough.

For this reason, it is not the model of marriage which is important, but rather the quality of the relationship and this is where the insights of postmodernism can be helpful. That is, our approach to marriage preparation should be less oriented, for example, towards teaching certain dogmatic points of view concerning marriage and certain specific roles of husband and wife. Theological descriptions of marriage should be taken as referring to possibilities, not to assumed realities. Through a narrative conversation the pastor, the couple and the Christian tradition engage in a dynamic hermeneutical process (see previous chapter). In this regard, Thatcher (1999:236-239) talks about the *communal partnership as the matrix of the sacrament*. "Matrix" is understood as a situation or surrounding substance within which something else originates, develops or is contained. In the context of marriage, the matrix of the sacrament is the relationship of each to the other. Louw (1993:32ff) underlines also the importance of the quality of the relationship and proposes that an evaluation of the quality of the relationship should be made. A marital relationship is built on attitudes, role expectations, communication, habits, tasks,

_____

sexuality, interaction, commitments, values and faith convictions. Jordaan (1996:12) points out that the postmodernistic desire for humans encountering each other has the potential of developing a Christian dialectic which addresses the essential human loneliness and need to belong within a marriage. Neuburger (1997:16) goes so far as to claim that our identity is an identity of belonging. A dialectical attitude to life allows for the immense diversity that is found in different marriages and can lead to a creative improvisation in order to develop the uniqueness of each marriage.

However, a word of warning must be mentioned regarding the implied promise of growth in intimacy of the dialectical approach to marriage, and this is in regard to the spirituality of the marriage.

The dialectical approach focuses on horizontal person-to-person intimacy, whilst the vertical or spiritual plane of person-to-God intimacy is necessary to complement and reinforce our ability to connect relationally.

Clinebell and Clinebell (1970:181) continue in the above vain when they write :

> *No human being can alone satisfy the spiritual hungers of his companions heart ... Intimacy reaches full flower for a couple only when they have found in, through, and beyond their marriage, a rich measure of those gifts which the great religions of the world have made available to men.*

Clinebell goes on to outline three fundamental religious needs in persons, namely, the need for an experience of the numinous and the transcendent, the need for a sense of meaning, purpose and values in one's existence and the need for a feeling of deep trust and relatedness to life. These needs are more than can be satisfied by marriage partners.

Concerning the needs and expectations of marriage from a non religious point of view Neuburger (1997:18) makes the interesting remark that the high divorce rate should not be interpreted that marriage is loosing its importance in society, but is rather linked to the high expectations that we hold about marriage – emotional and physical security, intellectual and sexual satisfaction, etc. – and which the family of origin or the professional context is not (any more ? = CdP) in the position to supply. Berscheid and Campbell (quoted in Fowers and Olson 1986:403) have also noted that at the same time -

> *that although close relationships have become substantially more*

_____

vulnerable to disruption and dissolution than they were just a generation or two ago, close relationships are seen by most people as being the prime source of personal happiness.

On the horizontal relational level this could be true, but the vertical relational level contributes another dimension of self-fulfilment as stated in the previous paragraphs.

Joubert (1996:45) concluded in a study of the New Testament understanding of marriage, that the Christian marriage implies that men and women are equal before God, that marriage is a religious institution which is placed within the framework of the couple's relationship with God, and that marriage has an eschatological dimension which implies the temporality of marriage subject to the fullness of the coming of the Kingdom of God. This study also focused on the right practice and understanding of sexuality within marriage. Joubert (1996:45) concludes that sexuality is a matter in which man and wife carry equal responsibility.   The Christian marriage implies an accountability and responsibility before God. We get married not only for our sake, but for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Balswick and Balswick (1989:80) give another division of three models of marriage and summarize the major characteristics of these models of marriage as follows (see diagram below): traditional marriage (which is often mistakenly viewed by Christians as biblical), modern marriage, and biblical marriage. These three models are then compared in terms of the four aspects of their theological model: covenant (commitment), grace (adaptability), empowering (authority), and intimacy (communication).

Traditional	Biblical	Modern
Commitment		
Commitment (to the institution)	Covenant (between the partners)	Contract (self-fulfilment)
Coercive	Cohesive	Disengaged
Dutiful sex (male pleasure)	Affectionate sex (mutual pleasure)	Self-centred sex (personal pleasure)

_____

Adaptability		
Law	Grace	Anarchy
Predetermined (segregated roles) Rigid / Stilted	Creative (interchangeable role) Adaptable / Flexible	Undetermined (undifferentiated roles) Chaotic
Authority		
Ascribed power Authoritarianism (male headship)	Empowering Mutual submissiveness (interdependence)	Possessive power Absence of authority (no submissiveness)
Male centred	Relationship centred	Self-centred
Communication		
Inexpressiveness	Intimacy	Pseudo-intimacy
Pronouncement	Discussion	Demand
(legislation)	(negotiation)	(stalemate)
Non-assertive / Aggressive	Assertive	Aggressive

Without going into detail concerning the vast amount of literature about marriage and the family in the Christian tradition, the following theological vantage points can be distinguished:

4.1.1 Creational order

This is possibly the most popular way of theologising about marriage, sex and the family. It is especially built on Genesis 1-3 where marriage and the family are seen as a creational order. Concepts like man as created in God's image, and that this must also be interpreted in the relational sense, form part of this theological point of view.

When Jesus refers to marriage and divorce (Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12), he places marriage within the perspective of creation (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:20-24):

- The mosaic law is secondary in relation to the creational order.
- Sexuality is a gift of God to the woman and man. It is good and expresses the difference between the sexes.
- God places the sexuality in a particular context: within a legal relationship.

_____

Understanding marriage as part of the creational order, before the fall, implies that it is not just valid for Christians, but also for non-Christians, i.e. for the whole of humanity. Humanity, man and woman, was created to reflect something of the character of God (Genesis 1:28), and it is in this context that the marital relationship should be understood.

The fact that marriage is situated before the fall implies that it does not have a redemptive character, but it creates a context of mutual sharing, to live our humanity as creatures according to the image of God.

The Genesis narrative states that woman was created to help man to accomplish his task: a suitable companion, an equal helper (עֵזֶר,כְּנֶגְדּוֹ Genesis 2:18, 20). This means that marriage exists in order for humanity to accomplish its original mandate. The term translated by *equal* or *suitable* (עֵזֶר) is important, since it means literally a vis-à-vis (counterpart, opposite). In this relationship one partner does not become the mirror image of the other, but each one keeps his/her otherness, and thus, his/her complementarity. The tension created in verse 18b is concluded in verse 20b, and prepares the way for verses 21-23. Humanity is a humanity-in-relation, created to communicate. When man says, "*This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...*" he uses an expression that refers to family ties, expressing a close, intimate relationship that endures (see also Genesis 29:14; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 5:1 & 19:12ff). There is also a word play between the word for man אִישׁ and the word woman אִשָּׁה that intensifies this close relationship between man and woman. It is interesting to notice that when God made (וַיִּבֶן build) woman from the rib of man (Genesis 2:21 and 22), the word used for "rib" (צֵלָע) could also mean "side". Thus, the help that man receives, is built from his side. She is the equal of man. She shares in his co-humanity, but at the same time, is different from him. In this way, their reciprocity and equality are at the same time emphasized.

It is well known that the first account of the creation of the world in Genesis comes to its climax with the making of humankind on the sixth day:

> *God created human beings in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them* (Genesis 1:27).

The second account of the creation of the world (Genesis 2:4b-25) has the Lord God

_____

making a man. The Lord subsequently decides that the man needs a partner (Genesis 2:8). All the animals and birds which God made are brought to the man, who names them, but finds no suitable partner among them. God then puts the man to sleep, takes one of his ribs, and builds it up into a woman. When the woman is brought to the man he exclaims :

> *This one at last is bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh! She shall be called woman, for from man was she taken* (Genesis 2:23).

There then follows an editorial comment on this saying:

> *That is why a man leaves his father and mother and attaches himself to his wife, and the two become one* (Genesis 2:24).

A more familiar version of this comment is found in the RSV:

> *Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

The idea of oneness in flesh is thought to have its root metaphorical meanings in the man's recognition of the woman's flesh as coming from his own, and in the oneness of sexual intercourse. It came to be seen as a union of the entire man and the entire woman. In it they become a new and distinct unity, wholly different from and set over against other human relational unities, such as the family or the race.

The term *one flesh* was not influential in the formation of the Jewish doctrine of marriage (and divorce). It was not used against the legitimate practice of polygamy (Deuteronomy 21:15-16). It does not occur again in the Hebrew Scriptures. The rabbis were more interested in whether the reference to the departure of the man from the family home to live with his wife, not a state of affairs to which they were accustomed, implies a matriarchal kind of society or whether it casts into question the patriarchal pattern with which the rabbis were so familiar in Israel. Since the text asserts the priority of the relationship of a man with his wife over his relationship with his parents, we may perhaps assume that, 1000 years BCE, the issue of a man's clash of loyalties between parents and wife was a troublesome one which the author was attempting to resolve. The text appears four times in the New Testament, twice in the Gospels, so it is a constitutive

_____

idea in the formation of Christian marriage. It is also well known that the teaching of Jesus about marriage in the Gospels arises contingently out of contemporary disputes about divorce. In taking issue with the practice of divorce in Jewish society, Jesus appeals to a higher authority than the Mosaic law which provided for it (Deuteronomy 24:1). The authority is the two texts from Genesis just cited. Mark has Jesus quote Genesis 1:27 and 2:24:

> *In the beginning, at the creation, 'God made them male and female'. 'That is why a man leaves his father and mother, and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh (*Mark 10:6-8; see Matthew 19:4-5).

The decisively new element in the understanding of the term *one flesh* is provided by the comment on it of Jesus himself. He says –

> *It follows that they are no longer two individuals: they are one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate* (Mark 1O:8b-9; Matthew 19:5-6).

By this single comment Jesus adds to the then prevailing understanding of the term several new meanings. It indicates, first, that the *attaching* or *cleaving* of the man to his wife is a deep personal union which actually creates a new identity for each of them. The couple are no longer two individuals. Each is who he or she is in relation to his or her partner. Secondly, the union is a permanent one. That this is so is made clear by the reaction of the disciples to Jesus' words. They think if a man cannot divorce a wife it would be better not to marry in the first place (Matthew 19:10; and see Mark 10:10). Thirdly, the union achieved by the man and the woman is achieved by action of God. There is a holiness about the union of marriage which is unhinted at in Genesis 2. God does not merely witness marriage vows: God ratifies them. Fourthly, divorce is excluded from the reign of God (although Matthew allows the famous exception of *porneia* – 19:9; 5:32). This follows not only from the permanence of the union but because of the uniting of the couple by God. And, fifthly, polygamy too appears completely excluded. While neither Jesus nor Genesis 2 says anything directly about polygamy, the personal union envisaged by Jesus cannot accommodate it.

But there are two further New Testament references to Genesis 2:24, the earlier of

_____

which does not appear to support the interpretation put on *one flesh*. To the male Christians who thought their freedom from moral law brought about on their behalf by Jesus extended to visiting prostitutes Paul admonishes:

> *You surely know that anyone who joins himself to a prostitute becomes physically one with her, for Scripture says, "The two shall become one flesh"* (1 Corinthians 6:16).

The fleshly union between a prostitute and her Christian client is clearly not a union of the moral kind envisaged by Jesus, brought about by God, and permanent. Does this therefore mean that Paul (who knew the teaching of Jesus about divorce - 1 Corinthians 7:10-11) drew a different conclusion about the meaning of becoming *one flesh*?
No. In an answer to a different question Paul rules:

> *The wife cannot claim her body as her own; it is her husband's. Equally, the husband cannot claim his body as his own; it is his wife's* (1 Corinthians 7:4).

It is a mistake to read this passage as a statement about ownership. *Belonging* is a better term, and the mutual belonging of the partners to each other is a striking element of the argument. It is best understood as a clear inference from the Genesis passage which Paul has just used. Since a husband and wife are *no longer two individuals* but are one flesh, each is in a real sense part of the other. The unity which they make as a couple vetoes any sexual independence which they may once have had as single people.

Graphical we could portray this unity of *one flesh* as follows:

_____
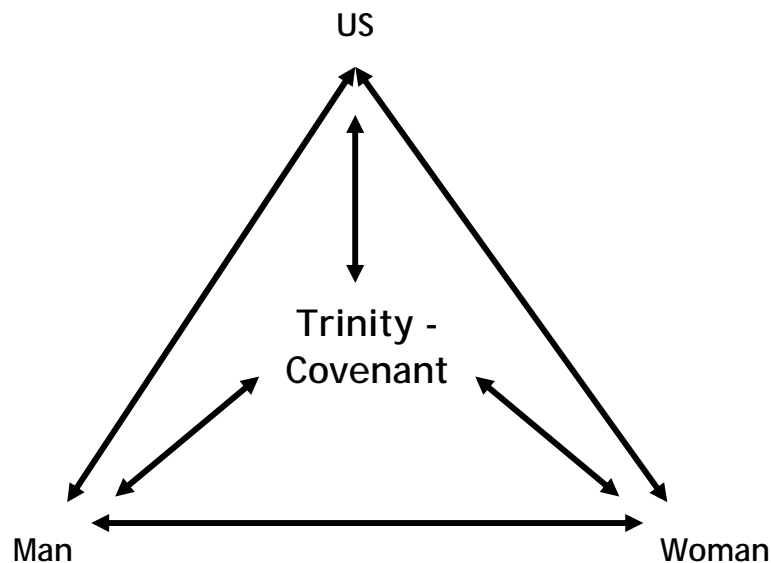
This new relationship is neither the absorption of the personality of one person by that of the other person nor the loosing of the personality of each partner to form a new unity. This is a adjusted diagram compared to the one proposed by Louw (1993:52-53). According to this diagram the man and the woman keep certain aspects of their previous status, but they have to renegotiate their new status (*us*). Their new status places them also in a different relationship towards God in the context of the covenant.

The covenant analogy in Ephesians 5 leads, as we have seen, to an appeal to the Genesis *one flesh* text. In illustrating the union which the writer believes to exist between Christ and the Church, he deploys the same insight just encountered in 1 Corinthians 7:4, that the bodies of a married couple do not simply belong to each other - they importantly *are* each other. The Ephesian analogy continues:

> *In loving his wife a man loves himself. For no one ever hated his own body; on the contrary, he keeps it nourished and warm, and that is how Christ treats the church*... (Ephesians 5:28b, 29).

In part the observation is based on self-love. People care for their own bodies. But self-love comes to mean something quite different in Christian marriage. *Self* can only be articulated *at all* through reference *(de*ference would be more accurate) to one's partner. The insight that a married person receives a new identity from his or her partner is drawn from Genesis 2:24. This can be affirmed with some confidence because a further word of explanation quotes it in full.

_____

This is why (in the words of Scripture) *a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh* (Ephesians 5:31).

But this use of the Genesis text is given a final tentative twist which seems to have provoked comment in every period of church history and is immensely important. Commenting directly on his own use of the Genesis text, the author says:

There is hidden here a great truth, which I take to refer to Christ and to the church. But it applies also to each one of you: the husband must love his wife as his very self, and the wife must show reverence for her husband (Ephesians 5:32-33).

The *great truth (mystèrion mega)* is more usually translated *great mystery*. Tertullian, Jerome and the Latin Vulgate render μυστήριον as *sacrament*. The writer thinks that the sacrificial love of Christ for the Church now enables the one flesh union of Genesis 2:24 to be Christianly understood in a way which, prior to the sacrifice of Christ, had not been possible. Christ's love is thought to exemplify the love which the writer believes is to be found in the one-flesh union of Genesis. But he is *tentative* about his own interpretation (*I take to refer to*). The author is writing about a real, existential, current concern, and searching the Scriptures in the light of the questions being faced by his community. The Genesis text is clearly fundamental to the issue. But as a Christian writer he will wish to interpret whatever he finds in the Hebrew Scriptures as referring in some way to Christ *(εις Χριστον)*. Contemporary Christians pondering over what has become of marriage have similar, but also dissimilar questions to ask, and these will be determinative when we search the Scriptures for ourselves. We will arrive at different answers, but in common with every generation of Christians they too must be transparently *εις Χριστον*.

The notion of marriage as *one flesh* in a patriarchal society has been used to incorporate the woman into the identity of the man, and so to transfer her and her property into his guardianship. Marriage then is too easily a loss. The new one flesh created marriage has too often been *his*. Without a mutual contribution to the married relationship an entire *gender-sex system* is encouraged in which wives exist through their husbands and subordinate their interests to those of men. Such relationships are clearly unjust. Socially, the wife has been in danger of becoming the man's adjunct, someone

_____

attached to him in a permanently dependent and subordinate position, his representative in domestic matters, in particular, bearing and rearing *his* children and keeping his house clean. Her dependence on him in such circumstances is complete. There is not even any psychological space to think her own thoughts. What fragile sense of selfhood remains to her, if she exists only through him and for him?

The question to be faced is whether the one-flesh model of marriage operates to encourage gender imbalance, or whether the use of it by patriarchal churches, theologians and societies is responsible for this model reinforcing women's subordination.   The Christian understanding of marriage is largely based on Jesus' own use of it. If it were to be abandoned by Christian theologians because it was deemed defective, serious questions would have to be asked about whether what remained was Christian marriage. Need that predicament be faced? Yes and no.

First, the all-important Genesis text from which Jesus quotes *does* assume that her flesh is his. The man was made first. The woman is made only after the failed search for a suitable companion for the man. The woman is made from the man's flesh, and when she is brought to him by the Lord God, it is *his* flesh that he recognizes. Moreover Paul (following the normal rabbinic exegesis of the time) reads the text in this way. On the one hand, the temporal priority of the first man over the woman is elevated by Paul to an ontological priority of men over women essentially, generically, functionally and timelessly.

> *Man is the image of God, and the minor of his glory, whereas a woman reflects the glory of man. For man did not originally spring from woman, but woman was made out of man; and man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man* (1 Corinthians 11:7b-9).

On the other hand we have seen that Paul insists that the bodies of partners in marriage are equally shared, for neither's body is individually: his or her own (1 Corinthians 7:4).

Whether Jesus understood *one flesh* as subordinating hers to his is much more doubtful. We have already noted how the disciples' reaction to Jesus' teaching on divorce indicated his far-reaching disagreement with conventional interpretations of both. Jesus' subsequent criticisms of one-sided divorce practice which permitted husbands to divorce their wives for trivial reasons and did not permit wives to divorce their husbands for any

_____

reason (Mark 10:10-12) should lead us to think that Jesus was firmly addressing and correcting the androcentric bias of the Jewish establishment. The suggestion made here is that the one-flesh model is *not* of itself androcentric and offers a fine model of what Christian marriage might be. A difficulty with this suggestion is that to establish it beyond doubt would involve extracting a concept from the broader conceptual milieu of the time, and that milieu is androcentric beyond dispute. So any commendation of the one-flesh mode must adopt the approach taken with the covenant model earlier, that is, it will be legitimately put forward as a non-sexist model of marriage and contrasted with secular accounts of marriage and of the person.

When the idea of marriage as a union of a man and a woman becoming one flesh is added to the cocktail of individualistic notions of the human person characteristic of late modernity, it positively effervesces. The special case of human union which is marriage as envisaged by Jesus provides a convincing alternative to the secular ethic.

While secular society allows many of the meanings of Christian marriage to drain away, the traditional one-flesh model retains and preserves a vision of lifelong partnership commended by Christ himself. Borrowing (and slightly extending) the momentous insights of the Church's first theologian of marriage (the author of Ephesians), we may say the Genesis one-flesh text *means* a lifelong union where each partner loves the other as that partner loves himself or herself. In starting out in faith to love the *other* as one loves oneself, one engages in an adventure which embodies the love of God revealed in Christ, finds the face of Christ in the face of one's partner, and shares with him or her that love which Christ shared with the Church.

In contrast with the individualistic view of the human person, the partnership of marriage confirms the *relational* view of the person. Jesus' abbreviated use of the Genesis text which affirms male and female alike are made in the image of God (*God made them male and female*: Mark 10:6, Matthew 19:4, citing Genesis 1:27) confirms that the image of God is to be understood *relationally.* Alistair McFadyen (cited in Thatcher 1999:97) says –

> *If the image [of God] is construed in relational terms, then the structure of human and personal being may be seen to be ex-centric. By this I mean that persons are orientated upon themselves (centred) by moving towards the reality of others.*

_____

Marriage draws on the divinely created structure of human relations. The form which one's relations takes determines the form which one's personal centring and hence personal identity takes. This can be expressed simply through the dictum that persons are what they are for others or, rather, the way in which they are for others.

Marriage too, understood as a 'one-flesh union', appropriately qualified, is a *form* of relationship, potentially the paradigmatic form for beings who are persons-in-relation.

In contradistinction to the idolatry of romantic love is contrasted the passionate love of God which bursts out in Christ's sacrifice of himself on behalf of the Church. This is a self-giving which is total, and so physical. The notion of *flesh* of course suggests this. In contrast to the self-referential project of personal identity is the adventure whereby each partner in reaching out to the other receives him or her back again countless times over, and so allows his or her identity to be determined in part by the partner's. The union of partners in marriage as held by the author of Ephesians is meant to anticipate the union of all things in Christ. Christ's work brings together *everything in heaven and on earth* (Ephesians 1:10; 2:6). Christ's reconciling work brings into one body Gentiles and Jews *so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace* (2:16; 3:6). The author prays that his readers may -

> *be strong to grasp what is the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love, and to know it, though it is beyond knowledge* (Ephesians 3:17-19).

The *advantage* of this point of view is that it is clear and that it communicates to everyone. This is probably the reason why most Christian literature on marriage follows this line of thought. It also conveys a necessary value of naturalness in human relations: if people want to live happily in their relationships, they must also be in harmony with God and his creation. This important aspect should not be neglected in a theology of marriage and the family.

The *danger* is that when a whole theology is built on this idea, the result is that an ungrounded optimism concerning the potential of relationships is formed, and even accepted as obvious. The argument could be put forward that premarital and extra-marital sex are not a problem, as long as everything only takes place within the harmony of God's creation.

_____

Even when Genesis 3 (the fall) is taken into account, this temporary drawback is overruled by a theology of recreation. This theological approach becomes even more evident since the Christian is recreated in Christ. Harmony with God and his creation is now not only obvious, but it becomes a calling.

If this theological point of view is the only hermeneutical key with which we try to understand marriage, sex and the family, it will lead to a merciless Pastoral Care. This natural creational order becomes the highest norm and no comfort is found for unmarried people, couples without children, couples who undergo invitrofertilisation, and not to mention people with a homosexual orientation (Müller 1996:45-46).

4.1.2 Sacramental view

The sacramental view (especially promogated by the Roman Catholic Church) of marriage is largely built on the above mentioned theological point of departure. The social and ecclesial institution of marriage is grounded in the basic structure of life lived as faith. This view emphasizes God's grace, working through nature and marriage as an order of creation. It is more concerned with the integrity of the symbol than with the justice of relationships. It places greater emphasis on the expectations of the church and less on the natural dynamics of love. It claims the presence of redemption, but denies the personal reality of brokenness and the perversity of life. The sacramental view tends to reduce marriage to an institutional form. Households and families exist to socialize people, uncritically, into the faith through the regular routines of their lives (Patton & Childs 1988:82, 100). The Roman Catholic Church only recognizes marriages which took place within the RCC itself. This sacrament, as in the case of the holy communion and baptism, is a visible sign of an invisible grace. The presence of the priest is viewed as a witness of the commitment. The council of Trente (16th century) insisted on the presence of a priest (up to that time in history, a mutual agreement for the marriage was enough) in order to underline the fact that by getting married the couple becomes part of the Christian community. About the year 1150 marriage became the 7th sacrament under the initiative of Pierre Lombard. He evokes the double conjonction of the partners, i.e. "the consent of the souls and the mixture of bodies". In this way, the Church took up position against the social practice of the time, i.e. arranged marriages. The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that "makes the marriage." If consent is lacking there is no marriage. The priest (or deacon) that witnesses the

_____

marriage celebration welcomes the consent of the contracting parties in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church.

A mixed marriage needs for liceity the *express permission* of ecclesiastical authority. In case of disparity of cult an *express dispensation* from this impediment is required for the validity of the marriage. The priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. The presence of the Church's minister (and also of the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that marriage is an ecclesial reality (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Regarding the point of view of the RCC, the following remarks can be made:

- The RCC does not consider marriage as the will of God for all mankind – believers and unbelievers – and, thus, that it forms part of the general grace of God.
- The RCC considers marriage as part of the order of creation *and* redemption.
- It does not consider that marriage is, in the first place, an event that implicates the society/community.
- It does not consider the fact that the texts in the Old Testament and the New Testament concerning the relationship between man and woman symbolize the relationship between God and his people.
- The RCC considers that the exchange of vows does not constitute a sacrament as a sign of the grace of forgiveness and a life with God.
- They do not take into account that a union between human beings stays fragile, and can be broken, even if it was not the initial intention of the man and the woman, and even though it is not the initial intention of God for humanity.
- The RCC considers that a marriage between a Catholic and a Protestant does not exist.
- Often there is a contradiction between the official standpoint and the actual practice of the RCC. RCC does not recognize a marriage outside the RCC if permission was not asked for and granted. Protestants consider a couple as married after the civil wedding. If permission is granted, in the case of a mixed marriage, is this marriage Catholic of Protestant? In the case where the RCC has granted their permission for a mixed marriage, the latter is not considered as a real marriage, since it is not accepted as a sacrament.
- According to Fuchs (1979:137) the term *sacrament* is due to the wrong translation

_____

of the word μυστήριον (Ephesians 5:32) by the Latin term, *sacramentum* (see also above).

For the RCC the sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us (Catechism of the Catholic Church). Protestant theology has always rejected this claim. The Reformation considered only baptism and holy communion as sacraments directly instituted by the Christ as visible signs of the salvation acquired at the cross. Marriage is by no means considered as an "automatic" grace. In the Scriptures marriage is presented as a calling to express and to realize the image of God according to which we are created.

In a certain way, we could understand marriage as a sacrament, because it has – in a very broad sense – the function of making visible the grace of God in our daily life. Marriage, and especially marriage between Christians, is one of the institutions that could transmit and exhibit faithfulness, tenderness, acceptance of the other, dependence and mutual support. Through the love for one another, through the gift of life and through faithfulness towards one another, love for God becomes a reality. Thatcher (1999:233ff), according to his ecumenical Theology of sacrament, also argues for a broader understanding for marriage as a sacrament that could also be acceptable for Protestants. According to Mackin (1989:7-8),

> ...*in entering men's and women's lives thus sacramentally God does so with double and interlocking intent: to draw men and woman to himself, and to draw them to one another. In drawing them to himself in faith, trust and love, he would also draw them to one another in the same believing, trusting and caring attitude.*

If sacrament is understood in this way, Protestants could be able to affirm the sacramental sense of marriage. If a sacrament mediates God's presence, the confinement of marriage to the order of redemption unacceptably restricts the omnipresence of God. Sacraments make visible the reality of God's love.

_____

4.1.3 Covenant

Covenant is a major biblical symbol for the divine-human relationship and only later was it applied to marriage (especially in Reformed circles). The Hebrew term for covenant בְּרִית refers to a binding relationship. It -

signifies a relationship based on commitment, which includes both promises and obligations, and which has the quality of reliability and durability. The relationship is usually sealed by a rite – for example, and oath, sacred meal, blood sacrifice, invocation of blessings and curses – which makes it binding (Anderson *in* Thatcher 1999:68).

It seems almost inescapably related to the legal concept of contract, although some writers emphasize the contrast between the two concepts as it was understood in the ancient world :

The binding and inviolable character of covenants derived from the divine sanctions attached to the covenant agreement. Contracts have people as witness, and human or civil society as guarantor. Covenants have God or gods as witness, but not in the same sense that the gods or God simply vouch for the correctness of the agreement; they act as guarantors that the terms of the treaty, alliance, or covenant will be carried out (Palmer 1972:618).

There is a strong covenantal implication in the foundational text of Genesis 2:24:

For this reason man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.(NIV)

The man who *leaves* (עָזַב) his father and mother is said to *sever a covenant* with them. When he *attaches himself* (דָּבַק) *to his wife* he creates a covenant with her (Thatcher 1999:68).

The first biblical mention of a covenant is found in Genesis 6:18 when God establishes a covenant with Noah. This covenant is repeated in chapter 9:9-10 where God

_____

actually extends his covenant to include even non-human creatures.

The second biblical reference in which God makes a covenant is Genesis 15:18, where the covenant is extended to Abraham. This covenant is later amplified in Genesis 17.

From these texts we can draw the following conclusions:

- God was not offering either Noah or Abraham any choice in the matter. That is, God was by no means saying, "Now I am going to commit myself to you *if* this is your desire". Instead the establishment of the covenant was based entirely on God's action. God's offer was in no way contractual; that is, it was not based on upon either Noah's or Abraham's keeping his end of the bargain. God's commitment was there whether it was accepted or not.

- God did desire and even commanded a response from both Noah and Abraham. Did this make God's covenantal offer conditional? No! The covenant that God offered was to remain *an everlasting covenant* regardless of what Noah or Abraham did.

- While the covenant itself was not conditional, the potential benefits or blessings it provided were. Both Noah and Abraham were given an option by God in the covenantal offer. If they were to benefit from the offer, they had to agree to fulfil their end of the bargain. Although the continuation of God's love was not conditioned upon the nature of Noah's or Abraham's response, their receiving of any of the blessings or the fulfilment of the covenant was conditional. Here there is the offer and the responsibility to react favourably in order to receive the blessing of the covenant.

- In the texts cited, God extended the covenant to more than just these two individuals. The covenant included their families as well. God extended *an everlasting covenant* (לִבְרִית עוֹלָם) to Abraham which included *generation after generation* (לְד ֹר ֹ תָם) (see Balswick and Balswick 1989:23-24).

It seems then, that entry into the covenant generally seems to be free. Once having entered, however, a person's freedom appears to be significantly limited. 'Covenant' has some of the characteristics of 'vocation' in that it involves committing oneself for the creation of a higher purpose; yet, it also serves as a model for God's order, a new and distinct community amongst other communities. The family is to be, as well as

_____

to build, a new world. Because the covenant symbol is based on God's covenant with His people, by analogy it is more applicable to the parent-child relationship than to the marriage relationship.

Thatcher (1999:69-75) describes in certain details the further use of *covenant* in the Old Testament, especially as it is depicted in -

- Hosea's actual or fictitious marriage to Gomer, his adulterous wife, and the symbolic power of the marriage to stand as a model of the broken covenant between God and God's people.

- Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's deploying of the language of a broken marriage to expose the broken relationship between the Lord and the Lord' s people. The Lord is the wronged husband whose marriage with the people of Israel has been sabotaged by his bride's unfaithfulness.

- Deutero-Isaiah (40-55) moved towards a view of covenant-love as unshakeable and unaffected by human faithlessness. This prophet had suffered the pain of exile in Babylon and as a result of that experience he had come to believe that God would never again allow such affliction to befall the covenant people. His hope for a renewed covenant is poignantly expressed by means of a prolonged marital metaphor. Israel the once barren, deserted wife will now have an abundance of children.

Neither Jesus nor Paul uses the term *covenant* in relation to marriage.   However, since *covenant* comes to be increasingly qualified by *steadfast love*, it is appropriate to include in the present section part of the well known analogy from Ephesians 5 between husbands and wives and Christ and the Church. The text has been used in the past to legitimize a range of practices which today are rightly questioned, including the divine legitimation of the submission of wives to husbands, and the alleged *metaphysical* indissolubility of marriages. The text incorporates a *household code* or *Haustafeln*[1] but in this case the conventional relationship between husbands and wives has been partly transformed by profound theological reflection (Thatcher 1999:75-77).

Members of the Christian community are to *be subject to one another out of*

_____

[1] There are three households codes in the New Testament, Ephesians 5:21 – 6:9, Colossians 3:18 - 4:1, and 1 Peter 1:18 – 3:7. Similar material is found in 1 Timothy 2:18 – 3:7, 6:1-2, Titus 2:1-10. A household in the ancient world would be hierarchically ordered, from the male householder, down through to his wife, children, slaves and other property.

_____

reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:22). But the exercise of mutual subjection throughout the community as a whole should not tempt us to suppose that the power which some members have over others because of class, status or gender, is being substantially redistributed. *Wives are to be subject to your husbands as though to the Lord* (Ephesians 5:22). The conventional wisdom of subjection to husbands is now given a theological rationale by means of two tightly related analogies. Subjection of wives to husbands is required -

> *for the man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of the church. Christ is, indeed, the saviour of that body; but just as the church is subject to Christ, so must women be subject to their husbands in everything* (Ephesians 5:22-23).

All three household codes in the New Testament teach the subjection of wives to husbands. Keeping modern feminist criticism of subordinationism in mind, the fact that our moral sensibilities today have been sharpened over a span of two millenia and should not give us licence to find fault with those who, two millenia earlier, did not share our enlightenment. The "norm" provided by New Testament Christianity -

> *is not necessarily the specific command or injunction, but the sensitivity to what was appropriate and practical and right and witness-bearing within the social constraints at the time – their "healthy worldliness"* (Dunn 1996:60, 63).

Mackin (1989:71) translates the participal Ὑποτασσόμενοι *(*literary, *being subject to*) as *defer to.* Since the example to be followed in subjection to husbands is the subjection owed to Jesus Christ himself, the inferior position of the wife in the marriage appears to be divinely sanctioned. As it is between man and woman, so it is between Christ and the Church. The writer introduces into New Testament theology an entirely new insight. The individual relationship between husband and wife *within* the Christian community is to be understood alongside the transcendental relationship of Christ *to* the Christian community. This is then unpacked by means of the familiar metaphor of the Church as the *body* of Christ.

The first use of the analogy is the simpler one: *The man is head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of the church.* *Head* appears to mean leadership of the marital community of two, just as head of the Church means leadership of the ecclesial community

_____

of many[2]. But the author does not lose sight of the analogical character of the argument. The remark that *Christ is, indeed, the saviour of that body* might equally well have been used analogically to suggest that the husband is the saviour of the wife.   While he does not say this, deference to husbands in everything along the lines of the Church's deference to Christ nonetheless reinforces the wife's subordinate role in the marriage.

An important question to be raised is whether the redefinition of the role of husbands in the subsequent verses is sufficiently far-reaching and radical to counterbalance the asymmetrical deference of wives.   Everyone in the household must act *out of reverence for Christ* (Ephesians 5:21): for husbands this means loving their wives, *as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it* (Ephesians 5:25).   While the love of a wife would not have been a surprising thought in the ancient world, the love that is enjoined on Christian husbands here is novel and distinctively and authentically Christian. The author takes for granted that the death of Christ is to be understood as a sacrifice and that the sacrifice is a self giving. The verb παρέδωκεν signifies a relinquishing of oneself, a giving over of one self for another (Mackin 1989:73).   Husbands are to give themselves to their wives with all the devotion and totality with which Christ gave himself for the Church.

Christ's sacrifice for the Church is next qualified by images taken from bathing - the washing of baptism and the washing of the bridal bath. Consecration and cleansing by water and word *(*Ephesians 5:26*)* represent the process of union between the believer and Christ brought about symbolically by baptism. The presentation of the Church to himself as glorious and perfected -

puts Christ in a double role in the imagined wedding ceremony. He is the pronubus, the person who presents the bride to the groom. He is also the groom (Mackin 1989:73).

Jewish readers would be mindful of the Lord's marriage to the foundling girl Israel who is first betrothed and then washed with water by the bridegroom, who then prepares her for the wedding ceremony (Ezekiel 16:8-14). The Lord God's verdict on his bride was:

And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty, because the splendour I had given you made your beauty perfect (Ezekiel 16:14).

The breadth of the basic analogy between husbands and wives, and Christ and the

_____
[2] Paul takes for granted that the man is the head of the woman. See 1 Corinthians 11:3.

_____

Church, is expanded by these images to include the new covenant inaugurated by the death of Christ.   The new people of God are personified in the single image of the Church. In each case the people of God are depicted as God' s bride. Because they are *God's* bride, they must be made perfect. The bride of the old covenant had splendour bestowed on her by the bridegroom (Ezekiel 16:14).   The bride of the new covenant was endowed with splendour by Christ' s sacrifice. Nothing more is needed to make her an acceptable bride: the death of Christ has united the Church to himself irreversibly by his self-sacrifice. And the consequence for the Christian life is that husbands are required to love their wives in similar fashion (Thatcher 1999:76-77; Joubert 1996:43-44; Janson 1996; Dreyer 1996).

Paul defines marriage from a Christological and ecclesiastical point of view. With this approach he takes the emphasis away from the separate roles of each partner to the relationship between Christ and his Church that serves now as a model for marriage. If man and woman identify with this image of marriage, it should not only lead to a new way of looking at each other, but also to a new way of conduct, a new style of living, that is based on the couple's relationship of faith with Christ and their commitment to his Church.

A recent example of how the basic contents of the covenant are formulated for today's society is found in the Netherlands.   In 1983 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands worked on a report of a workgroup about sexual relations (published under the title In liefde trouw zijn – "To be faithful in love" = CdP).   In this publication they tried to formulate the basic contents of the covenant. Two fundamental motifs are discovered in God's covenant : a liberating and an imperative facet (1983:26). In spite of conflict and suffering God instituted a covenant as a context for love and freedom. This freedom also contains and implies responsibilities before God and our fellow man.

In this basic covenant values of love, freedom and responsibility are consequently applied to all sexual relationships : reciprocity, durability, freedom and safety (1983:33). According to the writers of this report homosexual relationships are seen in a more positive light as long as these principles exist in a relationship.   One can appreciate that these writers seek to find responsible norms for sexual relationships in the midst of a secularised society. But at the same time, these norms only function on a horizontal level. As long as men or women act in a responsible way towards each other, any sexual relation is permissible. To what extent is the relationship with God brought into consideration in the human relationship? Love for God and obeying his will can not be seen apart from love of our fellow man. The vertical dimension of God's presence and commitment to our world

_____

through his Spirit should at all times be taken into consideration.

If the biblical model of covenant is to play a central role in a postmodern celebration of Christian marriage, clearly there are elements of it which are simply unserviceable. The survey of the covenant model of marriage quickly uncovered simmering issues of gender and power in the texts themselves. Where the marriage covenant is illuminated by the divine-human covenant, there must be no more transfer of divine power to the man and of human fickleness and infidelity to the woman. There must be no more stereotyping of women as covenant-breakers. Any suggestion of sexual violence must be absolutely filtered out. The theological conviction that in relation to God, God alone takes the initiative must not transmit to the human marriage relation that husbands alone take the initiative. Even in Ephesians 5 the bridegroom is the active partner who initiates the marriage and even prepares the bride for his wedding: the bride is the passive recipient of his ministrations, subject to him in all things. Her perfection and her passivity coincide. Any refashioning of the covenantal idea must first deal with these fundamental difficulties.

Despite these difficulties I remain convinced that *covenant* can and should remain central to the Christian doctrine of marriage, and that it is possible (indeed essential) to state how marriage as a covenant may be commended in ways that are free from sexism and gender imbalance. This will be attempted next by making and qualifying five claims about covenants, each of which builds on the previous one in a cumulative way.

(1) Marriage is a covenant in the straightforward sense that it is an agreement between two people. It has not been forgotten that throughout the Bible and much of Christian history, marriage is an agreement between two families, not between two people. *Covenant* is being rooted here in contemporary experience. Beginning with the deep-rooted meaning of covenant as a *binding relationship*, which includes commitment, promises, obligations, durability and concluding or sealing by a rite, marriage fits the description of covenant very well. A covenant in the ancient world is likely to have a god or gods to witness it, thereby acting as guarantors of the agreement and underlining the seriousness of the pledges being made. Almost all Christian marriage services have the opening words which acknowledge God as witness. No partner need promise anything that the other partner does not. So there need be nothing detrimental to the mutuality of a marriage by its being a covenant in this sense.

_____

(2) Marriage is better understood as a covenant, not as a contract. Let us take Palmer's contrast between the two types of agreement. While he has probably exaggerated and polarized the differences between them, the general contrast is still useful.   He writes, -

> *Contracts deal with things, covenants with people. Contracts engage the services of people; covenants engage persons. Contracts are made for a stipulated period of time; covenants are forever. Contracts can be broken, with material loss to the contracting parties; covenants cannot be broken, but if violated, they result in personal loss and broken hearts. Contracts are secular affairs and belong to the market place; covenants are sacral affairs and belong to the hearth, the temple, or the Church. Contracts are best understood by lawyers, civil and ecclesiastical; covenants are appreciated better by poets and theologians. Contracts are witnessed by people with the state as guarantor; covenants are witnessed by God with God as guarantor. Contracts can be made by children who know the value of a penny: covenants can be made only by adults who are mentally, emotionally, and spiritually mature* (Palmer 1972:639).

There is little doubt that the notion of contract has been more influential than that of covenant in the Christian tradition. It was John Calvin who initiated a covenant theology of marriage. The dominant secular understanding of marriage is that it is a contract and it is irony that while late modern societies return to a contractual understanding which was once the dominant Christian understanding, Christians are rightly discovering the fruitfulness of a covenantal understanding of the essence of marriage.

(3) Christian marriage is a covenant between husband and wife ratified by Jesus Christ. The warrant for this assertion is given by an interpretation of Ephesians 5, which seeks to resolve the problems of power and gender. This is how such an interpretation might go.

First, the method of the author is to relate everything that is to what God has done in Jesus Christ. He has been *granted the privilege of proclaiming to the Gentiles the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ* (Ephesians 3:8). It is inevitable that the relationships governed by household codes will get the full *Christological treatment*, for literally everything - including time and history, the earthly and heavenly realms and

_____

everything in them - is understood in the light of God's purpose in Christ. When marriage too receives this treatment, the daring analogy comparing husband and wife with Christ and the Church is introduced. It is clearly possible (and of course desirable) to retain the firmly Christocentric approach to marriage, while at the same time developing this approach in ways more sensitive to gender implications than the author believed necessary in first-century Ephesus.

Secondly, the Ephesian household code, determined by the revelation of the divine love in Jesus Christ, is prefaced by the injunction to the whole church to *Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ* (Ephesians 5:21). Mutual subjection within the household is to be understood in the broader context of the theme of subjection in the whole letter, where *all government and authority, all power and dominion* is made subject to Christ, for God *put all things in subjection beneath his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church which is his body* (Ephesians 1:21-22). Subjection to Christ in the community now anticipates the new age when all things will be subject to him. The vexed problem of *headship* is also best dealt with by this author's wider conviction that Christ is head not simply of the Church but *over all things*. The Christian community, which through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:13-4) anticipates the time when God's purposes in Christ are complete, lives that subjection now. Subjection, or if Mackin's term is preferred, *deference*, is for the entire community to express in the quality of its living together in Christ.

Thirdly, the sharing of the vision of how things might look when everything and everyone is subject to the love of Christ might start with the actual experience of contemporary families and households, where there is much evidence of things *not* being subject to Christ, where instead there may be sexual violence, the misuse of male power, the pursuit of selfish individualism, the exploitation of sexuality and the body, and the horrendous neglect and ill treatment of children. Thus relocated, the vision of mutual subjection *out of reverence for Christ* is delivered from the archaic and historically contingent set of hierarchical relationships which were an inescapable fact of life in the ancient world, and which included slaves (Ephesians 6:5-9). It is able to focus instead on the real transformative work required for women and men to love each other as Christ loves them both, and for this love to encompass children and engage prophetically with the new slavery (i.e., the unjust burden of work which state and capitalist organizations alike impose upon their employees). Once subjection is disengaged from gender politics

_____

and reintegrated into the cosmic vision of the ultimate reign of Christ, marriage can prefigure the victory of love over violence that is the hope of Christians everywhere.

(4) *Christian marriage is a covenant between equals, that is, between men and women who without distinction are equal recipients of the love of Christ*. This is a deliberate but simple amendment of the analogies in Ephesians 5:22-28 in accordance with what has just been said about the Christological method of the letter, about the headship of Christ being over everything, and about *subjection* referring prophetically to God's future when the reign of Christ over everything is achieved.   Paraphrased, the first analogy, addressed to wives only, says:

<div align="center">

wives must be subject to husbands

as

the woman is subject to the man, and

as

the church is subject to Christ.

</div>

The second analogy, addressed to husbands only, also implies the subordination of wives. It says:

<div align="center">

as Christ loved the church

so

husbands must love their wives.

</div>

The amendment, which would remove the subordinationist tenor of both analogies, makes husbands and wives subject equally, both to each other and to the Lord as head of the Church. The first analogy would then read:

<div align="center">

wives must be subject to husbands,

and

husbands must be subject to wives

as

the church is subject to Christ.

</div>

_____

The second analogy, now addressed to husbands *and* wives, would read -

> *as Christ loved the church*
> *so*
> *husbands must love their wives,*
> *and*
> *wives must love their husbands.*

The amended analogy removes the offensive gender identification of the male marriage partner with the male Christ, and male initiative with divine initiative. It does not remove the gendered requirement that husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the Church. It *adds* the gendered requirement that wives must love their husbands as Christ loved the Church, and thereby removes the further offensive inference that while men are capable of exemplifying Christ's love for their partners, women, who are not leaders and initiative takers, are capable only of subjection (see Farley 1990, chapter 8). It shares the insight earlier in the letter that Christ-like love is the responsibility of all members of the Christian community, since all of them have received the benefits of his sacrifice:

> *In a word, as God's dear children, you must be like him. Live in love as Christ loved you and gave himself up on your behalf, an offering and sacrifice whose fragrance is pleasing to God* (Ephesians 5:1-2).

(5) *The human covenant of marriage is a participation in the human-covenant between Christ and the Church.* The analogies of Ephesians 5 and their amendments require a further inference to be made more explicit. The Christian life is not only or even principally an *imitation* of Christ, but also a *participation* in the risen life of Christ, and that means the life of all-embracing love which reconciles everything to God. The interweaving of the human with the divine-human covenant is rooted in the steadfast love which is a mutually affirming partnership. The mutual love in the Christian vision for marriage does not come from nowhere: in its formation, realization, growth and perpetuity, it is an *icon* of the covenant love of Christ for the Church.

Can the covenant between Christ and the Church be understood without a restoration of the very inequality between partners which has plagued covenant models in both the Bible and tradition? And is there not a credibility gap between the Church

_____

understood as the bridegroom of Christ and the Church in its empirical manifestation as divided, hierarchical and uncomprehending? Karl Rahner has addressed these problems, and his solution is commendable. He acknowledges that both institutions, marriage and the Church, continually fall short of what they are intended by God to be. This falling short requires a distinction to be made in each case between the institution as a sign and what the institution is a sign *of,* that is, the signified. Rahner (1967:210-211) observes that -

> *What the Church points to is not herself. Rather as sign, i.e., as a socially organised community constituted by a common creed, a common cult and common works of charity, she is precisely the sign of that humanity, consecrated and united by grace ... the grace-given unity which extends far beyond the social organism of the church.*

In marriage too there is a gap between sign and signified. A particular marriage can sinfully be degraded into a lie when that which it is intended to manifest and to render present is not present in itself, namely the love that is grace-given and unifying. But despite the failure of both marriage and Church adequately to signify that divine love which inspires and animates them, the basic parallelism between marriage and the Church continues to exist. Both are signs,

> *at the palpable level of historical and social human life, of the fact that that love is being made effective and victorious throughout the whole of humanity which is the love of God for us and of us for God, the love which comprehends and unifies all so long as no-one sinfully denies it.*(Rahner 1967:211).

Rahner places Jesus Christ at the centre of his theology of marriage, but not as one whose male gender signifies power over his bride. Rather, the unsurpassed depth of the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:18-19) is the guarantee of the ultimate victory over the sin in both marriage and Church which makes those institutions damaged signifiers of the love each is supposed to embody.

If these arguments are sound, Christians can continue to have confidence in covenant language. That being so, the distinction between a covenant and a contract helps to express the difference between the Christian and secular alternative accounts of marriage. *Covenant* grasps well what is lacking in the contractarian mentality. The act of

_____

faith and acceptance of risk involved in marriage is well preserved by the phrase *plighting of troth*. To *plight* meant *to promise or bind by a solemn pledge*, or *to give one's solemn oath*.   The contractarian mentality preserves self-interest; the covenantal mentality commits itself to the betrothed. The contractarian mentality protects itself against risk; the covenantal mentality accepts risk and seeks to integrate it into the growth of the relationship. The contractarian mentality anticipates an end to the contract; the covenantal mentality anticipates togetherness without end. 45 The covenant mentality replenishes romantic love with unconditional love.   It replaces the endless self-referentiality of modern intimacy, not with an "other-referentiality" which robs the self of individuality, but in a covenant in which each resolves before God to cherish the other in mutual self-affirmation and self-giving.

These covenantal concepts mentioned above are indeed helpful for formulating a theology of marriage and the family, but on their own, they are insufficient. The role of responsibility is often overemphasized to the detriment of grace.   In this way the responsibilities to and of the different family members are emphasized without taking into account the grace of a covenantal committed God who is also at work in that family (Müller 1996:48-49, Patton and Childs 1988:100).

4.1.4 A worldly concession

Paul gave advice to the church at Corinth about how to handle an ascetic faction that believed that all sexual experience was wrong. The apostle allows marriage, but as a means of avoiding immorality:

> *In the face of so much immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband* (1 Corinthians 7:2).

It is hard to find a positive evaluation of marriage in this chapter. Its justification lies in avoiding extra-marital sex. It is a concession (7:6). Singleness is preferable (7:7-8, 26). Marriage is for people who lack self-control (7:9). It is second best. *Those who marry will have hardships to endure* (7:28) and anxious care (7:32). Since the Lord's return is imminent marriage is a distraction from doing the Lord's work (7:29-31). Unmarried men and women are *concerned with the Lord's business* (7:32-34). Married men and women are *concerned with worldly affairs* (7:33-34). A betrothed man who lacks

_____

restraint is nonetheless permitted to marry his intended bride (7:36-37). If he marries her he *does well*, but if he can manage not to, he *does better* (7:38).

Marriage in this letter is permissible but not commendable. This was to be the position taken by the Western church for more than a thousand years. But while marriage is second best when compared with singleness, a feature of Paul' s account of marriage, often overlooked, is the substantial equality of partners within it. He acknowledges that the desire to marry to satisfy sexual desire moves women as well as men (1 Corinthians 7:2). Once married they are under a mutual obligation to meet each other' s sexual needs:

> *The husband must give his wife what is due to her, and equally the wife must give the husband his due* (7:3).

The reason for this is one found in the discussion of the implications of the 'one-flesh' model of marriage (see above):

> *The wife cannot claim her body as her own; it is her husband's. Equally, the husband cannot claim his body as his own; it is his wife's* (7:4).

Neither is the *anxious care* involved in marriage a one-way flow from wife to husband. Paul takes for granted that the "aim" of a married man is *to please his wife* (7:33) and the aim of a married woman is *to please her husband* (7:34).

If marriage is a concession in Paul, it is to be avoided altogether in Luke. Matthew and Luke (Matthew 22:23-34; Luke 20:27-38) both record an incident in the temple when some Sadducees ask Jesus a trick question. A woman has seven husbands, one after the other, with no children by any of them. *Whose wife is she 'at the resurrection?* Matthew has Jesus answer with a comment about how life will be after death:

> *In the resurrection men and women do not marry; they are like angels in heaven* (Matthew 21:30).

But Luke has Jesus use the Sadducees' question to say that married people place themselves beyond the resurrection altogether:

> *The men and women of this world marry; but those who have been judged

_____

worthy of a place in the other world, and of the resurrection from the dead, do not marry, for they are no longer subject to death. They are, like angels; they are children of God, because they share in the resurrection (Luke 20:34-36).

Here is an asceticism more severe than that of Paul. People who marry are citizens of this world, not of the world to come, and their married status actually endangers their partaking in the resurrection. These verses are almost entirely overlooked in attempts to arrive at an overall and consistent account of the biblical teaching on marriage. Leaving aside the problem of what was at stake in speaking (against the Sadducees) of resurrection, the verses provide clear evidence for the view that not merely celibacy is better than marriage, but those unwise enough to marry jeopardize their eternal salvation. And, moreover, this view is attributed to Jesus. It seems that even "concession" is too weak a word. Only "avoidance" is strong enough.

This portrait of marriage in 1 Corinthians is more important for its advocacy of celibacy than for a commendation of marriage now. In particular the advice to marry in order to deal with one's own libidinous desires seems an inadequate defence for marriage. Marriage would then appear to function merely as a licence for having sex: that it might be a covenant involving sacrificial love, as in Ephesians, is not considered. The inconsistency in the theology of marriage is itself a powerful argument for the different authorship of each letter. We may also note that the reasoning behind the requirement that married partners must satisfy each other's desires overplays the one-flesh understanding of marriage. While the body of each partner is said also to belong to the other, what looks like equality of access to each other's bodies can only be acceptable if the power of husbands over wives is given up and replaced by power-sharing between them. Without such sharing, the statement that –

The wife cannot claim her body as her own: it is her husband's (7:4)

has put countless wives in extreme danger.

These reservations aside, the temptation to relativize the text as unduly influenced by the belief in the imminent return of Christ must not be allowed to drown out the possibility that, with regard to the preference for singleness over marriage, Paul is actually right. One way of interpreting Paul's characterization of marriage as *anxious care* is to

_____

believe him. While Paul may be optimistic in thinking that unmarried men and women are free from anxious cares, 49 a similar argument that the care of children and the pleasing of one's partner make particular demands which single people do not have seems obviously valid.   Perhaps because Western Christians have lived through an era of *mandatory marriage* it is still difficult for many people to realize that the destiny of marriage is far from inevitable. Once marriage is categorized as a *vocation*, the inference can be rightly drawn that significant numbers of people are *not* called to it. Paul uses the term *charisma* or gift in relation to singleness, marriage and temporary abstinence from sex (1 Corinthians 7:7). People who honestly believe they cannot fulfil the obligations of marriage must actively resist any pressure on them to marry. Neither should they think unfitness for marriage is any kind of character deficiency!

> *Each person has the gift God has granted him, one this gift and another that* (1 Corinthians 7:7).

The hard saying of Jesus that marriage endangers a person's salvation is very difficult to integrate into a positive theology of marriage may be possible to regard this saying as one which helped *to meet the needs and to validate the activities of a group of wandering preachers' in the aftermath of the sack of Jerusalem and the abandonment of the 'eccentric settlements* by the Dead Sea. These words of Jesus may have been appropriated by this *particular small group*. Equally, Christians with a strong commitment to marriage may be too eager to adopt disposal strategies of inconvenient texts. Perhaps one might find in this saying a warning against that kind of absorption in home and family which really is *subject to death*.   A perspective outside marriage, such as this text provides, enables elements of family life to be properly criticized as life-threatening, as real obstructions to the gift of salvation. Among these elements may be found an oblivious disregard of the wider world beyond the family, a lack of awareness of the damage which the continual closeness of married life is able to inflict on partners, a lack of awareness of the imbalance of power which remains a problem in many marriages, a spirit of selfishness and possessiveness which the maintenance of an affluent home encourages, and all those other features of marriage which led to the title *unholy misery*.

_____

4.1.5 Passionate mutual love

The Song of Songs provides our final biblical model of marriage. Its delightful, overt, playful, erotic imagery has led to its being either ignored or, under the influence of Ephesians 5, converted into an allegory of the spiritual love of Christ for the Church. The book is a cycle of love songs, accompanied by music and dancing, sung at wedding feasts and other joyful occasions. Christian commentators today generally think of the Song as the "joyous, tentative explorations of love of the betrothed couple, culminating in their marriage and full sexual union in 5:1" (Gledhill 1994:28). This judgment probably reflects the desire to impose on the text an anxiety about the marital status of the lovers, about which the text itself is shockingly indifferent.

It is significant that, as the recitative opens, the young woman is the first to speak:

May he smother me with kisses.
Your love is more fragrant than wine,
fragrant is the scent of your anointing oils,
and your name is like those oils poured out;
that is why maidens love you.
Take me with you, let us make haste;
bring me into your chamber, 0 king (1:2-4).

The woman is the one who first voices her yearnings, her anxieties, her fears and her delights in a much more colourfully expressive way, and more frequently than her lover does. She is the one who invites him to intimacy, she is the one who so often takes the initiative' (Gledhill 1994:93). In contrast to the asymmetry which is a feature of the covenant language of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Song subtly undermines the common typecasting of the male/female roles as dominant/submissive, active/passive, leader/follower, protector/protected, and so on. In the Song we have complete mutuality of desire, boy toward girl, girl toward boy (Gledhill 1994:94, 140).

The intense delight which the lovers take in each other is clearly an end in itself which is not justified by further reference to having children, pleasing God, or anything else.

_____

> *Fertility and reproduction of the species are themes which barely surface in the Song* (Gledhill 1994:134).

The sacrifice of Christ the bridegroom for his bride the Church was described in Ephesians 5 as a divine self-giving. In the Song there is a *human* self-giving, as the lovers give themselves to each other in consuming devotion. The young man speaks of his deep satisfaction in loving the young woman when he says,

> *I have come to my garden, my sister and bride;*
> *I have gathered my myrrh and my spices;*
> *I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey,*
> *and drunk my wine and my milk* (5:1).

Likewise the young woman, who having given herself to her lover, takes delight in the delight he has received from her:

> *My beloved has gone down to his garden,*
> *to the beds where balsam grows,*
> *to delight in the gardens, and to pick the lilies.*
> *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;*
> *he grazes his flock among the lilies* (6:2-3).

A further contrast invites attention: that between the natural beauty which the man finds in the woman, and the beauty conferred on the bride by the divine bridegroom of Ezekiel 16. In Ezekiel, he bathes, dresses and adorns her. Her beauty is perfect because of the splendour the bridegroom bestows on her (Ezekiel 16:14). The bride here is praised by her bridegroom as she is. After marvelling at her eyes, hair, teeth, lips, neck, breasts, he cries,

> *You are beautiful, my dearest,*
> *beautiful without a flaw (3:7).*

Song of Songs proclaims the joys of human love. We have had good reason already to note that the love of God is found in the deep, playful, mutual and erotic love the young man and woman have for each other. In this milieu the woman takes the initiative

_____

in making love and expressing her feelings at least as often as the man. The woman of the Song is equal to the man in everything. Her *persona* as an overtly desiring (and black) woman is perceived neither as sinful, nor as threatening. There is no extrinsic justification for their love. The garden of their love may be a deliberate reversal of the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden. *There is no expulsion here; no constraint or curse in the Song; no taint or shame.* The unity of this couple subverts the gendered humanity of the fall, of Ezekiel and the household codes.

This model is particularly appropriate for a generation of men and women still influenced by awkwardness and embarrassment in relation to their bodies and the bodies of others. While there is strong evidence that many contemporary people have more than overcome their parents' and grandparents' reticence to discuss or to admit to enjoying sexual experience, most Christians are still not encouraged to link sexual intimacy with the intimacy of faith. Connections are still not being made between sexuality and spirituality. Consequently, as the delights of mutual love are sampled and explored, these stirrings and intimations of human love are experienced without reference to the source of all love, poured out in the love of God for all things in Christ. Since divine love always surfaces in human love, the ongoing divorce between sexuality and spirituality means the most potentially fruitful experience for a person to discover, and grow, in faith, is repeatedly missed (Thatcher 1999:101).

4.1.6 Vocation

Marriage, understood as vocation, is a response to some purpose beyond its nature. It begins with God's gracious call, rather than (as with its sacramental view) with an order of creation. Marriage as a process of nature is clearly subordinate to the grace that comes through the response to God's call to renew creation. Married people and families are to serve God by carrying out their vocations. Marriage and the family facilitate this by stabilizing and supporting those involved. The equality of the couple comes through their common call to discipleship, but (as in Barth) the roles they carry out in that call may be static, socially determined, and apparently less affected by grace than the model itself suggests (Patton & Childs 1988:83). For Patton and Childs (1988:101) the specificity of vocation is that it is -

> *a process conception of life and marriage that claims that its meaning is discovered on the journey rather in the way that the journey was begun . . .*

_____

> *Marriage understood as shared calling, is not an attempt to live up to ideals but a commitment to be intimate in the real world.*

4.1.7   Communion

The symbol of communion stresses the resonance of two natures and the mutual participation of both in a world they hold in common and the qualities each has as a person. The symbol has its origin in mystical experience and involves grace, operating through given structures of personality. In taking nature seriously it stands close to a sacrament, but lacks the external or permanent symbolic structure typical of sacrament. It is less likely to stress the influence of church over nature, and demands the sociological condition of equality, psychologically presupposing an orientation toward growth and fulfilment, rather than control or the carrying out of presupposed functions.   The communion model seeks to energize persons in their marriage and family relationships, so that they can accomplish their vocation, live out their covenant, and participate in the sacrament of life. Rather than trying to transform them directly or to approach them as instruments or members of a community, the communion model tries to give them power to reveal themselves to each other so that in the resonance between their real selves they might be transformed to higher levels of living (Patton & Childs 1988:83).

4.1.8 Redemption

According to this view of marriage, sex and the family, Christians are called to live out of the reality of the redemption. Christ freed man from the bondages of sin and for this reason we don't have to be dictated to by sin in living out our relationships. Taking Christ's redemption from sin as a point of departure, a strong emphasis is placed on the couple and on members of the family to conquer sin in their lives.

The redemption from sin, and consequently the call to conquer evil, is a fundamental truth of the Gospel. As such it has to form an integral part of a family therapy. Paul is employing this same strategy in Romans 12. After explaining the content of the Gospel in the first 11 chapters, he starts with the words : "Therefore, I urge you, ...". An appeal must and can and could be made because of the redemptive work of Christ. But Paul does not begin his letter with Romans 12. What he says in chapter 12 only makes sense after reading the first 11 chapters.

If redemption does not contain both elements, i.e. redemption from guilt and

_____

redemption from the bondages of sin, it is not a message of true redemption. People easily accept the message of redemption from sin, but they don't experience redemption from the bondage of sin. They feel that that aspect is their own responsibility. For this reason the Christian message of redemption, for them, is a heavy burden that is imposed on them. The freedom which ought to be experienced in Jesus Christ is overshadowed by a new law.

The work of redemption of Jesus Christ can also be wrongly applied to marriage, sex, and the family. Through preaching and in the therapeutic context people are called in the name of Jesus Christ to perfection. It becomes the Christian variant of the popular psychology model which has its point of departure in the growth potential of man. The solution is in you, you just have to unlock it with a commitment to the ideal of a fulfilling life. It is the same appeal, this time in the name of Christ, but this is not the Gospel (Müller 1996:49-50).

All these views contain an aspect of the truth and should not be disregarded. Being familiar with them is important for the pastor who offers premarital pastoral care, because each view contributes to one's being able to talk about what marriage ought to be.

The pastor, as one representing the tradition of the church, is in fact saying to the couple : "In what way is your relationship developing in a sacramental way ? In what way do you share a common call and direction in life ? In what way is your covenant together related to the larger covenant of God with his people ? In what way are you developing as equal partners in your intimacy with one another ? In what way do you accept and experience the redemption from guilt and from the bondages of sin in your relationship together ? Which of these normative symbols for the marriage of Christians is most present or is missing from the way you understand your relationship?" These questions enable a couple in storying their relational narrative in relationship to The Story represented by the Church, her tradition and by the pastor who is trying to assist the couple interested in marrying or in contemplating marriage.

4.2   STORIES OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS

The premarital conversation is more than just giving out information (theological or psychological), of how a couple ought to live. Taking the above mentioned chapters in consideration, we can say that a postmodern approach will be culturally relevant (2.7.1

_____

Realities are socially constructed), encourages participation, develops both experience und understanding (chapter 3), validates all the different biblical portraits of marriage (4.1 Biblical portraits of marriage), senses the importance of past, present and future, and is localized (local knowledges).

To understand a narrative approach to a premarital conversation, it is useful to see how different schools of thought interpret and undertake "marriage preparation" or "premarital counselling".

As I have already mentioned, this approach moves away from an educational and instructive approach towards "marriage preparation". The goals of marriage preparation according to three researchers, which fit into this educational approach, will be briefly outlined below. It does not mean that these approaches are wrong, but a narrative approach entails something else (see especially the next chapter, but also other case studies presented in this reading). I will give three examples of what I mean by *these* other approaches. The approaches that I mentioned in 1.7.2 *Personal experience* could also be added here.

1)   According to Schumm and Denton (1979:24-25) until recently only three approaches to premarital preparation have been used (Mudd 1957; Nash 1970).

The first, approach, generalized education preparation, is exemplified by family life education in high schools and colleges, as well as home economics extension programs.

A second approach, identified as therapeutic counselling, is designed to meet the needs of couples presenting specific and often distressing problems. In the literature, this approach is primarily presented in terms of case studies rather than in a systematic or theoretical manner.

The third approach, instructional counselling, has traditionally been the province of the pastor, rabbi, and physician. The goal of this form of premarital counselling is to prepare couples to make realistic adjustments to their expectations of marriage by providing them with information and exposure to a variety of frequently occurring marital problems.

Programs have tended to focus on sexual adjustment, marital roles, relationships with in-laws, wedding plans, and religious concerns. Couples are usually counselled privately, although groups of couples may be present together for sessions that are

_____

primarily educational. Systematic evaluation of such programs is infrequent even though couples often complete written questionnaires to evaluate their "compatibility."

A fourth approach, the enrichment approach, has been promoted based on the premise that equipping couples to deal with their own concerns is more useful to them in the long run than merely conveying information and advice. Enrichment, as defined by the *Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment,* involves the enhancement of couples' commitment, communication, and skills in conflict resolution (Mace 1978). Aspects of the enrichment paradigm have been incorporated into several premarital programs (Miller, Corrales & Wackman 1975; Gurman & Kniskern 1977). Although most of these programs focus on the process component of human interaction rather than on the content aspect (Gleason & Prescott 1977), many do not give sufficient thought to the components of commitment and conflict resolution, resulting in reduced effectiveness (Mace 1978).

In an earlier work Mace (1975:12-13) states that the shortcomings of marriage preparation programs are that they transmit knowledge, and that the "missing element" to be effective is that marriage preparation must move decisively from the impartation of knowledge to the investigation of personal and interpersonal dynamics – and not only to the investigation but also the facilitation of necessary behavioural change over a period of time. They employed five settings for their marriage preparation : (1) the provision of reading material for the couple, (2) a lecture to a class or group, (3) an instructional interview with a couple, (4) an investigative interview with a couple, (5) the supervised group interaction of several couples.

2) According to Glendening and Wilson (1972:551) premarital preparation and counselling should,

a) help participants gain insights into themselves and their relationship,
b) provide techniques for maintaining and enriching relationships,
c) give the couple a positive experience of going for help together,
d)   give the couple the opportunity to be aware of and to practice the expression of feelings, and
e) share the belief that a deep emotional relationship brings joy.

3) Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981:13-14) mention the goals of a standardized marriage

_____

preparation program of the *Philadelphia Marriage Council* :

a) to provide education and information about married life to couples contemplating marriage, and,

b)   to help prospective spouses work through interpersonal difficulties they are experiencing at the time.

They themselves then propose (Bagarozzi & Rauen 1981:25-26) that marriage preparation programs should include the following :

a) To provide prospective spouses with the opportunity to become aware of and discuss the developmental tasks that they will face in the early stages of marriage.

b) To teach couples a variety of behavioural tasks that will enable them to successfully resolve these developmental tasks and make structural changes in their relationship. These skills include, but should not be limited to, conflict negotiation, problem solving, communication training, and positive behaviour change strategies.

c) To provide the couple with the opportunity of re-evaluating their decision to marry.

They stated that the most frequent conceptual inadequacies in premarital counselling are the failure to articulate a theory of family process and/or family development which serves as a rationale for the selection of program contents and procedures.

In a later article Bagarozzi and Bagarozzi (1982) offer some conceptual guidelines for designing and implementing premarital intervention programs and for evaluating their effectiveness. They believe that for any premarital intervention program to be successful it must be guided by a theory of family intervention which insures the development of those structural characteristics that are essential for the maintenance and stability of any living system. A premarital intervention program must also provide for the development of interactive processes within the system which contribute to its growth and viability (1982:53). For this, they used the concept of family development tasks which consist of eight content areas. Each content area can be thought of as being comprised of structural and process tasks which both participants must negotiate and resolve if they are to build a viable dyadic system. The eight content areas are : (1) marital roles and tasks, (2) finances and financial decision making, (3) sexual relations, (4) in-laws, (5) friends, (6) recreation, (7) religion, and (8) children. Within each of these eight content areas,

_____

couples are asked to discuss a variety of sub-issues. In order to facilitate these discussions, couples are taught functional communication skills. This is the first process task that each couple is required to master before being permitted to go on to the next phase of training.

Upon successful completion of this requirement, couples are taught collaborative problem solving techniques, conflict negotiation techniques and contingency connecting as means to achieve fair and equitable marital exchanges. Participants are taught to use these skills in addition to communication training, because communication skills, by themselves, are not considered sufficient to equip couples with the tools needed to resolve their differences successfully.

Upon the completion of this second group of process tasks, couples are ready to discuss and negotiate their differences in each of the eight content areas of married life where difficulties often arise. The sub-issues that couples are asked to address are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of concerns. However, they can be considered to represent a sample of important decisions which most couples will face during the early stages of relationship development. The mutually satisfying resolution of these issues in the dyadic phase of family formation is crucial to the successful resolution of successive developmental tasks, because they represent the foundation upon which a viable family system is built (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi 1982:53-54). They then go on to illustrate how the discussion and resolution of specific sub-issues contribute to the development of functional family structures and processes (Bagarozzi & Bagarozzi 1982:54-62).

Buckner and Salts (1985) propose a premarital assessment program which -

> *goes beyond providing information by seeking to make the couple aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their relationship. The program will help clarify potential problem areas and help the couple realize their own personal resources in solving these problems* (1985:513).

Their assessment model, unlike therapeutic counselling, is not limited to meeting the needs of couples presenting specific problems. It is applicable to all premarital couples. Assessment provides the opportunity for a couple to re-evaluate and confirm their commitment and decision to marry. Furthermore, this assessment program provides training in specific skills for the beginning marital and family therapist (Buckner & Salts

_____

1985:513). In order to achieve these goals the following areas are covered : (1) dating history of the couple and some parent information, (2) expectations, goals, roles, needs of each individual and of the couple, (3) family, children, finances, friends, recreation, (4) meeting with the parents of the couples, (5) communication and conflict resolution, and (6) values and sexuality (Buckner & Salts 1985:514).

Possibly the most well-known marriage preparation program (and marriage enrichment program) is *Prepare/Enrich* developed by Olsen and Olsen. The initial development of the *Prepare/Enrich* scales was based on the theoretical as well as empirical indicators of the critical issues and common conflict areas in marriage. A major category and assessment scale was then developed to assess each of these conflict areas for couples. They fall into four general groups: *Personality issues*, which are individual characteristic; *Intrapersonal issues*, such as personal beliefs and expectations; *Interpersonal issues*, which include communication and relationship issues, and *external issues* which are outside factors which affect the couple's relationship (Olson & Olson 1997:2). The following table describes the common conflict issues and the corresponding Prepare/Enrich areas:

Common Conflict Issues	Prepare/Enrich Areas
Personality issues	
Expressing self	Assertiveness
Self esteem	Self confidence
Denial / Avoidance	Avoidance
Control issues	Partner dominance
Intrapersonal issues	
Idealization / Social desirability	Idealistic distortion
Personality / Habits	Personality issues
Incompatible values/beliefs	Spiritual beliefs
Interests / Activities	Leisure activities
Expectations	Marriage expectations
Satisfaction	Marriage satisfaction

_____

Interpersonal issues

Communication	Communication
Arguments / Anger	Conflict resolution
Children	Children and Parenting
Commitment	Couple closeness
Marital roles	Role relationship
Sex /Affection	Sexual relationship

External issues

Relatives / Friends	Family and friends
Money / Work	Financial management
Family issues	Family closeness and
	family flexibility

The *Prepare* program was originally developed in 1978 after the authors encountered difficulties in working with premarital couples. The initial idea was to create a couples questionnaire which would get the couple talking to each other about their relationship. By including in the questionnaire relevant issues for couples, it was hoped that they would begin discussing and even resolving some of these issues before marriage. After the initial questionnaire was developed, a research project was designed to determine the impact of a premarital inventory and counselling for couples. These findings lead to further development of the *Prepare* Inventory and more clearly defined feedback sessions. It has been revised three times (1982, 1986, 1996). In 1996, major revisions were made in the *Prepare, Prepare-MC* and *Enrich* inventories and they were expanded into the *Prepare/Enrich Program* with six couples' exercises. The goal of the program was to build on the strengths of these well-designed inventories, and add a more comprehensive skill based program for couples (Olson & Olson 1997:3).

Improvements to Version 2000 of the Prepare/Enrich inventories

- Major item revision with 40% new items and 30% revised.
- 30 background questions with 15 questions on abuse.
- Four newly created personality scales.
- New typology of couples with 4 premarital types and 5 marital types.
- Expanded focus on family-of-origin and couple system using Couple & Family map

_____

(Circumplex model).

- Six couple exercises.

The *Prepare/Enrich* program is designed to facilitate the communication within each couple about meaningful issues in their relationship. The program has six goals and one couple exercise for each goal. The program is designed to increase their awareness of their relationship strengths and growth areas and provide them with relationship skills so that they can improve their relationship. The program includes first taking a relevant couple inventory (Prepare, Prepare-MC, Enrich or Mate) and then getting feedback about their results from a trained counsellor.

According to Olson and Olson (1997:19) the strength of this program is that it begins with a comprehensive couple inventory. The couple takes one of the above mentioned four inventories which have been designed to maximize their relevance to couples in different stages of their relationship. The inventories have been scientifically developed and have a high reliability, high validity and large national norms with couples from various ethnic groups. The inventories are based on system theory and the Circumplex model of couple and family systems.

The program does have some limitations. The inventories are lengthy with 165 items and 30 background questions. People with a low reading level would have some difficulty in completing the inventory. It is also required that both partners in the couple relationship take the questionnaire, and it is not designed for individuals with very severe emotional problems. Neither is it useful for couples experiencing intense marital conflict.

The South African theologian Daniel Louw (1993) also develops in his book <u>Liefde is vir altyd</u> (*Love is forever*) a guide for marriage preparation and marriage enrichment. According to him a marriage is an art of love and a gift of God's grace. The key to discover marital happiness and renewal is to be amazed about the gift of grace to be married and to be committed to master the art of love (Louw 1993:9).

The purpose of his guide is –

- to help couples evaluate their marriage,
- to motivate couples to be committed to their marriage,

_____

- to develop knowledge about self, the other and God,
- to give a description of what is mature love,
- to master the technique of in depth communication,
- to give guidelines for conflict resolution,
- to discuss how to handle tension,
- to give suggestions how to enjoy each other's bodies,
- to remind a couple of the importance of continual growth of their relationship.
- In the end he gives a five point plan for a marriage enrichment course.

A central part of his guide is questionnaires that could be quite useful, although the same criticism could be given as that of Olson and Olson (above). I found that couples are very hesitant to complete questionnaires and prefer discussions. Louw touches on a variety of relevant issues, but at the same time it is very lengthy and quite intellectual for the average couple. A solution could be that a couple chooses certain subjects that interest them and then they can be discussed.

4.3 COHABITATION

What are churches to say and do about the widespread practice of cohabitation prior to marriage, inside and outside the membership of the church? The "cautious" acceptance of cohabitation by the *Reformed Church of France* (see below) is referred to and commented. The general acceptance of this "new entry into marriage" by the society and certain churches is discussed from the point of view of the changing value systems in society. A possible theological response is also proposed.

The fact that there exists numerous different forms of cohabitation also complicate the pastoral approach towards this lifestyle. The reasons that motivate people to choose this way of life are so diverse that it is difficult to make general "judgements" or conclusions. People living together have a large range of motivations, which include reasons of a philosophical nature (e.g. contesting the *status quo*), financial convenience, uncertainty, fear, or just a refusal to be tied down. Within the church context this implies that we ought to apply an ethical pastoral analysis appropriate to each individual case.

The question concerning cohabitation also concerns the place of sexual relationships. When proposing the order *marriage, sex and the family* one could ask if the

_____

order of these terms used is correct? Which comes first – sex or marriage? I am deliberately choosing this order to propose a certain theological perspective of marriage. This choice is made in spite of a great variety of psychological, philosophical and theological discourses concerning certain lifestyles represented by different orders of these terms.

From my experience with couples cohabitating, they start to think about marriage when they start to think about having a family. An article recently appeared in a quarterly review of the *Family Planning Movement* of France stating that single people who don't practice their need for physical sexual satisfaction are not normal and could have certain psychological deviations. This is a so-called biological-natural point of view. One has then to conclude that marriage is the constitution of a relationship that *de facto* already exists and in which sexual intimacy already exists. Although marriage today is devalued in this way, I am of the opinion that marriage is the truly sensible context for a sexual relationship. This is the reason why I choose to use the given order of the terms. Using this title I am opting for a particular value: sex for the sake of marriage, and not marriage for the sake of sex. It is only from a relational ethical approach that we can talk sensibly about intimacy and sexuality. The family follows then as a valuable consequence of marriage and sex. A family is not constituted as a result of sex between people. Something that is formed in this way is more of a breeding flock and not a family. A family can only be constituted after a marriage is orderly contracted (see Müller 1996:43).

Because of the sex-dominated society in which we live, it might seem necessary to devote a whole chapter to sexuality, but I prefer rather to develop a theological hermeneutic of sex where the emphasis is placed on the relationship between sex, marriage and the family. Sex is not a separate issue, it is always relational. It never has implications for only one person, but always implies at least two people (Müller 1996:43). From a narrative point of view, which includes social constructionism, a sexual relationship between two people also has to do with the social relational context in which they live, and is therefore also determined by these other relationships in which they participate. I could even consider the following order : society, family, marriage, sex. A wedding is contracted between two people who did not fall from the sky, but are the products of a particular social context which determines the way in which they interact intimately. Of course, one could argue "which one came first, the chicken or the egg?" It is important that a theological-ethical value in terms of sexuality should be stressed from the beginning. This value-oriented approach towards sex brings us in direct confrontation with

_____

the current trend in Western society.

Russell-Jones (1993:31-35) writes about the "Madonna phenomena" which can be considered as an expression of what is happening in Western culture:

> *In modern times the body has been pitted against the soul as an agent of desacralization and demystification: the physical has taken centre stage explaining and displacing the spiritual. What has happened, however, is that the body itself has taken on sacred significance: it has simply taken the place of the soul as a mythical court of appeals, as dogma and a plan of salvation. Its discovery which for a long time was a criticism of the sacred and a struggle of man against God, takes place today under the sign of resacralization. The cult of the body is no longer in conflict with that of the soul. It follows upon it and inherits its ideological function'. The vast industries connected with health, fitness, beauty, and entertainment all testify to the pre-eminence of the body in contemporary culture.*

This shift should be gladly accepted, since the dualism between body and soul is no longer sustained, and especially not with God on the side of the soul against the body. Neither should the opposite ideology with God on the side of the body against the soul be supported. The relationship between God and man in the context of sexuality should be approached in a total differently way.

As an example I will present a pastoral situation[3] that demands a pastoral response. Through this presentation I would like to present a Pastoral narrative involvement in a situation where theological ethics are concerned. This could also be seen as a response to the relativism sometimes imposed by Postmodernism (see also 2.7.4).

> *Jacques, 30, and Marie, 25, have been cohabiting for two years and are planning to get married some time in the "near future". Marie is also two months pregnant. Jacques is an accountant and Marie a high school teacher. Jacques was married before and got divorced after four years of marriage. This happened four years ago. Both of them are non practicing Catholics, but decided to approach a Protestant church to talk about their situation, because of the problems surrounding remarriage in the Roman Catholic Church*

_____

[3] The couple contacted me after a priest of the RCC didn't want to marry them. The conversation took place at the Reformed Evangelical Church of Montpellier in June 2000.

_____

(RCC), and the fact that Marie is pregnant. Both of their families are Catholic, although only their mothers are "sort-of" practicing Catholics. Both of their parents experience their cohabitation, pregnancy and the fact that Jacques is divorced in a negative light ("How will they ever be able to get married in the Church ?).

Jacques and Marie decided to live together two months after they met. Despite the fact that their friends accepted this as normal, it created tension between themselves and their parents – until finally they moved away from their parents to a nearby town. Jacques and Marie were divided emotionally about their cohabitation and the fact that Jacques was divorced (and is still "married" according to the RCC), but they decided "not to think about it". During the conversation it came to light that this aspect of their relationship had more influence on their relationship and their future plans to get married than they thought.

It could be said that they made a kind of cost-benefit analysis of their situation. On the cost side, if they continue to live together, (a) the tension between themselves and their parents would continue or even get worse, (b) if they want to get married they should regularize Jacques' divorce with the RCC, because their parents won't accept a wedding in a Protestant church, and (c) their hidden guilt concerning all this would continue. On the benefit side, (a) they would not just conform to the beliefs and ideas of others. If they conform now to the ideas and believes of others (parents, Church) it could create expectations to do the same in the future. (b) The above mentioned "costs" would also be resolved.

I took note of their attempt to sort out their options, but starting to make an inquiry into the history of their family of origin by mapping their personal relationship history through using the genogram, ecomap and couple lifetime line (see 5.7.4). They came from middle-class French families. Jacques is the eldest of two children (he has a sister who is five years younger), and Marie is the youngest of three children (she has two elder brothers. They are two and three years apart). Both of them were baptised as children in the RCC and followed the catechism of the RCC. Their mothers wanted them to be "good Catholics because it is the right thing to do". Jacques experienced a lot of tension with his parents from his adolescent years especially concerning the fact that they "want to impose values on him that were outdated". He now interprets his first marriage in this light as a kind of breaking the bond with his parents. Marie had a close relationship with her mother, sometimes "too close". They shared a lot of life aspects and a relationship of "big sister/little sister" was established.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS   141
_____

The issue presented here is an ethical one and is often overlooked or consciously avoided by a pastor or counsellor in order not to be labelled as a "moraliser". In a situation like this the pastor should keep psychodynamic perspectives in mind as horizon and background in his ethical considerations. The essence of Pastoral Care is found in addressing the religious-ethical dimensions of human problems with an equal consideration for the dynamic-motivational issues as well.

Out of my own experience, I found that all the couples who attended the marriage preparation program of the RCC cohabited, whereas the couples attending the marriage preparation weekends organized by MVF and coming from a more evangelical background did not. Risman et al (1981:77) refers to findings of research that college students who cohabit tend to be less religious than other students.

Du Toit (1996:69) argues that in past years the church could assume that marriage was the only acceptable way to live out individual sexuality within society, but that this is no longer the case in the last decade of this century (for France, it has been the norm for at least the past three decades). A number of different ways of living out one's sexuality have arisen, for example, gay unions and cohabitation. Cohabitation, for example, has become an alternative form of family life and needs to be considered theologically and psycho-socially.

Gerdes (1988:218-219) writes that the reasons for increasing incidence of cohabitation can be traced back to economic and practical factors, such as the need to share accommodation and, in the case of older couples, psychological factors such the needs for intimacy and affection, particularly because of loneliness and a dislike of living alone (especially after a divorce or the death of a spouse). Cohabitation is also seen as a way of being in a more equal relationship, and a help to those who do not feel ready for a lifelong commitment. Hence, cohabitation is essentially a relationship of convenience, which serves as a temporary alternative to marriage. Sometimes it is referred to as a trial marriage.

During the marriage preparation sessions of the RCC an important factor that contributed to the decision to marry, was the decision of having children. This is also confirm by the study of Leridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp (1988) conducted by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED). This reason is given in spite of the fact that 43,7% of children where born out of wedlock (called "natural" children in France) in 2001.

_____

> *When asked about the reason(s) for cohabitation, the majority said that they didn't consciously give it much thought. It just happened naturally.*

The belief that cohabitation is an important prelude to marriage rests on the assumption that cohabitation serves to screen out potentially incompatible partners more effectively than does traditional courtship. By living together, relationships that do not work terminate before marriage occurs, and the more successful relationships continue on to marriage. This approach would lead us to expect that premarital cohabitation improves marital quality and stability.   Although this is a reasonable proposition, several investigations have found the contrary to be true : those who cohabit prior to marriage have been shown to be significantly lower on measures of marital quality and to have a higher risk of marital dissolution at any given marital duration (see DeMaris and Rao 1992 for a list of research done in this regard; Bennett et al 1988:127).   Booth and Johnson (1988) conclude from their study that couples who cohabit are more proned to accepting and expressing "unconventional" life styles. Their assumption is that a person who engages in one form of unconventional behaviour is more likely to manifest another. These couples also show a lower commitment to marriage which contributes again to a lower marital quality than those who do not live with their partner before marriage (see also Bennett et al 1988:128, 137;   Schoen 1992:281;   Risman et al 1981:77, 78).   This might give an explanation for the 50% divorce rate in France in 2003.

4.3.1 The changing value system

After reflecting theologically about marriage, I would like to make some remarks concerning the changing value system of our (French) social context.   Since we are formulating a particular approach from a social constructionism point of view, it seems necessary to outline some thoughts concerning the values underlying the choices couples make for their life together.

In spite of the various discourses that one can have about cohabiting, sexuality and marriage and the family, and the order in which they should occur, there are couples living together without being married who are serious and who have thought deeply about their choice of living together. We could call their point of view, since we don't have another expression, "an ideology of free love".

_____

> *Sometimes it has happened that during a conversation with a couple living together without being married that I have defended the institution of marriage stating that if they really love each other they would get married. Many a time this statement has been greeted with a smile ! Why ? They consider that this free engagement claims a vision of love more profound and more demanding than that of a married couple ! They say that they refuse to enclose love in an institution that they judge to be impoverishing and demobilizing. They prefer a commitment that needs to be reconfirmed each day, that can't conceal love's weakness behind the screen of an institution. They claim that love is free, or it does not exist at all !*
>
> *From this point of view, life together as a couple should be an intense exchange on the levels of affection and intellect. The relationship comes to an end when fervent love, enthusiasm and fusioning diminish.*

In 1984 at the national synod of the *Reformed Church of France* pastor Robert Grimm, one of the spokespersons on Protestant ethics concerning marriage, read a report on the evolution of morals which he called a "transmutation of moral values" and the "emergence of a new ethical sensibility" (Grimm 1984:2-3). These transmutations can be resumed as follows (Grimm 1984:68):

- The pre-eminence of love above the institution of marriage, of the affective above the legal;
- the priority given to the present above the duration, to the intensity of a relationship above the repetition;
- the weakening of ideas of promises and of commitment, in the name of freedom and authenticity;
- the pre-eminence of the idea of the couple above that of the family;
- the diminishing of religious practices, and the emergence of a different manner of understanding obedience.

It is for this reason, according to Grimm, that these "free" couples, non legalised, transmit also, in their own way, an ethical message that married couples should hear and take into consideration. The synod now considers marriage and cohabitation as being two possible equally respectable expressions of the same Christian "conjugality".

Sullerot stated in a report she prepared for the *Economic and Social Council*

_____

(1984:29-32) that marital status started to change in 1965. One notices a considerable fall in the number of marriages and a constant rise of cohabitation in different forms, together with its legal consequences. According to Sullerot the reason for this is that certain principles were abandoned and others were consecrated:

- The following principles were abandoned or became weaker: the idea of the sacred, respect for the patriarchal hierarchy, respect for the institution, the power of legitimacy with regard to filiation and succession, the principle of personal commitment;
- the following principles were promoted: personal liberty, the respect of the personal interests of each partner as an individual, the equality of each partner of the married couple in terms of their relationship towards each other and their relationship towards their children, and the equity between the children born within-wedlock, out-of-wedlock and adopted children.

Sullerot (1984:92-95) claims that the main impetus for change of contemporary values and the installation of a new value system came about after 1968. The principles of this new value system can be expressed as follows:

- The idea of an interdiction in the context of sexuality is totally rejected. Sexuality is exclusively personal and should be developed in the context of individual freedom. The idea that the sexual act can imply or lead to an official commitment or social status, is rejected. Sexuality can not be subject to social imperatives.
- From this flows the idea that there is an obligatory tolerance towards the behaviour of others. The only response towards the behaviour of others is : "It is his right!" This attitude could even go so far as not being able to insist on faithfulness in a relationship, each partner being free to do as he likes.
- There is a preference for the couple above the family. It is the couple who constitute the official union. The desires of the couple are the beginning and end of all things. Having a child is seen as a building block of the couple's relationship. This makes the couple relationship very fragile because it contains high expectations and unconscious demands. Regarding this point of view Grimm (1984:70) in a study done for the *Reformed Church of France* underlines that there is a certain preference for a "theology of the couple" rather than a "theology of marriage".

_____

- Security is no longer important – neither affective nor material security. Neither partner is seen as being capable of providing for these demands. How can I take an oath today and maybe tomorrow it will be a lie, or how can I make a promise today, if I don't know what I will feel tomorrow. These securities which are linked to marriage are sought elsewhere – work, the State, i.e. to make sure that we receive that which is our right. Parents are also seen as a refuge. Each partner visits his/her parents separately for a week-end or for the holidays. Contact with the parents of the other partner is almost nonexistent. For this reason, when these couples marry, in most cases engagements are not celebrated (Amongst the almost 60 couples who attended the marriage preparation program of the RCC, only one couple had had an engagement). In this regard Risman et al (1981:82) quote Rapaport who argues that marriage rituals ease the transition to marital roles, but that less ritual is needed when there is more premarital intimacy. I will explore the importants of these rituals in the next chapter. Regarding Rapaport's second claim, I found that the opposite is actually true, i.e. if we consider only the financial aspects of weddings today. Depending from one congregation to another the couples attending the sessions of the RCC could participate in the order of service for their wedding ceremony by selecting Bible texts, other texts (like poems), songs, and personal witnesses during the service. In some cases, a lot of originality was shown (see also next chapter).

- The duration of the relationship is not important. The intensity of the relationship is most important. If this intensity becomes less, if the flame diminishes, if silence becomes part of the relationship there is no reason to stay together – it will be hypocritical and unhealthy. Concerning this aspect, Lemaire (1997:335) considers that the notion of duration is fundamental for the formation of a couple relationship.

- Commitment is viewed as suspect. There is a superstitious fear that if we pronounce the words "I promise you that . . ." this will cause everything to fall apart. We make future plans to buy a car, to buy a house, to go on holiday, but we cannot respond to our feelings for tomorrow or the future. We cannot decide today that tomorrow or the years to come can be consecrated to one person, to love only one person. It seems impossible to mobilise our will for that.

_____

Sullerot (1984:61 ff) gives six reasons for this "new" lifestyle:

- Economic factors: the prosperity of a higher lifestyle.
- The development of contraception and abortion.
- Social factors like urbanisation, mobility, anonymity, and the changing attitudes of parents.
- The influence of the media in creating scepticism towards marriage.
- The reduced influence of religious practise resulting in the desacralisation of marriage.
- The feeling that, in a society of continuing mutation, one is overtaken by the time and the rhythm of these changes. This results in an intense investment in the present, without looking back or ahead.

Sullerot then concludes with this interesting thought – which she unfortunately does not develop further: Shouldn't we consider this questioning of marriage – coming from Jewish-Christian thought – as another symptom of a profound spiritual crisis in our society? Are the declining in the number of marriages and the development of cohabitation not also signs of a spiritual emptiness and a loss of meaning? If life and death have no meaning, why bother constructing a value system? Involuntarily it makes one think of the words of the contemporaries of Isaiah: "Let us eat and drink, ... for tomorrow we die!" (Isaiah 22:13b).

Another major change in society has to do with the *passage from duties/obligations* to rights. Since the beginning of time the traditional couple was more oriented towards the reproduction of life from one generation to the next, i.e. towards biological, material, cultural and spiritual succession. Because of the inevitability of death, always prematurely possible, and the *frailty of existence*, it was necessary for the individual to step aside for the benefit of the group. The survival of the family imposed certain obligations on each member and elevated duty to the level of virtue. Few events were linked to personal decision. Mortality and fertility were regulated by fate. Happiness was relative, necessity reigned and expectations were very limited. These norms were interiorized and accepted as natural. A couple's relationship and family life could be summed up in two words: *survival and transmission.*

Because of this, family relations were defined by duties and obligations : the duties of the husband and those of the wife, marital obligations and the duties of the children.

_____

This was the binding family relationship. The obligations of each family member corresponded to a specific role that they played and this role gave them a certain identity. Church education often regarded these duties as *sacred* and elevated them. In this way, the wife had to find her identity in her role and duty as a mother. It was very difficult for her to build an identity outside of this role. This led to a confusion between her *social role and personal identity*.

Since the 1950-1960's life expectancy in the West has increased considerably and this has resulted in certain fundamental changes within family relationships. From 1920 to the present day couples life expectancy has increased from 14 to 44 years.

Each person can now exist as a true individual with his own rights, without endangering the life of the group. Relationships are no longer understood in terms of obligations, but in terms of individual rights. This emergence of individualism has destabilized the relationships within couples. Human rights have become *individual rights, "my rights"*. The tendency is to forget the universal to the advantage of the individual.

Marriage is now lived in respecting the autonomy of each individual. The relationship is no longer dictated to by a moral or social imperative, but is claimed as a free choice, i.e. a decision to love. The couple have moved from a *prescribed union* to the management of a *mutually consented union*. From this perspective, when the sentimental union disappears, couples disintegrate far more easily than before. This partially explains the incidence of separations and divorces early in marriages. The fragility of these unions also reflects the importance of the relationship to the couple.

The fact that relationships are now based on individual rights means that *expectations have grown* and along with that *frustrations* have increased. Contrary to the traditional system in which the individual found his identity in duty accomplished and in his role allotted by society, now each person - liberated from these ancestral constraints - carries alone the weight of his existence and his identity. Of course, we have chosen the criterion of "happiness", but what kind of happiness are we talking about ? To choose happiness, also means to choose uncertainty and fragility – not because this choice is bad, but simply because it brings with it new demands and new difficulties.

According to Erich Fuchs (1979) this new form of relationships, which emphasizes the liberty of the individual, is the result, from a moral point of view, of the ideology of a

_____

capitalist consumerism society. A couple's commitment resembles an investment based on the flexibility of money: money is invested where there is the most profit gain, and withdrawn when there is a profit loss. In the same way we invest in marriage or a relationship as long as it has advantages for our own personal enrichment.

A way to avoid this kind of narcissistic egoism is to *anchor* a couple in a *story*. It is a long term perspective which prevents a lapsing into extremes. The *story* allows each one to be enriched and to participate in the common project of their relationship.

This is of great importance since a couple's expectations are becoming more and more excessive. According to the sociologist Gérard Mermet (2002), our society is moving from a *society of consumerism* to a *society of consolation*. We consume in order to be consoled, to fill an existential emptiness. Not being able to place our relationship in the future, we take refuge in a present filled with "good things". This attitude is also found in the context of marriage where each partner "consumes" the other: there is an over-investment in the relationship with each partner expecting the other to fill their existential void.

However, in spite of these tendencies of today's society, for many sociologists, the growth of individualism does not mean the end of institutional marriage. The desire for autonomy is not the cause of rupture, but, to the contrary, it encourages *the revival of relationships*. 'Living together' today, is being "free together".

Ultimately, contemporary couples, with these new characteristics, are both more captivating/endearing but also more fragile. They resemble a machine which, in becoming more complex, is becoming more fragile, but at the same time also more effective/outstanding (Poujol and Duval-Poujol 2003:7-10).

4.3.2 The public character of marriage

In order to understand marriage in its correct context, especially with regard to cohabitation (see 4.4), some remarks should be made about the public character of marriage, as marriage is not only a private commitment between two individuals, but also a commitment within society. You can find people living together without being married who have committed themselves privately to each other. The fact that there is no official

_____

commitment does not mean that there is no commitment. It could be possible that such a private commitment is stronger and more authentic than an official commitment made in public because of social conformity.

Johner (1997:22) cites the following definition of marriage:

> *Marriage exists, in the real sense of the word, when a man and a woman decide to establish their love relationship in the time and in the social context to which they belong, and that they testify to this decision by publicly committing themselves to one another. The society of which they are members recognize and respect them as such, and commit them (the society) again, from their side, to the couple.* (free translation – CdP)

Marriage is not only the commitment of the couple vis-à-vis society, but also and at the same time the commitment of society towards the couple. It means that the society should recognize the couple's new social status, and recognizes from now on the two as one new entity (and not two individuals living together).

André Dumas (1983:82-83) states the following :

> *The second function of marriage is to emphasise the choice that two beings have made to love each other. It is always a public ceremony, involving witnesses. It communicates to society a couple's intention to discontinue one life style and their mutual commitment to another. Marriage is the "unclandestinisation"* (i.e. making public of) *of the love for each other*.

If Christian young people (in France?) have great difficulty today in recognising the importance of marriage, is it possibly the result of the negative side of a certain ideology of secularism[4] that "untaught" (made them forget) them to consider the public implications of their faith ?

The union between a man and a woman has been clothed in many different forms according to historical and social contexts, but there was always this one constant that it is a commitment of the couple towards the society to which they belong (Fuchs 1979:183).

_____

[4] France is a secular state, which may seem like nothing extraordinary, but the French understanding of this principle led, for example, in the beginning of 2004 to the law against the wearing of the Islamic veil and other religious signs in public schools.

_____

And even in certain cases – for example in certain ancient patriarchal societies – the society committed itself to the couple.

According to biblical data, several details confirm this idea that the commitment of the couple, or of the fiancés, had a public character. Of course, we do not find a 476th command that states "You must have a civil wedding". I have already mentioned that we do not find a systematic discussion of marriage in the Bible – as with many other ethical issues. This gives us an opportunity to think about the multiply functions of the biblical text.

We can take, for example, the important role that the father of the bride played, without whose consent the marriage was not possible. This role was of such importance that we could ask if marriage in ancient Biblical times was not rather a contract between two families rather than between two individuals.

Consider the intervention of the elders in cases where the virginity of the woman was debated. Deuteronomy 22:13-21 explains what should be done when a husband claims that he wife was not a virgin when he took her as his wife. This was a public affair!

Several parables of Jesus concerning weddings indicate that it was a public affair (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24, for example)

We could also think about the meaning of the dowry: this dowry that the husband, according to Jewish law, had to pay to the family of the bride did not have the negative meaning that we give it today. With the dowry, the future bridegroom symbolised his commitment by giving to the family of his future wife an important part of his wealth. Following on from this, the marriage had important financial and succession implications for the families concerned, of which the State was an eyewitness. There was no private event.

In the laws of the Old Testament we find reference to the role of the elders, who took the place of magistrates in cases related to the marital covenant, for example, adultery, or in a dispute concerning the virginity of the bride (Deuteronomy 22). In these cases, the people concerned were referred to the elders, today they are replaced by judges and magistrates. Disputes of this nature, in spite of the fact that they concerned private affairs, could not be settled by the individuals concerned, nor by the respective families, but only by the civil authorities of the time. There was nothing private about this.

In the same way, according to Romans 7:2 it was the law (Jewish or Roman) that bound a woman to her husband.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS   151
_____

The theologian Henri Blocher (1984:125) states:

> *We could continue to evoke the role of the rites and the splendour of the celebration of weddings to which Jesus makes reference in several parables. These rites were eminently social practices that had the implication to bring marriage out into the open and showed society that marriage was the issue and not some other form of relationship. By means of these rites marriage became a communal event understood by everyone. By means of the celebration the whole village was associated with the wedding. No one remained uninformed. In this way, the whole society became a witness to the occasion.*

To be, to exist, marriage must be a public act. Today the banns of marriage are still published. This is not just an extra, optional act, but an essential element of the nature of marriage itself.

Thus, we could say that the union between a man and a woman is not based on some or other ideal, but form part of the social context in which it finds itself. The couple has eyewitnesses in order to be recognised by the society in which they live. The meaning of the civil marriage is that it gives a particular status to a man and a woman, by which the relationship is made public and by which each partner is committed to one another in front of witnesses.

It is true that the civil wedding does not always have the splendour that one wishes. Being aware of the austerity of civil "liturgies" certain magistrates try to give more splendour to civil weddings. But to change the situation for the better, a lot still has to be done, especially in the big cities, as the following testimony shows:

> *The large wedding hall on the second floor of the City Hall of the 18th district of Paris (...).   In one hour, ten couples had already paraded to pronounce their ceremonial 'yes' after standing and listening to the four articles of the Civil code. 'We have tried to add a more personal touch to the occasion in spite of the number of weddings celebrated each Saturday,' explains the assistant magistrate, who is concerned about the image of his stronghold. 'We refuse to do what is done in certain suburbs, where after the reading of the Civil Code all the couples say yes in unison before parading by to sign the register'. All the couples receive the same treatment. Or rather the same*

_____

> *timing : 4 minutes 13 seconds. Maximum time : 8 minutes 38. No more time is necessary to read the 4 articles and to sign at the bottom of the register. The elected representatives of the people try hard to alleviate the administrative rigour by sharing with the happy newly weds some nice words and giving them their family record book, and most important of all, a greeting card from the Mayor of Paris. Coming down the stairs of the City Hall, the newly weds just have time to make a wish: that the duration of the ceremony is not a prediction of the duration of their union* (Témoignage chrétien 10-16 October 1988, n° 2309 – free translation CdP).

In spite of its imperfections, the celebration of the marriage remains an important action for society. The marriage celebrated in front of witnesses marks the visible entry of the couple into the status of husband and wife. According to the actual civil law it also recognizes the parental authority of the father, and, consequently, the child is assured of having the lawful right to two parents. As a result, marriage can be viewed as social cement. This is very important as children born out of wedlock, more or less recognized by the father, have to choose between the father's name and that of the mother, and they are uncertain as to who has parental authority over them. These cases are becoming more and more frequent.

Since the French revolution marriage is a civil action. The church has been silenced and its only remaining function is to welcome couples who want to ask God to bless their union (Hoareau & Hoareau 1995:5.32-5.33).

But the difference between marriage and cohabitation is not only a question of *form,* i.e. that the content of the two ways of living together is the same, but the one takes place in public and the other one not. Marriage is then only "cohabitation with a ceremony". The difference between the two is situated in relation to the *form and the content of the supposed commitment*. It "most" cases of cohabitation the partners stay faithful to one another, *as long as they stay together*. The difference with marriage is that *duration* forms an integral part of the public commitment of the couple. This aspect is an inviolable principle of marriage on which the marital relationship is built. Sullerot (1984:91) refers to a study done amongst 18-25 year olds and states that they advocate a relationship which consists of an intense exchange of sexual and affective experiences and intellectual ideas. A relationship ends when these intense feelings of "being in love", of

_____

excitement and of "fusion" – feelings that justify a life together - start to diminish. For this reason, many of these young couples choose to cohabite in order not to be swallowed up in the marshlands of routine. In this way, they can break-up easier when things seem not to be working out and when they get bored with one another.

Even though cohabitation and marriage may share certain similarities, they represent two different lifestyles of living together, because they are built on two totally different foundations. In the one case, there is a preconditioned, public and definitive gift of one to another to build together their relationship "until death do us part". In the other case, a temporary self giving and delight in the partner and his/her qualities as long as the compatibility is "felt" (or until they come to decision that it is eventually worthwhile to make a life long commitment of faithfulness).

In spite of many couples living together before getting married, pastors have made the following observations concerning couples (Christians and non-Christians) who came to ask for a church blessing of their marriage (as a previously remarked, in France the state marries a couple, and if they want to, they can have a church blessing of their marriage *afterwards*):

- For many couples the civil ceremony seems to play a secondary role in relation to the religious ceremony. They only consider to be married after the religious ceremony.
- Certain wedding liturgies contain the phrase: "I now declare you husband and wife" pronounced by the pastor, even though the magistrate has *already* pronounced them "married in the name of the law" (article 74 of the Civil Law).
- In most cases, when the couple enters the church the bride is led in by her father and the bridegroom by his mother as if they considered that they were not yet married.
- These behaviours show a certain ambiguity amongst couples: marriage is a social and public act in front of a magistrate, but, at the same time, for many also a religious experience. It is not easy to make a distinction between that which is cultural, religious and historical.

4.3.3 A Theological approach possible?

Browning (2000:93-100) proposes four guidelines for the practice of Pastoral Theology in situations like this that consists of a religious, an ethical and a psychodynamic perspective. In some cases where the psychodynamic dimensions are dominant, and the

_____

religious and ethical dimensions less so, and if the pastor knows how to articulate the way that they are operative, the counselling being offered is nonetheless pastoral in the proper sense of the word.

1) Pastoral Theology should be understood as narrative hermeneutical response to the major themes of the Judeo-Christian tradition, with special regard for the implications of these themes for a normative vision of the human life cycle.

To understand Pastoral Theology as a type of narrative hermeneutical response will have great clarifying consequences for a variety of pastoral care ministries, especially those ministries such as institutional pastors or pastoral psychotherapists who must articulate their role before various professions and constituencies within the public world. It is difficult for pastors to explain intelligibly to a doctor or social worker their role identity in confined confessional terms. It is better to articulate one's faith assumptions in a more public and narrative hermeneutical language. And it is certainly better to do this rather than lapsing into the jargon of the Social Sciences, due to discomfort with confined confessional language. Browning proposes a revised correlational method of Pastoral Theology (Practical Theology of care) analogous to the revised correlational method proposed by David Tracy in the arena of fundamental theology (Browning 2000:93). The revised model critically correlates both questions and answers found in the Christian faith with questions and implied answers in various secular perspectives (the Human Sciences, the Arts) on common human experiences.

The pastor in this case should understand his task in a public and narrative hermeneutically articulated way. If the pastor chooses to guide the couple to get married rather than living together, it will be better if he can defend his stand publicly, i.e. narrative hermeneutically, although the starting point of his position may be grounded in faith. It should be, as always, faith seeking understanding. A purely confessional view of Pastoral Theology will no longer serve the pastoral minister functioning increasingly within the context of a pluralistic and secular culture.

2) Pastoral Theology must attempt to discern and articulate the relevance to care of both the religious dimension of common experience as well as the explicit faith themes of the historic Judeo-Christian tradition (Browning 2000:94).
This proposition follows directly from the first. If Pastoral Theology is to have a public character, it must concern itself with both the explicit themes of our historic faith as well

_____

as the tacit religious dimensions of everyday experience.

The desire to care for another person, as expressed by a pastor or a secular therapist, presupposes certain attitudes of a religious kind. Deciding to care for another person assumes certain convictions that that person is worth valuing and caring for, not just for certain instrumental purposes, but intrinsically and with regard to some wider, if not ultimate, standard of value and worth. A variety of contemporary philosophers and theologians (Stephen Toulmin, David Tracy, Schubert Ogden, Bernard Lonergan, Paul Tillich) have argued that all of our finite judgments about both truth and value presuppose limit-experiences and a "limit-language" about wider measures of the true and the valuable.

If Pastoral Theology can be hermeneutical enough to discern and articulate the limit-assumptions (which could be compared to faith assumptions) behind every act of care, pastoral practitioners can take their place more comfortably in the various pluralistic contexts that characterize contemporary ministry in both its specialized and generalized forms. In the above mentioned situation the pastor may want to ground his care for the couple under the rubric of the love and forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ. He should be aware, however, that this faith assumption is not altogether different from the limit-assumptions that the secular therapist makes. Even the secular therapist must answer the question, why do I care for this person? Why is this person worth helping? Why am I obligated to help? These questions point to limit-assumptions that taper off into religious faith. The pastor is fed by both sources of faith – those of common experience and explicit religious tradition. The difference between the pastor and the secular therapist is not that the one has faith and the other doesn't; it is rather that the pastor has the additional resources of a specific religious tradition. Recognizing this fact makes it possible for the pastor to take his/her place more gracefully in the contemporary pluralistic situation characterizing the helping disciplines today.

But the fuller task of Pastoral Theology is to give narrative hermeneutical expression to the norms for the human life cycle explicitly found in the major themes of the Judeo-Christian tradition.   Once again, it should be a matter of faith seeking understanding. Our task is to state the norms not just for the faithful (although certainly for them), but also to determine whether these norms have general public meaning, that is, whether they have general significance even for those who are not explicitly Christian.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS   156
_____

3) Pastoral theology should understand itself as an expression of theological ethics, primarily concerned with the religious-ethical norms governing the human life cycle (Browning 2000:96).

Pastoral Care is frequently seen as a religious enterprise, but we overlook the fact that it is also an ethical enterprise. Yet how do we proceed? What are our ethical methodologies? Once again, a philosophical or moral-philosophical perspective may help us sort out our theological-ethical options and do so in such a way as to communicate our stance in a reasoned way to our pluralistic moral situation. First, what does a couple bases their ethical thinking on ? In spite of the couple's traditional religious convictions (despite of their "vagueness"), their style of ethical thinking is often anything but classically religious in character. Often their cost-benefit analysis is a kind of teleological thinking. Teleological moral thinking tries to answer the question of what we should do by trying to determine which act will bring about the greatest amount of good over evil.   The teleologist is always interested in consequences; the moral thing to do is that which will bring into reality the greatest amount of good consequences when good is given an amoral (although not immoral) meaning, such as when we use it to refer to good health, good music, good food, and good times.

At first glance, one might think that the couple is a teleologist of a specifically utilitarian kind. With their cost-benefit analysis they are trying to calculate the good over evil that will come about as a consequence of different courses of action. Utilitarians invariably get involved in such calculations. But this couple is not in the full sense of the word utilitarian, as we will soon see. They are much closer to another kind of teleological thinking - an ethical egoist perspective, typical of so much of the ethical thinking in the contemporary cultural situation.

They are not a totally utilitarian couple because they are not doing their calculations - their cost-benefit analysis - with the good of the larger community in mind. A utilitarian always does his or her calculations with the larger community in view, trying to determine which act or rule, if followed, will produce the greatest amount of good over evil for the largest number of people. The couple is not doing this. They are doing their cost-benefit analysis in terms of the amount of good or evil that will accrue solely to themselves. This is the kind of ethical thinking that a teleologist of the ethical egoist kind invariably ends up doing. We should be reminded that some ethical egoists do things that indirectly create good for others, but they always do them primarily because of the good

_____

that will come to them. The couple is an ethical egoist in that sense. Each of the values that they are weighing has significance first of all for themselves; as of yet, they have asked no questions about the welfare of their families and the larger society.

The pastor has enough ethical sophistication to know that his own point of view is considerably different from that of the couple. Although a Protestant, he agrees with the classical Catholic position about the sanctity of marriage. But he also believes that the Catholic position puts too much emphasis upon the institutional form of marriage (see 4.1.2). It overlooks the possibility that God may cherish other values such as the natural dynamics of love (see also Müller 2002:23-32). The position of the pastor tends toward a mixed deontological and teleological position. The deontological approach to ethics tries to establish the right of some first principle or intuition that is deemed intrinsically morally independent of consequences. The divine commands of God are all examples, in their different ways, of deontological approaches. The pastor's mixed position was deontological in that the sanctity of marriage was for him both a revelational and intuitive given; it was teleological, however, in that he felt that this value, although always central, must sometimes be balanced with other values as well. But one can ask, what other things does God value in addition to this kind of expression of love between two individuals? Example, the qualitative aspects of a love relationship, etc. Hence, the chaplain's position would allow for the possibility of cohabitation, but not on narrowly egotistical grounds.

This pastoral care situation, where cohabitation is the primary focus, is used here only to illustrate a range of ethical issues that pastoral counsellors have been ignoring. Many other situations and many other issues could have been used. But this illustration alone is sufficient to raise a host of important issues. How does the counsellor now proceed? Does he take a thoroughly educative approach and let them solve this problem within their own mixed ethical-egoist and conformist values? Does he try to move them closer to his own way of thinking? Is their developmental history important? Does he need to attend to their feelings, their motivations, and their psychological makeup? What kind of helping relationship should he offer them? How do the religious perspectives discussed above affect this relationship? How does the ethical perspective just mentioned affect the relationship? These questions carry us into the last sections of this discussion and the heart of pastoral care - the practical judgment involved in bringing these religious and ethical perspectives together with the particularities of their situation, the strengths and

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

STORIES OF MARRIAGE AND OF PREMARITAL CONVERSATIONS   158
_____

weaknesses of their personality, and the initiatives and responsibilities they are likely to sustain.

4) Pastoral Theology should be concerned with specifying the logic, timing, and practical strategies for relating, theological-ethical and psychodynamic perspectives on human behaviour (Browning 2000:98).

The pastor's ethical outlook led him to believe that getting married was the most responsible course of action open to them. At the same time, he ended his interview believing that, for psychodynamic reasons, the couple was strongly attracted to the idea of getting married. But time was of the essence. A decision had to be made soon. He concluded the interview by offering to have two additional conversations. In these conversations he hoped to widen the range of their moral thinking so that they would begin to consider, in addition to their own individual needs, their needs as a couple, the needs of their families, and finally the needs of the larger community. In addition, he hoped to broaden their ethical thinking while at the same time attending to the complexities of their own developmental history.

On the moral level, the pastor believed that there were arguments against getting married. Their conception of themselves as a couple living together, the unlikely possibility of getting assistance from their families, their lack of financial resources, the possible negative effects on their relationship, and finally the place of the baby in the larger family context, led the pastor to have certain reservations, although he affirmed the sanctity of marriage, and the creation of a stable context in which the child can grow up. In addition, he held the conviction that modern society had already spawned too many alienated and emotionally deficient individuals and that the welfare of the social whole argues rather for the happiness of individual.

But there were indications, he thought, that the couple was deeply attracted to getting married. The mapping of Jacques' developmental history, for example, led to the hypothesis that Jacques was mildly narcissistic. The pastor felt that what seemed to be an oedipal (which, according to Freud, leads to the formation of the superego which is the source of the moral and the religion) relationship between Jacques and his mother was probably superficial. He hypothesized that the real developmental issue was the early narcissistic blows dealt to his self-esteem by his father who constantly criticized him for mistreating his younger siblings. The mother's later appreciation helped compensate somewhat for earlier narcissistic deficits. But having little understanding of what was

_____

really happening, Jacques developed the strategy of enhancing his self-regard through taking care of others who needed him. This led, the pastor thought, to an early marriage. This same need might also, he believed, be behind his wish "to have a child."

All of this the pastor held only for a moment. He did want to speak with them further. He hoped that in getting to know them better, he might gain a clearer idea about how to bring their moral discernment and their dynamic self-understanding into a closer relationship. He did not wish to take the role of a therapist, but he did want to promote both moral and psychological growth. For the next session, he planned to guide them into discussing their deeper feelings about the possibility of getting married before the birth of the baby. If it emerged that this option did not feed into Jacques over determined needs to be wanted and depended upon, the pastor then hoped to raise some carefully phrased questions designed to suggest additional moral possibilities. He could ask if they had thought about the welfare of the child, the strain it would place on them, etc. At a later date, the pastor was prepared to share simply and without airs of moral superiority his own moral views and the reasons he used to support them. In this way, he hoped to launch a process of moral inquiry that would at once be undogmatic in tone and dynamically sensitive to both the complexities of their developmental history as well as their level of moral thinking.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this fourth chapter we continued our journey on the road of narrative practice that leads to a new way of being and a way of seeing the world in which we live.

We investigated how this road was paved by its predecessors and how it can lead to various interpretations and different destinations. From the narrative path we went to the pastoral path, and from there we described man and the working of the Spirit in the life of man.

These principles lead to a specific understanding of marriage and marriage preparation. The implications of postmodernism, as discussed in chapter two, the hermeneutical pastoral approach as discussed in chapter three, and the biblical portraits of marriage, as discussed in this chapter, have certain implications for the way that cohabitation and marriage preparation programs are viewed and practiced. Flowing from

_____

the above discussion the following traits for a Christian understanding of marriage after modernity could be derived:

(1) Marriage would remain central, not peripheral, to the Christian understanding of sex and love. It would be an institution of mutual self-giving.

(2) There would be no abandonment, but rather a recovery of many of the traditional meanings of marriage.

(3) In contrast to modern individualism a social view of the human person as a person-in-relation is commended.

(4) The primary model of love suggested for Christian marriage is the divine-human love rooted in the divine Trinity.

(5) One's identity as a Christian and as a person is not simply a lifelong project but is conferred by being with others in relationship. Marriage is considered as the exemplar of what being with another actually means.

(6) A positive developmental assessment of Christian tradition (not merely the Christian marriage tradition) was urged. Tradition, combined with a modicum of reverent imagination, liberates by showering us with new possibilities which are forever old, forever new.

(7) The model of a lifelong covenant with one person was commended as a core meaning of marriage; and

(8) the claim was made that while patriarchy was redundant in marriage after modernity, religious faith was a positive necessity in providing the ethos of permanent commitment and deepening love.

In the next chapter the narrative ideas of Michael White and also Freedman and Combs – taking into consideration the views portrayed in this chapter - will be used to propose a premarital narrative conversation. Some of these ideas will be illustrated by certain examples taken from actual conversations.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE 161
_____

CHAPTER FIVE:

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE

"... an ordinary passer-by would think that my rose looked just like you - the rose that belongs to me. But in herself alone she is more important than all the hundreds of you other roses : because it is she that I have put under the glass globe, because it is she that I have sheltered behind the screen, because it is for her that I have killed the caterpillars (except the two or three that we have saved to become butterflies); because it is she that I have listened to, when she grumbled, or boasted, or even sometimes said nothing. Because she is my rose."
..."It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important ... Men have forgotten this truth, ... but you must not forget it."
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The little prince

5.1 ELEMENTS OF A NARRATIVE STANCE IN PASTORAL CARE

Freedman and Combs (1996:40) have developed a set of questions to help us maintain a narrative/social constructionist position. They ask themselves these questions from time to time as they work with people, and they encourage therapists who study with them to ask themselves the same questions. The questions keep evolving, so they are reasonably sure that by the time someone reads this their personal list won't exactly match the one they offer here.

Actually, what is now a list of questions started out as a list of "guidelines" that were phrased as permissive-but-still-rather-prescriptive statements. Phrasing them as questions makes them less prescriptive. Can you see how they would think that being less prescriptive fits with a post modern worldview?

Here are the questions:

- Am I asking for descriptions of more than one reality?

- Am I listening so as to understand how this person's experiential reality has been socially constructed?

- Whose language is being privileged here? Am I trying to accept and understand this person's linguistic descriptions? If I am offering a distinction or typification in *my* language, why am I doing that? What are the effects of the various linguistic distinctions that are coming forth in the therapeutic conversation?

_____

- What are the stories that support this person's problems? Are there dominant stories that are oppressing or limiting this person's life? What marginalized stories am I hearing? Are there clues to marginalized stories that have not yet been spoken? How might I invite this person to engage in an "insurrection of knowledges" around those marginalized stories?

- Am I focusing on meaning instead of on "facts"?

- Am I evaluating this person, or am I inviting her or him to evaluate a wide range of things (e.g., how a pastoral conversation is going, preferred directions in life)?

- Am I situating my opinions in my personal experience? Am I being transparent about my context, my values, and my intentions so that this person can evaluate the effects of my biases?

- Am I getting caught up in pathologizing or normative thinking? Are we collaboratively defining problems based on what is problematic in this person's experience? Am I staying away from "expert" hypotheses or theories?

It can also be added that a therapy situated within the context of a narrative mode of thought would take the form which:

- privileges the person's lived experience;
- encourages a perception of a changing world through the plotting or linking of lived experience through the temporal dimension;
- invokes the subjunctive mood in the triggering of presuppositions, the establishment of implicit meaning, and in the generation of multiple perspective;
- encourages polysemy and the use of ordinary, poetic and picturesque language in the description of experience and in the endeavour to construct new stories;
- invites a reflexive posture and an appreciation of one's participation in interpretive acts;
- encourages a sense of authorship and re-authorship of one's life and relationships in the telling and retelling of one's story;
- acknowledges that stories are co-produced and endeavours to establish conditions under which the "subject" becomes the privileged author;

_____

- consistently inserts pronouns "I" and "you" in the description of events (White & Epston 1990:83).

The following distinct advantages of a narrative metaphor could be mentioned. Firstly, narratives evolve through time and are fluid. Since people's lives progress in much the same way, a metaphor that captures this phenomenon seems more useful than one that is somewhat static (although Bateson's description of "recursive" patterns is more descriptive than "circular"). The focus here is on effects rather than causes.

Secondly, instead of a cybernetic metaphor that relies on *information* as a primary variable, a narrative metaphor uses *experience* as a primary variable. Experience is within the domain of living systems and has already been acknowledged as more primary in second-order cybernetics.   Narrative also seems to capture the life experience of therapists working in the metaphor more than cybernetics does. One effect of this is the shift from people's relationships as the object of therapy to their stories about their relationships, as the object of therapy.

Thirdly, the implication that experience is larger than the problem-filled stories suggests a new role for the therapist. By inviting clients to make meaning out of other aspects of their experience, the therapist creates a context of change or re-storying in a manner whereby the clients themselves become the ones to intervene in the problem (Zimmerman & Dickerson 1994:235). Hoffman (1985) and White (White & Epston 1990) both suggest this change. In other words, people can notice that they have already experienced participating in an alternative story if the therapy context is constructed to elicit these experiences.

5.2 LISTENING

Given our stories about a pastoral conversation, which are formed within these prevalent discourses, it is hard for most therapists to learn to listen to people's stories as stories. Our stories about a pastoral conversation conspire to make us listen with our ears cocked and our mouths set to say "Aha!" when we recognize a "clinically significant item" – something that we know what to do with.

However, as Weingarten (1991) notes, discourses can change and evolve when conversations between people affect culturally available narratives. That is, knowledge at a local level and from sub communities can influence larger discourses. As simple as it may seem, in the face of prevalent discourses and dominant knowledges, simply listening to the story someone tells us constitutes a revolutionary act.

_____

When we meet people for the first time, we want to understand the meaning of their stories for *them.* This means turning our backs on "expert" filters: not listening for chief complaints; not "gathering" the pertinent-to-us-as-experts bits of diagnostic information interspersed in their stories; not hearing their anecdotes as matrices within which resources are embedded; not listening for surface hints about what the core problem "really" is; and not comparing the selves they portray in their stories to normative standards.

Instead, we try to put ourselves into the shoes of the people we work with and to understand them, from their perspective, in their language, what led them to the decision to marry and to come for a premarital conversation. Only then can we recognize alternative stories. Connecting with people's experience from their perspective orients us to the specific realities that shape, and are shaped by, their personal narratives. This sort of understanding requires that we listen, with focused attention, patience, and curiosity while building a relationship of mutual respect and trust.

In spite of all of our education telling us that we do know, we try to listen for what we *don't know.*

5.3 NOT-KNOWING

Anderson and Goolishian (1988, 1990, 1992; see also Anderson 1990; Goolishian, 1990; Goolishian & Anderson 1990; Hoffman 1991) have written passionately and convincingly about the importance of a "not-knowing" position for therapists. They see therapy as a process in which "we are always moving toward what is not yet known" (1990:159). This implies not asking questions from a position of pre-understanding (Andersen 1991; Weingarten 1992) and not asking questions to which we want *particular* answers.

However, a not-knowing position is not an "I don't know anything" position. Our knowledge is of the process of a pastoral conversation, not the content and meaning of people's lives. We hope a pastoral conversation is a process in which people experience choice rather than "settled certainties" with regard to the realities that they inhabit. As Anderson and Goolishian (1988:381) write, -

The goal of therapy is to participate in a conversation that continually loosens and opens up, rather than constricts and closes down. Through therapeutic

_____

> *conversation, fixed meanings and behaviours ... are given room, broadened,*
> *shifted, and changed.*

We are most successful in achieving a not-knowing position when we concentrate on listening and when our talking is guided by and secondary to, that listening. As we listen, we notice and question the assumptions we are making. We ask ourselves, "Am I understanding what it feels like to be this person in this situation, or am I beginning to fill in the gaps in her story with unwarranted assumptions? What more do I need to know in order to step into this person's shoes?" If our internal conversation tells us that more information in a specific area would help us step more fully into a person's reality, we ask her to tell us more. Such constant questioning of our own assumptions invites people to question theirs.

Not-knowing fosters an attitude of *curiosity* (Cecchin 1987; Rambo, Heath & Chenail 1993; White 1988). We are curious about people's unique answers and we encourage people to develop them more fully. When an answer takes the conversation in an unexpected direction, we ask even more questions, following that new direction if it seems relevant.

Just listening and asking facilitating and clarifying questions from a position of curiosity can be very therapeutic. Sometimes people get all they want from a pastoral conversation through this process alone. Therapy of this sort is, as Anderson and Goolishian (1988: 380) indicate, -

> *...a process of expanding and saying the "unsaid" - the development,*
> *through dialogue, of new themes and narratives and, actually, the creation of new*
> *histories.*

Foucault (quoted in White 1991:146) makes the following remark about curiosity:

> *Curiosity is a vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by*
> *philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity, futility. The*
> *word, however, pleases me. To me it suggests something altogether different: it*
> *evokes "concern"; it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist;*
> *readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to*
> *break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervour to grasp*

_____

what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential.

These attitudes mentioned above are especially important when a couple is cohabiting and the personal opinion of the pastor is that they "are living in sin". The pastor should avoid talking about their *sexual relationship*. This is not the reason for their presence. The *attitude* of the pastor should be one of pastoral involvement, an attitude of interest, of inquiry, of pastoral exploration. He could explore by means of deconstruction, for example, the question, "Why now?" Together they can explore the difference between their prior attitudes toward marriage and their assumed changed attitudes *now*. What desires, fantasies can they share about how their partner will be "for them" once they are married? What worries and anxieties do they anticipate will go away or be taken care of? What pictures come to mind about how their spouse will respond to them when they are sick in bed and need care? What thoughts emerge as they think about marriage keeping them safe from loosing their partner? How will their sexual life be changed once they are married? This should be a *pastoral exploration,* a *pastoral involvement.*

5.4 INTERNALISING DISCOURSES

Adams-Westcott, Dafforn, and Sterne (1993) have written about how people who suffer abuse tend to internalise the traumatising events to which they have been subjected as inner dialogues, and how these dialogues colour the interpretation of subsequent events. They write (1993:262), -

> *Problems develop when people internalise conversations that restrain them to a narrow description of self. These stories are experienced as oppressive because they limit the perception of available choices.*

David Epston (1993) has pointed out that this process of internalising happens not just with local and particular experiences of trauma and abuse, but with larger cultural experiences as well. He notes Foucault's description of how death and disease (previously treated as if they were located primarily in a social or spiritual domain) came to be located at specific sites within specific human bodies. Epston (1993:171) writes, -

> *. . . anatomical space became causal space, the home of both death and disease. This was followed by the body being regarded as the repository of human*

_____

qualities. Mind, intelligence, madness, and a myriad of human qualities were regarded to be located in living bodies.

In the Middle Ages, if a person was "sick," "crazy," or "criminal," the cause and cure tended to be located in social or spiritual space - his ruler wasn't ruling well enough or he was out of touch with the appropriate spiritual community. In modern times, the emphasis is much more on individual responsibility for properly policing our minds and bodies. If a person has a heart attack, it is because she hasn't properly controlled her diet and exercise. If a person is depressed, it is because of a chemical imbalance in certain circuits of his brain and a chemical cure is required. According to Foucault, the most politically powerful discourses in modern society divide us from each other and invite us to treat ourselves and our bodies as problematic objects. Epston has called the kind of dominant discourses that support this process "internalising discourses" (see Madigan 1992:268).

An externalizing attitude can counter the "objectifying" influences of internalising discourses, by objectifying and separating what had been internalised. But, in order to adopt an externalizing worldview, we must retrain our perceptions so that we objectify *problems* instead of people.

5.5 DECONSTRUCTION

Deconstruction is another approach that is associated with the exploration and interrogation of texts using post structural perspectives. Post structural perspectives, and in particular deconstruction, are often associated with the work of the French theorist Jacques Derrida, even though he, like Foucault, is careful not to classify his work as belonging to any particular theoretical orientation. As Bloland (1995:526) puts it:

The Derridian strategy is to search out and illuminate the internal contradictions in language and in doing so show how final meaning is forever withheld or postponed in the concepts we use. The means for carrying out this project is deconstruction.

However, it is important to recognize that Derrida has not elaborated on "a single deconstructive method" (Agger 1991:112). Rather, the term deconstruction represents a range of approaches each with its own emphases. Consequently, deconstruction does not

_____

represent a unitary concept; it involves a multiplicity of fields and styles:

> *To present "deconstruction" as if it were a method, a system or a settled body of ideas would be to falsify its nature and lay oneself open to charges of reductive misunderstanding* (Norris 1991:1).

Norris goes on to point out that at times, the term deconstruction tends to suffer from a fairly loose usage to refer to any critique of existing social structures. Nevertheless, despite ambiguity and plurality in the way the term "deconstruction" is used, all deconstructive approaches have the same purpose. Rather than seeking to find "the" meaning within, or of, any text, they seek to challenge the very meanings and the assumptions on which those meanings are founded:

> *Methodologically, deconstructionism is directed to the interrogation of texts. It involves the attempt to take apart and expose the underlying meanings, biases, and preconceptions that structure the way a text conceptualizes its relation to what it describes* (Denzin 1994:185).

Thus, deconstruction involves a certain way of thinking about texts and a certain way of "reading" them: not to find "the" meaning of that text but to trouble the assumptions underpinning the text. Deconstruction involves looking at representation of reality in the text as a partial representation exploring silences and gaps in the text and what they reveal. Thus, deconstruction is -

> *less method than perspective, a kind of interpretative self consciousness* (Agger 1992:95).

Agger (1992) has highlighted some of the assumptions implicit within a deconstructive approach and it will be useful to briefly review his argument here.
The first assumption is that culture is a text and can therefore be interrogated as a text:

> *the boundary between the textual world and the social world fades once we subject culture to a deconstructive reading* (Agger 1992:98).

The second assumption is that deconstruction aims to locate the author. By this

_____

Agger is alluding to the unwritten and unspoken assumptions that the author made by selecting what will, and conversely will not, be said or written in the text and by determining what form the text itself will take. Thus the text is stripped of claims of objectivity and the author's influence is exposed.

For example, in carrying out scientific research and writing scientific research reports, standard, supposedly objective, scientific conventions are followed in terms of the way that both the research and the subsequent research report is structured. Deconstructive approaches trouble this concept, arguing that in writing and reading science -

the science writer buries the subjectivity of the writer underneath the heavy prose of methodology, allowing technical language and the figural gestures epitomizing science to take control of the text. The writer's deep assumptions about the nature of the world are suppressed underneath the technical surface of the text, hidden from the community of science and thus protected from external challenges (Agger 1992:102).

The third assumption identified by Agger in a deconstructive approach is that every cultural text is undecidable: the meaning is never given, but is open to challenge and contestation. Thus, another assumption is that a deconstructive approach seeks the aporias, that is the blind spots, omissions, tensions, circumlocations and contradictions, in every text. Agger refers to these as internal fissures and fault lines" in a text (1992:102). A deconstructive reading opens such fissures and fault lines to reveal the underlying sub textual frames of the text, some of which may actually be in competition with one another. Thus, another assumption of deconstructive approaches identified by Agger is that the subtext is turned into text.

A deconstructive approach reads at the margins and views -

many overlapping and cross-cutting texts - texts within, and beyond, texts, stories within, and beneath stories (Agger 1992:108).

Finally, a deconstructive approach assumes that reading "writes", because there is no way to develop readings outside of language and textuality (Agger 1992:105). In so doing, deconstruction challenges the privileging of the written text over the reading of

_____

that text. Each act of reading a text creates a new and different text. Thus, the reading of any text and the criticism that accompanies it, transforms that text, opening it to -

> *new versions of itself by bringing to light its hidden assumptions and inconsistencies* (Agger 1992:96).

5.5.1 Deconstructive listening

We call the special kind of listening required for accepting and understanding people's stories without reifying or intensifying the powerless, painful, and pathological aspects of those stories *deconstructive listening*. Through this listening, we seek to open space for aspects of people's life narratives that haven't yet been storied. Our social constructionist bias leads us to interact with people in ways that invite them to relate to their life narratives not as passively received facts, but as actively constructed stories. We hope they will experience their stories as something that they have a hand in shaping, rather than as something that has already shaped them. We believe that this attitude helps to deconstruct the "factity" of people's narratives, and that such deconstruction loosens the grip of restrictive stories.

The word "deconstruction" brings to mind the work of Jacques Derrida (e.g. 1988), which explores, among other things, the slipperiness of meaning. Derrida examines and illustrates how the meaning of any symbol, ward, or text is inextricably bound up in its context. Derrida and other deconstructionists believe that it is fruitless to search for the one "real" or "true" meaning of any text, as all narratives are full of gaps and ambiguities. Deconstructionist scholars focus on these gaps and ambiguities to show that the officially sanctioned or generally accepted meaning of a given text is but one of a great number of possible meanings.

So when we listen "deconstructively" to people's stories, our listening is guided by the belief that those stories have many possible meanings. The meaning a listener makes is, more often than not, different from the meaning that the speaker has intended. We seek to capitalize on this by looking for gaps in our understanding and asking people to fill in details, or by listening for ambiguities in meaning and then asking people how they are resolving or dealing with those ambiguities.

As people tell us their stories, we interrupt at intervals to summarize our sense of what they are saying. This allows them to tell us if the meaning we are making fits with their intended meaning. Even though our goal is "really" to understand people's realities,

_____

those realities inevitably begin to change in the process. In considering our questions and comments, people can't help but examine their stories in new ways. Our very presence makes their world a new and different reality.

As this process continues, new meanings, and new constructions emerge. Many of the gaps we notice haven't yet been filled in; people must search their experience to find details that fill the gaps, and as details are added the shape of the narrative changes. Also, when people hear that we are making different meanings from theirs, they can reconsider their own meanings and modify them. Throughout this process we listen with thoughtfulness to emerging new constructions. Are they useful or desirable? If a person doesn't prefer a new construction, we don't pursue it (Freedman & Combs 1996:46-47).

5.5.2 Deconstructive questioning

In the first part of a premarital conversation (as in other conversations) our primary intentions are to listen to people's narrative and to *understand* them, not change them in major ways. As we listen in a way that brings forth an awareness of either assumptions that narratives are built on, or gaps and ambiguities in people's narratives, space opens for stories to shift as they are being told.

At some point, usually when it seems that a certain degree of trust and mutual understanding has been achieved, we begin to ask questions of a more purposeful nature. That is, we shift from deconstructive *listening* to deconstructive *questioning*.

Deconstructive questioning invites people to see their stories from different perspectives, to notice how they are constructed (or *that* they are constructed), to note their limits, and to discover that there are other possible narratives. Another name for this process is "unpacking." As people begin to have ideas about how the narratives they are living out have been constructed, they see that those narratives are not inevitable, that they do not represent essential truth. Instead, they are constructions that could be constructed differently. The intent of this kind of deconstruction is not to challenge a narrative (Griffith & Griffith 1994), but to unpack it or to offer the possibility of considering it from a different perspective. Once this occurs, people can commit themselves to protesting it.

5.5.2.1 The politics of deconstructive questioning

Michael White defines deconstruction more actively and politically. He (1991:27) says:

> *According to my rather loose definition, deconstruction has to do with procedures that subvert taken-for-granted realities and practices: those so-called "truths" that are split off from the conditions and the context of their production; those disembodied ways of speaking that hide their biases and prejudices; and those familiar practices of self and of relationship that are subjugating of persons' lives.*

Following White (and Foucault), I believe that dominant stories can be "subjugating of person's lives." I have already discussed, in Chapter 2, how the medical model can lead people to a sense of themselves as "docile bodies," subject to knowledge and procedures in which they have no active voice. There are also subjugating stories of gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, and religion (to name a few) that are so prevalent and entrenched in our culture that we can get caught up in them without realizing it.

Deconstruction in White's sense can help us unmask the "so-called 'truths'" that "hide their biases and prejudices" behind the "disembodied ways of speaking" that give an air of legitimacy to restrictive and subjugating dominant stories. In adopting and advocating this type of deconstruction we are taking a political stand against certain practices of power in society.

When saying "taking a stand" I do not mean lecturing the people I work with. In the context of therapy, like it or not and even though we take steps to minimize it, the therapist's words are privileged. Inflicting our beliefs on the people we work with would replicate the effect of the dominant culture's privileged knowledges and practices on those in subjugated positions.

However, not taking a stand supports the status quo. In that sense, one cannot *not* take a political stand. In a racist society, for example, to ignore racism (to "take no stand on it") is to support its continued existence. We believe it is our responsibility as therapists to cultivate a growing awareness of the dominant (and potentially dominating) stories in our society and to develop ways of collaboratively examining the effects of those stories when we sense them at work in the lives and relationships of the people who

_____

consult with us.

Therapists must continually reflect on the discourses that shape our perceptions of what is possible, both for ourselves and for the people we work with. Although we can never obtain a detached or objective view, we can open up, rather than close down, the number and variety of possibilities available in the "mirrored room of therapy". We can reflect on the power relationships implicit in each possible discourse. We can seek new possibilities through self-education and through ongoing, regular deconstruction of our beliefs and practices. We pursue such deconstruction by reflecting with colleagues and with the people who come for consultation on the effects of the stories and discourses that guide our beliefs and practices.

5.5.3 Deconstructing beliefs, practices, feelings and attitudes concerning -

Deconstruction questions help people unpack their stories or see them from different perspectives, so that *how* they have been constructed becomes apparent. Many deconstruction questions encourage people to situate their narratives in larger systems and through time.   Many deconstructive questioning takes place within externalizing conversations. I will now consider some general beliefs and attitudes concerning love, marriage and sex that could be problematic in constructing a couple relationship.

- Love

1. *Love conquers all* or *love is enough belief.* This is one of the most popular beliefs. Many individuals think: *Being in love with someone* is *sufficient reason to marry that person.* "Simply because we are profoundly attracted to people and have passionate feelings of love does not mean for a moment that we should marry them. Falling in love is easy". Marriage based mostly on emotion rather than reason is dangerous. Premarital relationships based on emotion often result in premature marriages, before the individuals really know each other.

Lederer and Jackson (1968) emphasize that romantic love actually may be something else, for example, a strong sex drive, a flight from loneliness, a neurotic attachment (as in the case of an over adequate partner married to an under-adequate partner), or an excuse for domination and control. "The expression 'I love you' has such an immutable place in our traditions that it can serve as an excuse for anything, even for

_____

selfishness and evil" (1968:58). Although romantic love is a prerequisite for marriage for most couples, marital success is based on many more important factors including: similarity of values, similarity of backgrounds, age at marriage, personal and couple readiness for marriage, realistic expectations. Of the 25 premarital factors related to marital satisfaction, as determined by Lewis and Spanier (1979), romantic love is only one. For an extensive discussion of the limitations of romantic love in predicting marital satisfaction, see Ford and England (1979), Larson (1988), Lederer and Jackson (1968), and Peck (1978).

Although romantic love is not an ordinary state of being, some take the step of deifying it. It makes us think about the words of the John, the apostle, "God is love" (1 John 4:16), which is misconstrued by some as: "Love is god!", which has nothing to do with the godly. Is it possible that Christianity could have prepared the way for romanticism, and the fading away of the first idea?

When love is deified in this way, it becomes almighty, and we expect everything from it. This may lead again to ideas like my partner must meet all my needs of affection, security and intimacy. Love does not change certain identity characteristics, difficulties in communication, our past experiences, etc.

A more realistic alternative belief could be : *Although romantic love is important, especially in the early stage of a relationship, other factors are equally or more important to marital satisfaction and should be considered before marriage* .

2. *Angerless love.* "If you love me you will not be angry with me. If you are angry with me it means you do not love me." Anger is an essential ingredient of healthy living and loving. Love and anger are not opposites: Indifference is the opposite of both love and anger.

3. *Love without conflict.* Conflict is neither right nor wrong. Conflict is unavoidable in human affairs, and it is unavoidable in love relations. The stark absence of conflict is a far greater sign of danger than is its presence. This is, in fact, the best way to build a superficial, dull relationship. Disagreements, properly resolved, are the raw materials out of which close and creative relationships can be formed. Conflicts provide essential clues and opportunities which enable us to discover creative love and intimacy.

_____

4. *Magical knowing.* "If you love me you will know just what I am feeling, thinking, wanting, and needing." This is a pernicious myth that assumes that love somehow opens the inner doors of one's mind to the other person. It is usually an excuse for claiming that one is misunderstood and neglected.

5. *Love should lead to marriage.*   This is one of the outgrowths of historic romanticism, and it is perhaps the biggest mistake of all. During a typical life span it is likely you will meet several people with whom you may "be in love", but you would be well advised not to marry. This too is an outgrowth of romanticism, which claims that love is the sole reason for marriage. In the modern version of romanticism such love *demands* marriage.

6. *Love means never having to say I'm sorry.* This myth gives one an excuse for being and doing whatever one wants regardless of its consequences on the other. It takes away all accountability.

7. *Love is dead, or at least dying, if we feel the slightest attraction to others.* You probably will be attracted to and attractive to many others. This means that you are alive and well. Mature love can accept such feelings *without acting* on them.

8. *The perfect relationship belief.* Some people believe: *A couple should prove their relationship will work before getting married.* They may date, remain engaged, or cohabitate for unnecessarily long periods of time trying to "prove the relationship will work." They may even set up situations to test the strength of the relationship (e.g., date another person unexpectedly to see if the partner will be jealous or to see how he/she handles anger).   Such behaviours may indicate an underlying lack of trust or commitment in the relationship or an excessive fear of failure. The person's partner will likely tire of the tests and terminate the relationship. Unfortunately, ours is an imperfect world with imperfect people and imperfect relationships. In addition, future stressors, crises, and challenges to a relationship cannot be accurately predicted.

A more realistic belief could be: *There is no way to prove a marriage will work before getting married.* Marriage is different from dating or cohabitation; hence, the most a couple can do is to feel comfortable that they are ready to get married, are well matched, have good communication and problem solving skills, and are committed to

_____

marriage and the relationship, and then trust that they will be able to adjust to each other and solve marital problems after the wedding.

9.   *The cohabitation belief* (see also 4.4): There are still many single people who believe: *Cohabitation before marriage will improve a couple' s chances of being happily married.* They believe this in spite of mounting evidence that cohabitation is significantly different from marriage and that cohabitation used as a "trial marriage" usually does not improve a couple's chances for later marital success (See Larson, 1988, for a comprehensive list of research articles on cohabitation and marital satisfaction). The negative consequences of the belief in cohabitation as "marriage insurance" include violating one's moral standards and later regretting it, creating tension with one's parents, and later disillusionment when cohabitation fails to make the relationship divorce-proof. A more rational alternative belief is : *Cohabitation may help us get to know each other better but will not serve as a trial marriage or increase our chances of being happily married.*

As "proof" one has only to look at today's society: Almost all couples cohabit and in spite of this the divorce rate increases each year.

The expression "trail marriage" is also a deception. A couple who builds their relationship on the basis of non-commitment learns certain habits related to this life style, and later on experience difficulties adapting to another relational system, i.e. unconditional commitment.

In a survey dating from the beginning of the 1980's couples were asked the following question : "When you started to cohabit, did you consciently think about it or did things just happened?" Two thirds (more men than women) chose the second answer. Is it possible for these couples to continue a relationship, even if they marry?

10.   *The "opposites complement each other" belief, a person should choose someone to marry whose personal characteristics are opposite from their own.*[1]   The negative consequences of this belief are that it: (1) encourages people to look for partners who are different rather than similar to themselves; (2) encourages irresponsibility (e.g., the sloppy person who marries the neat person thinking that the neat person will pick-up

_____

1 Plato started this idea by saying that in the beginning men and women were joined together in pairs. Then, in a mischievous move, the gods tore them apart, leaving them to hunt around for their lost "other half".

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   177
_____

after him/her); and (3) discourages personal change (e.g., rather than changing myself, I will find someone who is the opposite of me and who will make up for my shortcomings).

Although in some cases opposites may attract (Karp et al. 1970), marrying someone whose traits are significantly different usually leads to conflict and dissatisfaction (Gordon 1988; Lazarus 1985; Mason & Jacobs, 1979).

> *Polar opposites may find one another enjoyably different and alluring for a limited time. Long-term relationships usually flourish when similarity rather than dissimilarity prevails* (Lazarus 1985:131).

Actually, no two people start out in marriage with more than a relative degree of compatibility. In fact, a main task of marriage is to *achieve* compatibility by a lifelong process of mutual adaptation. A commitment to work together for growth and change can achieve much more for a marriage than an initial set of shared interests. A more realistic alternative belief is: *A person should choose someone to marry whose personal characteristics are similar to their own.*

12. *The "Choosing should be easy" belief* . Some individuals believe: *Choosing a mate should be easy.* There is a popular idea that marriage and mate selection are a matter of chance. The myth that mate selection is accidental relieves some individuals of responsibility for failure of relationships and responsibility for taking action to help a relationship flourish (Stahmann & Hiebert 1987). It also may discourage people from participating in premarital conversations.

A more realistic alternative belief is: *Choosing a mate is not easy; hence, it should be carefully thought-out.* Our society has undergone rapid changes that confound marriage and career decisions (Rappaport 1976). Changing sex roles, the high divorce rate, the effect of inflation on the family, the need for higher education, and higher expectations for marriage have made choosing a mate more complicated than it was just 50 years ago.

- Marriage

1. *My partner will meet all my needs.* We have already covered this myth. No human being can or should meet all your needs. To expect your mate to meet all your

_____

needs is to set a trap for your partner. It is an exercise in narcissism.

2. *All our love, affection, security, and sexual needs must be met.* No one must have all of their needs met in order to be whole and healthy. If you want to see where there is perfect security and no anxiety whatsoever, go to the nearest cemetery.

3. *Marriage will give me an identity.* If "who you are" depends on "to whom you are attached," then your identity is little more than an attachment identity. It is not based on one's own self-esteem and self-worth.

4. *Marriage will make me feel good about myself (*or, *the perfect self belief).* If I enter marriage feeling good about me, then marriage will likely make me feel even better about me. However, if I enter marriage not feeling good about me, no amount of love from my mate will make me feel better about me. Thus, a *person should feel totally competent as a future spouse before they decide to get married.* This belief keeps many individuals single for a long time because few individuals ever feel *totally* competent to be a husband or a wife. In addition, successful marriage requires cooperation and effort by *two people,* not perfection in one or both. Some people use this belief as a rationalization for an underlying fear of close relationships or marriage. An alternative to this unrealistic belief is: *A person should feel competent to be a spouse, but most people feel some anxiety about their competence.* This anxiety should not keep an individual from marrying - no one is perfect. No one can perfectly predict the future adjustments a couple will have to make.

5. *Marriage is the antidote for loneliness.* Just as loneliness is possible even if one is standing or sitting in the midst of a huge crowd, so also loneliness is very possible within marriage. Marriage no more cures loneliness than cancer cures smoking. Some people have experienced increased loneliness within marriage compared to singleness. Lonely people who marry each other to correct their situation usually discover that the most intense and excruciating loneliness is the loneliness that is shared with another.

6. *Good marriages just "come naturally."* This is another pernicious belief arising out of romanticism. This myth does a good job of relieving one of all responsibility for working at the marriage.

_____

7. *The 'one and only' belief.* Although some people may be more "right" for you than others, the belief that there is somewhere a "right" partner out there in the world just waiting for you is another tenet of romanticism and romanticized mate selection. How does a person determine when they have found this one right person? Will they experience a magical, special feeling? Will a person pass up other good marriage prospects while waiting for this special feeling? Such a belief may also foster passiveness in the mate selection process.   For example, some individuals believe that their "one and only" will eventually just "come along"; hence, there is no pressure to actively date and get to know others more intimately.

Many fallouts from failed marriages claim "she/he wasn't the right person for me." This of course gives me an excuse for divorce by placing the responsibility on the other person who wasn't right for me. The problem is all and always with the other, never with me. A more realistic alternative belief is: *There are several individuals to whom a person could be happily married* (Coleman 1988; Jedlicka 1975; Walster & Walster 1978). The fact that there is no "one and only" in no way mitigates against using good judgment when selecting a spouse. Rather, it means that if one person does not measure up - assuming one' s standards are realistic in terms of one' s own assets - there are other persons who will (Coleman 1988).

The "perfect" partner belief. Linked to the idea above some individuals believe: *Until a person finds the perfect person to marry, they should not be satisfied.* Such a desire for perfection reduces a person's ability to find solutions and can lead to the opposite of the desired result. People live in a world of probabilities. The desire for absolute truth and security leads to exaggerated expectations that cannot be fulfilled and, consequently, produces indecisiveness and anxiety.

Individuals who believe there is a perfect partner for them out there somewhere often engage in short-term "rating relationships." That is, instead of getting to know their dates and *relating* to them, they evaluate and *rate* them prematurely in the dating relationship.   These individuals then develop a pattern of multiple short-term relationships, which lead to frustration, disappointment, and disillusionment for both the individuals and their dating partners. The uselessness of this belief is further amplified by the fact that people change over time. The person who appeared perfect at the beginning of marriage will inevitably appear imperfect later.

An alternative belief is: *No one* is *perfect.* Mate selection based on the qualities that are most important to a person and being able to compromise when all the qualities

_____

are not found is more realistic. A balance sheet with the pluses and minuses of a particular relationship may be useful for some individuals. The most an individual can hope for is to decide in the light of the best information available.

8. *The "try harder" belief*. This unrealistic belief is: *A person can be happy with anyone they choose to marry if they try hard enough*. (This is the opposite of the perfect partner belief.) The negative consequences of this belief include taking a too casual approach to mate selection (since "just about anyone will do"), fostering another false belief that "with enough effort anything is possible," and premature marriage (i.e., committing to a relationship before carefully evaluating similarities, differences, values, goals, expectations, etc.).

Many married individuals who hold this belief have experienced months or years of "trying harder" to make a marriage work without much success. This is because marriage is a reciprocal relationship that requires both spouses working together to resolve relationship problems.

It appears that there are some kinds of people who may not reciprocate one' s efforts in marriage; thus, they maybe poor marriage risks. Examples include:

- An addict who is not in recovery. This includes drug, alcohol, gambling, sex, food, and work addictions. People usually marry addicted people either not knowing the person is addicted or mistakenly believing they can change the person after marriage. In reality , no one changes anyone else.
- Someone who is violent or emotionally abusive.
- A young person (under age 20).
- Someone who is sexually unresponsive.
- Someone with major religious differences.

Pastors can help couples avoid relationships that are "disasters in the making" by bringing these ideas through deconstruction to the attention of the couple.

A realistic, alternative belief is: *It takes two mature and well-adjusted individuals to make a marriage work, so one needs to be reasonably sensitive and selective in the choice of a mate*. A prospective mate should be someone who is willing to give their fair share to the relationship, compromise, and be sensitive to equity in the relationship.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   181
_____

9. *Love never changes.* In effect, the essence of death is stagnation: The essence of life is growth. There can be no growth without change. All reasonably whole and healthy people change continually throughout their lives. Love will change. It may die or it may grow. Sometimes lovers grow apart. More often the partners kill their love and blame it on the partner changing.

10. *You don't marry the family.* The romanticist would have us believe that the individual is an isolated and unattached love object. On the contrary, both partners are the product of generations of socialization, rules, rituals, processes of interaction, and patterns of coping. Even if your partner claims "I have broken away from my family," he/she is still involved, if only in a reactive way. There is no escape from familial influence.

11. *Togetherness is the same as closeness and intimacy.* Not so! Genuine closeness and intimacy is not at all the same as "togetherness." Too much togetherness may be stultifying and smothering and may prevent the cultivation of one's own space and one's own interests.

12. *Children cement the marital bond of love.* The overwhelming evidence of research on marital satisfaction reveals that the single greatest negative influence on marital satisfaction is the birth of the first child. This is because the twosome becomes a threesome, and this changes the roles and the role enactment of the husband and wife, now become mother and father. Although the child may be much loved and much wanted, the child is a powerful influence on the relationship between the parents.

13. *A wedding is a marriage.* We say that Claire and Jean-Paul "got married". But they didn't! They only "got wedded". A wedding is just the first step toward the distant goal of becoming married.

- **Sexuality**

1. *Men are more sexual than women.* This myth is true only if orgasm, normal frequency, and reaction to specified stimuli are defined by the male. Only if variety means uniformity, only if more diffuse physiological response is considered less powerful,

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   182
_____

and only if single episode multi-orgasm capability is seen as less fulfilling, can we say that males are more sexual than females. Or, men enjoy sex, woman tolerate it.

2. *Love and sex are the same.* This myth points to the utter impoverishment of the English word *love.* There are those who would say that love is nothing more than sex, and there are those who would say that sex should be nothing but love. There is sex without love, and there is love without sex. Sex may or may not be a part of love. Linked to this is the idea that sex is always an expression of love.

Expressions like "Peace and love", "Make love not war" – emphasized during 1968 – still nourish the idea that sex is an automatic expression of love and peace. One of the confusions of our time is that the expression "I love you" means "I want to go to bed with you, have sex with you, now, without waiting any longer". "I am free to love" means "I will sleep with whom I want to when I want to."

The idea is to glorify love by liberating sex, to liberate sex from the spiritual and social under the pretext that they are too restrictive and limit freedom. Consequently that our sexuality became enslaved to the "tyranny of the short-lived". Rather than becoming masters thereof, we become weak and crippled in love.

According to the American psychiatrist Erich Fromm (1956:54) –

> *... sexual desire can be stimulated by the anxiety of aloneness, by the wish to conquer or be conquered, by vanity, by the wish to hurt and even to destroy, as much as it can be stimulated by love. It seems that sexual desire can easily blend with and be stimulated by any strong emotion, of which love is only one.*

Before a sexual union can become a real act of love, the persons concerned need to learn to love. This learning process has to do with the control of egoistic drives and mutual respect.

3. *Women want only love.* Since the waning of the influence of Victorianism and the important research by Masters and Johnson on the female's capacity for multi-orgasm, there is no basis for such a general statement. Some women want love without sex. Fewer women want sex without love. Probably the great majority of modern Western women want sex as an expression of love.

_____

4. *Men want only sex.* Some men want sex without love some of the time. Some men want love without sex some of the time. Men use the language of love to get sex. To say that men want only sex is unfair to men.

5. *Persons divorcing must have been having poor sex*. On the contrary, many divorcing people have great sex but nothing else. Some divorcing people continue to have sexual relations with each other either because of the convenience or because sex is so good or because they want a safe sexual outlet without getting involved with other partners.

6. *Sex is unimportant in really good marriages*. An old adage states that if there is poor sex it counts about 90% against the relationship, but if there is good sex it counts about 10% in favour of the relationship. If this statement is taken for its symbolic rather than its literal meaning, it illustrates how important sex is. It is so vital that if we do not have it the marriage is likely to be in trouble. On the other hand, even if we do have a good sexual adjustment it means that we are now free to pursue the other challenges and problems of married life.

7. *Simultaneous orgasm is the supreme sexual or lovemaking experience.* This is a belief related to middle and late Victorianism, and it was the cause of much sexual frustration. Although it is good to be committed to the satisfaction of one's mate, this becomes a most difficult and often self-defeating challenge because of the fact that one's mental concentration cannot be totally on both the mate and the self at the same time. Today the emphasis is on taking turns in petting and stimulation to orgasm so that both partners may be fully involved in both their own and their partner's orgasmic experience. Taking turns allows for much more quality and concentration on the needs and wishes of the partner as well as providing both partners the enjoyment of bringing pleasure to their partner (Crosby 1991:19-20, 88-91; Mace 1983, 1984:21; Larson 1992; Stahmann & Hiebert 1987:18-26; Tenenbaum 1999:49-51, Louw 1993:37-44).

5.6 EXTERNALISATION CONVERSATIONS

People within a culture share a dominant set of discourses, or ways of making sense, but each one of us puts our own individual story together in our own particular way, often changing the story depending on whom we are talking to, when, and why. Because

_____

each story is particular, there are no formulas that will definitively teach exactly how to use deconstruction in counselling. For this reason, it could be difficult to learn the narrative approach.

Some people speak about deconstruction as a process of "externalizing the problem," without necessarily discriminating against the nuances of the term. This process, called deconstruction, focuses on the problem rather than on the person and then mobilizes the client's resources against the problem.

More recent formulations of this approach have adopted the notion of ongoing *externalizing conversations* - a more fluid idea than that of "externalizing the problem." Externalizing is a rhetorical device that opens up a slightly different way of speaking about one's life. It seems to achieve several things.

First, if the dominant discourses of twentieth-century Western culture have promoted a view of individuals as prime movers in their own lives, then externalizing conversations create space for a different understanding in which discourses are accorded more influence in the shaping of experience.

Second, the device of externalization helps to reverse the trend in psychology toward seeking more and more deficits in individual character and encouraging clients to relate to themselves as deficient human beings. Separating the person from the problem often comes as a pleasant surprise to people who come to counselling with the expectation that they will have to walk across hot coals in penance for the inner deficiencies that "must" be causing their pain. Instead, they are immediately given the status of agents in their own and others' lives and regarded as resourceful, intelligent persons engaged in common human struggles.

Third, externalizing has an ironical effect. In a world intent on maximizing the disciplinary power of internalizing logic, the process of externalization parodies the dominant ways of thinking in our culture. The discourses in which problems have previously been located are thus travestied. The previous discourse can almost be laughed at from the new perspective; certainly, it has been gently undermined. This ironical effect is far more potent than any kind of direct confrontation.

_____

Fourth, the process of speaking in an externalizing way provides pastors with a discipline to maintain - a discipline that alerts them to the possibilities for agency in the lives of the people who seek their help. This discipline trains them to listen for discourses at work in the production of problems and breaks the unconscious habit of imputing to clients a sense of deficit. It moves them into a more respectful way of speaking to those who consult them (Monk *et al* 1997:45-46; White 1991:126, 140).

Thus do externalizing conversations serve the purposes of deconstruction. In this section, we have attempted to sketch some notions of deconstruction, locating it - as does White himself - in a much wider philosophical context. However, in the narrative literature, the notions of externalizing and deconstruction are sometimes used interchangeably.

5.6.1   Perceiving problems as separate from people

White has introduced the idea (1987, 1988/9, 1989; see also Epston 1993, and Tomm 1989) that the person is not the problem, but the problem is the problem. Externalisation is a practice supported by the belief that a problem is something operating or impacting on or pervading a person's life, something separate and different from the person.

When listening to people's stories, we ask ourselves questions like "What is problematic here? What is the nature of this problem? How does it show itself? What does it feel like for this person to have this problem in his or her life? What is influencing the person so that he thinks/feels/acts this way? What is keeping this person from having experiences he would prefer?" In asking ourselves these questions, we are taking the first steps in perceiving problems as separate from people. Externalisation is more important as an *attitude* than as a technique.

5.7 TRANSITIONS AND MAPPING

Information about a couple during a premarital conversation can be organized to reveal relationship patterns and changes in those patterns. By plotting the couple's relationships on charts known as genograms, ecocharts and the couple's life-line the different transitional stages, family life cycle and faith development could be graphically presented.

_____

5.7.1 Transitional stages

A transitional stage is reached when events make it necessary for family relationship patterns to be renegotiated and redefined. Events can originate inside or outside the couple or family system. The stages vary in timing, type, and magnitude according to factors such as ethnic culture, local custom, and family preference.

Burnham (1991:36-41) describes these transitional stages from three different, but interrelated aspects : trigger, timing, and magnitude. Essentially, change may be triggered in a family system by people entering, leaving, or developing. These triggers may occur expectedly or unexpectedly.

- **Triggers**

There are many events or issues that can prompt a family system to change its current patterns of relating. They can be describes in many ways. Three basic divisions are as follows :

  - *Formation*

Two or more people may decide to commit themselves to a relationship on a regular basis.

  - *Exits*

Someone or something is lost, or leaves a relationship, or signals the intention to do so. Leaving may be enforced, voluntary, or by death. In systemic terms leaving not only implies loss and, perhaps, suffering, but also the process of reorganizing and redefining relationships. The memory of those departed plays a significant part in this process. Death, divorce, imprisonment, going into care, working away from home, leaving to get married, going to college, are all examples of exits. Sometimes this may signal the disintegration of a system.

  - *Entry*

Someone or something different enters an existing relationship. The pragmatic

_____

effect of such an event is that the existing hierarchy and alliances have to be realigned to make way for the newcomer. Whether this is a 'good thing' depends on factors such as the rate at which relationships are expected to adapt in order to assimilate the new information. Stepparents, babies, boyfriends, live-in grandparents are examples of such triggers.

In the flux of family life these divisions are seldom discrete events. For example, someone's leaving may be prompted by another's arrival, or the formation of one relationship may depend upon the collapse of another.

- **Timing**

    These trigger points may be expected or unexpected.

    - *Expected*

    These are the kind of changes that all families anticipate at particular times in their evolution. People can map these out as part of their future plans. Changes that are prompted by physiological development or prescribed cultural or family patterns come under this heading.

    Physiological development: Birth, growth, puberty, and aging continually prompt the need to redefine relationships by regulating the distance between people. For example, the increase in dexterity that usually accompanies development allows a child independence in tasks that were done by other people, thus changing the relationship between them. Caretakers are freed from these tasks and may turn to other interests or people to fill this 'gap' .   Similarly, as a person ages and again becomes more vulnerable, the associated decreasing independence usually prompts a redefinition of the arrangements of living and often leads to increasing dependence on others (family or professional).

    Cultural patterns: Socially prescribed events, such as going to school, leaving school, receiving higher education, beginning work, retiring, leaving home, and getting married, also prompt changes in relationships. Each child in French culture has to go to school by the age of 6. This custom is supported by law (a cultural rule) and so a change in the relationships between the child and the family is dictated by an outside

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   188
_____

agency. It significantly alters the closeness/distance between a child and family.

Expected transitions in relationships are more predictable in time and can therefore be planned and even rehearsed. Ethnic groups have specific rituals, like the Jewish bar mitzvah, or the Irish wake, facilitating the transitions of adolescence and death respectively. Major transitions can be rehearsed, as when a parent and young child prepare for separation at primary school through incremental separations at playschool and in the company of other adults. Spouses who spend time maintaining their marital relationship during the parenting phase are more likely to adapt successfully when their children leave home. This type of preparation demonstrates a family system's flexibility and ability to reduce the confusion and distress that are commonly experienced at a time of transition.

Such events signal cultural-specific rules, i.e. that children should become autonomous from their parents. If a family rule is at variance with this, e.g. the child should spend all its time with the parents or vice versa, then such transitions are more likely to be difficult.

Family scripts: Families have idiosyncratic rules and rituals that govern transitions in the life cycle of relationships. These family scripts may be explicit or implicit. For example a family may have a rule handed down through the generations that the daughter who does not marry is expected to give up her personal plans and devote herself to looking after the aged parents.

These levels of biology, culture, and family system are not exclusive and there is an interplay between them. The greater the congruence between the levels the smoother the transitions and vice versa.

- *Unexpected*

These stages are triggered by events that are not in the family's schedule of anticipated events.   Their timing cannot be predicted and adjustments cannot therefore be planned. Examples of such events include: the discovery of an incestuous relationship; job loss; a premature or accidental death; a miscarriage; or an unwanted pregnancy.   An unexpected transition is also triggered when there is a surprise variation in the way that an expected event occurs, as when an adolescent declares

_____

himself gay, or a handicapped child is born. There may be no pool of knowledge in the family or community to offer advice. There will probably be no rituals to guide and support people through the experience. These deficiencies increase the risk of isolation which is already present as friends and relatives may not know how to approach those undergoing such changes. In many ways these events test the flexibility of a system's response to change more than the expected stages.

Another example of such a stage would be divorce. This would throw the family relationships into turmoil and confusion. A systemic practitioner would look at the ways relationships were reorganized, and the associated suffering of the individuals. Some alliances are severed, coalitions may be formed, and other relationships become more distant. When children are involved the adults have to negotiate the end of the marriage but maintain the parental relationship.

- **Magnitude of change**

This refers not to the size of the triggering event but to the degree to which a family needs to alter its beliefs and behaviours in order to accommodate the event.

- *First-order change*

This is a change that can be incorporated into the existing pattern or definition of relationships. A couple who decide to increase the number of evenings they see each other from three to four while still defining the relationship as platonic are making a first-order change.

- *Second-order change*

Bateson (1979) refers to this level of change as a *difference that makes a difference*. It denotes a change in the definition of relationships, which profoundly changes the system. This kind of change requires a fundamental reorganization of relationships, not merely an adjustment based on the prevailing beliefs and behavioural repertoires. A 22-year-old woman living at home begins to spend less time with her parents and more time with her boyfriend. This is seen by the family members as part of the continuing process towards her independence. It is within the

_____

pattern that has existed for some time. Therefore they do not feel it is out of the ordinary, and there are no homeostatic "alarm bells"' ringing. It is news of a difference that does not make a difference. Suppose instead that one evening the young woman comes home and says "I've given up my boyfriend because I think I'm gay. I'm going to live with a woman, please don't try and stop me, it's something I've got to do." This would be out of the ordinary for the family. It would be news of a "difference that made a difference" at the level of behaviour and beliefs, and thus one that significantly changes the patterns of relationships and the previously held views about those relationships.

Difficulties can turn into problems when first-order solutions are applied to second-order problems. An example of this would be if the parents said to their daughter, "Don't be ridiculous, go to your room and don't come down until you are ready to say you are sorry." This is using a solution that was appropriate at an earlier stage, when the definition of their relationship was a complementary one of parent and child, not the current person-to-person symmetry.

The implications of second-order change are often more significant to a family as they can devastate current routines, beliefs, and emotional ties. It usually takes place when someone is entering or leaving the family system. There is a need to find a new pattern or 'map' to fit the new system. According to Burnham (1991:41) first order difficulties are more likely to respond to a direct, educative approach, while second-order problems usually require more challenging or strategic approaches.

The ideas of externalisation and deconstruction can be fruitfully employed with regard to these transitional stages and the mapping of them by means of a genogram, an ecomap, a couple life line and the family life cycle (as described below). For example, the co-narrator maps the influence of the couple's decision to marry and the marriage itself on the couple, their family, Church and society. Bringing these influences to light would give the couple a clearer sense of their decision and commitment within their social context. The ideal situation would be if the respected families (parents, brothers and sisters) could also be present for this part of the conversation.

_____

The concept of "marriage" can also be externalized, and some general opinions of the society can be shared. Afterwards it can be linked to the couple and to what extent these ideas influence the couple's view of marriage.

One of the hallmarks of narrative therapy is *persistence* (Monk et al 1997:11). We continue to ask questions and to respond to the couple's stories, seeking to provide an opportunity of a full account of their experience - past, present, and future.

For example, with the following questions past, present, and future oriented questions could be asked. How (did/do) they intend to cultivate the idea to be separate and to bond (closeness) as a couple at the same time? How (did) are they going to create a context for growth and change? How (did) are they going to foster intimacy in their marriage? What (were) are their opinions on the sharing of power in marriage? How (did) are they going to implement it? How (did) are they going to foster good communication?

5.7.2 The genogram as mapping tool

Unless we come from a family of storytellers, we will need some assistance in thinking about family stories. The genogram is a very effective tool to facilitate telling stories for the sake of understanding one's family of origin. It is like a family tree, only more so. What makes a genogram different from a family tree is the stress on stories and traditions and emotional connections that go beyond mere facts. In a sense, the genogram is simply a vehicle for storytelling. There are insights that can be gained, however, simply by putting on paper a picture of the family within.

Like a family tree, a genogram seeks to identify two or three generations of membership in our first family. Unlike a family tree, stories and patterns of interacting and alliances are more important than the actual dates or places of birth. It does not matter whether one begins with the oldest or the youngest generation; the goal is to draw a map of the significant relationships of each family of origin from a multigenerational point of view. If you have a few models to start with, it does not take long to develop a distinctive approach to doing a genogram.

Because one of the goals of the premarital conversation is to clarify each individual's relationship to his or her first family, no story is unimportant in the creation of a genogram. Nor is any relationship insignificant. We are interested in the alliances that transcend generations and the impact of major family events over time. It need not be a

_____

problem that an individual does not know all the facts about births and deaths. Sometimes what we do not know reveals as much as what we do know. It is useful to do the genogram before going in search of information, because it helps to focus on the questions that need to be asked.

When the families we come from have not functioned well, there will be a reluctance to tell stories of things for which we are ashamed or to talk about relationships that are hurtful. Obviously, individuals should not be forced to tell stories they do not want to tell or talk about pain or shame they want to hide. There is usually more than enough material to explore in a family's history without such stories. Honouring their reluctance should, however, be linked with a recommendation to the couple that they share with one another what they cannot talk about in the presence of an outsider. It is also important to alert them to the possibility that they may attempt to create an impossibly ideal family in order not to be *at all like* the destructive families from which they came.

Telling the stories and exposing the family secrets enables a couple to confront the emotional power of their first families in order to create something new. The process of telling and hearing each one's story in the context of a genogram enables a couple to think about their pasts and their future in a way that is non threatening and often pleasurable. It is one action that has the potential to effect both leaving and cleaving. Doing a genogram is a leaving-home event because it can enable an individual to gain more emotional distance by externalizing the picture of the family she or he carries within. It is a time of cleaving because partners regularly discover something more about the one they intend to marry or a commonality between them that strengthens their emotional bond.

5.7.2.1 The advantages of a genogram

If the relationship is the primary focus of premarital counselling, then psychological inventories or questionnaires are the useful tools for locating areas in the relationship in need of further exploration. Because we regard the invitation to storytelling to be an essential dimension of preparation for marriage, the genogram is the preferred method. It has other advantages, which are particularly beneficial in areas where pastoral ministry moves across cultures or among the poor or in areas of the world not yet technologized.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   193
_____

1) It does not presume literacy or even an extensive ability in the language being used. It is possible to do a genogram with someone with very limited language skills. It simply takes longer.

2) A genogram is portable and adaptable to a variety of situations. Ordinarily it is done on paper large enough to include all the various connections of people we call family. There are computerized versions of a genogram that can be used individually. It may be done on a blackboard, although that medium does not leave a permanent record that can be used at another time.

3) It diminishes defensiveness. When couples are in love, they are not generally open to exploring their relationship - out of fear that someone might tell them they should not get married. Even if couples are told that psychological inventories will not be used in that gate keeping way, they are still cautious. The focus on the family of origin that we are proposing defuses this worry. Moreover, talking about our families is something that is ordinarily done over coffee with friends or with perfect strangers at social gatherings.

4) The genogram builds a bond between the pastor and the couple. It is a common activity that becomes a part of the history they share together and, when appropriate, may be introduced at some point in the rituals that follow. It also provides a reference point for pastoral conversations after the wedding.

5) When it is not possible for one person of the marital couple to be present until just before the wedding, doing a genogram is still useful. Being clearer about legacy and continuing the process of leaving home are both individual tasks that can be worked on even if the couple are apart. Beginning to understand how or in what ways one's family of origin will influence becoming married may be done individually before it is done as a couple.

6) The genogram is a public document. Presumably the material discussed is generally known to the family. The primary focus is not on a relationship that is still quite private and is still being formed.

7) Related to the public nature of the genogram, the focus on family of origin has the potential to make the wedding a many-generational event. People anticipating marriage should be encouraged to share what is produced with their parents, in the interest of initiating more conversation about the legacies of their history. One of the great advantages of the genogram in this regard is to give permission to people to ask questions about their families that they might not otherwise feel free to ask and bring to light previously hidden stories.

8) Doing a genogram can be fun (Anderson & Fite 1993:48-49).

_____

5.7.2.2 Significant themes to explore

No two genograms are alike. Family stories are unique and so is each member's interpretation of those stories. The patterns of interacting across and within the generations, the values and traditions, and the legacy of roles, rules, and rituals are also particular to every family. There are, however, some common themes to look for in doing a genogram. We have organized them around the following series of questions. The way one approaches these themes will be different with each couple, because the responses to some of the first questions we ask will determine what particular areas it might be important to pursue. No single genogram exercise can or should be expected to cover all these questions.

1) *What are the patterns of closeness and distance among family members?* Do the parents have a close marriage? What stories are told about the marriage of grandparents? Which child is close to which parent? What are the alliances among siblings? What are the attitudes about intimacy and sexuality in the family? Did some people work together better than others? Has anyone had difficulty leaving home?

2) *Are there special alliances that include one or both parents and cross generational lines?* What is the primary triangle in the family system? Is there anyone who is a permanent outsider? How does the family handle the question of loyalty? Are there secret alliances? Is there a child or grandchild who is the recipient of a special blessing? Are there naming patterns that suggest the bestowal of particular blessings?

3) *Is the family open or closed to the world outside?* Does the family value privacy highly? How are outsiders welcomed into the family? Is it easy or hard to become a part of the family?   Is the family involved in activities in the community or church or neighbourhood? Is the family open to differences that children bring home in the form of friends or ideas?

4) *How were family beliefs and values expressed?* How were religious beliefs expressed? How were values taught? If your parents had different views on religion or politics, how were those differences worked out? Can you identify the beliefs and values by how people worked and played, or by the organizations they belonged to? Were there sayings or family maxims that were frequently repeated by a parent or grandparent? What are the organizing myths that the family lives by?

_____

5) *In what ways are cultural ethnic actors important to the family's history?* If there were differences between the ethnic traditions of parents or their families, how were those differences dealt with? In the marriage of your parents, which ethnic traditions predominated?

6) *What is the family's history of loss and grief?* Is there a pattern of buried grief? Are there births and deaths in close proximity? For example, did grandfather die six months before or after the youngest child was born? If two things happen in the same year, was there any other loss? When there are a series of deaths before a child is born, what does that mean for the child? One of the things that makes a genogram different from a family tree is the relationship of events. The juxtaposition of the death of a parent and the birth of a child is particularly difficult because those two events introduce the processes of celebrating and mourning, which are not easily compatible.

7) *Are there repetitive symptoms, relationships, or functioning patterns across the family or over generations*? Are there losses that repeat generation after generation? What is the family's way of dealing with change? Are there patterns of failure that repeat? Is conflict unresolved or are resentments harboured? Is there a pattern of alcohol abuse or divorce or angry leaving-home events or unwanted pregnancies over time?

8) *What roles, rules, and rituals are part of the family?* Who are the responsible ones? Is there a family peacemaker or scapegoat? What are some of the other roles? Is there one person that the family worries about? Does the person about to marry understand his or her role in the family? Are there special rituals in the family for the celebration of birthdays? How did the family enforce its values or beliefs? Were there, for example, rules posted on the refrigerator door?

9) *What are the strengths of the family?* What are the patterns for survival or coping with stress that are constructive? What are the things that have helped your family endure over time? It is especially important to lift up the positive signs gleaned from family stories that are regarded as negative without denying the reality of pain or struggle in the family.

10) *If you want to find out more about your family, who could you ask?* Who knows the family stories? Is there a family historian? Who keeps the secrets? Who would be willing to break a family rule to tell you what you need to know about your family in order to be better prepared for marriage? These questions are particularly important when someone comes from a family in which stories are not told (Anderson & Fite 1993:54-56).

_____

It cannot be emphasized enough that the aim of doing a genogram is not simply the gathering of data; it is the initiation of a process of storytelling that is intended to extend far beyond the time of the pastoral conversation. In the brief span of time usually available before the wedding, it is not possible to examine all the topics listed above. The most one can hope for is to foster in the couple a curiosity about their origins and initiate them into a mode of storytelling that will become a part of their process of becoming married.

Beneath is an example of a simple genogram (of George and Astrid whom I met during the marriage preparation sessions of the RCC in March 1998), followed by a list of standard symbols (Carter & McGoldrick 1989:165-166) being used in doing a genogram.

ASTRID'S GENOGRAM

Jean-Paul b 1914
d 1990

Suzanne
b 1915

Thomas b 1910
d 1995

Stephanie
b 1914

Christophe

Priscille

André
b 1938

Dominique
b 1940

Blandine
b 5/8/42

Brice
b 2/10/44

b 1935

b 1936

m 5/1/1957

Marie-Pierre

Jean

Lionel

b 11/12/58

b 17/9/59

b 22/3/63

div. 1981

Alexis
b 7/6/80

Astrid
b 3/12/69

Andrew
b 1/11/67

b 1969

m 2/4/88 div. 5/5/91

GEORGE'S GENOGRAM

Symbols for genograms

male   female   birth date 43-75 death date   Death = X

Index Person (IP):

Marriage (give date)
(Husband on left, wife on right):   m. 60   Living together
Relationship of liaison: 72

Marital Separation (give date):   s 70   Divorce (give date):   d 72

Children: List in birth order,
beginning with oldest on left   Adopted
or foster children   60 62 65

Fraternal twins   Identical twins   Pregnancy

Spontaneous abortion   Induced abortion   Stillbirth

Circle members of current IP households

When changes in custody have occurred, please note

Symbols for family interaction patterns

Very close relationship   Conflictual relationship

Distant relationship   Estrangement or cutoff
(give dates if possible):

Fused and conflictual

_____
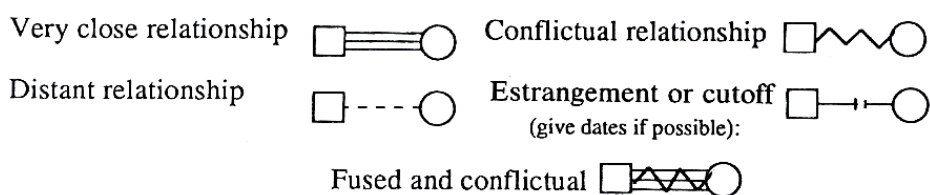
The father of George, and George himself, were baptized in the Catholic Church. That is the reason why he expressed the desire to be married in the Church. George made the initial contact with the Church, since Astrid had no Church affiliation. George and Astrid did not think that they needed a premarital conversation, since they have been living together for 16 months. They agreed to at least do the genograms.

Three things were significant about George's genogram :

(1) His parents divorced when he was eight years old, and George was "abandoned" by them both to be raised by his father's mother Michèle. She ran a loose household, with many foster children. George learned to fend for himself in order to survive. Michèle was a generous and hospitable woman who loved children.

(2) George learned a family secret only after he told Michèle of his intention to marry. She had been married to a truck driver she called Pierre, who was presumed "dead" or who just "disappeared". She remarried, to Jacques, and shortly afterwards Pierre reappeared and demanded his rightful role as husband. Michèle would not be bullied, as she put it, and divorced the truck driver. George could understand his own caution about marrying more clearly when he learned this secret.

(3) George is distanced from his father because of a conflict with his father's second wife. He has seen his own mother (who now lives in the USA) only three times since the divorce seventeen years ago.

Astrid was married when she was nineteen and divorced three years later. Her first husband worked long hours and spent even longer hours with his male friends after work. Astrid said that she would often "go home" to her parents for several days at a time. After her divorce, she lived with her parents while finishing at a trade school. She is her father's only daughter. Astrid described her parents' marriage as friendly, but without much affection. Her favourite person as she grew up was her Grandpa Jean-Paul. He was a very funny man who loved children. His wife was very quiet and aloof and "very much like my father," as Astrid put it.

The most dramatic story in Astrid's family is not a secret, but an ongoing saga. Her brother Lionel had an affair with their brother Jean's wife, which occasioned a child and a divorce. The brothers still do not speak to each other except through Lionel's daughter, Alexis, who has been cared for by the grandparents until now. Astrid often

_____

> *took care of Alexis when she lived at home. The family has asked if Astrid will care for Alexis, who is now twelve, after she and George are married.*
>
> *The pastoral conversation with Astrid and George after the genograms were completed focused on the lingering influence of their origins. Astrid is determined to succeed this time in making a home. She is uncomfortable, however, with the influence of Michèle on George's life. George is concerned that with Alexis there that they, he and Astrid, will not have enough time alone to make a home. They were invited to imagine what a marriage would have looked like if Michèle had been married to Jean-Paul, as a way to envision the kind of family they might like to become. Before the wedding, they were able to decide not to take Alexis into their home on a permanent basis, and George had a "big talk" with Michèle about his love for Astrid.*

5.7.3 The ecochart as mapping tool

Ecological science studies the sensitive balance which exists between living creatures and their environment. The human sciences co-opted the ecological metaphor to promote greater understanding of the fact that humans are people-in-context. Therefore the drawing of an ecochart is especially valuable when work is being done with a family. A family's ecosystem also includes social, economic, political and other structures which determine the family's context.

An ecosystemic approach immediately calls for a whole series of complex, interdependent data. The ecochart was developed in order to gain an overview of this data and to attempt to identify connections. A meaningful conversation can be entered into with a family with the aid of this chart. To draw such a chart together with the family, can normally be quite a freeing experience for them, since the focus also falls on factors around them and helps them to realize that it is not they as individuals who are the prime foci of evaluation, but more the whole system of which they form a part.

The ecochart can be drawn from scratch on a clean sheet of paper, or a blank chart with outlines already drawn can be used and simply completed (refer to the sketch that follows). A simple genogram of the family is drawn within the large center circle. The next step is to fill in the connections between the family and the different aspects of their environment.

_____
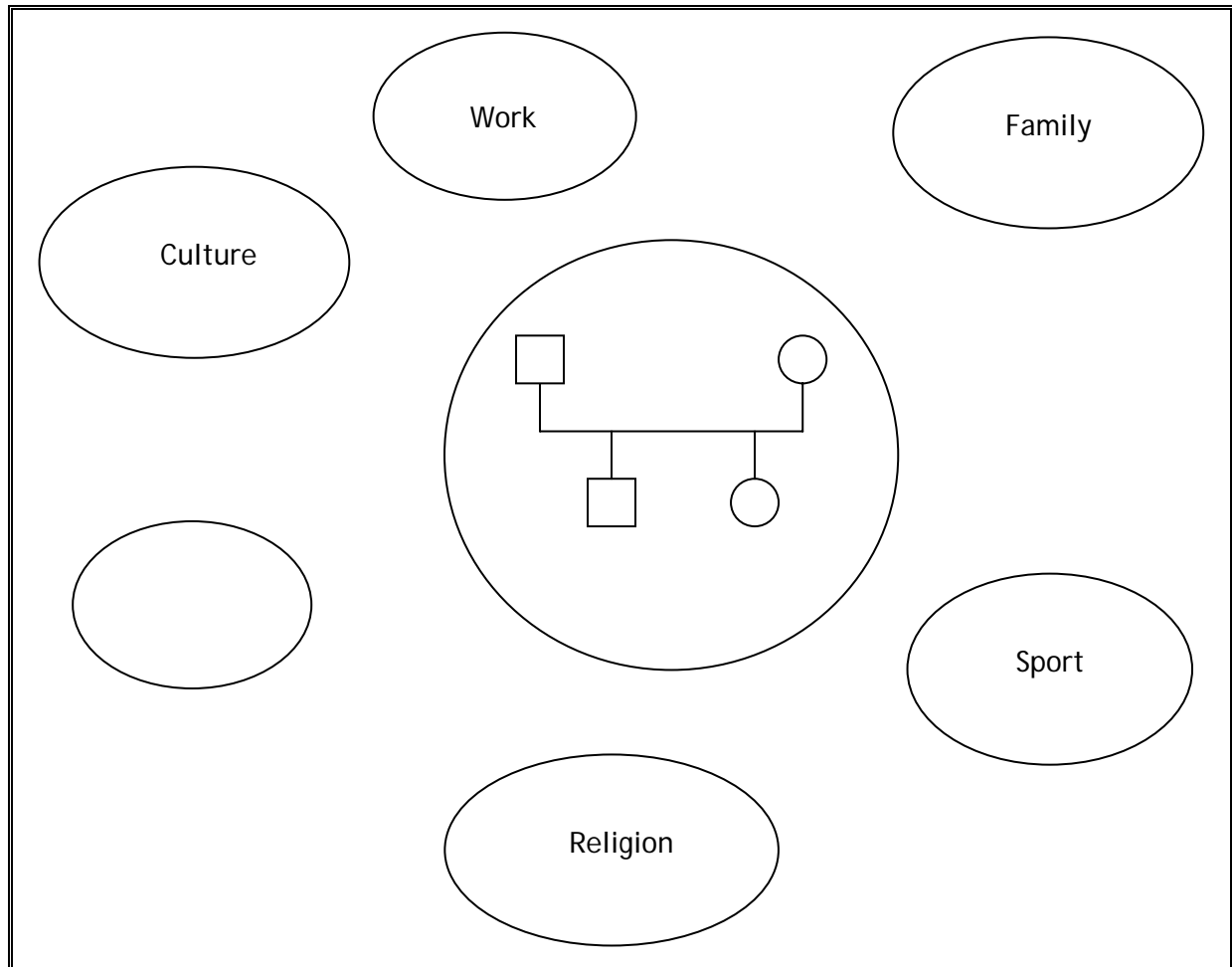
The drawing of the ecochart does not only lead to a balanced assessment of the family's situation, but especially leads to new decisions, since distorted relationships and one-sided interests are exposed.

As is the case with the genogram, the family should also be actively involved not only with the construction of the ecochart, but also its interpretation. The pastor can ask leading questions, but in the end they are the ones who make the discoveries (Müller 1999).

5.7.4 The couple life line as mapping tool

Another easy-to-use, but effective tool to explore a couple's relationship during a premarital conversation is to ask them to do it by means of a couple life line (CLL). It is a structured way of looking at their personal relationship narrative from the time they first

_____

met up to the wedding. The process is that of discovering some of the basic events, dates, dating manoeuvres, and conflicts of the premarital process. The *purpose* is to help the couple become aware of how they behave with each other, how they affect each other, and the patterns they have already established.

Stahmann and Hiebert (1987:58-59) discuss the rationale of the use of this kind of tool during the premarital conversation:

First, the CLL is a way of controlling anxiety. It is possible that both the couple and the pastor experience anxiety prior to and during the premarital conversation. Obviously, the anxieties are different. The couple are anxious about the mechanics of the wedding and the future of their relationship. The pastor is anxious about being able to provide the couple with a meaningful experience. The CLL can be seen as a way of binding anxiety.

The CLL has as one of its results the creation of a sense of direction, orderliness, that something is being accomplished. This sense of purposefulness alleviates anxiety for both couple and pastor.

Second, the CLL is a way of structuring information that is useful to both the couple and the pastor. The use of the CLL will not only help the couple look at what is happening presently in their relationship, but will also aid them in making sense out of earlier happenings. The CLL will provide a methodology that will facilitate the emergence of the patterns and dynamics in the relationship in an orderly and clear manner.

Third, the CLL heightens an awareness of patterns. The process enables the pastor and the couple to become aware of patterns and to heighten them in such a way that their impact can be more fully recognized and understood.

Fourth, the CLL creates a sense of movement in the lives of the couple. By looking at where they have come from and where they have been, the couple are allowed, in the context of a reflective setting, to have a sense of the transition in their lives from being single to being in a relationship.

Fifth, the CLL allows the couple to involve themselves in the process on their own level. People perceive relationships in very concrete terms. The CLL is designed to look at and explore the dynamics of the relationship as it is viewed by the couple.

Sixth, the CLL, which involves the use of significant questioning on the part of the pastor, becomes a model for interaction. Because couples have frequently roped off certain areas from discussion, and because questioning is often taken as an attack or criticism, questioning in and of itself is difficult for them. Through the use of questions in

_____

the CLL, the pastor models for the couples, helping them to gain some sense of the information and processes for obtaining it that are needed in order to understand another person.

The dating process is, in a certain way, an obscuring process. Couples rope off areas that they do not discuss. Part of this obscuring process is the result of the forces that impel couples toward marriage.

This couple life line (CLL) can start with the individual history of the couple which could be useful to gain an overview of their dating story. It can, however, evoke unnecessary discussions and emotions about past relationships. Their past dating experience could also be included when doing the genogram, while the CLL exclusively focuses on their relationship as a couple. The CLL can be done in many ways, and it works well if it is given as a homework exercise. It can be a line indicating different aspects of the development of their relationship, or it can be done in colour and with very graphic images. What is especially significant is the meaning and interpretation of these events by and for the couple.

Below is the CLL of Jean-Paul and Claire whom I met during a Summer camp of Family Life Missions *in July 1999. What was especially striking for them seeing their story displayed in this way was how important decisions were accompanied by other major events in their lives. We traced the story that led up to each of these events and then I ask what meaning these stories had for them and what these events said about themselves as individuals and as a couple.*

Jean-Paul 'Jan 97 found job   April '97 met Claire   1st date May '97 Sept '97 go steady
Christmas '97 spent with separate families

Jan '98 father died

Jan '98 decision to live together / May '98 separation 1 month /
Febr '99 decision to marry

Febr '98 ski holiday

_____
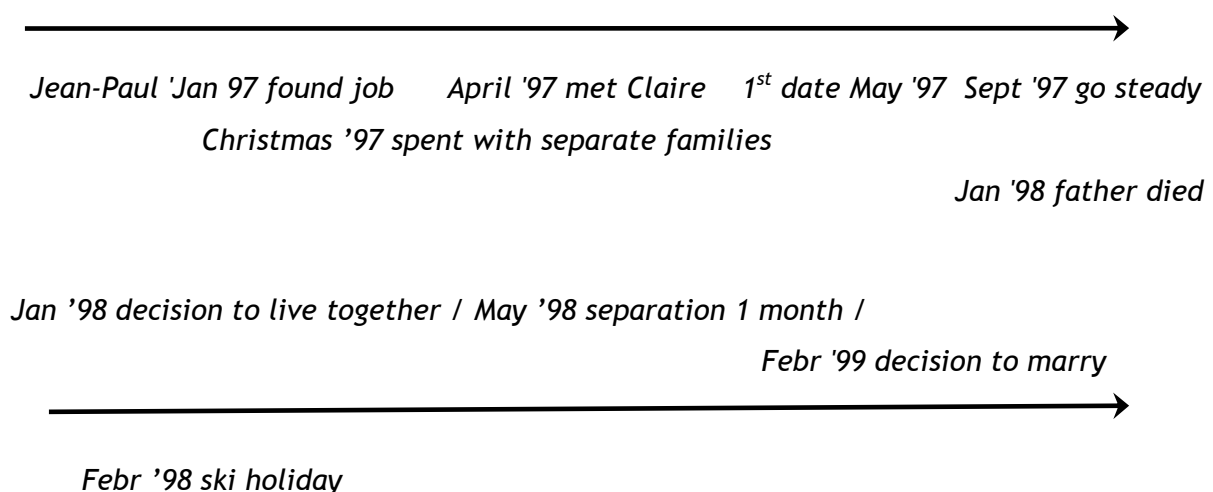
> *They said that idea/theme of the search for security was important for them as a couple and that they would like to construct their life together around this theme.*
>
> *We started to look at how the search for security (or the lack thereof) played a role in their families-of-origin, and also in other aspects of their lives. They noticed that the search for security was not always an issue. It was important in "serious life stuff", but not in lesser issues, for example, recreational activities.*

5.7.5 Family life cycle and faith development

The *Family Life Cycle* (FLC) is a useful tool in depicting the development and changes of the family through time. The work of Carter and McGoldrick (The Changing Family Life Cycle, 1989) is especially valuable in this regard.

Carter and McGoldrick (1989:3-4) emphasize two cautions about a life cycle perspective (that are also applicable to the other mapping tools) :

> *A rigid application of psychological ideas to the "normal" life cycle can have a detrimental effect if it promotes anxious self-scrutiny that raises fears that deviating from the norms is pathological. The opposite pitfall, over-emphasizing the uniqueness of the "brave new world" faced by each new generation, can create a sense of historical discontinuity by devaluing the role of parenthood and rendering meaningless the relationship between generations. Our aim is to provide a view of the life cycle in terms of the intergenerational connectedness in the family.*

Within the past couple of generations, the changes in the family life cycle have escalated dramatically, due especially to the lower birth rate, the longer life expectancy, the changing role of women, and the increasing divorce and remarriage rate. There has been also a small revolution in awareness of differences in male and female development. Awareness has also increased about the importance of ethnic patterns and cultural variability in life cycle definitions of normality (Carter & McGoldrick 1989:3, 10-11).

In outlining the stages of the family life cycle, they have departed from the traditional sociological depiction of the family life cycle as commencing at courtship or marriage and ending with the death of one spouse.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   206
_____

Before summarizing the FLC in table form, I would like to refer to four aspects of the constitution of a couple, especially in the beginning, that could be useful for a premarital conversation (see Lemaire 1979:150 ff; Poujol & Duval-Poujol 2003:19-29). The duration of these phases depends on each individual.

Meeting or "love at first sight"	Attraction, "love is blind", love-passion, spontaneity
Honeymoon	Euphoria, idealisation of the future, joy having entered the social status of a "couple" (married or not), live outside reality, "we are alone in the world"
Return to reality	Reintegration of the world outside and their social context, organisation of life together, the expectations of each one, role definition
Minor or chronic crises	Used to express frustration, roots of disagreements, redefine the rules – they can be positive and nurture the couple

The stages in the FLC can be summarized as follows:

Family Life Cycle	Emotional process of transition : Key principles	Second-order changes in family status required to proceed developmentally
1. Leaving home: single young adults	Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self	a. Differentiation of self in relation to family of origin b. Development of intimate peer relationships c. Establishment of self re work and financial independence
2. The joining of families through marriage : the new couple	Commitment to new system	a. Formation of marital system b. Realignment of relationships with extended families and friends to include spouse
3. Families with young children	Accepting new members into the system	a. Adjusting marital system to make space for child(ren) b. Joining in childrearing, financial, and household task c. Realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grand parenting roles.

_____

4. Families with adolescents	Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to include children's independence and grandparents' frailties	a. Shifting of parent child relationships to permit adolescent to move in and out of system b. Refocus on midlife and career issues c. Beginning shift toward joint caring for older generation
5. Launching children and moving on	Accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system	a. Renegotiation of marital system as dyad b. Development of adult to adult relationships between grown children and their parents c. Realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren Dealing with disabilities and death of parents (grandparents)
6. Families in later life	Accepting the shifting of generational roles	a. Maintaining own and/or couple functioning and interests in face of physiological decline; exploration of new familial and social role options b. Support for a more central role of middle generation c. Making room in the system for the wisdom and experience of the elderly, supporting the older generation without over-functioning for them d. Dealing with loss of spouse, siblings, and other peers and preparation for own death. Life review and integration

With this as background, the *stages of faith* of James Fowler (1981) can also be taken into consideration during the premarital conversation, especially when the story of faith (5.13) is brought into the conversation. These stages could help the pastor to reflect on a narrative hermeneutical pastoral response:

_____

1. Undifferentiated faith Intuitive-projective faith	Infancy Early childhood
2. Mythic-literal faith	School years
3. Synthetic-conventional faith	Adolescence
4. Individuative-reflective faith	Young adulthood
5. Conjunctive faith	Mid-life and beyond
6. Universalizing faith	

The stage that is of particular interest to this study is stage 4. This stage coincide also with stage 1 and 2 of the FLC of Carter and McGoldrick.

The movement from stage 3 to stage 4 Individuative-Reflective faith is particularly critical, for it is in this transition that the late adolescent or adult must begin to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes. Where genuine movement toward stage 4 is underway the person must face certain unavoidable tensions: individuality versus being defined by a group or group membership; subjectivity and the power of one's strongly felt but unexamined feelings versus objectivity and the requirement of critical reflection; self-fulfilment or self-actualization as a primary concern versus service to and being available to others; the question of being committed to the relative versus struggle with the possibility of an absolute.

Stage 4 most appropriately takes form in young adulthood (it should be remembered that many adults do not construct it and that for a significant group it emerges only in the mid-thirties or forties). This stage is marked by a double development. The self, previously sustained in its identity and faith compositions by an interpersonal circle of significant others, now claims an identity no longer defined by the composite of one's roles or meanings to others. To sustain that new identity the self composes a framework of meaning conscious of its own boundaries and inner connections and becomes aware of itself as a "world view". Self (identity) and outlook (world view) are

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   209
_____

differentiated from those of others and become acknowledged factors in the reactions, interpretations and judgments one makes on the actions of the self and others. It expresses its intuitions of coherence in an ultimate environment in terms of an explicit system of meanings.

Stage 4 typically translates symbols into conceptual meanings. This is a "demythologizing" stage. It is likely to attend minimally to unconscious factors influencing its judgments and behaviour.

Stage 4's ascendant strength has to do with its capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology). Its dangers inhere in its strengths: an excessive confidence in the conscious mind and in critical thought and a kind of second narcissism in which the now clearly bounded reflective self over assimilates "reality" and the perspectives of others into its own world view.

Restless with the self-images and outlook maintained by stage 4, the person ready for transition finds him- or herself attending to what may feel like anarchic and disturbing inner voices. Elements from a childish past, images and energies from a deeper self, a gnawing sense of the sterility and flatness of the meanings one serves – any or all of these may signal readiness for something new. Stories, symbols, myths and paradoxes from one's own or other traditions may insist on breaking in upon the neatness of the previous faith. Disillusionment with one's compromises and recognition that life is more complex than stage 4's logic of clear distinctions and abstract concepts can comprehend, press one toward a more dialectical and multileveled approach to life truth (Fowler 1981:182-183).

Erickson (1998) in his article <u>Re-visioning the family life cycle theory and paradigm in marriage and family therapy</u> describes some of the problems associated with the adoption of the FLC paradigm. His critique is clearly an influence of postmodern ideas as described in the previous chapters. When using the above mentioned tools (which are just *tools* in the conversational process), the co-narrator should be aware of these critiques to avoid falling into the pitfall of categorizing his narrators and assuming that these tools speak the "truth" of families and that they are *the one and only* conceptual framework from which to view families across the life span.

Erickson argues that the changing nature of the family has become more and more apparent. Family forms are becoming more and more diverse, and an adequate definition of "family" is becoming enigmatic. Perhaps "family", from a post modern perspective, is a

_____

fluid and evolving conceptualization and framework, not a completely static and unchanging structure or definition. Our ideas about what constitutes a family are imbedded within a cultural and historical context. It has been demonstrated that even our most personal understanding of family is socially constructed at both the cultural level and at a more micro level on interpersonal interaction. These changes should sensitize us to the idea of changing family forms and the possible constraints and limits of normative family ideals (Erickson 1998:342-343). By establishing what stages families will go through throughout the life span, by identifying the conflict and challenges of each successive stage, and by establishing what the family should look like at each different stage, the FLC has set up a very strict, confining and oppressive model of how families "should" be. The focus of such a paradigm centres on comparing families and persons with the normative standard to determine where they are deficient. The focus is also on describing the problems and difficulties these families and persons will encounter because of those deficits (Erickson 1998:345).

Others critiques that Erickson mentions are: (a) the marginalization and disqualification of the life experiences of women (whose lives are seen in regard to their biological capabilities), (b) the maintaining of the *status quo* (by incorporating the ideals of the dominant American culture of the 1950's which resulted in having a profound effect on social policy and thus on social control and public life), and, (c) finally, the failure to incorporate the cultural and historical context of the narrators - the FLC, as are many other psychological theories, is founded on the ideals, values, and morals of western culture. There is no inclusion of the experiences, ideals, values, and morals of racial, ethnic, religious, and many other types of minority groups (Erickson 1998:346-348).

Erickson then proposes a revisioning of the FLC that is more inclusive in understanding post modern families (1998:348ff). His first proposition concerns the research that has been done in the field of *New Action Theory* (NAT). NAT is a perspective on family informed by current feminist thought that is situated in post modern and social constructionist ideas. NAT -

> *is about* production. *In this view, persons produce or create the conditions of their lives within the context of their social environment. Sometimes their milieu prevents or constrains them from doing what they prefer. Other times, their milieu enables and enhances their goals. Very often it does both* (Scanzoni &

Marsiglio 1993:107 quoted in Erickson 1998:349).

NAT attempts to be very sensitive to both the constraint and empowerment of a person's production. The central focus of NAT in regard to production seems to be creative action, which is opposite to the constraints of "old action theory". NAT views people as struggling to create better lives for themselves and their families and rejects the view of families as deficient or as having failed to meet the norm or deal with change (Erickson 1998:349).

His second proposition concerns the use of narrative metaphors and narrative accounts of life (Erickson 1998:350). Rather than assuming that there are underlying structures to our lives and that the understanding we have of ourselves is simply a reflection of that underlying reality, the narrative metaphor encourages us to adopt a view that the stories we have about ourselves, our relationships, and our lives are constitutive of our lives. In regard to families, White (1995:18) stated:

> *I think that it is increasingly apparent, to all who care to look and to listen, that there are virtually as many family forms out there as there are families, and that many significantly differing forms appear to work quite well.*

The focus is on the stories that govern a family's life rather than on the family's structure or interactional sequences of behaviour. Narrative accounts give up the search for the essential, universal patterns and instead show interest in diversity and the pluralism of families' stories.

The differences between narrative accounts of life and the assumptions of the FLC paradigm can be portrayed as follows:

Narrative accounts	FLC assumptions
Personalized and subjective	Impersonal and objective
Looking for competencies	Looking for deficits
Creativity in difficult circumstances	Deviance
Resistance (to oppression, marginalization, prevailing norms, etc.)	Failure, abnormality, pathology

_____

Evolving, changing, unfixed narratives of life as lived	Static accounts of life as assumed or hypothesized
Needs of families	Problems of families
Family members as interactive agents	Family members as passive processors

Erickson then proposes a series of questions co-narrators can ask themselves in a revisioning process in order to explore their theories underlying their practices and to discover in what ways these theories incorporate values that may support the FLC paradigm and what implications this may have on their practice. The following questions may be helpful in this questioning process:

- What foundational assumptions and tenets of this theory rein the possible constraining or limiting concepts of the FLC paradigm?

- In what ways may the ideas of this theory, as relating to tenets of the FLC paradigm, be used as a subtle or overt means of oppressive social control?

- How might the assumptions of this theory disqualify the lived experiences of women and other marginalized groups through out the life span?

- In what ways is, or might this theory be, open to the experiences of women and other marginalized groups through the life span?

- In what ways does (or might) this theory assist in liberating women and other marginalized groups from the disqualifications and constraints of the FLC paradigm?

- How might this theory be moulded (or abandoned) in such a way to honour the life experiences and transitional experiences of the families, couples, or individuals currently consulting you?

Another important aspect that Erickson underlines (1998:351-352), is the influence of the personal beliefs of the co-narrator on his understanding of the FLC. This should also be understood with reference to what have already been said concerning deconstruction (5.5) and the awareness of our presuppositions (Gadamer). According to White (1991:121)-

> *deconstruction has to do with procedures that subvert taken-for-granted realities and practices: those so-called "truths" that are split off from the conditions and the context of their production; those disembodied ways of*

_____

> *speaking that hide their biases and prejudices; and those familiar practices of self and of relationship that are subjugating of persons' lives.*

In the process of deconstructing our beliefs and values concerning the FLC, life experiences and relationships in order to reveal what these personal beliefs and values (see 5.5.3) in this regard might be, Erickson proposes the following questions (adapted from Freedman & Combs 1996):

- *Exploring beliefs about the FLC*

1. What values or beliefs about the FLC (including tenets, stages, etc.) lead you to be doing what you are doing in therapy work with families?
2. What influenced your adoption of these beliefs concerning the FLC?
3. What people, groups, or institutions influence your beliefs concerning the FLC?
4. Who agrees with the FLC paradigm? Who disagrees with FLC?
5. What tenets or ideas of the FLC paradigm do you find potentially helpful?
6. What tenets or ideas of the FLC paradigm do you find potentially constricting, marginalizing, or disqualifying of families' or persons' experiences?

- *Exploring the effects of FLC beliefs and related interventions*

1. What interventions do your beliefs concerning the FLC paradigm encourage you to use?
2. Who benefits from these interventions and actions?
3. What are the effects of these interventions and beliefs on *your* life and on *your* relationships?
4. How do these FLC paradigm beliefs and interventions affect the distribution of power and privilege in your relationships with the families and individuals who consult you? What effect does this distribution of power and privilege have?

- *Exploring the suitability of beliefs and behaviours in regard to the FLC paradigm*

1. Do these beliefs and interventions suit you as a therapist?
2. What kinds of therapists use these same interventions? Does this reflect how you think about yourself as a therapist?

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   214
_____

3.   Do you think it's best for this approach, the FLC paradigm, to dictate how you conceptualize and approach work with families and individuals?

- *Encouraging resistance (to the FLC paradigm, dominant cultural ideas about the FLC, etc.)*

1. What beliefs, paradigms, and interventions concerning families and to life span might suit you better?

2. Do you know other therapists who might have similar beliefs or interventions? If you feel it is relevant, what can you learn from them?

3. What would be the effects of re-visioning the FLC paradigm in the way that you view families and your own personal theory of change? Would that suit you better?

3a. In your responsibilities as a therapist, would this be providing the highest quality of care possible?   Would it be ethical?   If not, what smaller change might be more appropriate? Who might support you in taking such a step?

4. Are there ways in which you have already begun to challenge oppressive beliefs or ideas of the FLC paradigm?

5. What tenets of the FLC paradigm do you see as beneficial to families, which you would keep intact in your personal theory of change? (Erickson 1998:352-353).

5.8 OPENINGS TO NEW STORIES

One of the purposes for everything that has been said so far in this chapter is to search with the couple their new story, a story that they want to construct together. We have to explore what they understand by the events that have already transpired in their relationship and those that lay ahead in their life together as *married* couple-to-be. This can be done by tracing the history and the meaning that the couple attach to these experiences. An exploration can be undertaken into what these experiences (marital life) mean in terms of their desires, intentions, preferences, beliefs, hopes, personal qualities, values, strengths, commitments, plans, characteristics, abilities, and purposes.

5.8.1 Open space questions

Once the landscape of their personal narrative, reasons for marriage and a Church wedding have been explored through deconstruction questioning, there are numerous

_____

vantage points from which unique outcomes or sparkling events concerning their future mutual narrative or for their wedding of stories might be brought forth. This is achieved through opening space questions.

Usually people will mention unique outcomes or demonstrate them spontaneously. I will anyway give examples of questions to constitute unique outcomes. The decision to marry is of course in itself a unique outcome. In such a case, we could respond to what the couple has mentioned, most likely with a preference question or a construction question.

If we don't observe openings to alternative stories or if the couple we work with don't tell us about them, we can co-construct them by asking :

1. Questions about *unique outcomes* that have occurred.

2. Or, we can ask about unique outcomes in the realm of imagination

through *hypothetical experience questions*,

3. questions that ask about different *points of view*, and

4. *future orientated questions.*

We group these different types of unique outcome questions together under the name "opening space" because each inquires about the possible presence of an opening that, if taken, may lead to an alternative story.

5.8.2 Unique outcomes

As contradictory as it may sound, this is possibly the most difficult part of the pastoral conversation with couples on the path to getting married. Most couples who cohabit think that nothing will change in their current situation and that their cohabitation has stood the test of time. It is just a formalization of an existing relationship. According to Mitchell and Anderson (1981:75), living together, no matter on how intimate or serious a basis, is not the same as being married, nor does it necessarily hasten the process of leaving home. Indeed, the resistance to marriage displayed by a substantial proportion of cohabiting couples often represents - the couple's proclamations of independence notwithstanding - the inability of either one or the other or both partners to leave home effectively. On the other hand, certain Christians couples believe, in a naive way, that God brought them together and they are "predestined" to get married. But a search for exceptions should be undertaken and in this way an opening could be constructed. A unique outcome could be the result of just a slight twist of meaning of the existing story.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   216
_____

For example, by giving the story various endings in the future. The use of metaphors could also be employed, because a metaphor embraces the truth without demanding it (Bohler 1987:68).

- Has there ever been a time when you thought of what the particularity of marriage is like compared to your current situation?
- Have you as a couple ever stood up to some of these cultural and religious prescriptions concerning the ideal marriage?
- When you started living together / When you first started going steady, the idea of marriage was not evoked, how did the change came about? What made you think of marriage?

A unique outcome is not necessarily an earth shattering experience or idea. It could be a thought or idea that is at odds with a current belief (for example, that nothing will change). The idea of continuation between their present situation and their future situation should also be emphasised. Just as some things will change, some things will also stay the same. This can free them to describe the instances of difference:

- Even though you resisted the idea of marriage for some time, what made you change your mind?
- You said that you were afraid of the lifelong commitment of marriage. What made you come to this new point of view?
- How are these alternative knowledges generated and/or resurrected?

What are the points of entry to these other versions? As persons separate from the dominant or "totalizing" stories that are constitutive of their lives, it becomes more possible for them to orient themselves to aspects of their experience that contradict these knowledges. Such contradictions are ever present, as well as being many and varied. These contradictions or "unique outcomes" provide a gateway to what we might consider to be the alternative territories of a person's life.

For an event to comprise a unique outcome, it must be qualified as such by the person to whose live the event relates. Following the identification of events that are candidates for a unique outcome status, it is important that persons be invited to evaluate these events: Are these events judged to be significant, or to be irrelevant? Do these events represent preferred outcomes, or do they not? Do persons find these developments

_____

appealing? Are persons attracted to some of the new possibilities that might accompany these events? If these events are judged to represent preferred outcomes, then persons can be encouraged to give an account of why they believe this to be the case.

When it is established that particular events qualify as unique outcomes in that they are judged to be both significant and preferred, the pastor can facilitate the generation of and/or resurrection of alternative stories by orienting him/herself to these unique outcomes as one might orient themselves to mysteries. These are mysteries that only the persons themselves can unravel as they respond to the pastor's curiosity about them. As persons take up the task of unravelling such mysteries, they immediately engage in story-telling and meaning-making.

To facilitate this process of "re-authoring", the pastor can ask a variety of questions, including those that be referred to as "landscape of action" questions and "landscape of consciousness" questions. Landscape of action questions encourage persons to situate unique outcomes in sequences of events that unfold across time according to particular plots. Landscape of consciousness questions encourages persons to reflect on and to determine the meaning of those developments that occur in the landscape of action.

5.8.3 Listening for openings

As I already briefly explained above, we generally focus on deconstructing people's reasons for coming for a premarital conversation (problem-saturated narratives in other counselling situations) before attempting to bring forth new stories. However, although we are presenting the processes separately for sake of clarity, the construction of preferred stories almost always goes hand-in-hand with the process of deconstruction.

Our entryway for inviting people to author and live new stories is through "unique outcomes," that is, anything that wouldn't have been predicted in the light of a decision to marry. Unique outcomes constitute openings that, through questions and reflective discussion, can be developed into new stories.
The way unique outcomes or "sparkling events" become apparent can vary tremendously.

Sometimes people offer unique outcomes quite directly, without a lot of drama.

_____

For example, someone may be describing a situation and then say, "It's not always like that," and go on to describe a unique outcome.

It is not unusual as people become involved in re-authoring their lives to save up new unique outcomes to relate to the pastor. At other times, it is important to listen very carefully if we are not to miss the mention of unique outcomes buried in people's descriptions of their life stories. For example, if a man says, "Once in a while I get through to him, but usually …" and then proceeds to describe the dominant story, we can be curious about the "once in a while" part, just as we would be curious about the answers to unique outcome questions.

Sometimes we can observe something happening that, given the actual story, we wouldn't have predicted - people who believe they have communication problems eloquently describing the problem or they claim everything is fine and they start disagreeing profoundly about a relationship issue, kids behaving well in a session although they are being described as always misbehaving, or a teenager showing up on time to meet other family members for a pastoral conversation although the problematic story is one of irresponsibility. In such a case, we could ask questions about how they did it, inviting them to story their achievement.

5.8.4 Asking for openings

Most often, openings develop "spontaneously" in the process of listening deconstructively and asking people about the effects of problems on their lives and relationships. If openings don't develop spontaneously, we can inquire more directly about their existence.   When we are working with an externalized situation, the most straightforward way of looking for openings is to ask about the influence of the problem on the life of the their relationship. That is, we ask questions like, "Has there ever been a time when the problem tried to get the upper hand, but you were able to resist its influence?" or "Have you ever been able to escape the problem for even a few minutes?" or "Is the problem *always* with you?" When questions of this sort follow a detailed inquiry into the effects of the problem on the person, people can usually find instances in which they were able to elude the problem's influence. Each such instance is a potential opening into an alternative life narrative.

We should also take into account that people tend to forget. Not only do we try to forget dark periods in life, all too often we fail to remember the bright spots. It behooves

_____

us to remember stories of grace, our stories of grace. When talking to non-practicing couples who want to get married in the Church – for what ever reason – they will quickly complain why they are against involvement in the Church, comfortably forgetting the positive aspects.

5.9   DUAL LANDSCAPES

Michael White (White and Epston 1990) speaks of the "dual landscapes" of *action* and of *consciousness* (in following Jerome Bruner). He believes that since the stories that constitute people's lives unfold in both those landscapes, pastors and therapists should inquire into both. These dual landscapes can easily be used while doing the genogram, ecochart and the CLL.

5.9.1 Landscape of action

According to Bruner (1986:14) "landscape of action" –

constituents are the arguments of action: agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument, something corresponding to a 'story grammar.'

This is similar to the "who, what, when, where, and how" of journalism. In the landscape of action, we plot sequences of events through time. Thus, the landscape of action is constituted of (a) events that are linked together in (b) particular sequences through the (c) temporal dimension – i.e. past, present and future - an according to (d) specific plots. In a text, the landscape of action provides the reader with a perspective on the thematic unfolding of events across time (White 1991:124).

That which is discussed under "developing an opening into a story" relates to the landscape of action: *detail in multiple modalities* involving the viewpoints of *multiple characters* in a particular *scene or setting.* What we need to add now is the action itself. What happened, in what sequence, involving which characters?

In the landscape of action, we are interested in constructing an "agentive self" with people. That is, we ask questions with an eye to enhancing those aspects of the emerging story that support "personal agency." The very act of re-authoring requires and demonstrates personal agency, and most people experience that in this work. We go a

_____

step further in making personal agency apparent by asking in a variety of ways how people have accomplished what they have.

Asking "how", or some question that implies "how," is especially useful for inviting stories of personal agency.

The answers to "how" questions can also make stories experientially vivid and develop sequences of events through time. Examples: "How did you do that?" "What did you do that led you to feel this new feeling?" and "How did you notice this different way of perceiving the situation?". Answers to such questions almost always come in the form of stories.

We think about the *shape* of a story as it comes forth: What happened *before* the unique outcome? How smoothly did things unfold? Were there false starts involved? What did this particular episode lead to? In this regard, we are especially interested to know if there is a *turning point*, a place where the story changes for the good. Although "turning point" is not a fitting metaphor for everyone in every situation, when it is, it becomes a significant event that we can plot in time, so that it becomes a story. If there is such a point, it creates a focus for when a problematic story becomes a preferred one. As such, we believe it is useful to focus special attention on it, bringing forth even more shape and detail, perhaps even treating it as a story-within-a-story.

No matter how vivid a story is in the landscape of action, if it is to have *meaning* it must also be developed in the landscape of consciousness. By "the landscape of consciousness" we refer to that imaginary territory where people plot the meanings, desires, intentions, beliefs, commitments, motivations, values, etc. that relate to their experience in the landscape of action. In other words, in the landscape of consciousness, people reflect on the implications of experiences storied - in the landscape of action. Jerome Bruner (1986) has discussed how the interplay between these dual landscapes invites empathic and experiential involvement in the lives and minds of the characters in a story. As we read a novel, watch a movie, or listen to a friend recount an amusing anecdote, we become really involved only as we reflect on what people's actions *mean* - why they do what they do, what they hope will or won't happen next, what their actions say about their character, and so on. The sequences of events they tell us about in response to "how" questions only come to embody personal agency when people enter the landscape of consciousness and make meaning of them. Perceptions, thoughts,

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   221
_____

speculation, realizations and conclusions dominate this landscape, and many of these relate to -

(a) the determination of the desires and the preferences of the characters,

(b) the identification of their personal and relationship characteristics and qualities,

(c)   the clarification of their intentional states - for example, their motives and their purposes - and, to

(d) the substantiation of the beliefs of these characters.

As these desires, qualities, intentional states and beliefs become sufficiently elaborated through the text, they coalesce into "commitments" that determine particular careers in life - "life styles" (White 1991:124).

5.9.1.1 Landscape of action questions

Landscape of action questions can be referenced to the past, present and future, and are effective in bringing forth alternative landscapes that stretch through these temporal domains. The following questions are mainly those that resurrect and generate alternative historical landscapes; questions that are historicizing of "unique outcomes". However, some future oriented landscape of action questions will feature in some of the examples.

Questions that historicize unique outcomes are particularly effective in bringing forth alternative landscapes of action.   These questions bridge those preferred developments of the present with the past; they encourage persons to identify the history of unique outcomes by locating them within particular sequences of events that unfold through time. Often, these questions assist persons to plot the history of the alternative landscape of action to the extent that they reach back and predate the landscapes of action of the previously dominant and "problem-saturated" stories that persons have had about their lives.

Landscape or action questions can focus on both the recent history and the more distant history of unique outcomes. Those landscape or action questions that bring forth the recent history of the unique outcome mostly relate to its more immediate circumstances:

- How did you get yourself ready to take this step? What preparations led up to it?

_____

- Just prior to taking this step, did you nearly turn back? If so, how did you stop yourself from doing so?

- Looking back from this vantage point, what did you notice yourself doing that might have contributed to this achievement?

- Could you give me some background to this? What were the circumstances surrounding this achievement? Did any one else make a contribution? If so, would you describe this?

- What were you thinking at the time? Have you been advising yourself differently? What did you tell yourself that pulled you through on this occasion?

- What developments have occurred in other areas of your life that may relate to this? How do you think these developments prepared the way for you to take these steps?

The pastor can encourage the participation of other persons in this generation/resurrection of alternative and preferred landscapes of action. Including members of the community of persons who have participated historically in the negotiation of, and distribution of, the dominant story of the person's life is particularly helpful. For example, other family members can make particularly significant and authenticating contributions to these alternative landscapes of action :

- How do you think your parents managed to keep their act together in the face of the fact that they didn't approve of the person you want to marry?

- What have you witnessed Jean doing recently that could throw some light on how he was able to take this step?

- What did you see Dominique doing leading up to this achievement? How does this contribute to an understanding of how she got ready for it?

- Would you describe to me the circumstances surrounding this development of your son's life? Did any one else contribute to this, and if so, in what way?

The following questions provide examples of those which bring forth the more distant history of the unique outcome. These invite the identification of events and experiences that have a less immediate relation to the unique outcomes. As with those questions that bring forth the recent history of the unique outcome, it is helpful to engage, as co-authors, members of the community of persons who contributed historically

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   223
_____

to the negotiation and distribution of the dominant story that is repudiated in this re-authoring process.

- What can you tell me about your history that would help me to understand how you managed to take this step?

- Are you aware of any past achievements that might, in some way, provide the back-drop for this recent development?

- What have you witnessed in your life up to now that could have given you at least some hint that this was a possibility for you?

- I would like to get a better grasp of this development. What did you notice yourself doing, or thinking, as a younger person, that could have provided some vital clue that this development was on the horizon of your life?

- Please think about your son's recent action and reflect on his life as you have known it. With hindsight, what do you recall him doing that could have foreshadowed this, that could have given you a lead on this?

- It seems that what Claude and Stephan have recently accomplished is a manifestation of some behind the scenes work that they have been doing to restore their relationship. Were you aware of any signs that this work was taking place? If so, what were these signs?

These examples provide just some of the options for engaging persons in the generation/resurrection of alternative landscapes of action. Questions can also be introduced to encourage persons to bring forth the recent history and distant history of those events that have foreshadowed the current unique outcomes.

As couples begin to articulate preferred events in these alternative landscapes of action, and as they become more engaged in the arrangement or linking of these events in particular sequences through time, they can be encouraged to explicitly name the alternative plot or the counter-plot that is suggested by this arrangement. The name of the alternative plot or counter-plot is important, for it, amongst other things, (a) contributes very significantly to a person's sense of their life's going forward in preferred ways, (b) makes possible the attribution of meaning to events or experiences that would otherwise be neglected or considered to be of little significance, (c) facilitates the session by session sorting and linking of the events that have taken place between sessions, and

_____

(d) provides for persons a sense of knowing what might be the next step in their preferred direction in life.

The alternative plot or counter-plot is often named quite spontaneously in the process of this work. When it is not, the pastor can facilitate this by asking questions that encourage persons to generate descriptions in juxtaposition to the previously dominant plot. Through these questions, persons who have been concerned about "losing their relationship" (previously dominant plot), may determine that these developments in the alternative landscape of action suggest that they are on the path of "reclaiming their relationship" (alternative plot or counter-plot). A person who concludes that "self-neglect" has been highly influential in his/her life (previously dominant plot), may decide that the developments in the alternative landscape of action reflect that s/he has been engaged in a "self-nurturing project" (alternative plot or counter-plot) (White 1991:128-130).

5.9.2 Landscape of consciousness

In order to explore the landscape of consciousness, we ask what Freedman and Combs (1993) call *meaning questions.* These are questions that invite people to step back from the landscape of action and reflect on the wishes, motivations, values, beliefs, learning, implications, and so forth that lead to and flow from the actions they have recounted. In co-authoring stories, we move between the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness, weaving the two back and forth again and again.

5.9.2.1 Landscape of consciousness questions

Landscape of consciousness questions encourage persons to review the developments as they unfold through the alternative landscape of action, and to determine what these might reveal about –

(a) the nature of their preferences and their desires,

(b) the character of various personal and relationship qualities,

(c) the constitution of their intentional states,

(d) the composition of their preferred beliefs, and, lastly,

(e) the nature of their commitments.

_____

Landscape of consciousness questions encourage the articulation and the performance of these alternative preferences, desires, personal and relationship qualities, and intentional states and beliefs, and this culminates in a "re-vision" of personal commitment in life. It is through the performance of meaning in the landscape of consciousness that peoples' beliefs and desires become sufficiently coherent and well organized as to merit being called "commitments" or "ways of life', and such coherences are seen as "dispositions" that characterize persons.

The following questions provide an example of just some of the forms that landscape of consciousness questions might take. These invite persons to reflect on developments as they have unfolded in both the recent and the more distant history of the landscape of action.

- Let's reflect for a moment on these recent developments. What new conclusions might you reach about your tastes; about what is appealing to you, about what you are attracted to?
- What do these discoveries tell you about what you want for your life?
- I understand that you are more aware of the background to this turning point in Dominique's life. How does this affect the picture that you have of her as a person?
- How would you describe the qualities that you experienced in your relationship at this earlier time, when you managed to support each other in the face of adversity?
- What do these developments inform you about what suits you as a person?
- In more fully appreciating what went into this achievement, what conclusions might you reach about what Jean intends for his life?
- It seems that we are both now more in touch with how you prepared yourself for this step. What does this reveal to you about your motives, or about the purposes you have for your life?
- What does this history of struggle suggest about what Claude believes to be important in life, about what she stands for?

As persons respond to landscape of action and landscape of consciousness questions, they engage in a reliving of experience, and their lives are "retold". Alternative knowledges of self and of relationships are generated and/or resurrected; alternative modes of life and thought become available for persons to enter into. Throughout this re-authoring dialogue, the pastor plays a central role in challenging any early return to the

_____

canonical that would suggest that the unique outcome is self-explanatory (White 1991:131).

It should be added that these landscape of action and landscape of consciousness questions are not simply about history. They are questions that historicize the unique outcome. Also, the re-authoring is not simply a process of "pointing out the positives". Instead, this approach actively engages persons in unravelling mysteries that the pastor can't solve.

5.10 AN OVERVIEW OF A PREMARITAL NARRATIVE CONVERSATION

I will now demonstrate the different aspects and principles that I have been taking about up till now. At the end I will give an illustration of a conversation with a couple concerning their decision to get married.

Furthermore, the order in which the conversation is presented should not be seen as a chronological sequence whereby the pastoral conversation should be developed. However, it seems helpful for certain counsellors (myself included) to have a particular sequence in mind when learning and practicing how to use a narrative approach. It should also be noted that, mostly because of practical reasons (especially time), the outline given below was/is not followed exactly in this way. The counsellor is led by the needs and the rhythm of the couple. In the ideal situation this outline could be applied to each theme of "traditional marriage preparation" (i.e. self image, choice of marital partner, motive for marriage, communication, conflict resolution, growth, marital roles, professions, parenthood, finances, parents-in-law, faith).

As it has already been said, a useful method is to follow people's interests. With a premarital conversation the conversation naturally moves to reasons for the interview. If, however, the information is not forthcoming, inquiry can be made. Careful attention is given to reasons for the decision(s) to marry and why a Church wedding is desired. As we listen we ask deconstruction questions. One systematically asks deconstruction questions (for example "relative influence questions" could be useful), and then one is likely to start with "story development questions" anytime there is an opening. One can always go back to deconstructive listening and questioning if the situation calls for it.

_____

I may not use some type of questions at all during a particular conversation. I tend to use deconstruction questions and opening space questions in the early part of the conversation. I use preference questions throughout interviews, particularly in relation to unique outcomes. Once a preferred unique outcome is identified, I ask story development questions and meaning questions. Often alternating the questions by asking several story development questions and then a meaning question and then more story development questions. However, there are many exceptions to this standardized pattern. For example, one can sometimes omit preference questions, relying instead on voice tone, facial expression, and past statements of preference for guidance.

If the couple starts by describing what they want, expect and look for in marriage, one could respond to that as a unique outcome and begin inviting them to author that story. During the story development, questions that contrast the past with the present or the future might be asked, so that the authoring of the alternative story and telling of the present story are interspersed throughout the pastoral conversation.

Sometimes, one can move between a present story or preconceived idea and the alternative story in order to connect with people's experience. A couple might begin to live an alternative story and then something stops them. They feel blocked or pulled back. In that situation, one can either ask about the alternative story, which may be enough to reengage them in it, or one can listen and ask deconstruction questions about what is pulling them back.

As the story develops further, questions to create an audience are asked - that could be friends, family, church and even strangers.
With the "final" meeting the couple is invited to review the story as it has developed - especially questions contrasting the past, present and future. Future-oriented questions are especially asked.

The table below gives an overview of a premarital narrative conversation taking the explanation above into consideration. The movements alluded to, are not comparable to steps or phases.
There is some logic in trying to move from deconstruction to story construction, but there is no problem if one's logic leads them differently. The emphasis falls more on circularity, rather than on a linear movement. The dance-metaphor gives direction. It

_____

begins somewhere and ends somewhere, but is always free and asks for a creative engagement. In this sense, it differs greatly from a strategic phased model. These movements can only be applied meaningfully if they are aligned to the broad narrative approach as described in this dissertation. It depends on the creativity of the pastor. The ideal would be if the pastor integrated these "techniques" in his own unique way in the creation of stories. In a certain way, everything depends on the creativity and not-knowing position of the therapist.

The various movements naturally consist of subjective choices, but these choices have not just been randomly selected. An attempt is made with them to simply promote conversational questions. There are certain methods which simply do not fit with a narrative approach. For example, the reader will not find any questionnaires[2] or scales of measurement in this approach. This would be too mechanical and it seems to the narrative pastor as if the tendency was too much towards a manipulation of the companion, and therefore would exhibit disrespect for the story. The narrative approach by definition could not be at ease with hypnosis as a therapeutic method. Whenever we work with stories, we work with memories. The stories, as remembered, are the very stories that powerfully impact our lives. These remembered stories form our identity, which is what the pastor is working with and not that which lies in the sub-conscious or unconscious.

Furthermore, it can also happen that these movements which will be discussed, from a narrative point of view, can be incorrectly applied. They can be applied in a non-narrative structuralistic way. Much depends on the not-knowing position that the pastor assumes. If this position is not taken seriously, then no method can ensure a healthy narrative approach.

In narrative pastoral work, the story is not only seen as a means of releasing information, but more as a way to self awareness. This is why people are led to tell and re-tell their stories in such a way that re-interpretation and re-construction can eventually happen. New stories need to be constructed on the basis of which a new future can be envisioned.

---

2 I include at the end of the dissertation the questionnaire that I used and which was one of the reasons that brought me to the narrative approach. It felt as if I, through the questionnaire, wanted to promote *my* hypotheses, and the participants always had various questions about the questions in the questionnaire. People's stories are too diverse to be grasped or defined by a questionnaire.

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   229
_____

This opens up a very natural place for **The Story**. God's story can help a person or family to re-formulate both the story of the past, as well as the story of the future in such a way that new meaning can be found in the present. We can re-interpret our stories using God's story. A painful story of the past can now be reframed to produce a rock under water in the stream, on which one can find secure footing and new hope to reach the opposite bank safely.

We do not work with change techniques in this model, whether psychological, sociological or theological. It is assumed that a story which flows from the past to the future possesses the necessary potential for change (see also Müller 1996 & 1999).

Deconstruction and externalization	Openings to new stories	Story development	Story construction
Joining Decision to marry Religious story Genogram Couple Time Line Ecochart Effects or results Relative influence questions Contextual influences Interrelationships Tactics or strategies	Unique outcomes Listening for openings Asking for openings	Landscape of action Process Details Time Context People Hypothetical event questions Landscape of consciousness Motivation, hopes, goals, dreams Values, believes Characteristics & qualities	Naming the story Thickening the story Audience Rite de passage Theme

- *Example 1 : In the beginning - Joining*

As with any counselling situation the pastor introduces himself, the context and the way the conversation will be conducted, in the beginning and a real interest is shown in the couple.

_____

> *Hallo, as I said over the phone, my name is X* (you could add something about your work and some personal information). *I would like to welcome you to, what I call a premarital conversation. I want you to see these couple of sessions that we are going to share together, as an opportunity to learn and to share from one another. I'm not here to give you a winning recipe for living happily ever after, there's no magic formula.*
>
> *I work from a narrative perspective. One of the important aspects of this approach is the meaning that* you *give yourself to your own experiences, rather than the meaning I (or Freud, or somebody else) give to these experiences. For this we will be looking at where you come from, where you are, and where you want to go. The fact that you want to get married in the Church is also significant, and we will be looking at that too. As we go along, I will explain more about it.*
>
> *From time to time I will take some notes that I will share with you – what I will write on paper about you belongs to you. The reason why I write things down is to help remember for future reference.*
>
> *I would like also to assure you that what is said here stays confidential. Feel free to interrupt me, to ask if you don't understand or agree with something, or if you want to talk about something that I didn't mention.*
>
> *You can begin by introducing yourselves to me* (or they can introduce each other to you).

- *Example 2 – A transcript*

After the general introduction and joining I usually begin asking about their decision to marry and how it came that they decided to marry. I find this beginning interesting with cohabiting and non-cohabiting couples. Deconstruction questioning and externalization is of great use in this respect. The decision to marry can be seen as a sparkling event. This has of course a whole story behind it which can be traced. Other sparkling events or unique outcomes can also appear during the premarital conversation. In "general", there is not a "problem" in the strict sense of the word that brings a couple to a premarital conversation.

During the first part, we can ask questions such as: Why marriage? Why in the church? What made them decide to come for a premarital conversation? What are their expectations regarding these meetings? How did they take the decision to marry? Where a couple cohabit questions could be asked about how their relationship will be different

_____

after they get married. During this time, space could be opened towards new stories. This can be done by tracing their family history and their personal relationship history. These stories can be further developed through meaning questions in order to construct a new story bringing into play the story of faith.

In the beginning a time could be spent on their **decision to marry**.

Jean-Paul and Martine have been living together for just over a year and decided to get married about a month before. Their reason for cohabiting was to make sure that their relationship would work by learning to live together and in this way rid themselves of doubt about spending their lives together. This transcript gives an idea how the different aspects of a premarital narrative conversation (as outlined in the table and the discussion above) are put into action.

CdP: So, the main reason for your cohabitation was to rid yourself of doubt concerning your decision to marry?
Jean-Paul & Martine : Uh . . . uh.
CdP: And, if I understand correctly, over the past year you've learned some things about yourselves and your relationship which confirm your decision to marry? But at the same time, it was very difficult to make this decision?
Jean-Paul & Martine: Mmm, . . . yes.

> (I make sure that their decision to marry is a preferred one, seeing it as a unique outcome, and I review some of the developments they had already described in the landscape of action.)

CdP: What does this tell you about yourself? What kind of person does that say to you that you are, that you have been able to do that now?

> (I inquire into the landscape of consciousness concerning their decision. I decided not to trace the history of this decision for the moment.)

> (Previously it came out that Jean-Paul wanted to get married from the beginning, but Martine was very hesitant. "Usually" it is the man who is

_____

hesitant, and not the woman. This is also the reason why I chose this example. So I let Martine talk.)

Martine: What kind of person am I? It's not quite a question that I expected, but very interesting. Many times in the past comments were made about the fact that I can't make decisions and I felt pressured. Although I was not quite in favour of cohabitating, it helped me in the process of making this decision. It took a little while, but I made the decision.

My self-worth is more than I thought it was. I'm not as indecisive and insecure as certain people think, even myself. Sometimes I will talk down to myself. Now I can say to myself and these others, "Look, I made this decision, an important one also, and I'm proud of it".

CdP: You refer to people who think that you are indecisive and insecure. If you think back over the years who – friends, family, teachers – would be the least surprised to see you making this decision?

(Here I ask questions about past events that have something in common with the present unique outcome.)

Martine: Who would be the least surprised?

CdP: Yes, who would say, "I knew she had it in her."

Martine: Well, my aunt Dominique. She is the one person who would say "I knew she could make an important decision. Good for her." Many others will say, "She's just out to prove something, it won't last."

CdP: What was it that your aunt Dominique saw as different about you?

(Martine identified a person from the past who would appreciate this sparkling event in her present life. I invite her to explore the meaning of her life from aunt Dominique's view point. When she takes up my invitation, she experiences a flood of memories. She tells several stories about past experiences. These stories are rich in detail and she spontaneously develops them in both the landscape of consciousness and the landscape of action. On her own she also introduces another figure, uncle Gérard).

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   233
_____

Martine: She's a lovely person. She was always able to understand me for some reason. I don't know if it because she's kind and gentle and she always took time to listen to me. She is the youngest sister on my mother's side and is only 10 years older than I. I always tease her about this. Just after she finished her studies – as a medical nurse – she got married and had kids – she worked as a nurse for a very short time. I remember her coming to visit us one weekend and we went to the local mall. She was 20 and I 10. It was as if I was shopping with my big sister. There were some teenage friends around. It was great, you know . . .

We drank tea and ate cake like two old lady friends . . . it was so funny . . .

I still ask her about that time, and she still remembers it.

She always talked to *me, not down to me. Yes, she always talked* to *me. There was something special about her that I connected with.*

I also have an uncle Gérard who's the same way. He is the youngest brother on my father's side. He's something special. We actually only met, re-met, 10 years ago. They lived not far from us, in Arles, but they then moved to Paris and we didn't see them for many years. One of my cousins was killed in a car accident and he came down for the funeral. The night after the funeral we started talking and we almost talked right through the night. Before eventually going to bed, I told him that I had been talking to my mother with "long pants". But a sober "my mother", because she was an alcoholic. He just laughed.

After that he called me once a week. Just to see how I was. I didn't have anybody else. And to this day, we talk at least once a month. And when they come down south, they stay with me for a night or two. It's just a given.

When I talked to him a couple of weeks ago and told him that "we" decided to get married, he was delighted and encouraging – he knew about my trouble making the decision.

The other day, it was a Saturday, I went early to do the shopping and returned home at about 10 o'clock. I unpacked everything and was in a good mood. I just had the urge to call uncle Gérard. I wasn't going to wait for him to call me. I got up to go to the phone, and as I was about to pick up the phone, it rang. It was him. I yelled, I could not believe it. I went, "I can't believe this."

And he said, "What? Did I interrupt something? What's happening?"

I replied, "No, uncle Gérard. I was on the point of picking the phone up to call you."

_____

He giggled and said, "I been thinking about you this morning."

"Oh yeah," I said.

"For once I got up early for a Saturday morning. Do you have good news?"

And I went, "Y-e-s." Trying not to sound too out of this world.

He went, "Do you have a smile on your face?"

I went, "Yeah. It's about as wide as the Rhône. We're going to get married."

He went, "That's great. Congratulations."

You know? But it was a strange feeling . . . so strange . . . yeah.

Once they came down for my mother's funeral. I told him that my mother and father always made me feel or told me that I was only adequate, "But that's fine because it was the best that you can do. But, you're not as good and motivated as so and so."

I remember so well the fire in the eyes of my uncle. He was furious. And it was the first time.

CdP: Now when was that?

Martine: Three years ago.

CdP: OK.

Martine: My mother died three years ago this Summer. It was the first time that I can vividly remember thinking to myself, "Maybe, maybe, it's not true. Maybe those feelings aren't true. Maybe I'm pretty good in what I do."

CdP: Now, what was it about this interaction that made it possible for you to think that?

Martine: Because of his instant reaction to the statement I made. That, you know they made me feel like . . . they told me I was only adequate at best. And you know how you can see in somebody's look on their face like they were shocked? That was the last thing they expected to hear?

CdP: Yeah.

Martine: When I saw his initial reaction. . . . Of course after his initial reaction, then came the typical uncle accolades and, "No. No. You're wonderful. You've done a lot for your family." And . . .

CdP: But it was more the reaction than the words?

Martine: It was more the reaction that got through to me.

CdP: Yeah.

Martine: People's reactions get through to me faster than words I've come to. . . . They do, because words mean nothing. Most of the time.

_____

CdP: Now . . . so he has known something about you for a long, long, time. . . .

Martine: Uh-huh.

CdP: . . . that that adequate stuff just didn't fit with at all. It just made his blood boil.

Martine: Yeah. It did! Instantly.

CdP: So, what do you think you would see if you were able to look at you when you were a kid through your Uncle Gérard's eyes, and see that kid the way Uncle Gérard saw her? What do you think he saw back then? What do you think you would see?

Martine: Well, through my young adolescent years, he wasn't around. He stayed in Paris.

CdP: But if we go back to when he did. . . .

Martine: Before that?

CdP: Yeah . . . what do you think he saw that maybe nobody else except possibly your aunt Dominique saw? What did he notice in you?

Martine: I don't know. I think that. . . .

CdP: Well, what would be your guess? Best as you can imagine, kind of crawling inside his body. . . .

Martine: That here is a kid that has overcome what for some people would be insurmountable odds. I think.

CdP: So if I were able to go back and interview him, back then, at that time, and I'd say, "What insurmountable odds? What are you talking about? What is it that she's overcome?" What do you think he would say?

Martine: "Taking care of her family during really rough times. Keeping them together." Because that's what I did. I did do that. At a very young age. I did do that. He would have seen a girl that had a lot of potential but wasn't able to develop it because she wasn't given the opportunity.

CdP: And if I said to him, back then, if I somehow could do that, "You say potential. Potential for what? What kind of potential do you see in this girl?"

Martine: Hmm . . . Uncle Gérard's response would be, "She should get a better education to reach whatever she would want to be. Be it a doctor or lawyer or an artist or an author, whatever it would be."

CdP: So he saw somebody that had a lot of . . .

Martine: Yeah . . . yeah.

CdP: . . . lot of stuff . . .

_____

Martine: Yeah. Uncle Gérard's kids are all well educated except for his oldest son. They all went on to . . . you know, it's his daughter who's the Ph.D. in Biology. He has another daughter who's an accountant. And he has another son who's. . . . He has a daughter who's a social worker and another son who's a very successful businessman. And then he's got two that are a little goofy, but you know, out of seven kids he/they did pretty well. He always told me later. . . . That week that they stayed with me, after my mom died, he and I did a lot of talking.

And he said, "It used to always anger me that you kids weren't given the opportunities that you should have been given."

CdP: What difference did it make for you to hear that from him?

Martine: Back then it made me feel real sad and real hopeless, like, "Gosh, I was cheated. I was cheated." Now I feel that it's time to stop blaming other people and just get on with it, and stop dwelling on the past. Which I don't think I was doing consciously, but subconsciously I think I was. I had a lot of years of garbage to get out of myself. You know?

CdP: Yeah.

Martine: After my mother passed away, when it came up to my dad's birthday time, and I couldn't stop crying, which made me go in to see a therapist back then, she very kindly said to me, "Oh, and you miss your mom and dad, don't you?"

And I looked around and went, "No. I'm sorry but I don't. They weren't nice people to me." They weren't nice people. I mean, if you sat down and met them, you would have enjoyed their company. They weren't nice people to me. I don't think. So no.

I was mourning. I don't know what I was mourning but it wasn't their passing. I was mourning probably their living, instead of their passing. I think that's what I was mourning all those years. All these past three years.

And now it's like, "Okay, so you did the best you could do." You know, they danced as fast as they could, and God bless them. And so you just . . .

CdP: And now you're in a position where you can realize some of that potential that uncle Gérard always saw in you?

Martine: Yeah. That's what I'm seeing this decision *to marry . . . .*

CdP: Yeah. So, if you sit there for a second, and you think back over everything you've said here today . . . What stands out for you? What pieces of that are . . . If you kind of think of yourself as somebody that's been sitting here off to the side (gesturing to an

_____

---

area in a corner of the room) listening to Martine over there, (gesturing towards Martine) what stands out?

Martine: What stands out . . . well, I think I was a lot better person. Much better than I realized. At a much younger age. . . . But I'm just coming to realize it now, I think.

CdP: What difference does it make to be . . . not just realize that you're a good person now, but to realize that you've been a good person all along? That you were a much better person than you realized at a much younger age? What difference does it make to come to that realization now?

(Here I am inviting Martine to connect the meaning of the past experiences she has been relating to the context of her present life. She goes one better by extending the past and present meaning into the future.)

Martine: My feelings won't get hurt as easily as they have in the past. So I will be a lot stronger. I will feel a lot stronger within so people won't walk all over me. It's been almost like a vicious circle. You know? My feelings get hurt because somebody walks all over me, and somebody walks all over me because I let them hurt my feelings. And it's like, suddenly I feel like this circle is going to be ending. You know?

CdP: Yeah. Cause the possibility for . . .

Martine: Expansion.

CdP: Yeah, who knows what . . .

Martine: Yeah, I know. I know. I remember earlier we said something about . . . I said, "God, you know, if I just didn't have all that stuff happen to me when I was a kid, what could I have been?"

And I remember you saying, "What? Is it too late now?" And I thought, "Yeah." But now I think, "No, it's not. Who knows what I'm going to be?" I mean who knows? Who knows?

The **effects or results** of their decision on different aspects of their lives can also be traced. Most of the time, couples who cohabit are of the opinion that nothing will be different or that nothing will change in their relationship after marriage. This gives another occasion for deconstruction. Marriage is externalized and/or can also be given a name (companionship, for example). A series of questions can then be asked about the ways in which marriage, compared to just living together, will affect their lives:

- The person's sense of self: what they think of themselves as a person

_____

- Their view of themselves as a parent, partner, mother, wife, sister, brother, worker, etc.
- Their hopes, dreams and sense of future
- Their relationships with children, parents, partner, community members, colleagues, etc.
- Their work
- Their social life
- Their thoughts
- Their physical health
- Their spiritual life
- Their moods or feelings
- Their everyday life

When the couple's relationship has been explored by means of deconstruction, externalization and the mapping tools we can start to ask story development questions.

5.11 STORY DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

Once enough space has been opened to reveal a unique outcome or preferred development, we can ask questions to develop this alternative story. All of the questions we will talk about in this section are used to invite the re-authoring of stories. By referring to "story development questions" in this section we are referring to that part of re-authoring that turns events into a story in the usual sense. That is, story development questions invite people to relate the process and details of an experience and to connect it to a timeframe, to a particular context, and to other people. In this way an event is expanded in space and time, it is peopled, and it is re-experienced in a detailed way. It becomes a story. Such stories can be constructed either from actual events or from hypothetical ones.

Our hope when we ask story development questions is that people will come to experience their lives and themselves in new ways as they focus on previously neglected and unstoried aspects of their experience, aspects that lie outside the realm of the problematic stories they find themselves caught up in when they seek a pastoral conversation. To that end, it seems to be important that these stories be developed in ways that are compelling and experientially vivid (Freedman & Combs 1993).

_____

Freedman and Combs points out that their use of the terms "story development questions" and "meaning questions" are different from those adopted by Michael White from Jerome Bruner (1986). White (1991, 1995), followed by many other therapists, uses the terms "landscape of action" where they use story development and "landscape of consciousness" where they use meaning questions. He also uses a third category, "experience of experience" for questions asking people to adopt another's point of view. Rather than putting these questions in a separate category, Freedman and Combs have incorporated them under "story development questions" or "meaning questions". That is, they call these questions either story development questions or meaning questions depending on whether they develop the story or its meaning from another person's point of view. For example, "If I had been there and seen you take that step, how do you think I would describe what had happened?" is a story development question and the question "If I then were to tell someone what I saw in you that led you to take that step, what qualities do you think I would describe?" is a meaning question.

- Process

In asking questions about process, we invite people to slow down an event and notice what went into it. As a person works to retrieve the sequence of important elements involved in a unique outcome, he relives it. In this process, he has the opportunity to create a map that will then be available to follow during the future challenges. Since they ask people to review their own actions, these questions almost always contribute to stories of personal agency.

- What were the steps you took in doing this? What did you do first? Then what?
- How did you prepare yourself to see things in this new way?
- As you look back at this accomplishment, what do you think were the turning points that made this possible?
- Were there particular things that you said to yourself that supported this new resolve?
- How did you do it?

_____

- Details

    Details help make an event vivid.   Questions about detail offer people the opportunity to remember aspects of events that may have been neglected or forgotten. Full, detailed descriptions foster an intensity of experiential involvement that generalized accounts do not. This is true even for hypothetical events. Also, some of the different details brought forth may play a more significant role in the re-authoring than those details that are most readily remembered.

    - What was the look on his face when you told him you won the award?
    - What particular things would I have noticed if I were there when you two experienced this breakthrough?
    - What was it like to grasp that award in your hands? Did you hear the sound of the crowd or make out any particular faces?
    - What was happening in the rest of the room while you were coming to that realization?
    - What exactly did she say when you told her the news?

- Time

    Finding the *historical antecedents* of unique outcomes and preferred developments can lend particular significance and credence to the preferred self-identity stories that result from this work. Often, unique outcomes have historical roots to which problems have blinded people. "History questions" can help people identify and reclaim them.

    - Who would have predicted that you would have made this shift in your understanding? What would have led them to make this prediction? Would they recall a particular memory or event?
    - When in the past has your partner shown this kind of courage?
    - Was this a new development or do you have a history of speaking out in difficult situations? What situation comes to mind?

_____

Asking *future-orientated* questions can extend alternative stories into the future, changing people's expectations about what is ahead for them and, as Peggy Penn (1985: 301) notes, they can ". . . cut into ideas of predetermination."

- What do you think your next step might be?
- Now that you've discovered these things about your relationship do you have a different vision of the future?
- Do these new developments inspire you to make any predictions about the future role of power in your relationship?
- Three months from now, who do you think will be more pleased by the consequences of this new understanding? What are consequences that will please them so? (This question could also be listed under "people", see below).

Questions that *contrast* the past and either the present or future emphasize the changes a story has undergone over time. In answering these questions, people can notice many changes and differences that they have tended to take for granted.

- How is this different from what you would have done before?
- Okay, so this time you didn't let *laisser-faire* trick you into staying away from a social situation. How is that different from when *laisser-faire* controlled your life?
- You seem very pleased about the feedback you're getting from Linda. What did it used to be like when you experienced a lack of giving attention? And now . . .?

Questions that *link the past, present, and future* dramatize the time span and directionality of a narrative and add relevance to the events in different time frames.

- If we link the self-confidence from your past with your current ideas, where do you think you might go along these lines in the future?
- You said that in high school you stood up for yourself on a number of occasions and that just recently you've been back in touch with that ability and told your best friend what was on your mind. If we think of these events as a kind of trend in your life, what do you expect might happen next?
- Who from your past would have predicted this new development in your life? Knowing what he does about your past, if he were in on this current development, what would he predict about your future?

_____

- Context

Stories develop within particular contexts. Problematic stories may be coached or supported by different sociocultural contexts than preferred stories. As people construct alternative stories, new contexts may become important. Some narratives are more highly dependent on context than others, but every story has a setting. Asking questions about context can anchor a story to a particular place and situation. Sometimes questions about context invite people to extend stories into new places and new situations. Context questions can also invite people to notice the role their culture plays in evoking and supporting preferred stories.

- Are there particular organizations or contexts that would support your new resolve?
- Where did this happen? What was going on at the time?
- Has your newly discovered competence shown itself more at work or at home?
- Would you say the circumstances supported your doing this? How?
- Is this process you describe part of your culture? According to your culture how should one deal with this and similar challenges?

- People

Most stories have more than one character. "People questions" invite individuals to recollect the cast of characters contributing to an emerging narrative or to consider how particular people could play a role in the development of a story. These questions point to the importance of other people in alternate narratives. They also invite people to consider the effects of their alternative stories in the lives of other people - family, friends, sometimes even strangers. Since meaning is constructed in social interaction, it fits that stories should be "peopled."

- Who played a part in you retaking control of your life?
- Who will be first to notice that you've conquered this fear? How will it affect them?
- Has your correspondence with your mother played a part in this? What's the most important thing that she has written to you?
- How long do you think the rest of the family will have to see you following the rules before they relax about this change?

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   243
_____

- If you keep your brother in your heart as you face this problem, what difference will it make?

In this regard, experience of experience questions could also be added. According to White (1991:132) these questions facilitate the re-authoring of lives and relationships, and often they are more generative than those questions that encourage persons to provide an account of what they believe or imagine to be another person's experience of them.

These experiences of experience questions:

(a) invite persons to reach back into their stock of lived experience and to express certain aspects that have been forgotten or neglected with the passage of time, and

(b) recruit the imagination of persons in ways that are constitutive of alternative experiences of themselves.

Some examples of these experiences of experience questions follow. In the examples, these questions are oriented first to alternative landscapes of action, and second to alternative landscapes of consciousness. In the third place, examples are given of questions that encourage persons to bring forth the "intimate particularities" of future developments in these landscapes of action and landscapes of consciousness.

Of course, these questions are not asked in a barrage-like fashion. Instead, they are raised within the context of dialogue, and each is sensitively attuned to the responses triggered by the previous question.

(a) If I had been a spectator to your life when you were a younger person, what do you think I might have witnessed you doing then that might help me to understand how you were able to achieve what you have recently achieved?

- What do you think this tells me about what you want for your life, and about what you have been striving for in your life?
- How do you think that knowing this has affected my view of you as a person?
- What do you think this might reveal to me about what you value most?
- If you managed to keep this knowledge about who you are to yourself over the next week or two, how would it affect the shape of your life?

_____

(b) Of all the people who have known you, who would be least surprised that you have been able to take this step in challenging the problems influencing in your life?

- What might they have witnessed you doing, in times past, that would have made it possible for them to predict that you could take such a step at this point in your life?

- What do you imagine that told them, at that time, about your capabilities?

- What would they have assumed to be your purposes in taking that action at that point in your history?

- What did that tell them about you, and about what you believe to be important?

- Exactly what actions would you be committing yourself to if you were to more fully embrace this knowledge of who you are?

(c) I would like to understand the foundations upon which this achievement rests. Of all the people who have known you, who would be best placed to supply some details about these foundations?

- What clues did this provide them with as to which developments in your life were most valuable to you?

- What conclusions might they have reached about your intentions in building up these foundations?

- What could this have disclosed to them about the sort of life-style you are more suited to?

- If you were to side more strongly with this other view of who you are, and of what your life has been about, what difference would this make to your life on a day-to-day basis?

These examples serve only as an introduction to some of the options for developing questions that encourage the re-authoring of lives according to preferred stories. Among the many other options is the construction of questions that might bring forth future developments in the landscape of consciousness. These questions encourage a reflection on future events in the alternative landscape of action (White 1991:132-133). For example:

- If you did witness yourself taking these steps, how might this confirm and extend this preferred view of who you are as a person?

These questions can be followed-up by further landscape of action questions, and so on. For example:

- And what difference would the confirmation of this view make as to how you lived your life?

- **Hypothetical event questions**

We can also construct a story that builds on a unique outcome by adding details, process, time, context, and people from the realm of imagination by asking about hypothetical events or circumstances. Future questions are always about hypothetical events, but they can be very important in constructing actual lives.

After people make a distinction about themselves or their relationships that they find useful, they are invited to author a speculative history. For example, in a pastoral conversation Jacqueline and Marc realized that when they talked together about parenting they were both more confident about parenting. Because Thomas had been born in Jacqueline's previous marriage, dominant ideas of what it meant to be a "real" father had kept Marc from expressing his ideas about parenting. Dominant ideas about the responsibilities of motherhood had convinced Jacqueline that Thomas was her total responsibility. The two did not collaborate, and each of them often felt overwhelmed and alone. When they realized that they would both like to share ideas and negotiate about their parenting of Thomas, they were asked hypothetical questions to develop a speculative history. These were questions such as, "If, when you were first married, you had known how well you could share and negotiate parenting ideas and how much you would both enjoy doing so, how would things regarding Thomas have been different between then and now?"

Once such a history is established, people can speculate on process, details, context, and people. These hypothetical pasts, once experienced, often have real effects on people's present lives.

The following are examples of "hypothetical event questions" that can be used in story development:

_____

- If your mother had not died, how do you think growing up would have been different for you?

- If you were to take on such a project what would you do first?

- What do you imagine you would look like as a student? Would you change your style?

5.12 MEANING QUESTIONS

The idea that it is the meaning which persons attribute to their experience (for example, the decision to get married) that is constitutive of those persons' lives has encouraged social scientists to explore the nature of the frameworks that facilitate the interpretation of experience. Many of these social scientists have proposed that it is the narrative or story that provides the primary framework for this interpretation, for the activity of meaning-making; that it is through the narratives or the stories that persons have about their own lives and the lives of others that they make sense of their experience. Not only do these stories determine the meaning that persons give to experience, it is argued, but these stories also largely determine which aspects of experience persons select for expression. And, as well, inasmuch as action is prefigured on meaning-making, the stories determine real effects in terms of the shaping of persons' lives.

This perspective should not be confused with that which proposes that stories function as a reflection of life or as a mirror for life. Instead, the narrative metaphor proposes that persons live their lives by stories - that these stories are life-shaping, and that they have real, not imagined, effects - and that these stories provide the structure of life (White 1991:123).

Through story development questions, people plot the action and content of their preferred stories. Through meaning questions, we invite people into a reflective position from which they can examine different aspects of their stories, themselves, and their various relationships. These questions encourage people to consider and experience the implications of unique outcomes, preferred directions, and newly storied experiences. In naming the meaning of these experiences, they are constructing them.

For example, "What does it say about what's important to you that you said what you thought about the role of the Church in your marriage rather than what the pastor

_____

wanted to hear?" "I only meant that we should be accepted for who we are, and not because we adhere to certain doctrines."

This was a significant performance of meaning for this couple. They said that *they would not have known this about themselves* if they hadn't reflected on the conversation in the way that the question invited them to. This self knowledge allowed them to identify other experiences where they had stood behind themselves, and these, too were significant to discover. Through these discoveries the couple saw a different side of themselves. We do not mean to imply that this performance of meaning was all that was needed or was even a turning point in the session. It was, however, a significant experience that helped the couple recognize how, although dominant ideas and practices in the culture had excluded their experiences and their identity, they could choose to support their own thoughts and identity and that this choice was personally rewarding.

We ask meaning questions about the answers to "opening space," "preference," and "story development questions." We also ask "opening space," "preference," and "story development questions" in relation to the answers to "meaning questions." Meaning questions are woven in and out of these other kinds of questions, especially story development questions.

In addition to asking about the general meaning and implications of stories as they unfold, we also ask about personal qualities, relationship characteristics, motivation, hopes, goals, values, beliefs, knowledge, and learnings that people derive from their developing narratives.

- **Meaning and implications**

Questions about *meaning and implications* of their life as a married couple are the most open-ended kind of meaning questions. The answers may well speak of personal characteristics or values or one of our other listed categories. Through these questions couple draw meanings in whatever way makes sense to them.

- What does it mean to you that your partner would do this?
- If you were to apply this knowledge to your life now, in what context would it make the most difference? What difference would it make?
- What does this new perspective tell you about yourself?
- What is the significance for you as a family that you are here together talking about this new development?

_____

- **Characteristics and qualities**

In asking about *characteristics and qualities* of people and relationships, we are focusing meaning on self-image or "relationship-image." These questions are very helpful in updating the identity of a person or relationship to fit with a developing alternative story.

- What does it say about you as a person that you would do this? What characteristics does it show?
- In the light of having accomplished this together, how would your partner describe the kind of relationship you have?
- What qualities are evident to you about your partner now that you've heard the steps s/he has taken to put temper out of her/his life?

- **Motivation, hopes, and goals**

Questions about *motivation, hopes, and goals* invite people to notice, how particular developments reflect larger life projects. Constructing the two as related adds to the significance of these developments.

- What do you think motivated him to take that step?
- Do you think the way that you two stuck to the task is reflective of what you hope for yourselves as a couple?
- We've just listed a number of things that you went ahead and did on this project. Does reviewing this make your goals in this area clearer? What would you say your goals are?

- **Values and beliefs**

Questions about *values and beliefs* can invite people to look beyond specific events and reflect on their moral, ethical, or spiritual dimensions.

Jill Freedman (Freedman & Combs 1996:138-139) gives the example of a family that came for one two-hour meeting and six weeks later heard from Elizabeth, the daughter. The

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   249
_____

members of the family were white, middle-class Catholics of Irish descent. When Elizabeth became engaged to Jared, a Muslim engineering student from Iran, fear captured the family. The fear seemed to be fuelled by the movie, "Not Without my Daughter" about an Iranian man married to an American woman. The Iranian man in the movie seemed to be a loving husband when in this country, but became an abusive stranger when the family visited Iran. The American woman barely escaped with the couple's child. A second phenomenon stoking the fear was a flurry of calls from family and friends, all of whom knew people who knew other people in American-Iranian relationships that had turned out to be disastrous. Thirdly, the church would not recognize a marriage such as the one Elizabeth was contemplating.

For the purpose of this illustration, Freedman limits her comments to a brief portion of their phone call six weeks after the consultation. Elizabeth called to report that her parents were actually getting to know Jared, something they had not been interested in doing previously. Freedman asked what she thought made the difference so that this could happen. She said that the most important thing was the way her parents answered a particular question. The question Freedman asked was, "You've told me that you made up your mind to have nothing to do with this marriage; yet you're here, seeking a consultation. What do you value that has led you to seek a pastoral conversation?"

"When they thought about that question, it was like they melted." Elizabeth said, "They had been frozen, turned against me for months, but when they heard that question, they started talking about how much they loved me, how they wanted to be part of my future, how they wanted the best for me, and it was like I had my parents back. After that, they began doing some things to actually get to know Jared. Now, Mom calls their house the United Nations."

With these questions we ask people how unique outcomes reflect their values and beliefs:

- Why does this new way of thinking suit you better than the old way?
- From what I have heard, what would I say you value in friendships?
- Now that we've reviewed what happened at your partner's work, what do you think she must believe to have taken the stand she took?

_____

- **Knowledge and learnings**

Since we often see therapy as an "insurrection of lost knowledges," we believe that it is important to bring forth people's specific local knowledge concerning unique outcomes and preferred directions in life. This is especially true when dominant cultural knowledge has played a role in the constitution of their problem-saturated stories. Here are some questions we might ask to highlight learnings and knowledge that counter the problem:

- As you think back on that event, what did you know about your relationship then that somehow you have lost track of since?

- Is there something you can learn from this that might be important in other aspects of your life?

- When you see how far you've come what do you learn about yourself?

- As you reflect on this incident, what do you know as a result of it that "the friends of self-hatred" wouldn't want you to know?

5.13 STORY CONSTRUCTION

We could think of "story development questions" and "meaning questions" as our questions for story construction (rather than deconstruction or opening space). They build on unique outcomes, inviting people to use unique outcomes and preferred experiences as a basis for developing alternative stories and meanings, for example, constructing a mutual project or goal for their marriage. Although we see the stories that develop in a pastoral conversation as people's own, we have also thought about something that Karl Tomm (1993) points out in a discussion of Michael White's work. He writes that White picks the events he invites people to story and that the picking powerfully determines the kind of stories that will be constructed. The questions therapists ask clearly play a part in which events, both lived and imagined, will become storied. The unique outcomes that become candidates for story development are chosen by therapists when they ask more questions about them, but they are also chosen by the people we work with when they name them as preferred developments in response to preference questions.

Our values, the narrative metaphor, and our experience influence both our choice of questions and our decisions about which "sparkling events" to focus on. Since our choices have a hand in shaping the kinds of stories that are constructed, it is important

_____

that we situate ourselves; making our values, ideas, and the experiences that they are based on clear enough that people can understand that they are not neutral (White 1995). We offer our ideas as those which are based on particular experiences, not as truth claims. We also invite the people we work with to ask questions about our questions and our intentions as we work with them.

In a pastoral conversation, particular strands of narrative are selected and thickened by weaving back and forth between story development and meaning-making. That is, as someone begins to develop an alternative story, we ask questions that invite them to perform meaning on that story. We may then ask what story developments result from the meaning that emerges, and so on, so that a tapestry of story developments and their meanings is woven.

5.14 STORY OF FAITH

In the process of developing and constructing the story, we will at a certain time also touch on the story of faith. The process of becoming married does not occur in a vacuum, but in a context that includes what we believe about marriage. The content of those beliefs in turn shapes the process. Becoming married occurs within a framework of established religious teachings and social traditions about the meaning of marriage. It is also a process shaped by implicit expectations and beliefs about what marriage means that are drawn from our experience and from the common culture. My intention with this section is to describe some religious aspects of importance during the premarital conversation which could propose a way of being married that reflects the tradition of faithful Christian living.

There are two questions that we need to ask in order to understand the relationship between content and process: How do traditional theological understandings of marriage affect becoming married? What are themes from the tradition that might become a couple's vision for marriage and family living from a Christian perspective? The first question asks about a theology *of* marriage; the second is about a theology *for* marriage. It is important for people planning to marry to ask both questions in order to make explicit unspoken assumptions about their meaning of marriage, and in order to identify a vision of life together that might become a goal for becoming married.

Articulating underlying beliefs and expectations of marriage is necessary in our time for three reasons:

(1) There are powerful forces in the wider culture that are likely to determine the way people think about becoming and being married unless couples are able to utilize their faith as a resource for understanding the meaning of marriage.

(2) Because people are experiencing a growing freedom in relation to traditional religious expectations, there is a widening gap between official church teachings and the operational theologies by which people live. For that reason, even people who come from the same faith tradition or denomination may believe different things about marriage.

(3) People more frequently marry outside their racial or cultural or religious heritage than in former times. Different beliefs about marriage in the same relationship are likely to be the norm rather than the exception. Moreover, because we are often dislodged from our cultural and religious roots, there is less reinforcement from our social context for the beliefs we have been taught and may still hold in tentative ways.

Everyone has some understanding, however vague, of the meaning or purpose of marriage. That understanding, even if unspoken, creates the framework by which people determine gender roles, establish boundaries between the family and the outside world, make and keep friends, and decide how and for what money is spent. Those assumptions become an operational theology when the authority of God or the church is invoked in support of a particular view of life. The growing secularism and the corresponding decline of traditional forms of authority mean that the theologies by which people live have less and less to do with deeply held traditional values or official church teaching (see the section on "Deconstruction" 3.6).

In addition to these particular and often highly personal operational theologies, there are differences among Christian churches regarding the meaning of marriage. In the Roman Catholic tradition, marriage is a "symbol and sacrament of love resulting from the covenant between Christ and his Church." Similarly, Orthodox theology regards marriage "as a form of human community in service to the Church and the Kingdom of God". When husband and wife become one flesh in marriage, they are an ecclesial reality that expresses Christ's love to the Church. The Protestant perspective varies widely, but generally connects marriage with God's creative activity (see the earlier discussion in 2.9).

Because marriage is common to all humanity, it is first of all a civil rather than an ecclesial concern.

_____

5.14.1 Five suggestions for conjugal spirituality

In exploring the story of faith, we could also discuss with the couple a certain "conjugal spirituality".

First, married couples may find it helpful to apply the symbols of covenant and union to their marriage simultaneously, and to counterbalance each with the other, for *covenant* clearly maintains the separate identities of the spouses as they undertake a common project, whereas the one-flesh union clearly maintains their oneness, *a union of hearts and lives*. Ironically the term *contract* which is rightly criticized as a description of marriage successfully maintained the separateness of the contracting parties and in one matter at least (sexual access to each others' bodies), full (albeit theoretical) equality. It may be helpful for spouses to see themselves as simultaneously separate persons and united partners, and to regard their separateness and togetherness as dialectically related, that is, one polarity cannot function properly unless the other one does, and that is a role that applies equally to both. Nearly 50 years ago Derrick Sherwin Bailey warned against couples regarding their union as an -

> *amalgamation in which the identity of the constituents is swallowed up and lost in an undifferentiated unity* or as *a mere conjunction in which no real union is involved (*Bailey 1952:44).

Or, drawing on Hogan's convincing argument that the subjects who constitute the marriage have specific identities as spouses, as parents, and as individuals (Hogan 1993:102), we might say that a marriage is more likely to flourish when each of these three roles is attended to and nurtured. A husband and a wife are simultaneously a person, a partner, and (probably at some time) a parent. Attending to one another's needs in all three roles might constitute the first basic task of marital spirituality.

Secondly, couples may wish to distinguish for themselves between oppressive and non-oppressive elements which together comprise their marital union. A married union which creates dependence or assumes a fusion of individuals into a single synthesis, is a distortion of marriage: conversely a union which exists through mutual presence, intimate communication and reciprocal love may be said to represent *the mystery of Christ's incarnation and the mystery of his covenant*. André Guindon warns against wives -

> *falling prey to an ideology (which macho males will inevitably encourage) of*

_____

> *pseudo-intimacy, a sort of "togetherness" which sacrifices healthy autonomy and self-care to the illusory security of continuing dependence* (Guidon 1986:97).

A beginning to the project of union may be discerned in a couple's discovery, across the sexes, of their *common humanity:*

> *When a man and a women leave their parents and start living together they will find the same humanity in each other. Together they will face existence, sharing the same life conditions, running the same risks* (Guidon 1986:97).

Guindon's understanding of the dialectic between wives and husbands as persons and as spouses sets an agenda for the development of conjugal spirituality. Any arrangement whereby a spouse abandoned his or her freedom or was required to surrender it would compromise the spouse as a person - nothing of worth would be left for the other to love. The very basis for human otherness would be lacking. Equally, any dissolution of oneself into a kind of two-in-one being would amount to a moral suicide. What is needed, rather, is -

> *an interchange of intimate communication between the spouses which gradually makes them uniquely present to each other - to each other's bodies, minds, needs, feelings, hearts, desires, fears, hurts, joys, and dreams. From the new vantage point which this conjugal presence and sharing gives them, spouses acquire an original insight into the nature and the fecundity of human affiliations* (Guidon 1986:98)*.*

One might add to these remarkable intuitions that insofar as married couples realize a divine presence in their being present for each other, they acquire an experiential insight into the fecundity of the divine love made present in Christ.

Thirdly, any attempt to practice a conjugal spirituality has first to stare into the hiatus that confronts it. Traditional spirituality sees discrete individuals as the locus of spiritual value and the couple as two individuals on separate journeys to spiritual growth. Conjugal spirituality is the loving *ethos* of a marriage, each trying to love the other as God loves them in Christ and recognizing Christ in each other. It empowers the couple to grow together and each partner to grow separately, each enabled by the other. It points to the possibility of a shift of the centre of spiritual attention from within individuals to the

_____

spaces between them, to their encounters and to the interpenetration which sometimes results. It is a spirituality which looks for the presence and action of God in relationships and in their impact, and which affirms the couple as a spiritually and theologically significant unit (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:215).

This is surely an area where the experience of married couples is vital. It ought to be possible for innovative and exciting investigations to be carried out among Christian people to measure the hiatus in conjugal spirituality, to find out whether *couples even think of finding and serving Christ in and through one another*, and so on. While sociological and psychological research into marital difficulties is pervasive, marital spirituality, and especially the blocks that prevent it from happening, is a genuinely new field.

Oliver's terms *conjugal soul* and *conjugal body* convey a remarkably fresh approach to the dynamics of one-flesh unity. The *conjugal soul* of a couple is born:

> *When the outward pull of attraction becomes strong enough to cause interaction and to create relationship, a new density of being becomes necessary to re-establish the individual's stability in the face of the continual and progressive "de-centering" which is taking place... The inner core of the individual who persists in relationship becomes subtly and over time substantially different from its previous self. In this sense, every soul is a conjugal soul, one which links a person affected by relation* (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:216).

While the term *conjugal soul* has its application early in the life of a couple, and may be predicated in different degrees, to all close human ties, the *conjugal body* is the basis for *conjugal soul* in its most fully developed, archetypal form. Each, neither absorbing nor being absorbed becomes more and more permeable to the other. A substantial interpenetration of being takes place. Using the familiar geometrical figure of two overlapping circles, she says:

> *The circles actually begin to overlap, creating a spiritual reality which is both 'I' and 'not I', 'Thou' and 'not Thou', significantly and recognizably both two and one. When a pair goes from closeness to commitment, each comes to be partly other as well as self. It is no longer spiritually accurate to consider one alone, in isolation from the conjugal dimension which pervades it* (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:216).

_____

Finally, the difference between traditional and conjugal spirituality can be illustrated by the contrast between centrifugal and centripetal forces. Traditional spirituality emphasizes centrifugal movement, away from the self as the centre of the world. Conjugal spirituality emphasizes centripetal movement, revolving around the axis created by its own being, the axis defining two as standing in relation. That is why the primary spiritual task of conjugal love is the creation, maintenance, and growth of that unique reality which is each new relation, the necessary foundation for joint outward-looking service (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:216). The hope is maintained that a loving relationship of itself produces anti-bodies against egotism and provides a training ground for creating wider and wider circles of love (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:217).

While conscious of the havoc caused by exploitative relationships she affirms that attraction, desire and longing are spiritually worth the risk, for they force us continually outward to learn the lessons of unity. Love and longing are good for us, for they break down our ego boundaries, allowing the self to be enlarged and enriched by knowing others, by learning from them and interacting with them (Oliver *cited in* Thatcher 1999:217). Conjugal love, she says, is itself a *spiritual discipline* because it can pleasurably tempt one toward self-forgetfulness and self-transcendence. What moves us in the other may be nothing less than a revelation of God - The recognition of "God" in another, our attraction to this revelation, and the affinity it brings into being are the basis for spiritual friendship as well as for the more intimate conjugal relations (Thatcher 1999:217).

5.14.2 Marriage as *perichoresis*

Michael Lawler (1995:49-66) suggest that marriage could be understood as a form of *perichoresis,* the term used (from the sixth century onwards) for the relations between the divine Person of the Trinity and the two natures of the Son. The word derives from *Χορειν, to make room for another*, and from *περι, round about*. It is defined as the dynamic process of making room for another around oneself. Perichoresis helps us to visualize what it is to be a person-in-relation on the basis of the communion of the Persons within the Trinity. It prompts us towards affirming our own identity as a person while recognizing that other persons make us who we are and we help make other persons what they are. Marriage is of course unnecessary to experience finitely the infinite communion of the Trinity, since, as bearers of the divine image, our destiny is communion with others and with God. But marriage is an intensification of relationship at its most personal and

_____

enduring.

Perichoresis depicts persons as made for communion with each other: with persons love can be a relation. It embraces both. While affirming that the communion which is marriage and the communion which is God participate in each other, attention to particular details of the perichoresis is likely to have a radicalizing effect on the meaning of marriage. For example, perichoresis as a mode for marital communion subverts patriarchal marriage completely, for just as the model of friendship was finally incompatible with ruling and obeying, so the model of perichoresis is incompatible with theories and practices of gender which announce masculine superiority (e.g., the theory which says a *woman's head is man* [1 Corinthians 11:3]). The Persons who together make up the one God are in every respect coequal. Subordination of the Son and/or the Spirit to the Father is expressly ruled out in the Church's doctrine and by the Church's great statement about the Trinity. Perichoresis does not allow one Person power over the other. In marriage understood as perichoresis, partners do not exercise power over each other, but give themselves *to* each other. Domination impairs communion and so is a form of sinfulness. Spouses share in Christian redemption when loving communion is realized between them. *Making room for one another* is particularly appropriate to partners who are constantly in each other's company, and often in each other's way. It is an art which requires attentiveness, intuitiveness, indeed, nothing less than divine grace. Just as the divine communion goes beyond itself to create a world and share its being, so the com-munion of marriage may empower each partner in turning their love for each other outwards to the wider community, to children and to God.

Perichoresis is an appropriate term to describe a relation to another person in whose care we place ourselves and for whom we care. Perichoresis may imply a continuity of presence that friendship does not. Language which has been historically reserved for reverent musings about the holy mystery of God is especially appropriate for filling the hiatus in compiling a theology and spirituality of marriage (Thatcher 1999:232).

5.14.3 The use of Scripture and prayer

The Bible is essential to Christianity. It is the main link between contemporary Christians and their founder, Jesus Christ, and his followers. No service of corporate worship is complete without readings from it. Churches in the Protestant tradition owe their existence to the assertion of the primacy of Scripture (*sola scriptura*). Thus, during theological training and in the ministry much emphasis is placed on the critical analysis of

_____

Biblical texts. The Bible is consulted on many aspects of Christian life and education, and it is regarded as authoritative and indispensable. But when we examine pastoral care literature, we might draw the opposite conclusion. It is also significant to notice that after many years of biblical studies, pastors seem largely unable to integrate that which they have been taught with their pastoral ministry. Some of them reject the use of the Bible altogether, whilst others apply the Bible in a fundamentalist manner (see Pattison 1988:106-107).

Pattison (1988:107-114) gives the following reasons why it is so difficult to employ the Bible in a pastoral ministry:

- Pastoral care is largely a product of the post-biblical Church. At best, there are some parts of the Bible which may be deemed to relate tangentially to contemporary problems, but a great deal of this literature is of a completely different kind, e.g., history and narrative. The Bible is not a handbook of pastoral care (or of anything else, for that matter). Thus, it is often not easy to find a text that corresponds to a contemporary situation.

- The nature of theological education and the way in which biblical studies are approached are also significant. Theological study over the last century or two has gradually fragmented and become more specialized. Modern exegesis of the Bible makes it difficult to apply the Bible to our contemporary problems.

- The historical-critical approach to the Bible has created problems for the use of the text not only by its methods but also by its findings. Furthermore, it challenges the authority and inspiration of the Bible, and leads further to the questioning of the uniqueness of the Bible. It also emphasises the compilation of the canon as the work of a human institution, the church, and not directly as the action of God. This approach underlines also the cultural relativity and distance of the Bible from our own time. The diversity of the nature and purpose of the various writings which comprise the Bible has been highlighted. The Bible contains many different types or genres of literature (poetry, narrative, law, wisdom, etc.) written in very diverse circumstances over many centuries.

  This critical approach to the Bible has produced a counter-reaction, which complicates the issue even further (fundamentalism and Biblicism).

- The diversity of biblical perspectives and the cultural distance of the Scriptures from the present day have pointed to the need for interpretation, i.e. hermeneutics.

_____

Pattison (1988:114-129) then describes how five contemporary pastoral care theorists use the Bible in their work. A thorough discussion of these approaches falls outside the domain of this study, but I will only name these approaches together with their advocates. They are:

- The fundamentalist or biblicist approach (J.A. Adams, L. Crabb, D. Buchanan).
- The tokenist approach (H. Clinebell).
- The imagist or suggestive approach (A. Campbell).
- The informative approach (D. Capps).
- The thematic approach (W. Oglesby).

Louw (1993:392-394) claims that the following ways of using of Scripture are wrong: moralising, illustrative or typological, an abstract, a biblicist approach, homiletical, dogmatic, and critic destructive.

Pattison (1988:129-133) then develops some implications for Pastoral Care from what has been learned of the nature of the Bible from modern scholarship.

In the first place, the importance of the Bible within the ecclesiastical context should be acknowledged. The Bible is the church's book. It was compiled by and for groups of believers and its main historical use has been in corporate public worship. Smart (1970:23) writes –

No part of it (with the possible exception of a few passages) in its origin was intended for private consumption. It is distinctively a public book.

He goes on to criticize the devotional use by individuals of the Bible rather harshly:

The Bible is marching orders for an army not bedtime reading to help us sleep more soundly (Smart 1970:23).

These remarks may be somewhat exaggerated, but they do serve as a warning to those who would individualize and personalize the message of the Bible in order to apply it simply and directly to Pastoral Care. The Biblical writings do not form a handbook of personal Pastoral Care, nor can individual passages be used as a spiritual bromide in every pastoral situation.

_____

Pattison (1988:130) claims that the main role of the Bible in Pastoral Care is to shape and form the consciousness and character of the Christian community and the individuals who comprise it. Pastors and those in their care are in a constant dialogue with the text of Scripture. This conversation with the text is a long, gradual and indirect process of growth in the worshipping community which embraces the totality of Scripture in all its pluralism and not merely texts congenial to moments of intense personal need. In this process the importance of social constructionism becomes evident.

Because of this, the Bible needs constant re-interpretation if it is to be related to contemporary needs and situations.   This interpretation does not mean repeating the words of a text verbatim in each new situation, -

> *it is finding new words to convey the contemporary meaning of a text as it emerges from the critical hermeneutical dialogue* (Pattison 1988:132).

The implication of this in Pastoral Care is that being faithful to the Bible does not necessarily mean that pastoral encounters have to be bedecked with a multiple quotations from Scripture.

> *Biblical faithful Pastoral Care is not a matter of including lots of words from the Bible at every opportunity, but of re-expressing new meanings in different words appropriate to contemporary situations. Sometimes the actual words of a text may be helpful in a pastoral encounter, sometimes not. Sometimes the use of actual biblical words can even be a betrayal of the need to interpret and make relevant* (Pattison 1988:132).

In this process the pastor needs to be careful not to fall into one of two traps. The *first* is that of escaping from the immediacy of honest personal encounter in pastoral care by hiding behind the words of the biblical writer. It is tempting, if one feels inadequate, to want to do, or say, something helpful and the Bible may seem a useful resource for finding the right words.   Unfortunately, the right words for relieving the pastor's uneasiness may be the wrong words from the point of view of conveying immediate and honest personal care to a needy person. The *second* trap is that of failing to realize that a text may mean one thing to the person who selects and quotes it, and quite another to the person to whom it is quoted (Pattison 1988:132-133).

_____

Hiltner's (1972:189) reference to the dual nature of the salvation history can also be used to warn against a superficial use of Biblical narratives. He says that in the Christian religion and in Judaism where faith is based on principles which developed out of a history of events, the expression of faith can take on two forms: (1) the telling and interpreting of events; and (2) the description and explication of principles (dogmas):

> *Thus the dramatic as well as the expository form of expression is inherent in these two faiths. Probably the most effective communication is achieved with some combination of the two methods* (Hiltner 1972:189).

Without reference to the events (the narrative), the principles tend to get detached from situations and thus become irrelevant. On the other side, the narrative alone without the principles or dogmas is a narrative which is nostalgic, but not liberating.

But when the reading of Scripture and prayer are employed in the right way, there is not a more effective way to bring the Vertical dimension into the conversation.

Within the narrative approach it could be useful to emphasize the narrative passages in the Bible. But these passages should not be used in a nostalgic way with the result that an encounter cannot take place. An evenly balanced use of Scripture is needed in which the purpose is not just a general religiousness, but an integration of faith in the narrative of the couple (Müller 1996:175).

5.14.4 The transmission of values of faith

Possibly one of the most difficult tasks of a pastor is to be a transmitter of Christian values. It is difficult for at least two reasons. Firstly, values are not just taken over from another person, even if it is from a trusted pastor or therapist. Furthermore, it can happen that subjective values be subtly forced onto the couple. Regarding this, Gerkin gives the following advice:

> *. . . the vision of the good Christian life is best communicated to persons by the caregiver in the language of metaphor, image, and narrative, on the one hand, and of relationship, attitude, and behaviour, on the other hand* (1991:18).

_____

The mediation of the Story cannot take place by a technically correct use of the Bible and prayer as methods. Such mediation only takes place where an authentic believing pastor operates within a caring context of the community of faith. In this way it is also one of the "easiest" tasks of the pastor. "All" that he has to do, is to live from Scripture. According to Friedman (1985:8) the "pastoral" has to do with the fact that the pastor listened (and is listening) to Scripture. If the pastor represents a life long communion with Scripture, the transmission of these values could take place:

> *. . . our spirituality and our tradition will spring naturally from our being."*

It has to do with something that mediates the presence of God. Such a presence has to do with a deep communication that transcends words, style, technique, theory or theology. Augsburger claims, -

> *It is a presence gifted by Presence* (1986:37).

The words of the writer Anne Lamott can also be added:

> *If something inside you is real, we will probably find it interesting, and it will probably be universal. So you must risk placing real emotion at the centre of your work. Write straight into the emotional centre of things. Write toward vulnerability. Don't worry about appearing sentimental. Worry about being unavailable; worry about being absent or fraudulent . . . "* (1995:226).

5.14.5 Audience/community of faith

Asking questions is probably the easiest way for pastors to encourage the people they work with to identify and recruit an audience. The following are examples of questions that encourage people to name candidates and consider recruiting them:

- Who would be most interested to learn of this step you've taken? Why would that interest her so? How could you let her know?
- Who in your current life would have predicted that you would make this kind of commitment? What do they know about you that would have led them to make this

_____

prediction? How would knowing about this step support this knowledge about you? Would that be helpful to you? How? How could you let them know?

- Who would most appreciate this event we've been talking about? What might he learn about you if you let him in on it that would be of interest to him? What might he say to you about this? How could you initiate such a conversation?

These questions all presuppose that the person might actually initiate a conversation. Such conversations, when they occur, are very valuable. They constitute lived experiences that can become important incidents in people's life narratives. Simply entertaining the idea of such conversations often motivates people to initiate them.

We've found that even if the conversations do not actually happen, an audience still develops in people's thinking or imagination. Even an imaginary conversation can constitute the real experience of a supportive audience. It is not unusual for someone to name a particular person who would be interested in their story and then, without ever letting that person know, assume support and appreciation from her. This assumption makes it more likely that the person will perform preferred versions of himself when he is around the unknowing audience. In this way, the unknowing audience becomes an actual audience! Questions that don't go as far as suggesting conversations with other people can also be useful - either in creating audiences in the imagination or by implication reminding the person that she is a member of a supportive community.

- Who will be most pleased to discover that you have taken this step? How might she discover it?

- Who will be most affected by this development? What will he notice that will let him know?

Even if a particular person is not available in the current situation, it would be helpful to name her as a potential audience member.

- Who from your past would have predicted this development? What did she know about you that would have led to that prediction? Was there a particular incident that let her in on this about you?

- Who would you like to talk with about this that you have not yet talked with? It could be anyone, living or dead, here or far away. What might they say?

_____

5.14.5.1   Inviting an audience

Anderson and Goolishian, among others (Anderson & Goolishian 1988; Anderson, Goolishian & Winderman, 1986; Goolishian & Anderson 1981, 1987; Hoffman 1988; Levin, Raser, Niles & Reese 1986) have emphasized the idea that problems are maintained through language and social interaction. In accordance with their emphasis, they have invited members of the "problem-determined system" - those who are in language about a problem - into the therapy room. The Brattleboro team members (Lax 1991) routinely ask, "Who is involved with this situation?" when someone calls to set up a pastoral conversation. During that first phone call they introduce the possibility of everyone involved coming to the meeting. We appreciate the phrase "introduce the possibility" because a direct request for the presence of friends, relatives, co-workers, or representatives of involved agencies can be an occasion for distress. When most people originally seek a pastoral conversation, the dominant discourses lead them to assume that something is wrong with them. If we suggest including other people in the process, they may imagine experiences of embarrassment, shame, and possibly of social control. As their assumptions about a pastoral conversation are deconstructed in the course of our work together (including the initial phone conversation), people tend to be more open and even enthusiastic about inviting others to join in. The final choice about who should attend pastoral conversation meetings is, of course, always in the hands of the people who consult with us.

5.14.6   The wedding as a *rite de passage*

With the high rate of cohabitation one could question the relevance of the wedding ceremony as a *rite de passage*. It is also unfortunate that modern Western society has lost the importance and the emotional impact of rituals. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the wedding ceremony is not the *rite de passage* itself. The wedding ceremony celebrates that which has already been determined and developed in the couple's relationship. It is the celebration of a commitment.

Without going into detail of all the different kinds of rituals, I will limit myself to that which is applicable to our current subject.

Reflecting on the different definitions of rituals the following themes often reappear in literature:

_____

Firstly, they are symbolic acts which are accompanied by *words* and *gestures*. Blom and Lindijer (1986:17) claim that rituals are prescribed symbolic acts which are performed in a specific way and in a specific sequence. They can also be accompanied by verbal formulas.

According to Tellini (1987:241) a ritual -

> *even in it simplest form, . . . is composed of word and gesture. Words alone fail to engage the dimensions of the body and may therefore lack the power to convince . . . Together, word and gesture may become not only a skilful instrument of communication but also a moment of disclosure.*

Secondly, rituals have to do with *communication*. They are *symbolic acts of communication*. Meerburg (according to Blom and Lindijer 1986:17) emphasises that a conscious and symbolic communication takes place during the execution of the ritual. With conscious communication she makes reference to verbal communication and with symbolic communication she means gestures like music, kneeling, laying on of hands, etc.

Thirdly, communication should be understood as giving an answer to a particular situation or event, to a specific person or community, to previous or prospective generations, and in its profound sense to God. According to Heitink (1990:128) rituals are symbols, but the emphasis is on the act. These rituals are most of the time an existing or given act by means of which previous generations also gave answers to drastic events in life.

Wittstock *et al* (1992:118-119) refer to Bateson who emphasises that rituals are the confirmation of relationships through fixed patterns of action which have been previously developed and established. And referring to Bernstein the symbolic function of rituals is to join individuals to the social order. It is the facilitating of respect for and strengthening of procedures which maintain and promote the social order.

Fourthly, we can say that rituals refer to *formal* and *structured* gestures over which agreement exists and which occur over and over again within particular circumstances. Although they are not pragmatic of nature, they fulfil a specific function (Renner 1979:164).

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   266
_____

Fifthly, there is often, although not always, a religious element involved:

Rituals are repeated, normative, symbolic, and functional behaviours often associated with religious expression (Couture 1990:1088).

Mulder (1992:507) says that a ritual is symbolic gesture which bring one in contact with a deeper reality and grants an intense experience. He describes this deeper reality as a transcendent reality, the eventual Reality.

When all these elements are taken into consideration, a ritual could be described as a symbolic, formal, structured, and often a religious communicative gesture by which an individual and/or community gives an answer to a specific event (Müller 1993:3).

The wedding is a ritual event that occurs in the midst of a process that has two parts: leaving home and becoming married. Sometimes the wedding is *the* leaving-home event, or at least close enough to that process that leaving-home issues dominate the wedding. In some instances, the work of becoming married is delayed until one or both partners in marriage have emotionally left home.

The wedding and all the rituals that surround it are a *rite de passage* from the social status of being single to that of being married. In his work on wedding rituals, Stevenson (1987) reminds us that the modern marriage liturgies combine what were separate rites until the end of the Middle Ages. The betrothal was the rite of separation, which initiated a rite of engagement. It was distinct from the rite of incorporation, the celebration of marriage. The modern wedding ceremony is a blend of both rites, although the emphasis is more clearly on incorporation and joining.

Because a wedding embodies both leaving and cleaving, Anderson and Fite (1993:68ff) propose that it would be useful to recover something of the connection between the rite of separation and the rite of connection. There are at least two ritual choices. We can reinstate the rite of betrothal as a separate and earlier event that symbolizes the leaving home that has happened and is happening for each individual anticipating marriage. This ritualization of the leaving-home process would give new meaning to publishing the banns. The second option would be to plan a wedding ritual that reflects both of the processes. The latter is more likely, because it is difficult to

_____

imagine reconstituting the betrothal rite in modern, mobile societies. One possibility would be to create a ceremony for the parental blessing of children that may be added to the wedding itself or celebrated around the time of the wedding rehearsal.

The word that is most frequently used to describe this time of transition between separation and the incorporation of the wedding is *liminality.* In his classic work on The Rites of Passage, van Gennep (*in* Anderson & Fite 1993:69) maintains that –

> *the passage from one social position to another is identified with a territorial passage, such as the entrance into a village or a house, the movement from one room to another, or the crossing of streets and squares.*

In traditional cultures, marriage involved an actual change from one family, clan, village, or tribe to another. It was a territorial passage with social consequences.

During this transitional or liminal time, participants in the process are temporarily without social status and rank. This temporary loss of identity often results in confusion. In order to ensure some stability in the midst of the chaos and anonymity of a liminal time, there are prescribed forms of dress or behaviour. It is not surprising, therefore, that people who are non-traditional in every other aspect of their lives will insist on very traditional dress and symbolic action as part of the wedding.

The benefit of understanding the liminal character of the wedding event is that it helps people anticipate the inevitable stress it evokes. Getting married ushers in an in-between time, a time in which the old status as a single person is no longer entirely true but the new status has not yet been bestowed or internalized. It is an inherently confusing and, therefore, a stressful time. It is a time when people are most vulnerable, when the blemishes (and more serious dysfunctions) are likely to show, and when self-reflection is particularly difficult. One way that people cope with the chaos is to plan weddings that are picture-perfect.

The wedding is usually an emotionally charged moment. It is more so if the leaving-home work is still unfinished. Even those who have lived apart from their homes of origin or lived together as a couple are surprised by the intensity of the emotions around planning a wedding. The situation is further complicated by separate portfolios and careers and separate furnishings and pension plans that must be merged in a responsible and just way. What makes the time around a wedding so difficult for everyone is that major transitions are taking place in a person's identity and a family's stability. It is like

_____

manoeuvring between two boats in choppy waters. Few of us are surefooted at such times. We need rituals of transition that acknowledge the reality of contradiction and chaos at this liminal time. We need weddings that are more like parable than myth.

5.14.7   Religious deepening

In spite of a secularised society, people still get married in the Church. This gives the opportunity of acting out the religious significance of the ritual of the wedding, and also a possible religious deepening of the couple and participating community.

According to Lukken (1984:24-40) the functionality of rituals can be summarized as follows:

1) A freeing and canalising function:

Weddings are often emotionally charged events, and serve as a way to acknowledge, canalise and structure existing emotions.

2) A mediating function with relation to the past:

The wedding as ritual, although future orientated, tells us something of our past, something about our origins. In this way we can have renewed confidence in the future.

3) An ethical function:

In the case of a mature and authentic wedding, it concerns life. It broadens and deepens perspectives, and leads to corresponding actions. The execution of the wedding as ritual contributes to a reorientation of basic life values.

4) Attesting function

Through the ritual the mystery of evil is deprived of its horrifying power. In a certain way through the ritual we exorcise evil and we confess in a concrete way that evil does not have the last word.

5) Expressive function:

Although rituals are not a personal creation, it is indeed an essential expression of self and for this reason there should be room for a creative addition. It helps us to give expression to our feelings.

6) Condensation function:

The ritual condenses reality. It becomes a resting place next to the road. The ritual intensifies of our experience of reality. As such, an added dimension is given to reality which would otherwise not have been possible. The past and the future are condensed

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   269
_____

into the present and are made tangible. They are brought into reach and made controllable.

7) Social function:

If the ritual is correctly implemented, it creates communication. During the ritual a reaching out to the other takes place with a call to participate in the communication. It helps to save an individual from dysfunctional isolation.

5.14.8   The needs of planning

This section is about a pastoral approach to planning the wedding. In the schema that we are proposing, conversation with the couple about the wedding itself will take place in the *ending* phase between the minister and the couple. The context for planning the wedding is wider than just *their* relationship. The sequence is not accidental. It is an extension of the emphasis on the wedding as a public commitment by the couple, in the midst of a significant community (audience), concerning their intention of getting married.

The importance of planning the ritual as a part of premarital conversation is a consequence of at least three related factors. There is, first of all, a growing recognition of the need to recover symbol and ritual in human life. The growing complexity of our lives increases the need for rituals of transition. That need extends beyond the process of becoming married, but certainly includes it. The wedding is a ceremony that negotiates power and realigns relationships for a wide range of people. Meaningful rituals are as crucial for making a marriage as the moral seriousness of the couple.

In a study of marrying and burying, Ronald Grimes (cited in Anderson & Fite 1993:66) has described the need for ritual in this way:

> *No matter how deeply couples "share" on retreats or learn, under priestly or therapeutic guidance, to "talk through" everything, they are not prepared to wed until their insights are somatized, made flesh, in ritual. It is a mistake to assume that couples automatically incarnate their own insights, just as it is courting disaster to relegate the work of embodying to the bedroom.*

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   270
_____

This is a bold word with which we agree. Our marriages are seldom different from the rites with which they begin. Becoming married is a process that surely takes time, but how we begin matters very much.

The second factor that requires more careful attention to planning the liturgy as part of pre-wedding work is that most religious traditions allow and even encourage the couple to participate in planning their own wedding ceremony. As we will suggest later in this chapter, there are some standard elements for a ritual that occur in the context of Christian community. Within those parameters, however, the couple is encouraged to plan a liturgy that reflects their values and the vision of family towards which they would like to grow. Even when there are differences regarding the religious meaning *of* marriage, it is both possible and necessary for couples to find common themes from the Christian *tradition for* family living.

The third element that supports this perspective on pre-wedding work is the widespread longing to recover the distinctly pastoral dimension of the church's ministry. As we have seen from this dissertation, most of the categories used to counsel couples prior to marriage have been drawn from psychological resources. We do not wish to return to an earlier pattern of premarital pastoral work in which catechesis was the dominant mode and human process was ignored. The model for a premarital conversation presented here takes seriously what we have learned from narrative theory about becoming married as a process. It suggests a way for couples to identify the values from their faith traditions that might express the vision of family they intend to become. And it encourages couples to plan a celebration of fidelity that initiates a process *and* affects a new reality for the couple and for the community of their friends.

5.14.9   Discovering a theme for the wedding

Nico ter Linden, the pastor of the Westerkirk in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, introduced a process by which couples are invited to discover a theme for the wedding and the marriage it inaugurates. Although ter Linden has developed his approach within a social context that is thoroughly secular, the method works equally well within a framework in which religious symbols or traditional Christian stories and values are still part of the common culture. The task is to identify an image or theme that can be used to link the narrative the couple is forming from their many stories with *the* Christian story.

_____

The process actually begins at the conclusion of the meeting with the couple that immediately precedes the one in which the focus is on planning the wedding. Each individual is invited to think about stories, songs, plays, movies or sayings *from any source* that convey something about their hope for the family they are forming. The emphasis is on *their* hopes or dreams more than on the source of the image or story. For that reason, anything can serve as a place to begin. The section of scriptural texts may be a springboard for this discussion. The pastoral task is to find a way to move from those images to themes and stories from the Christian tradition that will reflect and undergird the kind of family they hope to become.

_____

With ter Linden's idea as the background, I introduced it to a couple as theme for their wedding. This is also an example of rituals, rules, beliefs and values that could exist in a family of origin and with which a couple could be confronted with.

Paul and Françoise had planned their wedding for the fall. Just before the summer holidays they decided that they would spend the first week of the holidays with Françoise's parents at their summer holiday home. During this time Paul learned the following : We enter into this family with a complete program : Lunch each Sunday at exactly 12:30 at her parents' home (who live 30km from where the couple were planning to settle), the first week of August will be at the family holiday home, there are compulsory get-togethers for Christmas and for other announced feast days. One should not forget to take off his/her shoes and put on slippers when entering the house (so as not to dirty the house); then there are/were conversations spangled with "If I were you, I would . . ." In the morning one has to finish the stale baguette of the day before, before buying fresh bread, and water and (red) wine are drunk from the same glass – which gives your water a reddish colour. At first Paul didn't say anything and his sisters-in-law-to-be found the situation amusing, but said nothing. Françoise didn't find these habits out of the ordinary. During one of the conversations they discussed having children, and her mother was quite clear about how they (she = Françoise) should raise them and what role she herself would play in their upbringing. This was the opportunity to set their boundaries as a couple-to-be and the beginning of the so-called leaving and cleaving process. I asked them to name the aspects of their families that they didn't want to keep and those aspects that they wanted to keep as part of their new life together. They came up with generalisations for their families-of-origin and "not having enough" for their marriage to be. They said that it felt as if there were so many things linked to their families of origin that they would need to renegotiate and to rethink, and they didn't know if they would have enough courage to do that. Françoise was afraid that she would eventually run out of love for Paul, although she didn't doubt her love for him. Concerning children, she felt that she would not have enough resources to provide for their emotional nurturing. The previous day I had read the Bible narrative of the feeding of the five thousand and realised that this might have a unique outcome. Because they had some religious background I asked them if they knew this story. They did and said that it was one of the few stories that they remembered (talk about divine intervention!!), so we read the passage together (Matthew 14:13-21). We used the story

_____

> *as imagery for their life together, illustrating Françoise's feeling that she would not have enough loaves and fishes to feed her family. With this in mind, time was spent looking at their families of origin and the rituals that accompanied them. We traced their history and its influence on their past, present and future in different aspects of their lives. Paul and Françoise were quite surprised at how certain pre-conceived ideas where actually the cause of some friction between them. We spent a lot of time on the meaning they attached to these family rituals. Together they renegotiated their position towards their families-of-origin, and found certain positive rituals that they decided to keep as part of their own family-to-be. This provided them with enough loaves and fishes to feed their relationship and gave them hope that eventually their relationship could be one of God's miracles.*

Developing a theme or image that anticipates the kind of family the marrying couple would like to become is a way of linking the stories from families of origin with the Christian story. This means learning to weave one's individual, family, and future marital story with the narrative of God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ. It will be awkward for some couples who have never thought about their story in relation to God's story. For that reason, we use planning the wedding ritual as a tool, like the genogram, to invite the couple to explore ways in which they might envision their life together in the light of the Christian story. Ultimately this means an invitation into a relationship with the God whose presence these rites mediate.

As the couple's preparation for the wedding proceeds and aspects of their personal and family stories begin to unfold, certain values, commitments, and life themes will quite naturally become evident. As they do, even before the conversation about planning the liturgy, these themes can help shape the larger wedding ceremony in a way that honours each individual's past narrative and anticipates the couple's common future narrative. Some themes will develop out of families of origin. Others will become apparent from the couple's own history. Still others will embody the faith traditions of the couple.

The image of being married as "loving the distance between them" is consistent with the paradoxical essence of human life. It acknowledges contradiction or paradox as an inevitable dimension of faithful living and an inescapable reality of family living. The stories or images or sayings that a couple presents initially may not always reflect this understanding of marriage. For that reason, the pre-wedding pastoral conversation may

University of Pretoria etd – Du Plooy, C W (2005)

A PREMARITAL PASTORAL CONVERSATION IN NARRATIVE MODE   274
_____

need to include "saying the other side" (i.e. the story of faith), so that the themes that a couple finally chooses will be consistent with the parabolic way of Jesus. We could identify three contradictions that are present in wedding preparation but also characteristic of being married.

- **Continuity and discontinuity**

The first and most obvious paradox of becoming married is reflected in the simultaneous beginnings and endings, the continuities and discontinuities, which characterize every wedding. The wedding launches a new adventure, that of becoming married. At the same time, it brings to a close a host of possibilities that were part of being single. We leave elements of our personal history "behind", and yet nothing ever really leaves us. It is simply transformed at a deeper level. The wedding as we have it today has condensed two distinct ritual processes of separation and incorporation into one event. It is about leaving as well as cleaving.

In the new version of the old classic film *Father of the Bride* the father awakes to discover his bride-to-be daughter playing basketball in the driveway. In a wonderfully tender conversation that describes the paradox of holding on and letting go, the daughter says this to her father:

> *I just kept thinking about how this is my last night in my bed, and kind of like my last night as a kid. I mean, I've lived here since I was five - and I feel like I'm supposed to turn in my key tomorrow. It was so strange packing up my room. You know how you always trained me never to throw things away? I couldn't throw anything away, so I have all these yearbooks and ratty stuffed animals, my old retainer, all my old magic tricks. I've actually packed it all. I just couldn't let go. I mean, I know I can't stay, but I don't want to leave."*

There are a variety of patterns for leaving and letting go. Sometimes parents are ready to let go before children are ready to leave. Other times parents hold on to children who are ready to leave. This is *the* psychological drama of a wedding. If the process is allowed to unfold in a parabolic way, there *can* be a giving up and a getting at the same

_____

time. We need to develop wedding rituals in which parental and family relationships are acknowledged and honoured at the same time as being symbolically severed.

- **Bonds and boundaries**

The second paradox is about bonds and boundaries, connectedness and separateness. One of the greatest gifts we can give those to whom we are married is to love the distance between us. The wedding ritual, however, has all too frequently emphasized being "one flesh" at the expense of honouring human separateness. The focus of a wedding is on the process of bonding that is being intended by the couple, and that is as it should be. Unless, however, an individual marrying has sufficiently left to establish clear and flexible boundaries in relation to the family of origin, that bonding may eventually come to feel like suffocation or invasion.

People marrying after living on their own want to be assured that they will not lose their hard-won sense of self in the process. The wedding liturgy needs to give expression to these polarities, which will characterize the long process of becoming married that is only now beginning. Rilke has said it well:

> *It is a question in marriage, to my feeling, not of creating a quick community of spirit by tearing down and destroying all boundaries, but rather a good marriage is that which appoints the other guardian of his solitude, and shows him this confidence, the greatest in his power to bestow.*

- **Private event, public context**

The wedding is a public event that celebrates, at least in most cultures, a private, voluntary covenant. This third paradox of the wedding also describes the entire process of becoming and being married. We have already suggested that making public the private decision to marry may, in some instances, be another leaving-home moment. In every instance, how a couple negotiates this transition from private relationship to public status is a significant part of becoming married. The rituals that precede a wedding, such as showers or engagement parties (which unfortunately are less and less celebrated), support this movement from private to public. They enable the communities of family and friends of the couple to recognize their new public status. We need to find more and more ways to emphasize the public nature of marriage.

_____

The corollary of making marriage more public is for the public sphere to take on qualities of recognition and nurturing previously confined to the private sphere of the family. A marriage needs to be private enough to provide a safe place for individual selves to be sustained and intimacy to be nurtured. Those values cannot be sustained, however, if they belong only to the private sphere of the family. The family cannot alone sustain qualities like nurturing and recognition if the public world is defined as a place in which care for others is impossible, and atomized selves protect their autonomy by denying the reality of others. Those who would keep the traditional split between the private, female world of nurture and the public, male world of achievement are likely to insist on keeping marriage private.

Marriage is a sign of God's love and faithfulness, but it is also a place from which we are sent to serve the world for God's sake. People who rarely close their doors find little occasion to nurture intimacy; those who rarely open them run the risk of deadening self-absorption and perpetuating a society that cannot support family living. If the wedding ritual is to enhance a more fluid relationship between public and private worlds, it will always be paradoxical. It will be necessary to balance the public and private realities of becoming married.

5.15 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have continued our journey in looking at how a narrative approach can be practiced in the context of a premarital pastoral conversation. We looked at how conversations can be deconstructed and how new stories can be written. The externalization of events and different mapping tools were and can be used in this process. The way the story of faith can play a significant role in this conversation was also described. In the pastoral narrative conversation all these stories (pastor, couple, biblical and Church tradition) meet and horizons overlap. This coming together of different stories leads to a new understanding of the whole.

In the next, and last chapter, we will be looking at the road that lies ahead.

_____

CHAPTER SIX:

THE JOURNEY FORWARD - A PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

> *The hard-won meanings should be said,*
> *painted,*
> *danced,*
> *dramatised,*
> *put into circulation.*
> *Victor Turner*

6.1 INTRODUCTION

I have come to the "last" chapter of this study where it is customary, on the one hand, to reach some sort of "final" conclusion and, on the other hand, to evaluate with critical reflection the research done. The purpose of this would be to show in this case the potential and relevance of a narrative approach for a premarital conversation. Such a conclusion pulls together the threads of the thesis that have been systematically developed in the preceding pages of the text. Having read such a conclusion, the reader is left with a sense of closure, a sense that a path has been traversed and a certain destination reached.

In a certain way, this conclusion should not be viewed like that, since in many ways it would be antithetical to the discussion of postmodern approaches to attempt to arrive at an end point. Instead, in keeping with the philosophy of these approaches, it is hoped that this final chapter opens up ideas and further avenues for exploration. In so doing, the thesis will provide you with a way forward, a future journey and a quest, that would enable you to pursue your own exploration and analysis of these approaches and allow you to see how they can be applied to research into aspects of a premarital conversation (and also, therapy and Pastoral Care in general). The being a narrative journey, the study did not seek arguments or final conclusions that could be formulated in concise formulations, but the validity of the study is to be found in the story itself and therefore I tried to tell the story has fully as possible – although lots of other stories could have been added.

Thus, in many ways this thesis marks the start (and continuation) of what is hoped (and what has been expressed) will be a journey of discovery for you, the reader. This thesis has introduced you to some aspects of the development of premodern, modern and

_____

postmodern thought, narrative theology, a pastoral involvement and premarital care. It is up to each reader to seek out more information as he or she sees fit. All of this is to emphasize whatever happens in printed form (as with any other form of text) can only be a partial and incomplete representation of the reality being presented. There is always more to be said and thought about!

6.2 WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

As the introduction to this chapter has emphasized, this thesis forms part of a journey of discovery with respect to postmodern approaches and their applicability to pastoral hermeneutical narrative involvement of premarital care. However, reading this thesis has been a journey in itself, and it could be a useful exercise at this point to pause in order to reflect where we are on that journey. Hence the title of this section: "Where have we been?"

The subject matter in the examples has ranged from various contexts and case note documentation to the ways in which popular media shape, and are in turn shaped by, dominant assumptions and understandings of a couple and family relations. We have seen that postmodern approaches can illuminate and challenge aspects of Pastoral Care and therapy, ranging from more micro levels of analysis such as that of individual settings, to the macro focus of social representations of couple and family issues.

Chapter 1 (Introduction and research orientation) started by giving a brief overview of the actual situation of marriage today. The supposition that if correct biblical information is passed on to Christians (or non-Christians), they will become obedient, and behavioural change will take place automatically, was questioned.

The title of the research study was next analyzed motivating why these specific terminologies were chosen. To better understand my motivation of this study I outlined my personal remembering conversation taking in consideration the different levels of communication: the conversation between writer and reader, what you as reader bring and what I as writer bring to the conversation.

The two different fields of actions were next described. The emphasis of this study was rather on the action (the now of the story) than focussing on problems.

_____

The first chapter finished with an explanation of the different modi of research interaction and the research expectations. The research approach of this study was explained as participatory research with the preference of thick descriptions. Much of the criticism of research approaches are concerned with their apparent inability to influence practice and stems from assumptions about the research that is "deliverable"; or what Gouldner (1971) termed the "background assumptions" about what a research project and its product should be. Purkis (1994) extends this point when she writes:

> *Pressure to provide answers is understood within the context of this article as a linguistic device widely employed in the literature for legitimating research efforts, that is, in response to an approach to the field of study where research is understood as fulfilling a "need" to inform practice.* (1994:15)

Thus Purkis is questioning the assumption that research must fulfil a "need" (either spoken or unspoken) to inform practice in the first place. In so doing she is challenging understandings about what research is for and what outcomes of research might and "should" be.

At times, the journey we have taken has led us over some rocky theoretical ground, with many potential paths to follow. No easy answers present themselves to the questions and issues that arise. However, we have been able to map out some guiding principles which serve both to inform our explorations and to avoid the discussion becoming bogged down in the mire of theoretical and methodological ambiguity, vagueness, and assumed understandings about the nature, conduct and purpose of the research endeavour.

I wish to conclude this discussion of our journey by offering a cautionary note. It is timely to reiterate a theme that has permeated the discussion throughout this story, that is, that postmodern approaches should in some way be viewed as privileged, mandatory, or as replacing other approaches to research. Rather, this story suggests that postmodern approaches have a place in Pastoral Family Therapy research along with other theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. It is not an *either/or* situation. Instead, it is more a matter of enabling and allowing a variety of research approaches and theoretical frames to inform research and subsequent knowledge development in the Pastoral Family Therapy areas.

_____

It is not a case of attempting to replace one grand narrative with another! At all times, the rationale for choosing a particular research approach rather than other possibilities must be stated clearly.   The strengths and limitations of the various approaches must be recognized, as must the role that theoretical and methodological frameworks play in shaping research understandings, research undertakings, and conclusions reached. Postmodern, like any other approach to research, represents certain views of reality.   Put another way, postmodern approaches themselves are discursive constructions, drawing on certain knowledge claims to give them presence. Thus, they are open to the same sort of challenge and scrutiny as any other theoretical frame.

The journey continued (Chapter 2) by positioning the research study within a scientific-philosophical context. This was done by giving a description of the development of premodernism to postmodernity to narrative ideas. Basic points of departure of a narrative worldview were discussed in terms of how realities are constructed through language and the social context. Social constructionism is seen as an important aspect of this worldview.   The narrative approach also has important implications for the understanding of truth, knowledge and power. I seeked to understand how this approach developed. The purpose was then to arrive at a working description of how to do theology in a postmodern context (Chapter 3). A narrative hermeneutical pastoral theological response was proposed. This proposal was reached by investigating the contribution of various contributions to narrative theology: Crites' understanding of the narrative quality of experience, Gadamer, Tracy and Riceour's contributions to hermeneutics, Gerkin's narrative hermeneutical approach, Ganzevoort's understanding of narrative and personal identity and Müller's proposal of a pastoral narrative involvement.

Chapter 4 started by examining several biblical portraits of marriage and how they can be useful in a premarital pastoral narrative conversation.   Different premarital programs were also evaluated with this purpose in mind.   A reflection was shared concerning the general cultural phenomenon of cohabitation.   The shortcomings of this lifestyle compared to the commitment in marriage are underlined.

Chapter 5 outlined a premarital conversation in narrative mode.   As guidelines, certain elements of a narrative stance in Pastoral Care are proposed taking in consideration listening skills and a not-knowing position.   The importance of the deconstruction of certain beliefs and attitudes towards love, marriage and sex is discussed.

_____

The way that information about the family can be organized to reveal relationship patterns and changes in those patterns can be illustrated by means of several mapping tools (genogram, ecocharts, and the couple life line) and in taking in consideration the different transitional stages of the couple, family and their faith development.

The purpose of these actions is to arrive at an opening for the constructing of a new story for the married couple-to-be. Different ways of asking story development questions are proposed. After discussing the contribution of White's landscape of action and landscape of consciousness a conversation concerning a couple's decision to marry is given. The chapter closes with the story of faith. The implications and complications of using Scripture and prayer are outlined. Eventually a conjugal spirituality is proposed. The search for an audience or community of faith to support and celebrate this new rite of passage of the couple is underlined.

6.3 WHERE ARE WE?

The previous section in this chapter provided us with an overview of where the discussion has led us so far. Where does this leave us now? Hopefully it leaves us in a position of wanting to know more about these approaches and the research that has arisen, and can arise. The bibliography suggests further reading and should enable us to continue us explorations. This thesis is just a beginning, and a very brief beginning at that!

It is also hoped that as a result of the exploration of these approaches, we are beginning to question and explore assumptions and understandings implicit within our practice area and/or research that previously we may have taken for granted. All of this involves the development of reflexivity on the part of the reader and/or researcher.

Porter notes that the development of reflexivity -

> *entails researchers viewing their own beliefs in the same fashion as they view those held by their subjects* (1993:141).

The research process itself, in that it is a form of text that is discursively constituted, thus becomes a focus of the reflexive researcher. Apparent "givens" such as understandings of reliability and validity, or what does or does not constitute research, are

_____

opened up to scrutiny. The same is true for the form that research texts take. Porter (1993) ably demonstrates reflexivity in action in his exploration of why certain journal editorial boards and manuscripts reviewers reject the use of the word "I" in papers submitted for publication. He argues that there is no logical reason why manuscripts using the first person, that is, "I", should be viewed as less scholarly than those which use the passive voice. Rather, such reasons stem from largely unexplored assumptions about what constitutes "good" and/or appropriate scholarly writing, which in turn, often arises from the discursive frame of the supposed disinterested objectivity that the passive voice purports to represent. Porter asserts that -

> *the academic text is just as much the result of convention and contrivance as any other cultural artefact. We can not take the conventionality of texts for granted; their language needs to be treated as problematic* (1993:142).

Such reflexivity and the questioning it promotes also applies to enacted texts (Jacobson & Jacques 1997); that is, the field notes, observations, interview transcripts and so forth that purport to represent aspects of the reality under scrutiny by a researcher. In other words, we need to look at the texts themselves, rather than assume texts are simply neutral conveyors of information. Any representation of reality which takes the form of empirical materials and data collected in a research undertaking will only ever represent partial aspects of the reality being studied. Further, how those aspects are represented will be shaped and influenced by the assumptions and frameworks that researchers bring with them and impose on the research process. Thus empirical materials themselves must be scrutinized for what they reveal about the reality portrayed. Empirical materials are the textual record of what has been observed, studied and subsequently "found". As such they are open to the same scrutiny as any other form of text. Hertz captures the idea of looking at texts well when she writes:

> *Through personal accounting researchers should become more aware of how their own positions and interests are imposed at all stages of the research process - from the questions they ask to those they ignore, from whom they study to whom they ignore, from problem formation to analysis, representation and writing-in order to produce less distorted accounts of the social world* (1996:5).

Reflexivity also brings into scrutiny the notion of the research "field", both in terms

of what the field is, and how that field is represented in the research text. The field for any particular research endeavour is not out there waiting to be described by researchers. Rather, the field is a construction of the researcher. It is the researcher who defines the field for a particular study and who then goes about constructing that field by the collection of research data. In turn, the role of the researcher is, at least in part, constructed by the understanding of the field in play. Turner points out that Foucault's work, for example, provides -

> *us with an analysis of the forces that produce "the field" - both the lie of the land itself, and the shaping of the eye that surveys it* (1989:17).

Subsequently Jacobson and Jacques (1997) discuss the effect of destabilizing the field, that is, challenging the notion of a fixed, stable field of study. When reporting on the field for a study looking at how the social space of nursing (or Pastoral Family Therapy in our case) has been, and is, constructed and maintained, they note:

> *The object of the research is not the nurse* (pastor) *but the lens through which the nurse* (pastor) *is represented. The goal is not one of better understanding what is really going on but one of understanding how any construction of the real is influenced by the relationships of power through which the structure of social reality has been produced and is maintained, often in seemingly mundane ways* (1997:54).

Thus, the field itself can be explored to expose the ways in which the field is both constructed and positioned by the researcher, and which in turn constructs and positions the researcher. Hence Turner (1989) defines the field in the following way:

> *It constitutes, shall we say, an attitude towards their "clients" needed by agents of social control, a framing of the life of actual or potential subjects, a point of view which will force an intersection of the interests of the inquirer and the life of the subject* (1989:14).

Postmodern approaches enable the development of a reflexivity that can challenge and open up to scrutiny otherwise closed and taken-for-granted aspects of both the research process and Pastoral Family Therapy practice. Far from being nihilistic and

_____

entirely destructive, as Eagleton suggests when stating that these approaches allow -

you to drive a coach and horses through everybody else's beliefs while not saddling you with the inconvenience of having to adopt any yourself (1983:144),

postmodern approaches offer new and different perspectives on the practice realm. In offering such perspectives, there is no claim to the last word or definitive answers. Rather, there is a desire to -

become more reflexive about the ways that situated knowers and knowns influence the production of inevitably perspective-dependent knowledge (Jacobson & Jacques 1997:56).

A reflexive approach can expose what we are and offer other possibilities for what we might be.   In this way it may be possible to –

avoid both the positivism of the window and the nihilism of the mirror (Turner 1989:25)

for, as Turner points out, in refusing what we are or what is, there is a risk that we may render ourselves homeless by an act of will (1989:20).

Doing Pastoral Care in this way, it is important that the pastor encourages his co-re-searchers to tell their stories and to be involved in their stories. Parry and Doan (1994:30) says:

As therapists, we continue to deal with the stories people tell us about the disordering of the text of their lives … Each text is the story of someone's efforts to live in this Zone called the postmodern world, in which, in the collapse of common rules or stories, we can only hope to be able to make "arrangements" with one another through our inescapable participation in one another's stories.

Parry and Doan go on and distinguish three tasks of a postmodern therapist (pastor). The first task is –

_____

that of encouraging people in the legitimizing of their own stories (1994:27).

The second task is to encourage people to use words that convey emotions and feelings when they tell their stories:

A story is a person's own story, and he/she is the poet (Parry and   Doan 1994:72).

The third task of a postmodern therapist is to empower people to realize that their stories about themselves are unique and these stories belong to them.

… when there is no central story against which to evaluate that of either an individual or family, then, not only do all persons' and families'   ways of being themselves through the stories they tell, become legitimizing,   but   each person is freed from the assumption that a grand narrative tends   to foster - namely, that each person is entitled to only one self. In a time of different *worlds and different languages, different selves will be called upon to perform the many different deeds expected of people in their different worlds* (Parry & Doan 1994:27)*.*

One of assumptions of this research is that people can be taught that there are many different stories. White identified two types of life stories: the *dominant story* that gets told over and over again and is constituting of a person's life, and the *alternative story* that forms part of the subjugated knowledge and thus does not shape the person's life to same extent. To bring about change, new meaning and unique outcomes in these stories one can make use of externalization and deconstruction.

As pastor, I must remember that it is not only the story of the couple or family that is at stake and that is told, but also my own story and the Biblical Story. The involvement and the bringing together of these different stories should play a prominent role in the pastoral conversation.

Looking then reflexively to where we are after everything is said and done, I have found that postmodern society also implies a post-Christian society. Many of the material discussed in this study (especially chapters 4 and 5) were experienced by couples, which

_____

could be considered as non practicing "Christians", as new and strange. They just want to prepare the wedding service, get married, and get on with life. This gives an opportunity to share understandings of the Christian concept of marriage.

On the other end of spectrum are those Christians that are committed to their faith and who are searching in this postmodern society for rules and guides of how to have a successful marriage. These couples had and have to discover their own road make use of the Biblical portraits of marriage.

It was interesting to notice that both of these groups had similar "misconceptions" concerning love, marriage and sex (as discussed in the previous chapter).

6.4 THE JOURNEY FORWARD

Postmodernity has been used in this thesis to convey the opportunity that exists for Christian theology to engage with thought forms and practices which have lost or are in danger of losing contact with it. The location of ourselves at or towards the end of modernity has also enabled the developing theology of Christian marriage to be linked with wider social, cultural and intellectual upheavals. The vision of marriage after modernity has not abandoned its premodern roots; on the contrary, as it has tried to listen and respond to the postmodern crisis, it has been able to appreciate its historic rootedness in different ways. A new context generates new questions, which in turn make new discoveries possible. The new questions have been frequently awkward to handle, and the answers have frequently incorporated premodern practices.

The Christian understanding of marriage is set in the long premodern period prior to the changes of modernity. It will be necessary to refer continuously to the diverse premodern traditions of marriage while reinterpreting what is found there in the light of the demands of the postmodern social and cultural situation. The Bible has no guidance for us about the right age for marriage, nor about any ceremony. There is clear tension in the New Testament between the concessionary view of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:19) and the estimation of it as the great mystery symbolizing the union of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). Marriage was discouraged within the early church in the light of the imminent return of Christ. In the next century it was discouraged because of negative attitudes to sexuality and because of the moral priority given to celibacy. A wedding ceremony was, until modern times, never a requirement, and the principal justification for the inferior way of marriage was that of having children. Only in the second millennium

_____

did marriage become a sacrament, and the meaning of '"sacrament" has changed completely since then. The engagement (fiançailles) was a common means of entry into marriage, and vows could be made when the parties were as young as seven. The cultural discontinuities between premodern times and our own will render the premodern legacy strange to us; yet its very strangeness, its power to surprise and sometimes to amaze, will help to provide a critical resource for reviewing our own practice.

The social changes associated with modernity and postmodernity are crucial for this study – as described in the previous pages. Modernity is associated with the rise of state bureaucracy, with "the classificatory, controlling impulse seen in sphere after sphere". A legal marriage act represents the apex of modernity as it affects marriage, for during the premodern time, ecclesiastical ceremonies and official registration were not legally required for a valid marriage to be enacted. The entry into marriage was less formal, and in some periods engagement licensed sexual intercourse prior to the actual marriage ceremony. Courtship and attitudes to sexual intercourse prior to marriage were different prior to the legal aspect and it will be necessary to "lift the veil of modernity" in order to suggest that the informal entry into marriage via cohabitation, which our contemporaries have largely accomplished for themselves, is a partial return to premodern nuptial orthodoxy. In the eighteenth century the entry into marriage is effectively policed, and law becomes a principal means of enforcing social compliance. But these changes had more to do with the handing down of property than with the gospel, and we will need to be wary of them.

Marriage within modernity becomes increasingly associated with romantic love, the growth of individuality, the choosing of partners by each other, and (in Protestant countries) the ending of clerical celibacy. The most far-reaching change of all in the modem period is the mass production of reliable contraceptives, in particular the sheath in the nineteenth and "the pill" in the second half of the twentieth century. The vigorous opposition to the use of contraceptives, even within marriage, by the Roman Catholic Church is a correct discernment that contraception changes sexual experience forever, since sexual intercourse need no longer be associated with the transmission of life.

For this study, postmodernity will be understood principally as a new opportunity for Christian thought and practice, coincidentally situated at the beginning of a new millennium. The seizure of a new opportunity does not overlook that Christian theology is in some respects in a weaker position than it was even half a century ago; that it has lost

_____

many of the privileges it once had in the academy; that religious pluralism and moral relativism render it more difficult for Christian theology to obtain a hearing; and that indifference to anything that might be said in the name of Christ may be growing. Theology is still able to earn a hearing, insofar as it speaks positively and meaningfully to people's experience, to the immediate context of human experience. The intention of this process is the transformation of the human story, both individual and corporate, in ways that will open the future of that story to creative possibilities.

The following scenarios of postmodern families were described by a recent judge (G. Cornu, judge in Civil Law) in France:

> *There are certain couples that are married and who live united, others live in hate, others have just given up, or they have separated, with or without children. There are those that have been married and who are not anymore – because of a divorce or death – and who live alone – widowed or divorced – and sometimes they will decide to live together again with someone, or they remarry, and they have in all of these situations more children, some of which will return to cohabite with their first/previous husband and/or some that will live with the new partner who has also children from a previous relationship(s). There are those that are not married and that can live together as a couple, or that can stay single, with or without official ties – according to the personal preferences and precautions of each one concerned – with few or a lot of children, with the same partner or with several partners. There are those that have children within the household of others and others that accept in their household the children of others. There are those that welcome, acknowledge, legitimate, adopt and those that abandon, contest and disown. Chaos in diverse situations. It is not the law that is complicated. It is people. Each one lives as he/she likes or can. "And they married, and they had a lot of children". This also exists.*

The story that you are about to finish reading has been an attempt to create a "writerly" text as opposed to a "readerly" text.

> *A "readerly" text assumes a passive reader seeking to understand an author's intentions. It is the opposite of a "writerly" text that is purposely vague, open to many interpretations, and deliberately encourages the reader to rewrite the contents of the text* (Rosenau 1992:167).

_____

As a "writerly" text, the thesis has attempted to engage readers reflexively in the discussion. In so doing it has offered challenges to readers to explore their own taken-for-granted assumptions about research and the health arena.

It may remember that the preface of this story it was indicated that the impetus to write this story stemmed, at least in part, from my own and others' experience of the lack of information and research in this field of study. Such absence and need led me to question the assumptions that were being made about research, and the "product" of research and cultural discourses. This questioning enabled me to understand more clearly what was going on in terms of discursive constructions of research and social family issues. In the same way, I hope that this story increases the reader's ability to serve their audiences for their research and pastoral counselling which draws on these approaches.

Giroux (1992:22) has promoted what he terms "border crossing" in order to create "borderlands" or "alternate public spaces" where it is possible to rewrite "histories, identities and learning possibilities". This story has promoted the crossing of borders in order to move into and to create new spaces from which to view and research aspects of Pastoral Family Therapy. Postmodern approaches to research open up new territories, pushing beyond the constraints of the discursive borders of taken-for-granted understandings of Pastoral Family Care. As in any journey of exploration and discovery, the way forward is fraught with dangers and difficulties. Nevertheless, the potential offered by such a journey for opening up and rewriting histories, identities and research possibilities (to paraphrase Giroux) is enormous, and well worth the risk and the unsettling effect of challenging aspects of reality we have come to take for granted. This story has been a small part of such a journey forward. I hope that it encourages readers to continue on this journey of exploration. In the words of Anne Lamott:

> *You move them along until everything comes together in the climax, after which things are different for the main characters, different in some real way* (Lamott 1995:62).

Until everything comes together . . . It sometimes takes a long time to reach a *preliminary* conclusion. The more complex the situation and the plot, the longer it takes. Anne Lamott (1995:82-3) has also written a passage from the perspective of the reader. She says:

_____

When you write about your characters, we want to know all about their lives and colours and growth. But we also want to know who they are when stripped of the surface show. So if you want to get to know your characters, you have to hang out with them long enough to see beyond all the things they aren't. You may try to get them to do something because it would be convenient plotwise, or you might want to pigeonhole them so you can maintain control. But with luck their tendrils will sneak out the sides of the box you've put them in, and you will finally have to admit that who they are isn't who you thought they were.

This is about "understanding" too quickly and therefore not to understand at all. This is also about the desire to maintain control. Lamott says (1995:85) that her students always assume that well-respected writers, when they sit down and write their books, know pretty well what is going to happen because they have outlined their plot and this is why their books turn out so beautifully. And then she reacts by saying: "I do not know anyone fitting this description, on the way to finding a plot and structure that work. You are welcome to join the club." Likewise, therapists and pastors shouldn't know and therefore shouldn't control the plot and climax of a story. You may perhaps envision a temporary destination, but you must allow your "characters" to develop from there in their own way towards the end. This does not mean that we cannot share certain biblical values concerning marriage. We are co-authors together with the couple. Walking with them on the life journey.

Lamott uses a wonderful metaphor to describe how the writer should allow the plot to develop into its own climax.

If you're lost in the forest, let the horse find the way home. You have to stop directing, because you will only get in the way (1995:114).

And another striking metaphor:

. . . we (writers) need to align ourselves with the river of the story, the river of the unconscious, of memory and sensibility . . . (Lamott 1995:121).

The way towards the climax is not an easy one. The premarital conversation, like writing, is seeing people develop, engage and disengage and finding meaning therein.

_____

But you can't do that if you're not respectful. If you look at people and just see sloppy clothes or rich clothes, you're going to get them wrong (Lamott 1995:97).

And further:

I honestly think in order to be a writer, you have to learn to be reverent. If not, why are you writing? Why are you here? (Lamott 1995:99).

If writing is more than mere technique, if it is about reverence and awe, how can a pastoral conversation be only a technique? In the end, the pastoral conversation, like writing, is the development of an extraordinary relationship with your characters/co-researchers.

This often involves God and religion. Both good writing and Pastoral Care moves on the edges of life, are interested in the essence of life and of relationships. Like the writer, the pastor doesn't bring God in from outside, he or she discovers God in the writing and in the pastoral conversation.

And then there is the ending: what is our sense of who these people are now, what are they left with, what happened, and what did it mean (Lamott 1995:62).

During the premarital conversation, we can get discouraged, especially towards the end of the encounter. It may feel as if the necessary change that *you* envisaged, did not and will not take place, there will be no encounter between their story and the Story.

You may feel a little as if writing (the pastoral conversation - CdP) *a novel is like trying to level Mount McKinley* (the Drakensberg for the South African and the Alps for the French) *with a dentist's drill. Things feel hopeless, or at least bleak, and you are not imaginative or organized enough to bash your way through to a better view, let alone some interesting conclusion* (Lamott 1995:177).

_____

> *The problem is acceptance, which is something we're taught not to do. We're taught to improve incompatible situations, to change things, alleviate unpleasant feelings* (Lamott 1995:178).

After our involvement with people in a premarital conversation, and after we have waited for our "characters" to develop within their own plot into their own climax, we have to accept the ending that is appropriate for them. We have to allow them to draw us into their story and to make us part of their lives. We must be able to imagine with them and within their boundaries. The narrative approach wants to teach us to sacrifice our own created endings and to be happy with our "characters'" imaginative endings.

To be a pastor, like being a writer, is to be able to dream for and with people. Lamott (1995:231) says:

> *You are lucky to be one of those people who wishes to build sand castles with words, who is willing to create a place where your imagination can wander. We build this place with sand of memories; these castles are our memories and inventiveness made tangible. So part of us believes that when the tide starts coming in, we won't really have lost anything, because actually only a symbol of it was there in the sand. Another part of us thinks we'll figure out a way to divert the ocean. This is what separates artists from ordinary people: the belief, deep in our hearts, that if we build our castles well enough, somehow the ocean won't wash them away. I think this is a wonderful kind of person to be.*

To be a "narrative" pastor is to be engaged in writing. Novel writing, autobiographic writing, re-writing, all kinds of writing. To live is to write. Living is authoring. Although life is a gift which we merely receive, it is also the raw material for the lives we are creating. We author our stories.

The therapeutic process equals the writing of a story, the creating of a book. It involves many of the stories of those involved: the clients; the families; the therapists; the patients. But the therapeutic process is not only a mere reflection on those stories, it is also a new writing.

A pastoral conversation creates its own story.

_____

Having a pastoral conversation is as uplifting, inspiring, exhausting, and painful as it is to write. Those who are called to do it will continue to do so because it gives meaning, in spite of and through suffering (Müller 2000).

Writing, and a pastoral conversation, can only be done when one has the commitment and patience to do it "bird by bird". I would like to close this article with the story of the title of Lamott's book:

> *…thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird"* (Lamott 1995:19).

It should be kept in mind that the degree of participation which is possible is a function of a combination of factors and that each situation determines how much room there is for the people involved to co-operate with outsiders (Babbie & Mouton 2001:317). For example, regarding this study, the premarital narrative conversation as outlined in chapter five has been initiated by the participation and consultation of the co-researchers (or narrators). Due to the practical problem of availability of narrators proficient in English the evaluation and conclusions expressed in this study could not be done with the involvement and participation of the narrators/co-researchers. This is a future aspect that could be developed. Couples should be convinced about the necessity and the need for evaluation and follow-up.

For future research in this field more attention should be given to the influence of cohabitation on the later marital situation. The difference in lived experience between cohabitation and marriage, at not legal differences, need to be addressed.

Couples should also be made aware of the time involved in evaluating and constructing their marital life together. Women seem generally to be more open to this kind of relationship development. Although couples were very hesitant to complete questionnaires, the conducting of small workshops where experience was lived rather than information given, were appreciated.

_____

An advantage of situating the inquiry undertaken by this thesis in a postmodern narrative context is that it relativizes our own time, and requires both an appreciation of the past and openness to God's future. The treatment of a premarital conversation *after modernity* provides a sufficiently broad canvas for wide, far-reaching social changes to be brought into the frame.

It is propose at the end of this writing that if the understanding of marriage as a lifelong covenant is to survive Christian marriage should be *non-patriarchal*. It should be also admitted that non-patriarchal marriage will be difficult to achieve.   Christian traditions of marriage have been carriers of patriarchy - that much is sadly obvious. However, there are grounds for hope that the understanding of marriage within the churches will continue to grow in the direction of non-patriarchal mutuality. Nonetheless non-patriarchal marriage by itself is not enough.

"Reinvented humanism" arrives at profound insights into that equality of worth of human beings which a hierarchical view of human relationships inevitably loses sight of, while it dismisses the transcendent source of love which may yet be found to be the guarantor of the very equalities the new humanism celebrates. The pragmatic ethic needs something more than vague appeals to *responsibility*, when the chosen complexities of sexual experience engulf the individual. What happens when the proclaimers and practitioners of the *secular religion* of romantic love move on to *their own* post-religious phase, much as contemporary people are assumed by these writers to have done, in evacuating themselves from the formal requirements and disciplines of faith?

As a "post-Christian" writer, I announce sexual relationships which celebrate mutuality and equality. While there is undoubtedly room for a critical examination of what these concepts entail, where they come from, and how theology is able to contribute to them, Christians should welcome these achievements. But while post-Christian writers proclaim also a post-patriarchal present, Christians can justifiably point out that these social arrangements have so far done little to foster commitments that empower couples to arrive at a deepening love for each other which thrives on mutual acceptance and forgiveness of each other, and on the spiritual growth which works to remove the need for forgiveness in the first place. While the churches from a contemporary perspective have been slow to proclaim the equality of partners within marriage, they have always proclaimed the enduring nature of marriage through felicity and adversity. While certain

_____

post-Christians appear to have removed Christian marriage from among the various forms of being-with-another currently on offer, marriage is able to provide precisely what the new provisionality conspicuously lacks.

Postmodern, yet Christian, marriage, offers the vital prospect of marriage which is post-patriarchal yet enduring. The crisis for marriage is that its patriarchal form is outmoded and rightly rejected while nonpatriarchal versions of marriage either remain in infancy or are simply unacknowledged as a real possibility. Marriage has generated its own transformations in the past: the present transformation from patriarchy to equality remains an imperative for all the churches. The removal of patriarchy from marriage may also dislodge many of the factors contributing to marital breakdown and to the reluctance to make permanent, open-ended commitments to a single partner. But the end of patriarchy does not mean the end of unprovisional commitment: it merely removes the main obstacle in the way of exercising it. The obligation on husbands to love their wives *as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it* (Ephesians 5:22) remains undiminished by the admission that the obligation is based on an offensive patriarchal theory which requires the submission of women to men, and the assumption that such heroic other-regarding acts could only be performed by men. The removal of the theory is a wholly positive development. The obligation is not diminished, but rather, intensified, because, after patriarchy, it becomes a shared one, and consequently one that is likely to have a higher chance of being carried out.

The handling of the Ephesian marriage text to eliminate ancient assumptions about male superiority remains instructive in indicating what is involved in advocating a non-patriarchal form of Christian marriage. Patriarchy has to be faced, not evaded. Since the theology of Christian marriage has been in the hands of men since the letter to the Ephesians was written (and still largely remains so), it is not surprising that it is proving difficult to dislodge. The disowning of the patriarchal premises in this text is essential for husbands' sake, for wives' sake, for Christ's sake, indeed for everyone's sake. In a non-patriarchal marriage the husband has an equal partner in giving and receiving married love as Christ loves the Church. The love the husband has for his wife will be deeper because she will be his equal, but not a dependent being capable only of obedience, submission and reverence in relation to him. Because she turns out, after patriarchy, to be able to love reciprocally and thereby exercise freedom, his love can be more genuine. If she loves her husband as Christ loves the Church she becomes an equal partner in the joint project of the marital covenant and the androcentric calling into question of her abilities is

_____

removed. Non-patriarchal marriage makes the couple jointly subject to Christ, thereby intensifying the place of Christ in the marriage. Under patriarchy the wife submits to Christ through her husband; after patriarchy each submits to each other and Christ is the 'head' of both of them. This does not tamper or jeopardize the place of Christ within a couple's marriage: it gives it the possibility of greater realization because the authority of Christ in the marriage is given a higher status by not being mediated through maleness. What happens in reading the Ephesian text *after patriarchy* is able to illustrate a different kind of reading - the *reading* of the contemporary *context* of marriage also as a breaking away from patriarchy. But there is much that Christian marriage can never be *post-* because the loving communion on which it is founded is the communion of the Trinitarian God, and the invitation to share in it is given by the selfgiving of the Trinitarian God in the Person of Christ. The tragedy for postmodern marriage is that while patriarchal versions of marriage are rejected, marriage itself has been gravely weakened and taken on forms which, while stressing equality, also incorporate elements which are inimical to the preservation of marriage in any form. A version of marriage which is emphatically post-patriarchal, while emphatically not post-Christian, will alone meet the demand *both* for genuine equality between partners *and* for a deepening and enduring relationship between them.

This is the hope for Christian marriage after modernity. If it is to become a reality it is likely that Christians practising it will need increasingly to become critical of postmodern trends which seem to marginalize marriage completely: in short they will become increasingly *counter cultural* in respect of marriage. This will be no new matter. Christian attitudes cannot fail to be influenced by the wider social attitudes to marriage. That is, the temptation to regard marriage merely as a private matter must be resisted, since there are public influences, expectations and consequences surrounding a couple's supposedly private decisions. The ever-increasing demands of employers easily militate against the cultivation of successful marriages.

It was also proposed that practicing *conjugal spirituality* will deepen a marriage by deepening their joint relationship with God.

The above considerations concerning marriage should be taken into account in the conducting and the construction of a premarital narrative conversation.

_____

As reader of this story I leave you with the following words of Jacques Brel:

I wish you everlasting dreams
and the strong desire to see some fulfilled.
I wish you love to love that which needs to be loved
and to forget that which should be forgotten.
I wish you strength to resist the slide into indifference,
and the negative values of our times.
I wish you deep enthusiasm and the delightful cries of children
and the songs of birds on awakening.
Most of all my wish is for you to be you.

_____

DIVORCE CEREMONY

Prayer

Scripture reading: Philippians 3:7-14 - A new beginning, a new life

Zukav, *The dancing Wu Li Masters* - Every beginning is a beginning as if it is for the first time.

Friends, we are together here in the presence of God and before these witnesses to recognise the annulment of this marriage between Kirsten and Corné. The marriage is given by God when he said in the beginning: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2: 18). This marriage, which has been undertaken in the utmost seriousness, is now being annulated, not in a light hearted way or without consultation, but in devotion and humbleness, with pain and tears, in the deepest dependence on and in the love of God.

Kirsten and Corné, who has been married in the church and who has been granted a divorce by the State, come and ask of God and those present to recognise the annulation of this marriage and ask God for forgiveness so that they can live under the grace of God, and also in honour in the eyes of people. We, their friends, come in love together to support them.

Kirsten and Corné have, in respect and dependence, come to the realisation that it is in the best interest of them both that this marriage must be annulated. They have acted in love and understanding and to the best of their abilities. Aware of the seriousness of such a decision, it is their wish to ask God to recognise the annulation of this marriage between them and to ask God and each other for forgiveness and to pray the best wishes for each other for the future.

It is expected from us, their friends and fellow Christians, to do everything in our power to support them and to carry them in this new life that lies ahead for them.

Will you, Kirsten and Corné, do everything in your power to live in love for God and all people so that you can be free to make a new beginning in your life with hope and trust?

Giving back of the rings

Prayer: Our Father (Matthew 6:9-13)

Blessing

QUESTIONNAIRE

> This questionnaire is anonymous

1. Do you agree with the following statements:

      A. One must cohabite with someone before getting married:

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

      For what reason:

1.   Trial marriage   2.   Commodity   3.   "Things just happen like that"
4.   We consciously didn't think about it   5.   Other   _____

      B. It is too easy to divorce today.

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

      C. It is normal for couples getting married to think that if their marriage doesn't work out, they could always get divorced.

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

      D. The happiness of the individual is more important than an unhappy marriage.

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

      E. Marriage is for life, even if the couple is unhappy.

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

      F. Marriage is for life and should never be terminated except in extreme circumstances.

1.   Agree strongly   2.   Agree   3.   Don't know   4.   Disagree
                                   5.   Disagree strongly

2.   **A.**   **Have you been thinking during the past year that your relationship had some problems?**

               1.   Yes   2.   No

      B.   **Have you already talked to your partner about a possible separation?**

               1.   Yes   2.   No

      C.   **Do you think that the chances for you getting a divorce are:**

1. Zero   2. Very feeble   3. Feeble 4.   Possible   5.   Quite possible

3.   A.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        concerning the amount of understanding that you receive from your partner?

        B.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        about the amount of love and affection received?

        C.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with your life together?

        D.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with your sexual relationship?

        E.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with the way that your partner behave towards the child(ren)?

        F.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with the help of your partner in household tasks?

        G.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with the fidelity of your partner?

        H.   Are you -
1.   Very satisfied 2.   Satisfied   3.   Not very satisfied   4.   Unsatisfied
        with your relationship?

4.   How does your relationship compare with others?
1.   Much better   2. Better   3. The same   4. Worst   5. Much worst

5.   One year ago, your relationship was:
1.   Much better   2. Better   3. The same   4. Worst   5. Much worst

6.   The feelings of love for your partner are -
1.   Very strong   2. Strong   3. Average   4. Feeble   5. Very feeble

7.   Do you disagree from time to time about household tasks, money, sexual life,
        child(ren), leisure activities, parents-in-law:
1.   Never   2. Seldom   3. Sometimes   4. Often   5. Very often

8.   Many households have from time to time disagreements. There are some cases
where people in their anger slap, hit, or kick the other. Did it already happen to you?
1.   Never   2. Seldom   3. Sometimes   4. Often   5. Very often

_____

9.   When you started cohabiting, did you -
1.   already decided to get married   2.   The idea of marriage wasn't evoked
3.   Were still very undecided, but the possibility of marriage was evoked
4.   Prefer not to answer   5.   Other

10.   Which of the following reasons made you decide to get married?
1.   We had no preconceived ideas against the marriage. Life together affirmed that we can get married.
2.   We are expecting a child
3.   We would prefer not to get married, but cohabitating presents too many problems from the side of the community.
4.   Our parents really would like it if we get married. So, we decided to get married.
5.   Prefer not to answer
6.   Other

11.   Could an important change in your actual situation change your projects and make you decide to have more children than you actually want to have?
                              1. Yes   2. No

If yes. Which of the following changes could make you decide to have another child?

1.   A bigger home   2.   A larger income
3.   An easier way to look after the children
4.   The possibility for the wife to interrupt her professional career for a couple of years
5.   If other, which? _____

12.   For a married couple, the ideal situation ought to be -
1.   To share all activities and leisure
2.   To sustain a certain amount of activities and leisure apart
3.   Prefer not answer

13.   If for some insurmountable medical reason(s), you as a couple could not have children, will you say that this would be for you -
1.   A terrible thing to bear   2.   A difficult thing to bear
3.   An inconvenient minor   4.   In the end, a could thing
5.   Anyway, we didn't want children   6.   Prefer not to answer

14.   Which of the following reasons are for you personally the most important to have children -
1.   When you love somebody, it is natural to have children
2.   A couple is considered only as normal by the rest of the family and the society if it has children.
3.   It is an obligation in face of the society
4.   A child bring irreplaceable joy to the parents
5.   It is especially my partner who wants children
6.   Prefer not to answer

_____

15.   While wishing to get married, couples often think of some inconveniences of marriage. For you, when you thought of the possibility to get married, were there any inconveniences of marriage which you thought of?

A.   To live always with the same person and making a very long term commitment -
1.   Bothered me a lot   2.   Bothered me a little   3.   Didn't bother me
4.   Pleased me   5.   Prefer not to answer

B. The fact to get settled, become middle-classed, to fall into a routine -
1.   Bothered me a lot   2.   Bothered me a little   3.   Didn't bother me
4.   Pleased me   5.   Prefer not to answer

C. To accept the fact that somebody has control over my life -
1.   Bothered me a lot   2.   Bothered me a little   3.   Didn't bother me
4.   Pleased me   5.   Prefer not to answer

D. Committing my future to someone who could develop differently than I -
1.   Bothered me a lot   2.   Bothered me a little   3.   Didn't bother me
4.   Pleased me   5.   Prefer not to answer

E. The obligation of fidelity -
1.   Bothered me a lot   2.   Bothered me a little   3.   Didn't bother me
4.   Pleased me   5.   Prefer not to answer

16.   If the possibility to get divorced didn't legally exist, would you anyway gotten married?
1.   No, maybe I would not have got married
2.   I would have hesitated before taking the decision
3.   Nothing would have changed for me
4.   Prefer not to answer

17.   Do you think that a woman can decide alone, even against the opinion of her husband -
       A.   To take the pill
                                          1.   Yes   2.   No

       B.   To have an abortion
                                          1.   Yes   2.   No

18.   Do you think that in the marriage that -
1.   Fidelity is absolutely necessary   2.   One can tolerated some space
3.   It is better if each one leave each other big enough freedom concerning this point
4.   Prefer not to answer

19.   Do you think, concerning fidelity, that for the wife, it is -

_____

1.   Exactly the same for men   2.   A little different
3.   Quite different   4.   Prefer not to answer

20.   Do you think that for people cohabitating, the problem of mutual fidelity is -
1.   Exactly the same as if they were married
2.   In a way little more subtle
3.   In a way a lot different, but not more supple
4.   Prefer not to answer

21.   Which one of the following statements characterises the best your life before
       your current cohabitation -
1.   No relationship, not sentimental, not sexual
2.   One night stand(s)
3.   A love relationship without sexual relationship
4.   A love relationship with sexual relationship but without a project of marriage
5.   A love relationship with a project of marriage
6.   Prefer not to answer

22.   When you started to live together, did you already decided -
1.   To get married in the near future
2.   To live together to verify the solidity of your relationship in view of getting
       eventually married
3.   To live together without thinking of marriage
4.   To live together putting aside the idea of marriage
5.   Prefer not to answer

Questions of identity:

23. **Sex:**   1.   F   2.   M

24. **Age:**   1. 18-19   2. 20-22   3. 23-25   4. 26-28   5. 29-31   6. 32-35

25.   Profession:

       1.   Agriculture   2.   Labourer
       3.   Management   4.   House person
       5.   6.   Employee
       7.   Education   8.   Other

26.   Latest certificate obtained:
       1.   University degree   2.   Grade 12   3.   Grade 8
       4.   5.   Grade 10   6.

27.   Age at cohabitation:
              1. 18-19   2. 20-22   3. 23-25   4. 26-28   5. 29-31   6. 32-35

28.   Duration of cohabitation (in months):

_____

<div style="text-align:center">1. 1-6   2. 7-12   3. 13-18   4. 19-24   5. 25 +</div>

29.   1. cohabited before   2. never cohabited
         3. cohabited only with future spouse   4. am divorced

30.   **Age when married:**
         1. 18-19   2. 20-22   3. 23-25   4. 26-28   5. 29-31   6. 32-35

31.   **A. Number of children under charge:**   1. None   2. 1   3. 2
                                                         4. 3   5. 4 or more

        B.   1.   Conception before marriage   2.   Birth before marriage
               3.   Marital birth

30.   **A.** Were you looking for work when you started cohabitating: 1.   Yes   2.   No
        B. Are you actually looking for work: 1.   Yes   2.   No
        C. Were you looking for work when you got married: 1.   Yes   2.   No

31.   **Religious affiliation:**
        1.   None   2.   Non Christian
        3.   Practising catholic   4.   Non practising catholic
        5.   Practising protestant   6.   Non practising protestant

34.   **What is the most important reason for you that made you decide to have a religious ceremony?**
        1.   Tradition   2. My personal religious convictions
        3.   Our personal religious convictions
        4.   The personal religious convictions of my partner
        5.   One of the two families (or both) would have found it difficult if we acted differently
        6.   Prefer not to answer

Comment(s): _____

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NARRATIVE BASED RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1.   **Positioning**

    a.   Within which scientific paradigm and research process do you place yourself?

    b.   Why do you choose for this one? How did you come to this specific paradigm?

    c.   Explain how you understand this scientific paradigm and research procedure.

    d.   Explain your own role as researcher within this paradigm and procedure.

    e.   How does this posisioning of yourself as researcher distinguishes you from other approaches?

    f.   How are you going to conduct your research in order to maintain subjective integrity?

2.   **Action**

    a.   Which action or field of action (*habitus*) did you choose to research?

    b.   How did it come that your curiosity was awaken by this action?

    c.   How did your own personal story influenced your choice of this action for research?

    d.   How are you going to use and report your own story in your research?

    e.   What was your initial response to this field of action?

    f.   How do you think could it become possible for you to be drawn into the action, in stead of remaining an outside observer?

_____

g.   Describe the possible *modi* of interaction that you are considering in order to do research on this action. For instance:

      1.   Observation? What kind?

      2.   conversations?

      3.   questionaires?

h.   In whose language are you going to describe the action (yours, the participants, which participants, theological language, the language of the sub-culture, etc.)?

i.   Are you going to have feedback from the particpants on your discription of the action, or not? Why?

j.   Where would you like to create your borders in terms of actions/action fields, and in terms of theological and/or other subjects?

3.   Background

a.   Identify the persons and/or the discourses, which have played a role in the development of this particular action or action field.

b.   Thinking about these persons and/or discourses, what would you like to research in depth in order to understand the action better?

c.   Try to order these persons and/or discourses in priority.

d.   How do you think at this stage, did it happen that these particular persons are involved in this particular action?

e.   How are you going to gather, compile, and report the stories, which form the background of this action?

f.   Give a preliminary overview of the the literature that is available and which you plan to use.

_____

4.   Development

    a.   How are you going to bring the different stories (action stories, background stories, your own story, literature, art, etc.) in conversation with each other?

    b.   What measures are you going to take in order to maintain an alertness for unexpected developments in the understanding of the action? For instance: Are you going to create a reflecting team? Are you going to involve the larger scientic community in your interpretation, and how?

    c.   How are you going to involve the participants in the action, as your co-researchers? At what stage and how are you going to give them the opportunity to reflect on your preliminary interpretations?

    d.   How are you going to facilitate a *critical* reflection on your preliminary findings?

    e.   Who are the marginalized in this field of action and in your research programme? How are you going to ensure that the normally unheard voices would be heard?

5.   Climax

    a.   Have you any expectations of what the climax would be like for you in this research process?

    b.   How do you think are you influenced by this expectation in planning your research?

    c.   What actions are you going to take in order to ensure that you wait for the climax to happen, in stead of manipulating it?

    d.   How would you know that you have reached a climax in your research?

6.   **Ending**

    a.   How would you describe the imagined ending of your research? What would you like to accomplish, and why?

    b.   Why would the ending be worth the while for you, even if you might not reach any new discovery?

    c.   How are you going to report your research and findings? (dissertation, thesis, article, etc.)

    d.   Write a broad outline of how you anticipate your research document (dissertation, thesis, article, etc) could look like.

    e.   Describe the importance of selfreflection as part of the ending of your research.

    f.   What makes it difficult for your to write a selfreflection with integrity?

    g.   How are you going to overcome these difficulties?

    h.   Who do you think would benefit from your research? How are you going to communicate your research findings to them?

_____
_

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAMS-WESTCOTT J., DAFFORN T. & STERNE P.   1993. Escaping victim life stories and co-constructing personal agency. In <u>Therapeutic conversations</u> edited by Gilligan, S. & Price R. New York: Norton. 258-271.

AGGER, B. 1991. Critical theory, post structuralism, post modernism: their sociological relevance. <u>Annual review of sociology,</u> 17, 105-131.

AGGER, B. 1992. <u>Cultural studies as critical theory.</u> London: Falmer press.

AICHELE, G. 1988. Poverty and the hermeneutics of repentance. <u>Cross Currents</u> 38, 458-467.

ALLEN, J.E. 1973. <u>The early years of marriage.</u> Nashville: Graded Press.

ALFRED, G.H. 1976.   <u>How to improve your marriage and family.</u> Utah: Brigham Young University Press

ALPASLAN, N. 1994. <u>Hoop en hulp vir die huwelik. 'n Werkboek vir huweliksvoorbereiding en huweliksverryking.</u> Pretoria: Kagiso uitgewers.

ANDERSEN, 1991. Relationship, language, and pre-understanding in the reflecting process. Paper read at the Houston-Galveston Institute's Conference, "Narrative and psychotherapy: new directions in theory and practice for the 21st century." Houston.

ANDERSON, W.T. 1990. <u>Reality isn't what it use to be: Theatrical politics, ready-to-wear religion, global myths, primitive chic, and other wonders of the postmodern world.</u> San Francisco: Harper & Row.

ANDERSON, H. & FITE, R.C. 1993. <u>Becoming married.</u> Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press.

ANDERSON, H. & GOOLISHIAN, H. 1988. Human systems as linguistic systems: Preliminary and evolving ideas about the implications for clinical theory. <u>Family process</u> 27 (4), 371-393.

ANDERSON, H. & GOOLISHIAN, H. 1990. Beyond cybernetics: Comments on Atkinson and Heath's "Further thoughts on second-order family therapy". <u>Family process</u> 29, 157-163.

ANDERSON, H. & GOOLISHIAN, H. 1992. The client is the expert : A not-knowning approach to therapy. In <u>Therapy as social construction</u> edited by McNamee, S. & Gergen, K.J. Newbury Park: Sage.

_____
_

ANDERSON, H.; GOOLISHIAN, H. & WINDERMAN, L. 1986. Problem-determined systems: Towards transformation in family therapy. Journal of strategic and systemic therapies 5 (4), 1-13.

ANDERSON, H. & MITCHELL, K.R. 1993. Leaving home. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press.

ANKERSMIT, P., DOESER, M. & VARGA, A.K. (editors) 1990. Op verhaal komen. Kampen: Kok-Agora.

APPLE, J. 1970. Premarital counselling techniques. Your Church March/April, 30-31, 51-54.

ARD, B.N. & ARD, C.C. 1976. Handbook of marriage counselling. (2nd) Palo Alto, California: Science Behavior Books.

AUERSWALD, E.H. 1985. Thinking about thinking in family therapy. Family process 24 (1), 1-12.

AUERSWALD, E.H. 1987. Epistemological confusion in family therapy and research. Family process 26, 317-330.

AUGSBURGER, D.W. 1986. Pastoral counseling across cultures. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

AVERY, A.W. 1980. Relationship enhancement with premarital dyads. American journal of family therapy 8 (3), 23-30.

AXINN, W.G. & THORNTON, A. 1992. The relationship between cohabitation and divorce: Selectivity or causal influence? Demography 29 (3), 357-374.

BABBIE, E. & MOUTON, J. 2001. The practice of social research. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

BACH, G. & WYDEN, P. 1969. The intimate enemy: How to fight fair in love and marriage. New York: Morrow.

BADER, E., MICROYS, G., SINCLAIR, C., WILLET, E. & CONWAY, B. 1980. Do marriage preparation programs really work? Results of recent research in Canada. Journal of marital and family therapy 6 (2), 171-179.

BAGAROZZI, D.A. & BAGAROZZI, J.I. 1982. A theoretical derived model of premarital intervention: the building of a family system. Clinical social work journal 10 (1), 52-64.

BAGAROZZI, D.A. & RAUEN, P. 1981. Premarital counselling: appraisal and status. The American journal of family therapy 9 (3), 13-30.

BAILEY, D.S. 1952. The mystery of love and marriage. London: Camelot Press.

_____

_

BALL, J.D. & HENNING, L.H. 1981. Rational suggestions for premarital counseling. Journal of marital and family therapy 7 (1), 69-73.

BALSWICK, J.O. & BALSWICK, J.K. 1989. The Family. A Christian perspective on the contemporary home. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House.

BATESON, G. 1972. Steps to an ecology of mind. New York: Ballantine Books.

BATESON, G. 1979. Mind and nature. A necessary unity. New York: Dutton.

BEAVERS, R.W. 1985. Successful marriage: a family systems approach to couples therapy. New York: W.W. Norton.

BENNETT, N.G., BLANC, A.K. & BLOOM, D.E. 1988. Commitment and the modern union: Assessing the link between premarital cohabitation and subsequent marital stability. American Sociological Review 53, 127-138.

BENSON, M.J., LARSON, J., WILSON, S.M. & DEMO, D.H. 1993. Family of origin influences on late adolescent romantic relationships. Journal of Marriage and the Family 55, 663-672.

BENTLER, P.M. & NEWCOMB, M.D. 1978. Longitudinal study of marital success and failure. Journal of consulting and clinical psychology 46 (5), 1053-1070.

BERGER, E.M. 1983. Words don't always say it . . . and flowers may be misunderstood. Marriage and family living 65 (9), 12-15.

BERGER, P. & LUCKMANN, T. 1966. The social construction of reality. New York: Doubleday.

BERKHOF, H. 1969. De mens onderweg: een christelijke mensbeschouing. s'Gravenhage: Boekencentrum N.V.

BERKHOF, H. 1979. Christelijk Geloof. Nijkerk: Callenbach.

BERKOUWER, G.C. 1957. De mens het beelds Gods. Kampen: Kok.

BERTHOUD, P. 1985. Couple et ordonnance créationnelle. La revue réformée 36, 144 (4), 171-184.

BIENVENU, M.J. 1975. A measurement of premarital communication. Family coordinator 24 (1), 65-68.

BITTER, R.E. 1986. Late marriage and marital stability: the effects of heterogeneity. Journal of marriage and the Family 48, 631-640.

BLOCHER, H. 1975. Clartés sur le marriage. Ichtus 57, 6-12.

BLOCHER, H. 1984. Le marriage. Icthus 6 (125), 3-8.

BLOCHER, H. 1990. Mariage et cohabitation. Perspectives bibliques et théologiques. Fac-

BIBLIOGRAPHY   312
_____
_

Réflexion 16, 26-37.

BLOLAND, H. 1995. Post modernism and higher education. Journal of higher education 66 (5), 521-559.

BLOM, M. & LINDIJER, K. 1986. Wat de pastor ten dienste staat. In Handboek Pastoraat. Pastorale perspectieven in een veranderenden samenleving (deel 2) edited by Faber, H. Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus. 3-28.

BOHLER, C.J. 1987. The use of storytelling in the practice of pastoral counseling. Journal of Pastoral Care 41, 63-71.

BONS-STORM, R. 1989. Hoe gaat het met jou? Kampen: Kok.

BOOTH, A. & EDWARDS, J. 1985. Age at marriage and marital instability. Journal of Marriage and the Family 47, 67-75.

BOOTH, A. & JOHNSON, D. 1988. Premarital cohabitation and marital success. Journal of Family Issues 9, 255-272.

BOSCH, D.J. 1991. Transforming missions. Paradigm shifts in Theology and Mission. New York: Orbis Books.

BOSZORMENYI-NAGY, I. & KRASNER, B.R. 1986. Between give and take. A clinical guide to contextual therapy. New York: Mazel/Brunner.

BOTES, H.J. 1985. Huweliksvoorbereiding en -verryking: 'n Kort handleiding. Pretoria: Kital.

BOZON, M. 19 . Le marriage: montée et déclin d'une institution. La famille: l'état des savoirs. 47-57.

BREUGGEMANN, W. 1993. Texts under negotiation. The Bible and postmodern imagination. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

BREUGGEMANN, W. 1993a. Biblical perspectives on evangelism. Nashville: Abingdon.

BROWNING, D.S. 1983. Religious ethics and pastoral care. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

BROWNING, D.S. 1996. A fundamental Practical Theology. Descriptive and strategic proposals. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

BROWNING, D.S. 2000. Pastoral Theology in a pluralistic age. In The Blackwell reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology edited Woodward, J. & Pattison, S. USA : Blackwell Publishing. 89-103.

BRUNER, E.M. 1986. Experience and its expression. In The anthropology of experience edited by Turner, V. W. & Bruner, E.M. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 139-155.

BRUNER, J. 1990. Acts of meaning. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

BRUNER, J. 1991. The narrative construction of reality. Critical inquiry 18 (1), 1-21.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   313
_____
_

BUBER, M. 1966. <u>The knowledge of man: The philosophy of the interhuman.</u> New York:
Harper and Row.

BUCKNER, L.P. & SALTS, C.J. 1985. A premarital assessment program. <u>Family relations</u> 34,
513-20.

BUMPASS, L.L. & SWEET, J.A. 1991. The role of cohabitation in declining rates of marriage.
<u>Journal of marriage and the family</u> 53 (4), 913-927.

BURKHART, R.A. 1950. A program of premarital counseling. <u>Pastoral psychology</u> 1, 24-33.

BURNHAM, J.B. 1991. <u>Family therapy. First steps towards a systematic approach.</u> London &
New York: Routledge.

BURR, W.R. 1973. The effects of premarital factors on marriage. In <u>Theory construction and
the sociology of the family.</u> New York: Wiley.

BYRNE, B.J. 1983.   Sinning against one's own body: Paul's understanding of the sexual
relationship in 1 Corinthians 6:18. <u>Catholic biblical quarterly</u> 45, 608-616.

CADOGAN, D.A. 1982. Twelve questions to ask before you marry. <u>Marriage and family living</u>
64 (2), 12-13.

CAHILL, L.S. 1993. Can we get real about sex ? In <u>Perspectives on marriage</u> edited by Scott,
K. & Warren, W. Oxford: Oxford University Press.   207-214.

CAMPION, M.A. 1982.   Premarital sexual counseling: suggestions for ministers and other
counselors. <u>Journal of psychology and Christianity</u> 1 (4), 53-60.

CAPPS, D. 1984. <u>Pastoral Care and hermeneutics.</u> Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

CAPPS, D. 1995. <u>Agents of hope - a pastoral psychology.</u> Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

CAPRA, F. 1983.   <u>The turning point. Science, society and the rising culture.</u>   Flamingo:
Fontana.

CARBONNIER, J. 1992. Le droit entre le droit et le non-droit. Conclusion juridique pour un
colloque de démographie sur la nuptialité. <u>Population</u> 47 (7), 745-760.

CARNS, D. 1973. Talking about sex: Notes on first coitus and the double standard. <u>Journal of
Marriage and the family</u> 35, 677-687.

CARSON, D.A. 1996. <u>The gagging of God.</u> Leicester, England: Apollos.

CARTER, B. & McGOLDRICK, M. 1989. <u>The changing family life cycle.</u> USA: Allyn & Bacon.

CARTLEDGE, B.N. 1998. <u>The role of group dynamics in a pastoral approach to marriage
enrichment.</u> D. Th. Dissertation. University of Stellenbosch.

CATECHISME DE L'EGLISE CATHOLIQUE.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   314
_____
_

CECCHIN, G. 1987. Hypothesizing, circularity, and neutrality revisited: An invitation to
    curiosity. Family process 26, 405-413.

CHEEK, J. 2000. Postmodern and poststructural approaches to nursing research. USA: Sage
    Publications.

CHEEK, J. & RUDGE, T. 1994. Inquiry into nursing as textually mediated discourse. In
    Advances in methods of inquiry for nursing edited by Chinn, P. Gaithsburg: Aspen
    Publishers. 59-67.

CHRISTOPHER, S. & RODNEY, C. 1984. Factors involved in premarital sexual decision-making.
    Journal for sex research 20, 363-376.

CLAYTON, R.R. & VOSS, H.L. 1977. Shacking up: cohabitation in the 1970's. Journal of
    marriage and the family 39 (2), 273-283.

CLINEBELL, J.C. & CLINEBELL, C.H. 1970. The intimate marriage. San Francisco: Harper
    Collins Publishers.

CLINEBELL, H.J. (Jr.) 1977. Premarital counseling: Religious dimensions. In Klemer's
    counseling in marital and sexual problems: A clinician's handbook (2nd edition), edited
    by Stahmann, R.F. & Hiebert, W.J. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins.

COLEMAN, J.C. 1988. Intemate relationships, marriage and family. New York: Macmillan

COLES, R. 1988. The call of stories. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Publishing Company.

COMBS, G. & FREEDMAN, J. 1990. Symbol, story and ceremony. Using metaphor in individual
    and family therapy. New York, London: Norton.

COMBS, G. & FREEDMAN, J. 1994. Narrative intentions. In Constructive therapies, edited by
    Hoyt, M.F. New York, London: The Guilford Press. Pp. 67-91.

COMPTON, J.R. 1991. Premarital preparation and counseling. In Pastoral Counseling edited
    by Estadt, B.K. et al New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

COOPER, R.M. 1981. Sex, images, fantasies, and God. St. Luke journal 24, 84-94.

COUTURE, P. 1990. Ritual and Pastoral Care. In Dictionary of Pastoral Care and
    Counseling edited by Hunter, R.J. Nashville: Abingdon. 1088-1090.

COYNE, J.C. 1985. Toward a theory of frames and reframing: the social nature of frames.
    Journal of marital and family therapy 11 (4), 337-344.

CRITES, S. 1989. The narrative quality of experience. In Why narrative ? Readings in
    Narrative Theology, edited by Hauerwas, S. & Jones, L.G. Grand Rapids, Michigan:
    William B. Eerdmans. Pp. 65-88.

CROCHIERE, N. 1982. Preparing when the honeymoon is over. Assessing the relationship before marriage. Marriage and family living 64 (6), 6-9.

CROSBY, J.F. 1991. Illusion and disillusion. The self in love and marriage. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

CROUS, J.J. & PRETORIUS, H.G. 1994. Faktore wat huweliksmaatseleksie beïnvloed: 'n vergelyking tussen eerste en tweede huwelike. Nederduitse Gereformeerde teologiese tydskrif 35 (1), 101-108.

D'AUGELLI, J.F. & D'AUGELLI, A.R. 1977. Moral reasoning and premarital sexual behavior: Toward reasoning about relationships. Journal of Social Issues 33 (2), 46-66.

DE JONGH VAN ARKEL, J.T. 1987. A paradigm for pastoral diagnosing. D.Th thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

DE JONGH VAN ARKEL, J.T. 1988. Theology beyond Newton: A quantum leap. In Paradigms and progress in Theology edited by Mouton, J., Van Aarde, A.G. & Vorster, W.S. HSRC. 223-238.

DE JONGH VAN ARKEL, J.T. 1991. Ekosisteemdenke as meta-teorie in die Praktiese Teologie. Practical Theology in South Africa. 6 (1), 61-75.

DELL, P.F. 1985. Understanding Bateson and Maturana: Toward a biological foundation for the social sciences. Journal of marital and family therapy 11, 1-20.

DEMARIS, A. & LESLIE, G.R. 1984. Cohabitation with the future spouse: its influence upon marital satisfaction and communication. Journal of Marriage and the Family 46, 77-84.

DEMARIS, A. & MACDONALD, W. 1993. Premarital cohabitation and marital instability: A test of the unconventionality hypothesis. Journal of Marriage and the Family 55, 399-407.

DEMARIS, A. & RAO, K.V. 1992. Premarital cohabitation and subsequent marital stability in the United States: a reassessment. Journal of marriage and the family 54 (1), 178-190.

DENZIN, N. 1994. Postmodernism and deconstruction. In Postmodernism and social inquiry edited by Dickens, D. & Fontana, A. New York: Guilford. 182-202.

DE SHAZER, 1991. Putting difference to work. New York: Norton.

DERRIDA, J. 1988. Limited, Inc. Evanston: University of Illinois Press.

DICKS, R.L. 1962. Premarital guidance. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

DICKS, R.R. 1950. Premarital counseling: The minister's responsibility. Pastoral psychology 1, 41-53.

DINGEMANS, G.D.J. 1986. In de leerschool van het geloof. Mathetiek en vakdidactiek voor catechese en kerkelijk vormingswerk. Kampen: Kok.

DINGEMANS, G.D.J. 1990. Praktische theologie op zoek naar identiteit. In De tijd van de verborgen God. Verkenningen en reflecties edited by Dingemans, G.D.J. 's-Gravenhage: Boekencentrum B.V. 114-151.

DINGEMANS, G.D.J. 1989. Praktische theologie als academische discipline. 43, (3),192-212.

DITTGEN, A. 1991. Les marriages religieux en France. Comparaisons avec les marriages civils. Congrès et Colloques INED 7, 137-155.

DOCKERY, D.S. (editor) 1995. The challenge of postmodernism. An Evangelical engagement. A Bridgepoint Book.

DOHERTY, W.J. 1986. Quanta, quarks, and families: implications of quantum physics for family research. Family process 25, 249-264.

DREYER, Y. 1996. Bybelse huweliksrolle en die moderne egalitêre huwelik (Efes. 5:21-32). Practical Theology in South Africa 11 (2), 95-103.

DREYER, Y. 1999. 'n Besinning oor meta- en basisteoretiese aannames in die Praktiese Teologie. Practical Theology in South Africa 14 (1), 46-62.

DUMAS, A. 1983. Le mariage change de visage, qu'en pensent les églises ? In Couples aujourd'hui. Paris: Les bergers et les mages.

DUNN, J. 1996. The household rules in the New Testament. In The family in theological perspective edited by Barton, S.C. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. 43-64

DU PLOOY, C.W. 1994. 'n Eko-hermeneutiese pastorale paradigma met besondere verwysing na seksualiteit. M. Div. Dissertation. University of Pretoria.

DU PLOOY, C.W. 1995. Paradigmatic points of departure for pastoral care. Practical Theology in South Africa 10 (2), 27-39.

DU TOIT, C. 1996. Kerk, kuisheid en postmodernisme. Practical theology in South Africa 2 (2), 69-79.

DU TOIT, D. 1991. The wrong motives for marrying. Orientation 58-62 (4), 45-52.

DUVALL, E.M. 1959. Premarital sex: the counselor's challenge. Pastoral psychology 10, 25-32.

DUVALL, E.M. & MILLER, B.C. 1985. Marriage and Family development. New York: Harper & Row.

EAGLETON, T. 1983. Literary theory: An introduction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

EBERHARDT, T. 1996. Storytelling and Pastoral Care. The journal of pastoral care 50 (1), 23-

_____
–

31.

EDGAR, W. 1985. Le divorce et le remarriage. La revue réformée 36 (144/4), 185-201.

EDWALL, G.E. & ROE, M.D. 1982. The development of sexuality: A perspective on issues and values. Journal of psychology and Christianity 4, 23-29.

ELIA, A.D. 1959. Teamwork in premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 10, 33-38.

EPSTEIN, N. 1986. Assessment and modification of dysfunctional belief systems in marital therapy. British Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy 4, 1-9.

EPSTEIN, N. & EIDELSON, R.J. 1981. Unrealistic beliefs of clinical couples: Their relationships to expectations, goals, and satisfaction. American Journal of Family Therapy 9, 13-21.

EPSTON, D. 1993. Internalizing discources versus externalizing discources. In Gilligan, S. & Price R. (eds.) Therapeutic conversations. New York: Norton. 161-177.

EPSTON, D. 1994. Extending the conversation. Family therapy networker 18, 30-37, 62.

EPSTON, D. & WHITE, M. 1992. Experience, Contradiction, Narrative & Imagination: Selected papers of David Epston and Michael White, 1989-1991. Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich centre publications. 109-151.

ERICKSON, M.J. 1998. Revisioning the family life cycle theory and paradigm in marriage and family therapy. The American Journal of Family Therapy 26, 341-356.

ERICKSON, M.J. 1998. Postmodernizing the faith – Evangelical responses to the challenge of postmodernism. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

EVERETT, W.J. 1985. Blessed be the bond. Christian perspectives on marriage and the family. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

FAIRCHILD, R.W. 1959. Variety of premarital interviewing. Pastoral psychology 10, 9-13.

FARLEY, M.A. 1990. Commitment, covenant and faith. Chapter 8 in Personal commitments. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

FESTY, P. 1986. Cohabitation et cohabitants: Enquetes et indices. Les familles d'aujourd'hui Colloques de l'Aidelf, 343-355.

FIRET, J. 1968. Het agogisch moment in het pastoral optreden. Kampen: Kok.

FISCHER, L. 1983. Mothers and mothers-in-law. Journal of Marriage and the Family 45 (1), 187-192.

FOLEY, M. 1981. Marriage - a relationship. Preparation and fulfilment. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.

FORD, D.F. 1989. System, story, performance: A proposal about the role of narrative in Christian systematic theology. In Why narrative ? Readings in narrative theology,

_____

_

edited by Hauerwass, S. & Jones, L.G. 191-215.

FORD, E.E. & ENGLAND, S. 1979. Permanent love: Practical steps to a lasting relationship.
Minneapolis: Winston Press.

FORER, L.K. 1978. The birth-order factor: how your personality is influenced by your place in
the family. New York: David McKay, Company, Inc.

FOUCAULT, M. 1965. Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason.
(transl. by Howard, R.) New York: Random House.

FOUCAULT, M. 1975. The birth of clinic: An archeology of medical perception. (transl. by
Sheridan Smith, A.M.) New York: Random House.

FOUCAULT, M. 1977. Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison. New York: Pantheon
Books.

FOUCAULT, M. 1980. Power/Knowledge: selective interviews and other writings, 1972-1977.
(translated by Sheridan, A.) New York: Pantheon Books.

FOUCAULT, M. 1982. The subject and power. In Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and
Hermeneutics edited by Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

FOUCAULT, M. 1985. The history of sexuality, volume 2: The use of pleasure. (translated by
Hurley, R.) New York: Pantheon Books.

FOURIE, D.P. 1991. The development of ecosystemic thinking. Unpublished manuscript.

FOURNIER, D.G. & OLSON, D.H. 1986. Programs for premarital and newlywed couples. In
Psychoeducational approaches to family therapy and counseling, edited by Levant, R.F.
New York: Springer.

FOWERS, B.J. & OLSON, D.H. 1986. Predicting marital success with PREPARE: a predictive
validity study. Journal of marital and family therapy 12, 403-13.

FOWLER, J.W. 1981. Stages of faith. The psychology of human development and the quest
for meaning. Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers.

FREEMAN, D.R. 1965. Counselling engaged couples in small groups. Social work 10 (4), 36-42.

FREEDMAN, J. & COMBS, G. 1993. Invitations to new stories: Using questions to explore
alternative possibilities. In Therapeutic conversations edited by Gilligan, S. & Price, R.
New York: Norton.

FREEDMAN, J. & COMBS, G. 1996. Narrative therapy. The social construction of preferred
realities. New York: W.W. Norton.

FRIEDMAN, E.H. 1989. Systems and ceremonies: A family view of rites of passage. In Carter,

BIBLIOGRAPHY   319
_____
–

B. & McGoldrick, M. (eds.) The changing family life cycle. A framework for family therapy. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. pp.119-147.

FRIEDMAN, E.H. 1985. Generation to generation. Family process in church and synagogue. New York: The Guilford Press.

FRIEDMAN, E.H. 1991. Bowen theory and therapy. In Handbook of family therapy Volume II, edited by Gurman, A.S. & Kniskern, D.P. New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers. pp. 134-170.

FRIEDMAN, H., ROHRBAUGH, M. & KRAKAUER, S. 1988. The time-line genogram: Highlighting temporal aspects of family relationships. Family Process 26.

FROMM, E. 1956. The art of loving. New York & Evanston: Harper & Row.

FUCHS, E. 1979. Le désir et la tendresse. Genève: Labor et Fides.

FURGESON, E.H. 1952. Aims of premarital counseling. Journal of pastoral care 6 (4), 30-39.

FURNISS, G.M. 1994. The social context of pastoral care. Defining the life situation. Louisville, Kentucky : Westminster John Knox Press.

GADAMER, H-G. 1986. Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik. Tübingen: Mohr.

GANZEVOORT, R.R. 1989. Lewensverhalen. Kampen: Kok.

GANZEVOORT, R.R. 1993. Investigating life-stories: Personal narratives in Pastoral Psychology. Journal of Psychology and Theology 21 (4), 277-287.

GARIEPY, S.H. 1988. But what's marriage for? Marriage and Family Living 70 (2), 10-13.

GERDES, L.C. 1988. The developing adult. Durban: Butterworths.

GERGEN, K. 1985. The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. American psychologist 40 (3), 266-275.

GERGEN, K. 1991. The saturated self: Dilemmas of identity in contemporary life. New York: Basic Books.

GERGEN, K. 1992. The postmodern adventure. Family therapy networker Nov/Dec, 52 & 56-57.

GERKIN, C.V. 1986. Widening the horizons. Pastoral responses to a fragmented society. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

GERKIN, C.V. 1986. Faith and praxis: Pastoral counseling's hermeneutical problem. Pastoral Psychology 35 (1), 97-102.

GERKIN, C.V. 1991. Prophetic Pastoral Care. A Christian Vision of Life Together. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 320
_____
_

GERKIN, C.V. 1993. The Living Guman Document. Re-visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

GERKIN, C.V. 1997. An introduction to Pastoral Care. Nashville : Abingdon Press.

GIBLIN, P. 1994. Premarital preparation: three approaches. Pastoral psychology 42, 147-161.

GILES, J.E. 1997. The story of the self : The self of the story. Journal of pastoral counseling 32, 25-34.

GIROUX, H. 1992. Border crossings. New York: Routledge.

GLEASON, J. & PRESCOTT, M.R. 1977. Group techniques for premarital preparation. The family coordinator 26 (July, 3), 277-280.

GLEDHILL, T. 1994. The message of the Song of Songs. Leicester: InterVarsity Press.

GLENDENBERG, S.E. & WILSON, A.J. 1972. Experiments in group premarital counselling. Social casework 53 (9), 551-562.

GLICK, P.C. 1984. Marriage, divorce, and living arrangements. Journal of family issues 5 (1), 7-26.

GLICK, P.C. & SPANIER, G.B. 1980. Married and unmarried cohabitation in the United States. Journal of marriage and the family 42 (1), 19-30.

GOOLISHIAN, H. 1990. Therapy as linguistic system: Hermeneutics, narrative and meaning. The family psychologist 6, 44-45.

GOOLISHIAN, H. & ANDERSON, H. 1981. Including non-blood related persons in family therapy. In Questions and answers in family therapy edited by Gurman, A. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

GOOLISHIAN, H. & ANDERSON, H. 1987. Language systems and therapy: An evolving idea. Psychotherapy 24 (3S), 529-538.

GOOLISHIAN, H. & ANDERSON, H. 1990. Understanding the therapeutic process: From individuals and families to systems in language. In Voices in family psychology edited by Kaslow, F. Newbury Park: Sage.

GORDON, S. 1988. Why love is nor enough. Boston: Bob Adams.

GOTTMAN, J.M. 1994. What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

GOULDNER, A. 1971. The coming crisis of Western sociology. London: Heinemann.

GRAHAM, E. 2000. Practical Theology as transforming practice. The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology. USA: Blackwell Publishers. 104-117.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   321
_____
_

GRIFFITH, J.L. & GRIFFITH, M.E. 1992. Owning one's epistemological stance in therapy. Dulwich centre newsletter 1, 5-11.

GRIFFITH, J.L. & GRIFFITH, M.E. 1994. The body speaks: Therapeutic dialogues for mind-body problems. New York: Basic Books.

GRIMM, R. 1984. Quelle signification, quelle importance donnons-nous à la celebration civile et religieuse du mariage. Bulletin d'information de l'Eglise Réformée de France. 22, 66-109.

GROVER, K.J., RUSSELL, C.S., SCHUMM, W.R. & PAFF-BERGEN, L.A. 1985. Mate selection processes and marital satisfaction. Family relations 34, 383-386.

GUIBERT-LANTOINE, C. de. et al 1994. La cohabitation adulte. Population et sociétés 293.

GUIDON, A. 1986. The sexual creators: A ethical proposal for concerned Christians. Lanham, MD: University Press o America.

GULDNER, C.A. 1977. Marriage preparation and marriage enrichment: the preventive Pastoral psychology 25 (Sum), 248-259.

GURMAN, A.S. & KNISKERN, D.P. 1977. Enriching research on marital enrichment programs. Journal of marriage and family counselling 3, 3-11.

HARE-MUSTIN, R. 1994. Discourses in the mirrored room: A postmodern analysis of therapy. Family process 33, 19-35.

HAUERWAS, S. & JONES, G. 1989. Introduction: Why narrative ? Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans. 1-18.

HAWS, W.A. & MALLINCKRODT, B. 1998. Separation-individuation from family of origin and marital adjustment of recently married couples. The American journal of family therapy 26, 293-306.

HEITINK, G. 1984. Pastoraat als hulpverlening. Inleiding in de pastorale theologie en psychologie. Kampen : Kok.

HEITINK, G. 1990. Pastoraat en andere vormen van hulp. In Heil, heling en gezondheid edited by Heitink, G. & Veenhof, J. 's-Gravenhage: Meinema.

HEITINK, G. 1993. Praktische theologie. Geschiedenis – theorie – handelingsvelden. Kampen: Kok.

HEITINK, G. 1994. Ontwikkelingen in de praktische theologie. Een kroniek. Praktische Theologie 21 (5), 511-536.

HENDRICK, S.S. & HENDRICK, C. 1992. Liking, loving and relating. (2nd edition). Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   322
_____
_

HENZE, L.F. & HUDSON, J.W. 1974. Personal and family characteristics of cohabitating and noncohabitating college students. Journal of marriage and the family 36 (4), 722-727.

HERTZ, R. 1996. Introduction: Ethics, reflexivity and voice. Qualitative sociology 19(1), 3-9.

HEYNS, J.A. 1977. Op weg met die Teologie. Pretoria: NGKB.

HEYNS, J.A. 1988. Dogmatiek. Kaapstad: NGKB.

HILTNER, S. 1972. Theological dynamics. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

HOAREAU, G. & HOAREAU, M. et al. 1993. Que ton oui soit oui. Manuel d'aide à la préparation au mariage. Paris : Mission Vie et Famille.

HOAREAU, G. & HOAREAU, M. 1995. Croître dans l'amour. Cléon d'Andran: Excelsis.

HOFFMAN, L. 1981. Foundations of Family therapy. A conceptual framework for systems change. USA: Basic Books.

HOFFMAN, L. 1985. Beyond power and control: Toward a "second order" family systems therapy. Family systems medicine 3 (4), 381-396.

HOFFMAN, L. 1988. A constructivist position for family therapy. The Irish journal of psychology 9, 110-129.

HOFFMAN, L. 1990. Constructing realities: an art of lenses. Family process 29 (1), 1-12.

HOFFMAN, L. 1990. Foreword. In The reflecting team: Dialogues and dialogues about the dialogues edited by Andersen, T. New York: Norton. ix-xiv.

HOWARD, G.S. Cultural tales. A narrative approach to thinking, cross-cultural psychology, and psychotherapy. American psychologist 46 (3), 187-197.

HUNT, R.A. & RYDMAN, E.J. 1979. Creative Marriage. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

HUYSAMEN, G.K. 1996. Methodology for the social and behavioural sciences. Johannesburg: International Thompson Publishing.

ICKES, W. 1993. Traditional gender roles: Do they make, and then break, our relationships? Journal of Social Issues 49, 71-85.

IMBER-BLACK, E. 1988. Families and larger systems: a family therapist's guide through the labyrinth. New York: Guilford.

IMBER-BLACK, E. 1989. Idiosyncratic life cycle transitions and therapeutic rituals. In The changing family life cycle. A framework for family therapy edited by Carter, B. & McGoldrick, M. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. 149-163.

IMBER-BLACK, E. 1993. Secrets in family and family therapy. New. York: W.W. Norton.

IMBER-BLACK, E. & ROBERTS, J. & WHITING, R.A. 1988. Rituals in families and family therapy. New York: W.W. Norton.

In liefde trouw zijn. 1983. Publication by the : Sectie Pastoraat van het deputaatshap
        Gemeenteopbouw, Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland.

INSEE, Recensements de la population 1990.

JACOBSON, N.S. 1977. Problem solving and contingency contracting in the treatment of
        marital discord. Journal of consulting and Clinical Psychology 45, 92-100.

JACOBSON, S. & JACQUES. 1997. Destabilizing the field: Poststructuralist knowledge-making
        strategies in a postindustrial era. Journal of management inquiry 6 (1), 42-59.

JANSON, M. 1996. Onderdanigheid en die moderne huwelik. Practical Theology in South
        Africa 11 (2), 140-149.

JEDLICKA, D. 1975. Sequential analysis of perceived commitment to partners in premarital
        coitus. Journal of Marriage and the Family 37, 385-390.

JOHNER, M. 1997. A quoi sert le mariage? Aix-en-Provence: Editions Kerygma.

JOHNSON, P.E. 1959. Emotional problems in premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 10,
        18-24.

JONES, E.F. & STAHMANN, R.F. 1994. Clergy beliefs, preparation, and practice in premarital
        counseling. Journal of pastoral care 48 (Summer), 181-186.

JORDAAN, W. 1996. Die huwelik en postmodernisme. Practical theology in South Africa 2 (2),
        1-23.

JOUBERT, S. 1996. Die huwelik in die Nuwe Testament. Practical Theology in South Africa,
        11 (2), 37-47

KARP, E.S., JACKMAN, J.H. & LESTER, D. 1970. Ideal-self fulfillment in mate selection: A
        corollary to the complementary need theory of mate selection. Journal of Marriage
        and the Family 32, 269-272.

KEENEY, B.P. 1979. Ecosystemic epistemology: An alternative paradigm for diagnosis.
        Family process 18, 117-129.

KEENEY, B.P. 1982. What is an epistemology of family therapy ? Family therapy 21, 153-168.

KEENEY, B.P. 1987. Aesthetics of change. New York: The Guilford Press.

KEENEY, B.P. & ROSS, J.M. 1983. Cybernetics of brief family therapy. Journal of marital and
        family therapy 9 (4), 375-382.

KEENEY, B.P. & SPRENKLE, D.H. 1982. Ecosystemic epistemology: critical implications for
        the aesthetics and pragmatics of family therapy. Family process 21 (1), 1-19.

KEMPER, T.D. 1966. Mate selection and marital satisfaction according to sybling type of
        husband and wife. Human relations 26 (1), 23-30.

_____
_

KILPATRICK, W.K. 1986. The use of literature in character formation. In Content, character and choice in schooling: Public policy and research implications. Washington DC: National Council of Educational Research. 85-92.

KIRKPATRICK, C. 1967. Family development, selective needs, and predictive theory. Journal of marriage and the Family 29, 229-236.

KLASSEN, M. 1983. Counseling for quality: some considerations for premarital counseling. Journal of pastoral counseling 18, 73-80.

KNOX, D. & KNOX, F. 1974. Preparation for marriage: Beyond the classroom. Journal of family counseling 2 (2), 16-22.

KNOX, D. & PATRICK, J. 1971. You are what you do: A new approach in preparation for marriage. The family coordinator 20, 109-114.

KNOX, D. & WILSON, K. 1981. Dating behaviors of university students. Family relations 30, 255-258.

KOTZE, D.J. & KOTZE, E. 199?. Die predikant se storie: 'n Narratiewe benadering tot die ontwikkeling van die persoon van die predikant. Ned. Geref. Teologiese Tydskrif 363-370.

KUHN, T.S. 1983. La structure des révolutions scientifiques. France: Flammarion.

KUNG, H. 1984. Paradigmenwechsel in der Theologie. Versuch einer Grundlagenerklärung. In Theologie- Wohin ? Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Paradigma edited by Küng, H. & Tracy, D. Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus Herd Mohn. 37-75.

L'ABATE, L. & McHENRY, S. 1983. Handbook of marital interventions. New York: Grune & Stratton.

LAIRD, J. 1989. Woman and stories: Restorying women's self-constructions. Women in families: A framework for family therapy edited by McGoldrick, M.; Anderson, C. & Walsh, F. New York: Norton. 427-450.

LAJEUNESSE, P. 1953. Marriage preparation course. South African clergy review 6 (1), 26-32.

LAMOTT, A. 1995. Bird by Bird. Some instruction on writing and life. New York: Anchor Books.

LARSON, J.H. 1988. The marriage quiz: College students' beliefs in selected myths about marriage. Family relations 37, 3-11.

LARSON, J.H. 1992. "You're my one and only": Premarital counseling for unrealistic beliefs

_____
_

about mate selection. American journal of family therapy 20 (3), 242, 253.

LARSON, J.H. & HOLMAN, T.B. 1994. Premarital predictors of marital quality and stability. Family relations 43 (2), 228-237.

LAUNAY, C. 1996. Mariages 1994. La nuptialité à son niveau le plus bas, avant une reprise? Insee première 438.

LAWLER, M. 1995. Perichoresis: New theological wine in an old theological wineskin. Horizons 22 (1), 49-66.

LAWSON, D.M. 1985. Differentiation in premarital preparation. Journal of psychology and Christianity 4 (3), 56-63.

LAX, W.D. 1991. The reflecting team and the initial conversation. In The reflecting team: Dialogues and dialogues about dialogues. edited by Andersen, T. New York: Norton.

LAZARUS, A.A. 1985. Marital myths. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact.

LEADER, A.L. 1975. The place of in-laws in marital relationships. Social Casework 56 (8), 486-491.

LEDERER, W. & JACKSON, D.D. 1968. The mirages of marriage. New York: Norton.

LEFRANC, C. 1995. Le mariage en déclin, la vie en couple aussi. INSEE juillet 392.

LEMAIRE, J-G. 1997. Le couple: sa vie, sa mort. La structuration du couple humain. France: presse Cameron.

LERIDON, H. 1991. Pourquoi le démographie s'intéresse-t-il à la nuptialité ? In La nuptialité : évolution résente en France et dans les pays développés edited by Hibert, Th. & Roussel, L. Congrés et Colloques 7, 7-18.

LERIDON, H. & VILLENEUVE-GOKALP, C. 1988. Les nouveaux couples : Nombre, caractéristiques et attitudes. Population 43 (2), 331-374.

LE ROUX, A. & DE BEER, E. 1994. Eensaamheid en intimiteit by getroude studente in vroeë volwassenheid. South African journal of psychology 24 (2), 53-59.

LE ROUX, P. 1987. Autonomy and competence in families with a child at risk : an ecosystemic approach. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pretoria: Unisa.

LESTER, A.D. 1995. Hope in pastoral care and counseling. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.

LEVIN, S. ; RASER, J. ; NILES, C. & REESE, A. 1986. Beyond family systems – toward problem systems : Some clinical implications. Journal of strategic and systemic strategic therapies 5 (4), 62-69.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 326

_____

—

LEVINGER, G. & HUSTON, T.L. 1978. Interpersonal attraction and relationships. <u>Annual Review of Psychology</u> 29, 115-156.

LEVINGER, G. & SONNHEIM, M. 1965. Complementarity in marital adjustment: reconsidering Toman's family constellation hyphothesis. <u>Journal of Individual Psychology</u> 21, 137-145.

LÉVY, M.L. 1992. Le secret de la paternité: des dix commandements au code civil et à la Sécurité sociale. <u>INED</u> 609-618.

LÉVY, M.L. 1996. D'une generation à la suivante. <u>Population</u> INED 316.

LEWIS, R.A. & BURR, W.R. 1975. Premarital coitus and commitment among college students. <u>Archives of Sexual Behavior</u> 4, 73-74.

LIBERMAN, R.R. (ed.)1980. <u>Handbook of marital therapy.</u> New York: Plenum Press.

LIÉGEOIS, A. 1994. Zingewing, pastoraat en hulpverlening. <u>Praktische theologie. Nederlands tijdschrift voor pastorale wetenschappen</u> 21 (5), 447-459.

LONGINI, M.D. 1982. When it's not the way you pictured it? <u>Marriage and family living</u> 64 (2), 18-20, 26.

LOUW, D.J. 1985. <u>Die volwasse huwelik.</u> Durban: Butterworth.

LOUW, D.J. 1991. Die maak van 'n "teo"-logiese analise in 'n pastorale hermeneutiek. <u>Practical Theology in South Africa</u> 6 (2), 170-183.

LOUW, D.J. 1993. <u>Pastoraat as ontmoeting. Ontwerp vir 'n basisteorie, antropologie, metode en terapie.</u> Pretoria: RGN.

LOUW, D.J. 1993. <u>Liefde is vir altyd. 'n Huweliksgids vir verloofdes en getroudes.</u> Cape Town: Lux Verbi.

LOUW, D.J. 1996. Metaphoric theology and God images in a hermeneutics for pastoral care and counselling. <u>Skrif en Kerk</u> 17 (1), 114-142.

LOWE, R. 1991. Postmodern themes and therapeutic practices: Notes towards the definition of "family therapy" : Part 2. <u>Dulwich Centre Newsletter</u> 3, 41-52.

LUKKEN, G. 1984. <u>Geen leven zonder rituelen. Antropologische beschouwingen met het oog op de christelijke liturgie.</u> Baarn: Amboboeken.

MACE, D.R. 1952. The minister's role in marriage preparation. <u>Pastoral psychology</u> 2, 45-48.

MACE, D.R. 1975. Education and preparation for marriage: new approaches. <u>Pastoral psychology</u> 24 (Fall), 9-16.

MACE, D.R. 1978. Personal communication.

MACE, D. 1981. Close, but not too close. <u>Marriage and Family Living</u> 63 (12), 5.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   327
_____
_

MACE, D. 1983a. Managing anger in marriage. Marriage and Family Living 65 (7), 10.

MACE, D. 1983b. Marital illiteracy. Marriage and Family Living 65 (11), 37.

MACE, D. 1983c. Skills training for couples. Marriage and family living 65 (10).

MACE, D. 1984a. Marriage and money. Marriage and Family Living 66 (1), 37.

MACE, D. 1984b. The myth of the seven-year itch. Marriage and Family Living 66 (6), 20-22.

MACE, D. 1984c. Can marriage couples fight fair? Marriage and Family Living 66 (7), 37.

MACE, D. 1984d. Do we marry for love? Marriage and Family Living 66 (9), 40.

MACE, D. 1984e. Incompatibility. Marriage and Family Living 66 (11), 37.

MACE, D.R. 1985. Getting ready for marriage. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press.

MACE, D. 1987. Three ways of helping married couples. Marriage and Family Living 17 (2),
        179-185.

MACE, D. 1988. What do you talk about? Marriage and Family Living 70 (4), 31.

MACE, D. 1989. What's good about marriage? Marriage and family living April 31.

MACE, D.R. & MACE, V.C. 1980. Foreword. In This time together: a guide for premarital
        counselling edited by Rock, S.A. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.

MACKIN, T. 1989. The marital sacrament. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

MADIGAN, S.P. 1992. The application of Michel Foucault's philosophy in the problem
        externalizing discourse of Michael White. Journal of family therapy 14, 265-279.

MADIGAN, S. & LAW, I. 1992. Discourse not language: The shift from a modernist view of
        language to the postmodern analysis of discourse in family therapy. Dulwich Centre
        Newsletter 1, 31-36.

MAIR, M. 1988. Psychology and storytelling. International journal of personal construct
        psychology 1, 125-137.

MARIN, P. 1993. A revolution's broken promises. In Perspectives on marriage edited by
        Scott, K. & Warren, W. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 180-187.

MAROTZ-BADEN, R. & COWAN, D. 1987. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law: The effects of
        proximity on conflict and stress. Family Relations 36 (4), 385-390.

MASON, R.L. & JACOBS, C.L. 1979. How to choose the wrong marriage partner and live
        unhappily ever after. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

MATTHYSEN, E. 1993. Ekosistemiese denke. Class notes.

MATURANA, H.R. 1975. The organization of the living: A theory of the living organization.
        International journal of man-machine studies 7, 313-333.

MATURANA, H.R. 1978. H.R. Biology of language : the epistemology of reality. In

Psychology and the biology of langauge and thought edited by Miller, G.A. & Lenneberg, E. New York: Academic Press. 2-63.

MATURANA, H.R. 1980. Autopoiesis: Reproduction, heredity and evolution. In Autopoiesis, autopoietic structures and spontaneous social orders edited by Zeleny, M. Colorado: Westview Press. 45-77.

MATURANA, H.R. & VARELA, J.V. 1980. Autopoiesis and cognition. The realization of the living. Boston: D. Reidel.

MAY, W.F. 1993. Four mischievous theories of sex: demonic, divine, casual and nuisance. In Perspectives on marriage edited by Scott, K. & Warren, W. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 188-197.

McADAMS, D.P. 1993. The stories we live by. Personal myths and the making of the self. New York, London : The Guilford Press.

McFAGUE TE SELLE, S. 1975. Speaking in parables. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

MCGOLDRICK, M. 1989. The joining of families through marriage. In The changing family life cycle. A framework for family therapy edited by Carter, B. & McGoldrick, M. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.   209-233.

MCGOLDRICK, M. & GERSON, R. 1989. Genograms and the family life cycle. In The changing family life cycle. A framework for family therapy edited by Carter, B. & McGoldrick, M. Boston: Allyn & Bacon. 164-189.

MCGRATH, J.F. 1999. Christology on two fronts: a New Testament model for doing Christology in a pluralistic context. Religion and Theology 6 (1), 65-82.

MCQUEEN, T.J. 1988. To the heart of things: Separating symptoms from troubles in marriage. Marriage and family living 70 (1), 18-19.

MEADOWS, M. & TAPLIN, J. 1970. Pre-marital counseling with college students: A promising triad. Journal of Counseling Psychology 17, 516-518.

MERMET, G. 2002. Francoscopie. Pour comprendre les Français, 2003. Larousse.

MILES, H.J. 1971. Sexual understanding before marriage. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

MILLER, J.G. 1980. General living systems theory. In Comprehensive textbook of psychiatry/III edited by Kaplan, H.I., Freedman, A.M. & Sadock, B.J.   Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins. 1: 98-114.

MILLER, S.; CORRALES, R. & WACKMAN , D.B. 1975. Recent progress in understanding and facilitating marital communication. The family coordinator 24, 143-152.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   329
_____
_

MINUCHIN, S. & FISHMAN, H.C. 1981. Family therapy techniques. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

MISHLER, E.G. 1991. Research interviewing. Context and narrative. USA: Harvard University Press.

MITCHELL, K. & ANDERSON, H. 1981. You must leave before you can cleave: a family systems approach. Pastoral psychology 30 (Winter), 71-88.

MITCHELL, K.R. 1967. Reinterpreting the purpose of premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 18, 18-24.

MITMAN, J.L.C. 1980. Premarital counseling. A manual for clergy and counselors. New York: The Seabury Press.

MONK, G., WINSLADE, J., CROCKET, K. & EPSTON, D. (eds.) 1997. Narrative Therapy in Practice. The archaeology of Hope. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

MONTELEONE, R. 1997. The integrity of a narrative path: Circles of possibilities. Journal of pastoral counseling 32, 45-56.

MORGAN, A. 2000. What is narrative therapy? An easy-to-read introduction. Adelaide : Dulwich Centre Publications.

MOUTON, J. & MARAIS, H.C. 1994. Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences. Pretoria : RGN.

MUDD, E.H. 1957. Premarital counseling. In Understanding your patient. edited by Liebman. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

MULDER, A. 1992. Pastoraat, ritueel en religieuze communicatie. Praktische theologie 19 (5), 506-519.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1991a. Ekohermeneutiese pastoraat en gemeenskapsontwikkeling: 'n Afrika perspektief. Acta theologia 2, 91-98.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1991b. Pastoral care in a post-apartheid South Africa. Practical theology in South Africa 6 (2), 184-192.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1991c. Grafika as hulpmiddel in die pastorale gesprek. Skrif en Kerk 12 (1), 54-63.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1993. Die gebruik van rituele in die pastoraat. Practical theology in South Africa 8 (1), 1-13.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1994a. Practical theological wisdom in the context of pastoral marriage and family therapy. Practical Theological in South Africa 9 (1), 20-28.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   330
_____
_

MÜLLER, J.C. 1994b. An eco-hermeneutical perspective on inter-cultural counselling. <u>Skrif en</u>
<u>kerk</u> 15 (2), 345-357.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1996. <u>Om tot verhaal te kom. Pastorale gesinsterapie.</u> Pretoria: RGN.

MÜLLER, J.C. 1999. <u>Companions on the journey. The art of narrative conversation.</u> Logos
Electronic Publishers.

MÜLLER, J.C. 2000. Therapy as fiction writing. *Unpublished manuscript.*

MÜLLER, J.C.; VAN DEVENTER, W. & HUMAN, L. 2001. Fiction writing as metaphor for
research: A narrative approach. *Unpublished manuscript.*

MÜLLER, J.C. & VOS, C.J.A. (editors) 1996. Een, maar twee. <u>Practical Theology in South</u>
<u>Africa</u> 11 (2).

MUNCY, M.W. 1983. The contribution of life cycle theory to pastoral premarital and marriage
counseling. <u>Pastoral psychology</u> 31 (4), 244-253.

MUNOZ-PEREZ, B. & RONDEAU-RIVIER M-C. 1990. Une nouvelle phase pour le divorce ?
<u>Données sociales</u> 297-300.

MURSTEIN, B.J. 1970. Stimulus-Value-Role: A theory of marital choice. <u>Journal of Marriage</u>
<u>and the Family</u> 32, 465-481.

NAGEL, J.F.P. 1996. <u>Benutting van die pastoraal narratiewe model in huweliksvoorbereiding.</u>
Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria.

NASH, E.M. 1970. Premarital counseling. In <u>The adolescent experience: A counseling guide</u>
<u>to social and sexual behavior</u> edited by Semmens, J.P. & Krantz, K.E. New York:
Macmillan.

NAUDÉ, L. 1990. <u>Psigoterapie en persoonlike konstrukte: 'n Vergelykende studie van Kelly se</u>
<u>teorie van persoonlike konstrukte en tweede-orde kubernetika.</u> Unpublished Master's
dissertation. Pretoria: Unisa.

NAVONE, S.J. 1977. <u>Towards a theology of story.</u> Slough, England: St. Paul Publications.

NEUBURGER, R. 1997. <u>Nouveaux couples.</u> Paris: Editions Odile Jacob.

NEWCOMB, P.R. 1979. Cohabitation in America: an assessment of consequences. <u>Journal of</u>
<u>the marriage and the family</u> 41 (3), 597-603.

NEWCOMB, P.R. & BENTLER, P.M. 1980. Cohabitation before marriage. A comparaison of
married couples who did and did not cohabit. <u>Alternative lifestyles</u> 3 (1), 65-85.

NORRIS, C. 1991. <u>Deconstruction, theory and practice.</u> London: Routledge.

NYLUND, D. & THOMAS, J. 1994. The economics of narrative. <u>Family therapy networker</u> 18,
38-39.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   331
_____
_

OATES, W.E. 1975. Before you marry them: a premarital guidebook for pastors. Nashville: Broadman Press.

OATES, W.E. 1982. Finding time for your spouse. Marriage and family living 64 (11), 18-22.

O'HANLON, B. 1994. The third wave. Family therapy networker 18 (6), 19-29.

OLSEN, M.G. 1983. Double income, double trouble? Marriage and Family Living 65 (12), 24-26.

OLSON, D.H. 1983a. How effective is marriage preparation? In MACE, D.R. (ed.) Prevention in family services. Beverly Hills: Sage.

OLSON, D.H. 1987. Building a strong marriage. Minneapolis: Prepare-Enrich, Inc.

OLSON, D.H., FOURNIER, D.G. & DRUCKMAN, J.M. 1986. Prepare/Enrich counselor's manual. Minneapolis: Prepare-Enrich, Inc.

OLSON, D.H. & NOREM, R. 1977. Evaluation of five premarital programs. Unpublished report, Department of family social sciences, University of Minnesota.

OLSEN, D.H. & OLSEN, A.K. 1997. PREPARE/ENRICH Program: Version 2000. Unpublished manuscript.

OLSEN, D.H., SPRENKLE, D.H. & RUSSELL, C.S. 1979. Circumplex model of marital and family systems: I. Cohesion and adaptability dimensions, family types, and clinical applications. Family Process 18, 3-28.

OLSEN, D.H., SPRENKLE, D.H. & RUSSELL, C.S. 1983. Circumplex model of marital and family systems: VI. Theoretical update. Family Process 22, 69-83.

OLSEN, M.G. & VON KAENEL, G.E. 1976. Two as One: A Christian Marriage preparation program. New York: Paulist Press.

OSMER, R.R. 1990. Teaching as Practical Theology. In Theological approaches to Christian education edited by Seymor, J.L. & Miller, D.E. Nashville: Abingdon.

PALMER, P.F. 1972. Christian marriage: contract or covenant. Theological studies 33, 617-665.

PARÉ, D.A. 1995. Of families and other cultures : The shifting paradigm of family therapy. Family Process 34, 1-19.

PARKER, I. & SHOTTER, J. 1990. (editors) Deconstructing social psychology. London: Routledge.

PARRY, A. 1991. A universe of stories. Family process 30, 37-54.

PARRY, A. & DOAN, R.E. 1994. Story re-visions. Narrative therapy in the postmodern world. New York: Guilford Press.

PASINI, W. 1995. À quoi sert le couple? Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   332
_____
–

PATTISON, S. 1988. A critique of pastoral care. London: SCM.

PATTON, J. & CHILDS, B.H. 1988. Christian marriage and family. Caring for our generations.
       Nashville: Abingdon Press.

PECK, B.B. & SWARTS, E. 1975. The premarital impasse. Family therapy 2, 1-10.

PECK, S. 1978. The road less traveled. New York: Simon & Shuster.

PELLA, G. & WELLS, P. 1988. Hiérarchie dans le couple? La revue réformée 39, 156 (4), 68-
       72.

PENN, P. 1985. Feed-forward: future questions, future maps. Family process 24, 299-310.

PENN, P. & FRANKFURT, M. 1994. Creating a participant text : writing, multiple voices,
       narrative multiplicity. Family process 33, 217-231.

PEPLAU, L.A., RUBIN, Z. & HILL, C.T. 1977. Sexual intimacy in dating relationships. Journal
       of Social Issues 33 (2), 86-109.

PETERSON, E.H.   1992. Five smooth stones for pastoral work. Grand Rapids, Michigan:
       William B. Eerdmans.

PIETERSE, H.J.C. 1991a. Die wetenskapsteoretiese grondslag van die Praktiese Teologie.
       Practical Theology in South Africa 6 (1), 38-51.

PIETERSE, H.J.C. 1991b. Praktiese Teologie as teologiese wetenskap binne die Teologiese
       Fakulteit. Practical Theology in South Africa 6 (2), 249-254.

PIETERSE, H.J.C. 1993. Praktiese Teologie as kommunikatiewe handelingsteorie. Pretoria:
       RGN.

PIETERSE, H.J.C. & VOS, C.J.A.   1991.   Pneumatologiese perspektiewe vanuit 'n
       kommunikatiewe handelingsteorie. Acta theologica 2, 1-18.

PINSKY, H.J. 1974. The effect of sibling constellation on mate selection. Dissertation
       Abstracts International 35 (6-B), 3031-3032.

POCOCK, D. 1995. Searching for a better story: harnessing modern and postmodern positions
       in family therapy. Journal of family therapy 17, 149-173.

POLLNER, M. & McDONALD-WIKLER, L. 1985. The social construction of reality – the passion
       within us all. Family process 24, 241-254.

PORTER, S. 1993. Nursing research conventions. Journal of advanced nursing 18, 137-143;

POTTS, K. 1994. Martin Buber's "healing dialogue" in marital therapy: a case study.   The
       journal of pastoral care 48 (4), 325-338.

POUJOL, J. & DUVAL-POUJOL, V. 2003. Les 10 clés de la vie en couple. Paris: Editions
       Empreinte temps présent.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   333
_____
_

POWELL, J. 1974. The secret of staying in love. Texas: Argus Communications.

PRETORIUS, H.G. & VAN WYK, J.D. 1994. Die evaluering van 'n huweliksvoorbereidings-
program. South African journal of psychology 22 (2), 140-146.

PRIGOGINE, I. & STENGERS, I. 1984. Order out of chaos. New York: Bantam Books.

PURKIS, M.E. 1994. Representations of action: Reorientating field studies in nursing practice.
In Advances in methods of inquiry for nursing edited by Chinn, P. Gaithsburg: Aspen.
13-31.

RAHNER, K. 1967. Marriage as a Sacrament. Theological investigations 23 (X), 199-221.

RAMBO, A.H.; HEATH, A. & CHENAIL, R.J. 1993. Practicing therapy: Exercises for growing
therapist. New York: Norton.

RANDALL, R.L. 1979. What do you say after they say, "We're living together?" Suggestions for
beginning pre-marital counselling. The journal of pastoral care 33 (1), 51-59.

RAPPAPORT, L. 1976. Adult development: Faith, houses … and more money. Personnel and
guidance journal 55, 106-108.

RAUSCH, H., GOODRICH, D. & CAMPBELL, J. 1963. Adaptation to the first years of
marriage. Psychiatry 26, 368-380.

REBEL, J.J. 1981. Pastoraat in pneumatologisch perspectief. Een theologische
verantwoording vanuit het denken van A.A. van Ruler. Kampen : Kok.

REBEL, J.J. 1984. De pneumatologische dimensie in het pastoraat. In Ervaren waarheid.
Opstellen, aangeboden aan Dr. H. Jonker Nijkerk : Callenbach. 107-119.

RENNER, P. 1979. The use of ritual in Pastoral Care. The journal of pastoral care 33 (3),
164-174.

RICOEUR, P. 1965. De l'interprétation. Essai sur Freud. Paris: Seuil.

RICOEUR, P. 1981. Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.

RICOEUR, P. 1986. Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique II. Paris: Seuil.

RIDLEY, C.A. et al. 1981a. Mutual problem-solving skills training for premarital couples: A six
month follow-up. Journal of applied developmental psychology 2 (2), 179-188.

RIDLEY, C.A. et al 1981b. Conflict management: A premarital training program in mutual
problem solving. American journal of family therapy 9 (4), 23-32.

RIDLEY, C.A. & BAIN, A.B. 1983. The effects of a premarital relationship enhancement
program on self-disclosure. Family therapy 10 (1), 13-24.

RIDLEY, C.A.; JORGENSEN, S.R.; MORGAN, A.G. & AVERY, A.W. 1982. Relationship

enhancement with premarital couples: An assessment of effects on relationship quality. American journal of family therapy 10 (3), 41-48.

RILKE, R.M. 1975. Rilke on love and other difficulties edited by Mood, J. New York: Norton.

RISMAN, B.J. et al. 1981. Living together in college: implications for courtship. Journal of marriage and the family 43 (1), 77-83.

ROBBINS, G. & TOMMER, J. 1976. Innovative uses of the FIRO-B in marriage counseling. Journal of marriage and family counseling 3:24-28.

ROBERTS, J. 1994. Tales and transformations. Stories in families and family therapy. New York, London: W.W. Norton.

ROBERTSON, B. 1990. Storytelling in pastoral counseling : A narrative pastoral theology. Pastoral psychology, 39 (1), 33-45.

ROGERS, C. R. 1972. Becoming partners: Marriage and its alternatives. New York: Delacorte Press.

ROLFE, D.J. 1975. Marriage preparation manual. New York: Paulist Press.

ROLFE, D.J. 1977. Techniques with premarriage groups. British journal of guidance and counseling 5, 89-97.

ROLFE, D.J. 1983. Toward a better preparation for marriage. Currents in theology and mission   10, 238-242.

ROLFE, D.J. 1985. Developing skills and credibility in marriage preparation. Pastoral psychology 33, 161-171.

ROOK, K.S. & HAMMEN, C.L. 1977. A cognitive perspective on the experience of sexual arousal. Journal of Social Issues, 33 (2), 7-29.

RORTY, R. 1991b. Essays on Heidegger and others: Philosophical papers, volume 2. New York: Cambridge University Press.

ROSALDO, R. 1986. Ilongot hunting as story and experience. In The anthropology of experience edited by Turner, V. & Bruner, E. Chicago: University Press of Chicago.

ROSENAU, P. 1992. Post-modernism and the social sciences: Insights, inroads and intrusions. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

ROSENBLATT, P.C. & BUDD, L.G. 1975. Territoriality and privacy in married and unmarried cohabitating couples. The journal of social psychology 97, 67-76.

ROTH, S. & CHASIN, R. 1994. Entering one another's worlds of meaning and imagination. Dramatic enactment and narrative couple therapy. In Constructive therapies, edited by Hoyt, M.F. New York, London : The Guilford Press.   189-216.

_____
–

ROUSSEL, L. & BOURGUIGNON, O. 1978. Générations nouvelles et mariage traditionnel. Enquête auprès de jeunes de 18-30 ans. INED-PUF, travaux et documents, 86.

RUBEN, H.J. & RUBEN, I.S. 1995. Qualitative interviewing. The art of hearing the data. London: SAGE Publications.

RUSSEL, M.N. & LYSTER, R.F. 1992. Marriage preparation: factors associated with consumer satisfaction. Family relations 41 (4), 446-451.

RUSSELL, C.S. 1974. Transition to parenthood: problems and gratifications. Journal of Marriage and the Family 36 (1), 294-301.

RUSSELL-JONES, I. 1993. The contemporary text: Media and preaching. Journal for preachers. 17 (1), 31-36.

RUTLEDGE, A. 1966. Premarital Counseling. Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co.

SCHOEN, R. 1992. First unions and the stability of first marriages. Journal of marriage and the family 54 (2), 281-284.

SCHULTZ, B., BOHRNSTEDT, G.W., BORGATTA, E.F. & EVANS, R.R. 1977. Explaining premarital sexual intercourse among college students: A causal model. Social Forces 56, 148-165.

SCHUMM, W.R. & DENTON, W. 1979. Trends in premarital counseling. Journal of marital and family therapy 5 (4/1), 23-32.

SCHUTTE, S.C. 1994. Samewerking tussen die predikant en die maatskaplike werker in huweliksvoorbereiding. M.A.-verhandeling. Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria.

SCHUTZ, W.C. 1976. The FIRO scales. Palo Alto, Calif.: Consulting psychologists press.

SHONICK, H. 1975. Premarital counselling: three years' experience of a unique service. The family coordinator 24 (3), 321-324.

SILLIMAN, B. & SCHUMM, W.R. 1995. Client interests in premarital counseling: a further analysis. Journal of sex and marital therapy 21 (1), 43-56.

SIMON, R. 1985. A frog's eye view of the world. (Interview with Humberto Maturana) The family therapy networker 9 (5), 36-43.

SLUZKI, C.E. 1981. Process of symptom production and patterns of symptom maintenance. Journal of marital and family therapy 273-280.

SMART, J. 1970. The strange silence of the Bible in the church. London: SCM.

SMITH, E.L. 1950. The Lord's prayer in premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 1, 34-37.

SOCOR, B.J. 1997. The self and its constructions : A narrative faith in the postmodern world. Journal of pastoral counseling 32, 1-24.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   336

_____
_

SPANIER, G.B. 1975. Sexualization and premarital sexual behavior. The Family Coordinator
24, 33-41.

SPANIER, G.B. 1976a. Formal and informal sex education as determinants of premarital sexual
behavior. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 5, 39-67.

SPANIER, G.B. 1976b. Perceived sex knowledge, exposure to eroticism, and premarital sexual
behavior: The impact of dating. Sociological Quarterly 17, 247-261.

SPANIER, G.B. 1976c. Measuring dyadic adjustment: new scales for assessing the quality of
marriage and similar dyads. Journal of marriage and the family 38 (1), 15-28.

STAHMANN, R.F. & HIEBERT, W.J. (editors) 1977. Klemer's counseling in marital and sexual
problems: a clinician's handbook. (2nd ed.) Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins.

STAHMANN, R.F. & HIEBERT, W.J. (editors) 1984. Counseling in marital and sexual problems:
a clinician's handbook. (3rd edition) Lexington, Mass.: Lexington.

STAHMANN, R.F. & HIEBERT, W.J. 1987. Premarital Counseling. The professional's Handbook.
Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

STEVENSON, K.W. 1987. To join together: the rite of marriage. New York: Pueblo
Publishing.

STONE, L. 1993. Passionate attachments in the West in historical perspective. In
Perspectives on marriage edited by Scott, K. & Warren, W. Oxford: Oxford University
Press. 171-9.

STRAUSS, A. 1946. The influence of parent images upon marital choice. American Social
Review 11, 554-559.

STRAUSS, A. 1947. Personality needs and marital choice. Social Forces 25 (1), 335.

STROUP, G.W. 1975. A bibliographical critique. Theology today. 32 (2), 133-143.

STROUP, G.W. 1981. The promise of Narrative Theology. London: SCM.

STUART, R.B. & STUART, F. 1975. Premarital counseling inventory. Champaign, Ill.: Research
press.

SULLEROT, E. 1984. Pour le meilleur et sans le pire. Fayard.

TANFER, K. 1987. Patterns of premarital cohabitating among never-married women in the
United States. Journal of marriage and the family 49 (3), 483-497.

TEACHMAN, J.D. 1983. Early marriage, premarital fertility, and marital dissolution. Journal
of Family Issues 4, 105-126.

TEACHMAN, J.D. & POLONKO, K.A. 1990. Cohabitation and marital stability. Social forces 69

BIBLIOGRAPHY   337
_____

–

(1), 207-220.

TEACHMAN, J.D., THOMAS, J. & PAASCH, K. 1991. Legal status and the stability of coresidential unions. Demography 28 (4), 571-586.

TELLINI, G. 1987. Rites and ritual. In A dictionary of Pastoral Care edited by Campbell, A.V. London: SPCK. 248.

TENENBAUM, S. 1999. Bien vivre sa vie de couple. Affectivité. Psychologie. Communication. Paris: InterEditions.

THATCHER, A. 1999. Marriage after modernity. Christian marriage in postmodern times. New York: New York University Press.

THIELICKE, H. 1978. The ethics of sex. Cambridge: James Clarke.

THISELTON, A.C. 1992. New horizons in hermeneutics. Grand Rapids, Michigan.

THOMSON, E. & COLELLA, U. 1992. Cohabitation and marital stability: Quality or commitment? Journal of Marriage and the Family 54, 259-267.

THOMTON, P.W. 1982. Love and commitment: No marriage can last very long without both ingredients. Marriage and Family Living 64 (1), 21.

TIELEMAN, D. 1993. Pastoraat en Zingeving. Gereformeerd theologisch tijdschrift 93, 1-32.

TINQUE, A. 1958. The minister's role in marriage preparation and premarital counseling. Marriage and family living 20, 11-16.

TOMAN, W. 1961. Family Constellation. New York: Springer.

TOMAN, W. 1965. Complementarity in family adjustment: comment. Journal of Individual Psychology 21:145-147.

TOMM, K. 1989. Externalizing the problem and internalizing personal agency. Journal of strategic ans systemic therapies 8 (1), 54-59.

TOMM, K. 1993. The courage to protest. A commentary on Michael White's work. In Therapeutic conversations edited by Gilligan, S. & Price, R. New York: Norton. 62-80.

TOULEMON, L. 1996. La cohabitation hors marriage s'installe dans la durée. Population 3, 675-716.

TRACY, D. 1981. The analogical imagination. Christian theology and the culture of pluralism. New York: Crossroad.

TRACY, D. 1983. The context: The public character of theological language. In Talking about God edited by Tracy, D & Cobb, J.B. New York: The Seabury Press.

TRACY, D. 1984. Hermeneutische Überlegungen im neuen Paradigma. In Theologie- Wohin ? Auf dem Weg zu einem neuen Paradigma edited by Küng, H. & Tracy, D. Gütersloh:

_____

_

Gütersloh Verlagshaus Herd Mohn.   76-102.

TRACY, D. 1999. <u>Pluralité et ambiguïté. Hermeneutique, religion, espérance.</u> Paris: Cerf.

TRAINER, J.B. 1979. Premarital counseling and examination. <u>Journal of marital and family therapy</u> 5 (2), 61-78.

TROST, J. 1975. Married and unmarried cohabitation: the case of Sweden, with some comparisons. <u>Journal of marriage and the family</u> 37 (3), 677-682.

TURNER, R. 1989. Deconstructing the field. In <u>The politics of field research: Sociology beyond enlightenment</u> edited by Gubrium, J. & Silverman, J.D. London: Sage. 13-19.

VANDE KEMP, H. 1985. Mate selection and marriage: A psychodynamic family-orientated course. <u>Teaching of psychology</u> 12 (3), 161-164.

VANDERKOOY VOS, D.J. & HAYDEN, D.J. 1985. Birth-order complementarity and marital adjustment. <u>Journal of marriage and the family</u> 47 (3), 723-727.

VAN DER VEN, J.A. 1994. Empirical methodology in Practical Theology: Why and How? <u>Practical Theology in South Africa</u> 9 (1), 29-44.

VAN DER WESTHUIZEN, R. 1993. Rituele in maatskaplike werkhulpverlening. <u>Practical theology in South Africa</u> 8 (1), 14-28.

VAN DIJK, T. 1997. Editorial : Analysing discourse analysis. <u>Discourse and society</u> 8 (1), 5-6.

VANHOOZER, K.J. 1990. <u>Biblical narrative in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. A study in hermeneutics and theology.</u> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

VAN HUYSSTEEN, J.W.V. 1987. <u>Teologie as kritiese geloofsverantwoording.</u> Pretoria: RGN.

VAN HUYSSTEEN, J.W.V. 1988. Paradigms and progress: inference to the best explanation. In <u>Paradigms and progress</u> edited by Mouton, J., Van Aarde, A.G. & Vorster, W.S. Pretoria: HSRC. 81-90.

VAN HUYSSTEEN, J.W.V. 1989. Narrative theology. An adequate paradigm for theological reflection. <u>Hervormde teologiese studies</u> 45 (4), 767-777.

VAN KNIPPENBERG, T. 1995. Pastoraat en zingeving. <u>Praktische Theologie</u> 22 (3), 365-376.

VAN WYK, A.G. 1999. Practical Theology discourse: Modernism and beyond. <u>Practical Theology</u> 14 (1), 74-98.

VAN ZOOST, B. 1973. Premarital communication skills education with university students. <u>The family coordinator</u> 22 (2), 187-191.

VARELA, F.J. 1979. <u>Principles of biological autonomy.</u> New York: Elsevier North-Holland.

VELTKAMP, H.J. 1988. <u>Pastoraat als gelijkenis. De gelijkenis als model voor pastoraal</u>

_____

–

handelen. Kampen: Kok.

VILLENEUVE-GOKALP, C. 1990. Du mariage aux unions sans papiers : Histoire récente des transformations conjugales. Population 45 (2), 265-298.

VILLENEUVE-GOKALP, C. 1994. Contraception et progression des unions sans papiers. Les modes de régulation de la reproduction humaine Colloques de l'Aidelf, 6, 441-452.

VITZ, P.C. 1992a. Narratives and counseling, part 1: From analysis of the past to stories about it. Journal of Psychology and Theology 20, 11-19.

VITZ, P.C. 1992b. Narratives and counseling, part 2: From stories of the past to stories for the future. Journal of Psychology and Theology 20, 20-27.

VON BERTALANFFY, L. 1950. An outline of general systems theory. British journal of the philosophy of science 1, 134-164.

VON BERTALANFFY, L. 1974. General systems theory and psychiatry. In American handbook of psychiatry edited by Arieti, S. New York: Basic Books. 1, 1095-1117.

VON BERTALANFFY, L.   1975.   Perspectives on General systems theory.   Scientific-philosophical studies. New York: George Brazilier.

VON BERTALANFFY, L.   1984.   General systems theory. Foundations, developments, applications. New York: Brazilier.

VON FOERSTER, H. 1981. Observing systems. Seaside, CA: Intersystems publications.

VON GLASERSFELD, E. 1987. The construction of knowledge. Salinas, CA: Intersystems publications.

VOS, C.J.A. & PIETERSE, H.J.C. 1992. Antropologiese insigte binne die kommunikatiewe handelingsteoretiese benadering in die Praktiese Teologie. Practical Theology in South Africa 7(2), 147-158.

VOS, C.J.A. 1996. Die volheid daarvan 1. Homiletiek in 'n hermeneutiese-kommunikatiewe perspektief. Pretoria: RGN.

VUGTEVEEN, S.L. 1982. Premarital counseling: helpful suggestions for the busy pastor. Reformed review 35 (Winter), 82-97.

WALSTER, E. & WALSTER, G.W. 1978. A new look at love. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

WATSON, F. 1997. Text and truth. Redefining biblical theology. Edinburgh : T & T Clark.

WATZLAWICK, P. (ed.) 1984. The invented reality. New York: Norton.

WEBB-MITCHELL, B. 1995. The importance of stories in the act of caring. Pastoral Psychology 43 (3), 215-225.

WEINGARTEN, K. 1991. The discources of intimacy: Adding a social constructionist and

feminit view. Family process 30, 285-305.

WEINGARTEN, K.   1992.   A consideration of intimate and non-intimate interactions in therapy. Family process, 31, 45-59.

WELLS, P. 1985. Mariage ou cohabitation: un choix impossible? La revue réformée 36, 144 (4), 159-170.

WHITE, J.M. 1989. Premarital cohabitation and marital stability : a reassessment of the Canadian evidence. Journal of marriage and the family 51 (2), 535-544.

WHITE, M. 1986. Negative explanation, restraint, and double description : A template for family therapy. Family process 25 (2), 169-184.

WHITE, M. 1987. Family therapy and schizophrenia: Addressing the "in-the-corner" lifestyle. Dulwich Centre Newsletter spring, 14-21.

WHITE, M. 1988. The process of questioning: A therapy of literary merit ? Dulwich Centre Newsletter winter, 8-14.

WHITE, M. 1988/9. The externalizing of the problem and the re-authoring of lives and relationships. Dulwich Centre Newsletter summer, 3-20.

WHITE, M. 1989. Selected papers. Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publications.

WHITE, M. 1991. Deconstruction and therapy. In Experience, contradiction, narrative and imagination edited by Epston, D. & White, M. Adelaide, Australia: Dulwich Centre Publication. 109-151.

WHITE, M. 1993. Commentary: The histories of the present. Therapeutic conversations edited by Gilligan, S. & Price, R. New York: Norton. 121-135.

WHITE, M. 1995 (reprint 1998). Re-authoring lives: interviews & essays. Adelaide : Dulwich Centre Publications.

WHITE, M. 1997. Narratives of therapists' lives. Adelaide : Dulwich Centre Publications.

WHITE, M. 2000. Reflections on narrative practice. Essays & interviews. Adelaide : Dulwich Centre Publications.

WHITE, M. & EPSTON, D. 1990. Narrative means to therapeutic Ends. New York: W.W. Norton.

WHITEHEAD, E.E. & WHITEHEAD, J.D. 1993. Sexuality and intimacy in marriage. In Perspectives on marriage edited by Scott, K. & Warren, W. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 198-206.

WILLIAMS, L.M. 1992. Premarital counseling: a needs assessment among engaged individuals. Contemporary family therapy an international journal 14 (6), 505-518.

BIBLIOGRAPHY   341
_____

_

WINCH, R.F. 1967. Another look at the theory of complementary needs in mate-selection. Journal of Marriage and the Family 29, 756-762.

WISER, W. 1959. Launching a program of premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 10, 14-17.

WITTSTOCK, B.; ROZENTAL, L.; SHUDA, S. & MAKGATHO, G. 1992. Links between rituals, ecologies of ideas, health and illness. From diversity to healing edited by Mason, J.; Rubenstein, J. & Shuda, S. Durban: SAIMFT. 117-128.

WOJCIK, J.V. & IVERSON, E.R. 1989. Therapeutic letters: The power of the printed word. Journal of strategic and systemic therapies 8 (2 & 3), 77-81.

WOOD, C.A. 1979. Premarital counseling: a working model. Journal of pastoral care 33, 44-50.

WOOD, N.S. & STROUP, H.W. 1990. Family systems in premarital counseling. Pastoral psychology 39, 111-119.

WORTHINGTON, E.L. 1990. Counseling before marriage. Dallas: Word Publishing.

WRIGHT, H.N. 1981. Marital counselling: a biblical based, behavioral, cognitive approach. Denver, Colorado: Christian Marriage Enrichment.

WRIGHT, H.N. 1983. Premarital counseling. Chicago: Moody Press.

WRIGHT, H.N. 1992. The premarital counseling handbook. Chicago: Moody Press.

WRIGHT, J. 1990. Getting engaged: A case study and a model of the engagement periods a process of conflict resolution. Special issue: Sexual and marital counseling: Perspectives on theory, research and practice. Counseling psychology quarterly 3 (4), 399-408.

WYLIE, M.S. 1994. Panning for gold. Family therapy networker 18 (6), 40-48.

YAHRAES, H. 1978. What research shows about birth-order, personality and IQ. Washington: U.S. Government printing office.

ZERFASS, R. 1974. Praktische Theologie als Handlungswissenschaft. In Praktische Theologie Heute edited by Klostermann, F. & Zerfass, R. München: Kaiser Verlag. 164-177.

ZIMMERMAN, J.L. & DICKERSON, V.C. 1994a. Tales of the body thief. Externalizing and deconstructing eating problems. In Constructive therapies, edited by Hoyt, M.F. New York, London: The Guilford Press. 295-318.

ZIMMERMAN, J.L. & DICKERSON, V.C. 1994b. Using a narrative metaphor : Implications for theory and clinical practice. Family process 33, 233-145.

ZOOST, B. 1973. Pre-marital communication skills education with university students. The

_____

_

Family Coordinator 22, 187-191.

ZUKAV, G. 1986. The dancing Wu Li masters. An overview of the new physics. New York: Bantam Books.