

**TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH GOING GIRLS WHO FALL  
PREGNANT OUT OF WEDLOCK: CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I        Vicentia Kgabe, declare that this dissertation on

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH GOING GIRLS WHO FALL PREGNANT  
OUT OF WEDLOCK: CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE

Is my own work and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and  
acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Baptismal Preparation class- A number of sessions where those who will baptize their children gather to be taught about baptism and the church.
2. Church- Anglican Church in Southern Africa
3. Clergy- People who are ordained to both the office of Deacon or Priest in the Anglican Church.
4. Conflict- A disagreement between two parties or more with different ideas or beliefs.
5. Confession class- A number of sessions where the one who has sinned ask for pardon from the priest and at the end he/she repents and is pardoned.
6. Discipline- Punishment given to correct a person or enforce obedience.
7. Expel- Being made to stop participating and/or coming to church until a certain period.
8. Lay leader- Elder A lay person in the church who is elected, co-opted or voted for a certain office of leadership in the church.
9. Law- Policy Canons and Constitution of the Church
10. Priest- A person ordained for the office of priesthood in the Anglican Church.

11. Sin- Committing the wrong that is not tolerated by the church.
12. Sinners bench- A bench/pew at the back of the church reserved for “sinners”.
13. Straaf Class- Straaf an Afrikaans word meaning torment
14. Uniform- An attire worn by members of the church according to the church groups they belong to.

## **TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF CHURCH GOING GIRLS WHO FALL PREGNANT OUT OF WEDLOCK: CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL CARE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Having been an active member of the Anglican Church since a little girl, there are things that I have witnessed and found them disturbing, not only to me but to other women and some men within the church. A number of girls who are active members of the church fell pregnant out of wedlock, and are being expelled from church and all the activities for a period of three months (minimum). The church has made falling pregnant out of wedlock a very sinful act, as a result of that, girls are told to stop participating from all church activities (the church sees this as a matter of discipline), and at times they are told to stop coming to church, because they are a disappointment to the church as well as their parents. The assumption is that they will have a bad influence on other young girls.

This problem has and continues to cause a lot of conflict and tension in homes, and also in some churches. Let alone the trauma that is experienced by these young girls, the parent(s) of these girls who are badly affected by the turn of the events. They see the whole thing as a failure on their part to raise a daughter with good morals. Parents are traumatized by this suspension. Some take a side of their child, while others enforce the church decision especially of not allowing their daughter to attend church, until after giving birth. Then girls are required to attend confessional class of restoration (penitential class), which will allow them to baptise their child and be received back into full membership.



Some girls have been defiant of the churches decision and continued attending church services. This has been met with an unwelcoming response by some church elders and some older women in the leadership of the church.

There are symbolic methods that are adopted to humiliate the pregnant girl. In some churches a bench / pew at the back of the church is allocated for pregnant girls, which is named “*sinner’s bench*” that is, where she is supposed to sit, until she gives birth. While in some African Independent Churches a girls is suspended from church and her uniform is taken and hung inside the entrance of the church, so as to let other know that there is a girl who has fallen pregnant in that congregation. This process of humiliation continues to traumatize these girls and their parents.

The church’s torments and traumatization on the girl’s faith and believe system does not only end with the pregnancy, it continues after giving birth especially in preparations for baptisms. The baptism preparation class is created in order to allow all those who wish to baptize their children to enrol on this class. There is no exact time frame of how long this class will be held or continue to be attended. It can be for a month or up to four month or even more. In a number of churches there is no set baptismal syllabus, anything and everything goes. The person who instructs this class in many cases is a lay leader (male or female) who has not been trained theologically nor given guidelines for baptismal preparation. It has been noted that few of the mothers don’t attend this classes for a number of reasons, while the grand- parents (grandmothers) are the ones who attend

because they want their grandchildren to be baptized. This traumatic experience poses a challenge to the method of caring for the flock.

In many cases the preparation class centres on the act, rather than the present situation which is to assist parents to raise their children in Christ especially with the help of Godparents and also to empower the Christian community to be caring community. The other side of the coin is that, fathers of these children have been rarely seen in these classes, let alone being asked to attend classes. Some women have been made to attend two baptismal classes. The first one is opened to everyone (the ones whose children are born in a context of marriage) and the other one is for unmarried women. In the second one (which has been named the *Straaf* Class – meaning torment) they recite Psalm 51, because they have committed a sinful act by having a child outside of marriage. The process continues then they go before a priest to confess their sin (that of having a child outside marriage), failing which to attend the second preparation class their child will not be baptised.

Some priest(s) have refused to baptize these children in a context of a family Sunday service, and they are baptized on a Saturday afternoon as they (priests) say “*Nka se kolobetse ngwana o diretsweng mo setlhareng ka sonaga*” loosely translated “*I will not baptize on a Sunday (within a church service) a child who has been conceived under a tree.*” The trauma continues throughout this process of confession, in other words, only those children who were born in a context of a marriage deserve a Sunday baptism where the whole faith community witness and welcome these children into their spiritual home.

From the moment these children are conceived to the time of their birth, their mothers experience rejection, are stigmatized and are isolated by the institution which is required and commissioned to love and accept everyone without discrimination. The question to ask is where is grace in the midst of this traumatic experience? Interesting and embarrassing enough the church only discriminates against women and not the men. Nothing is done in order to discipline the boy or man involved in this act. This is gross injustice on the girl child.

Stigma plays a pivotal role in the life of these girls, it does not make things better, and these girls become outcasts in their own community. Zackler said the following about stigmatizing teenage pregnant girls; **“the stigmatized girl tends to hold the same beliefs about identity that we do...the standards she has incorporated from the wider society equip her to be intimately alive to what others sees as her failing, inevitably causing her, if only for a moment, to agree that she does indeed fall short of what she really ought to be. Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual’s perception of one of her own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess and one she can readily see herself as not possessing”**. (1971:35)

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Falling pregnant unexpectedly is a shock and traumatic experience, because it alters the lives of many (i.e. the immediate and extended family, the girl, church and friends and the responsible boy) for ever, and for others it is a welcomed alteration, whiles it is

rejected and despised by others. The main question to ask is why are children born out of wedlock seen as the product of sin? Are these children being punished because of what their parents did? (or women in particular). Most of the issues raised above are traumatic and causes conflict in many families and churches. The church does not need to add to the already traumatic experience another tragedy. Her role in this case is to provide a space for healing and acceptance and care. The pastoral element is overshadowed by the emphasis of the law.

Some of the questions that arise from this problem are:

- Are girls who fall pregnant out of wedlock unworthy single Christian parents?
- Who cares enough to understand the circumstances that led to this girl falling pregnant? The church never asks a question; was it a consensual sex, rape or molestation?
- The church has failed to identify the father and deal with him in this process, who is he? A loving boyfriend, a married man in the same church, a family member or a leading figure in the church or community?
- Some girls have opted for abortion rather than facing the humiliation of occupying the ‘sinners’ bench’, or her uniform being hung at the entrance of the church. What is the church saying in this case? In other words, the church causes these girls to commit murder. While the boy is not challenged by the system of the church

### 1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology that the author elected to use is the *Shepherding Theory* of Charles Gerkins and Nick Pollard's *Positive Deconstruction Theory*.

The Shepherding model is one of the four Biblical models (*priest, prophets, wisdom, and shepherd*) for pastoral care used by Charles Gerkins and was first appropriated within the religious life of Israel as a metaphor with which to speak of the care of Yahweh for Yahweh's people. Gerkins alludes that "the prophetic, priestly, and wisdom models of caring ministry we inherit from the Israelite community are not, to be sure, the only biblical images with which we pastors have to identify. Another, in certain way a more significant, model is that of the caring leader as shepherd (Gerkins 1997: 27).

Nick Pollard explains *Positive Deconstruction* as "The recognizing and affirming of the elements of truth to which individuals already holds but also helps them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed. *Deconstruction* = helping people to deconstruct (take apart) what they believe in order to look carefully at the belief and analyse it. *Positive* = the deconstruction is done in a positive way in order to replace it with something better. (Pollard 1997:44)

Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches will be employed in this research. The primary approach that will be used in this research is qualitative, the reason being that the author believes that there are multiple possible realities constructed by different individuals, the available literature is limited and narrative writing skills will be used. The nature of the data that will be collected will be documentary, statistically, interview

data and questionnaire. The author will interview the subjects that are involved and affected. Abductive analysis (combination of deductive and inductive analysis) will be used for argumentation. The main aim is to create a caring model that will empower these girls in order to cope with this traumatic experience.

#### **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the suggested research is to contribute to the church a new way of caring for traumatized girl-child. In other words, challenging this traumatic, isolating and rejecting method of one sided discipline, and introducing a method of forgiving, healing and caring that our Lord shared while ministering in Palestine - a method also used by Gerkins.

#### **1.5 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

1. The relevance of this research is to help the leadership of the church (clergy and lay leaders) and how to care for the girl child, as well as the boy friend (or married man) during this difficult time of discipline. As research is conducted, the author will create healing methods or guidelines that will contribute to caring for both within the church and community.
2. Create guidelines for baptismal preparation during the suspension period (for both the girl and the boy).
3. Empower the clergy and lay people in dealing with the issue of what sin is and help them create a method of caring.

## **1.6 RESEARCH GAP**

Researches have been done on teenage pregnancy from the education and health care side, these research projects addresses the following; it's impact on the teenager's education, the community, socio-economic issues, and family relations. Other researches are focusing on the cause of teen pregnancy and ways that it can be prevented. The author hasn't come across a research done on unwed girls being expelled by the church as a result of falling pregnant that is the reason the author is doing this research project.

This contribution will help new and old clergy in order to be sensitive when dealing with this issue. Discipline is important in the church, but it must be inclusive and caring.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

The research emphasis is on isolation, rejection and oppression experienced by girls. The main aim is directed towards empowering them. However, the author is aware of the church letting the boy who impregnated the girl to go free.

## CHAPTER 2

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The research topic deals with girls who are active members of the church who fall pregnant out of wedlock, in this chapter the author will enlighten the reader about the issues of teenage pregnancy and the challenges that these girls and their families are faced with during this difficult time. For the purpose of this study the researcher will use both the words *adolescence* and *teenage* interchangeably. The researcher will give the definition of pregnancy and adolescence.

#### 2.2 DEFINITION OF PREGNANCY

- A female person having a child developing in the womb (Oxford Dictionary)
- The state of a female after conception and until the termination of the pregnancy (Stedman's Medical Dictionary)
- Denoting a female bearing within her the product of conception. (Stedman's Medical Dictionary)
- The condition of having a developing embryo of foetus in the body, after union of an ovum and spermatozoon. (Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary)



### 2.3 DEFINITION OF ADOLESCENCE

Vrey is of the opinion that the term adolescence implies the period during which the child is at secondary school level, irrespective of age or gender (Vrey 1979: 165).

According to Harlock the term adolescence is derived from the Latin verb “*adolescere*” which means “*to grow*” or “*to grow to full maturity*”. She further states that “adolescence is a period of transition when the individual changes physically and psychologically from a child to an adult” (Hurlock 1973:2). This definition comes close to what the researcher is alluding to when referring to adolescence (teenage) in this research work.

Grinder describes adolescence as a time when individuals begin to assert themselves as distinct human beings. Since no two persons have exactly the same experience or occupy identical position in the social structure, each can assert his/her distinctness providing he or she receives at least modest encouragement from society (Grinder 1973: 2).

Adolescence is and has always been primarily a period of change in the life of any individual. **“The child is becoming an adult, and for a time he/she possesses features of both, swinging back and forth from one to the other and sometimes intermingling both indiscriminately. Physically and emotionally he/she is maturing, and the force of his/her feelings often has the punch of a pile drive”** (Young 1954:93).

The primary fear of most adults is that the maturing and powerful sexual urge of the adolescence will escape control. Naturally the fear is strongest in relation to girls and the threat of illegitimate pregnancy lies constantly in the background.

## 2.4 TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Sex outside of marriage has and continues to gain social acceptance. Most people consider teenage pregnancy as a disaster, yet it is increasing in number each year and is occurring at younger and younger ages. In the local newspaper (The Star) it was mentioned that teenage pregnancy was at its highest in the last year (2006) in one school 71 girls became pregnant and over 400 girls were pregnant in Gauteng Province, South Africa. There is a rise in the birth rate among adolescent girls, regardless of socio-economic or marital status, racial or ethnic groups, geographic location or current family situation.

**“In earlier decades, pregnancy even in wedlock was considered something to conceal as far as humanly possible, young girls who found themselves pregnant outside of marriage regarded it as a disaster and took a hopeless, fatalistic view of the future”** (Oettinger 1979: 49). Today pregnancy in some circles is an instant prestige and, if there’s trouble at home, it is the very best way for teenagers to spite their parents.

Out of wedlock pregnancies are on the increase, especially among the younger teenagers and adolescents. A private, family embarrassment has quickly become a major

community problem. Increasingly in some Christian communities, clergy are called upon to officiate at weddings where the girl is pregnant and the couple is so young as to require on going parental support. As pregnancy out of wedlock is censured in many church communities, the question is, how can a pregnant teenager come to the priest for guidance in the context of trust, if the priest is leading or give in to pressure to punish the teenager with compulsory marriage?

Teen pregnancy is not often two teenagers conceiving a child, in most cases it is a teenage girl with an older boy or a man (married) engaging in a sexual act consensually or other wise.

It has been said by David Rolfe, “**that teenage pregnancy is one indicator of the syndrome of failure which includes: failure to remain in school; failure to achieve the adolescent functions of separating oneself from one’s parents, determination of sex role, development of a value system and choice of a vocation; Failure to limit family size; failure to establish a stable family; failure to be self-supporting; and failure to have healthy infants**”. (Journal of Pastoral Care: v38 1984 pg 29-43)

It has been observed that, one of the most serious phenomena of the times, in which we are living, is that more and more children are giving birth to children. Teenage pregnancies have increased all over the world, and as already mentioned in this chapter it is also a source of great concern in South Africa.

It has been asked on whether teen pregnancy situation truly constitute an epidemic or a problem of crisis proportions? This question has been the source of some controversy and appears to depend upon how one chooses to define the terms epidemic and crisis. It was concluded by Vonovskis that, **“the teen pregnancy phenomenon was elevated falsely to an epidemic or crisis level in order to suit the political agenda of certain moral entrepreneurs”** (1988:128).

Twenty or more percent of babies born in South Africa are babies born of teenagers; these statistics are among the highest in the world. (van Rooyen, 1994; 109). There are certain decisions that some pregnant teens need to make, such as, to carry their pregnancies to term and keep their babies or relinquishing them through adoption proceedings in various institutions. It has been suggested that approximately 5% (might have changed by now) of all unmarried childbearing teenagers relinquish their babies for adoption, with the probability being higher that white people will relinquish for adoption than will black people (Gullotta, 1994).

When faced with pregnancy, teen females and males are confronted with decisions that have important implications for their present and future lives. Also affected are the lives of their family members, and of course, of the unborn child. Decisions must be made in regards to abortion versus bringing pregnancy to term; marriage versus single parenthood; adoption versus keeping the child; and raising the child oneself versus having the child raised by other family members. These decisions are influenced, to vary

degrees, by male partners, friends, parents, and other significant others. They may be carefully thought through, or they, may be “spur of the moment” and haphazard.

## **2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF TEEN PREGNANCY**

The girl who finds herself pregnant out of wedlock is faced with a limited number of alternatives such as abortion, marriage or gives birth to an illegitimate child who she may or may not keep. Because the alternatives are so far and few and so seemingly obvious, it is tempting to assume that pregnant girls make a choice among these alternatives, a choice which reflects certain preferences, certain values.

There can be no advantages to teenage pregnancy. Girls who fall pregnant in their teens have to deal with a school career that is interrupted; some often gets married at an early age and are not qualified for a job where they may earn a good salary, as only few gets the opportunity to go back to school to further their education.

Many delay seeking of pre-natal care, not thinking or wanting to acknowledge that they might be pregnant until it is too late to prevent complications. Teenage nutritional habits also tend to be poor compared to older women, which is part of an overall tendency to neglect their physical health.

The biological age of the mother *per se* may lead to adverse health consequences among teen mothers. For these young mothers, biological immaturity has been linked to

pregnancy complications such as *toxemia, pre-eclampsia, hypertension, anemia, abnormal deliveries, uterine dysfunction pregnancy-related infections, postpartum haemorrhaging and abnormal bleeding, prolonged labour, premature rupture of the uterine membrane and premature labour*, as well as *relatively high rates of maternal death*.

Abortion is illegal in South Africa. However a large number of abortions are performed every year in many homes by unqualified health care providers, this is evident from records of teenagers in hospital with complications such as haemorrhaging, infections, sterility and sometimes even death (van Rooyen, 1994)

Infants born of teenage girls are significantly more likely than those of adult women to be premature and low birth weight; to have physiological abnormalities, including epilepsy, spinal and head injuries, low IQ and mental retardation, blindness, deafness, and nervous disorder; to be stillborn; to be miscarried; to be aborted voluntarily; and to die during infancy (Gullotta, Adams, Montemayor 1993).

## **2.6 TEENAGE PREGNANCY MARRIAGE**

Girls who become pregnant in their teens experience simultaneously two major developmental crises: “they have not yet fulfilled their female adolescence maturational functions, and imposed on this is a crises of pregnancy occurs, adding a third crises, as the early phase of marriage is also a critical period in feminine life” (Zackler 1971: 163).

Because of teenage pregnancy, a number of young people decide to get married while at least one of the pair is still a teenager, usually, but not always, this is the girl. There are a number of reasons why some teenagers chose marriage;

1. Because they are forced by their parents.
2. They want to give the child a name, and
3. They feel is their “payment” for making a mistake.

The Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa (PPASA) in their research discovered that, these marriages are often referred to as “shotgun marriage”; more than half of such couples will divorce within five years. They also face poor employment opportunities that cause financial difficulties and force them to share a house with their own parents (either boy/girl) meaning that they won’t have privacy. The child born to some of these couples may be resented and seen as a cause of isolation from friends and emotional immaturity contributes to an inability to cope and result to instability of the relationship, and that kind of pressure leads to marital conflict. (1992:161)

Though there are those who will decide to marry we have another group that will face the task of raising their children as single parents.

## **2.7 DEFINITION OF SINGLE PARENTING**

It is difficult to give an exact definition of the term single parent because, as Abrahamse puts it; **“young women with different background profiles exhibit markedly different**

**rates of single parenthood, because teenage girls who become single mothers are a highly diverse population” (Abrahamse 1988).**

### **2.7.1 SINGLE PARENTING**

After liberation from apartheid and new democracy was ushered in South Africa, the African community started talking and dealing about single parenting openly. This open talking has prompted that adequate attention and resources be invested in helping to address this issue.

Everyone needs to address it, the author would like to bring it closer to home, she feels that the church needs to play an active role, though it is still struggling in addressing and relating to this new phenomenon, I don't see any institution that do it with more care than the church can do. What the faith communities need is to be equipped in caring and supporting single parents through caring ministries Schools too, are a good place to start on tackling and taking this struggle forward. Thou this is not the main focus for this research; the researcher felt the need to raise awareness as this is linked to the main problem of suspension of young girls.

The single parenting families are often faced with extreme economic problems. The vast majority of single parent families are low income families consisting of a mother (often a displaced homemaker with relatively little formal education), and her young children. It



has been found that many female single heads of households are themselves adolescent mothers.

Single parents commonly experience difficulties with role identity. Some social stigma is still attached to single parent status, regardless of how it was acquired. For single parent mothers development of positive role identity is often hampered by their inability to support their family financially. Single parents often experience stress from attempting to balance wage-earner and parental responsibility.

Lack of formal education and consequently of job skills, limits access to occupation that provide adequate income for an acceptable standard of living. The careers of these women are additionally hampered by socialisation into traditionally female occupations that are low paying, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty (Kerka 1988).

Poverty is persistently linked with single parent household, especially those headed by women. Wage difference between men and women arising from labour shortages or gender discrimination, reinforce low-income status.

It is assumed that although childcare is an issue for all parents, an overwhelming number of single parents cannot afford high quality day care.

## 2.7.2 TYPES OF SINGLE PARENTS

The vast majority of single parent families are low income families consisting of a mother and her young child or children, characterised by a high percentage of minority representation and relatively little formal education. Women always carry the brand often because of divorce, unemployment or men disappearing from the family home. In most cases children will always remain with the mother in rare cases they will go with the father for financial security, but later on they chose to return to the mother.

In most patriarchal African communities, children belong to the man. Amongst the *Babukusu* tribe, (West Africa) **“if a marital union fails, the wife would return home or be returned to her family of origin, and if subsequently she had children, her former husband would pay her family three heads of cattle for a baby girl and two heads of cattle for a baby boy”** (Oduyoye 1995: 103). The author is of the opinion that this is not about a man being a better parent compared to the mother, she believes that this is all about economics (who can financially provide) that the tribe of *Babukusu* give the man the custody of the children.

Three major sub-groups of single parent families have also been identified. These sub-groups are: *displaced homemaker, adolescent mothers and single fathers* (Burge 1987). Single parents are also created by the death of a spouse and unmarried parenthood as well as by separation and divorce.

According to Kerka, “each year in United States of America, one in ten (10) teenage girls become pregnant, often ending up in being a single parent” (1988: 35). This tendency can also be true for black South African girls. These vast sub-groups of single parents face many obstacles to self-sufficiency, such as lack of education, job readiness and emotional immaturity. Their crucial need to complete their education and achieve employment is complicated by their immediate needs for food, housing, childcare and emotional support

Single parenting can encourage early childbearing by reducing social control and increasing an opportunity for engaging in irresponsible sexual activities. The single parent may also encourage sexual activity by acting as a role model. For instance, “**a single mother who is dating or cohabiting, sends a message to teenage daughter(s) that sex outside of marriage is acceptable and perhaps even preferable**” (McLanahan & Sanderfur 1994).

In the olden days within the African structure, children were raised by the entire family, relieving the mother from the burden of raising the children on her own. Mbiti says, “**The children belong to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only the fathers name. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and what ever happens to the group happens to the individual. The individual can only say ‘I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am’** (1969: 108)

## **2.8 EDUCATING TEENAGERS ABOUT PREGNANCY**

Brent Miller in his book *Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy* offers a tool in a form of a curriculum that will engage teenagers to open up and deal with sex and their sexuality. The curriculum is called *Reducing the Risk*.

Reducing the Risk (RTR) curriculum provides instructions and practice using social skills needed to implement knowledge about preventing pregnancy and to reduce unsafe behaviour in future high risk situations. RTR curriculum also gives considerable emphasis to norms; it explicitly emphasizes that the student should avoid unprotected intercourse, either by not having sex or by using contraception if they do have sex. Nearly every activity supports or reinforces this norm. Finally, the curriculum seeks to ensure that some discussion occurs between parent and child and requires that youth ask their parents about their view on abstinence and birth control (Miller 1992: 56).

## **2.9 ROLE OF PARENTS**

Most parents don't feel comfortable discussing sex with their children, some of them (parents) their parents didn't teach them about sex and they find uneasy breaking new ground. Despite this, many agree that parents play an important part in educating their children.

Oettinger sees the *'inaccessible father'* has become a key phrase in reporting studies of parent-child relations. The tradition of mother as the caretaker persists in most homes, since the father's role continues to have little part in the daily routine of child care and many consists largely of admonitions. Many children perceive their fathers' as disinterested. It is no small wonder that parental failure to discuss sexuality, particularly the erotic aspects, appears as a common factor in investigation of how and where children receive sex information or form attitudes towards their own sexuality (Oettinger 1979:45).

This *'inaccessible father'* problem will continue as many teens continue to get pregnant and impregnate, because some will pass on to their offspring what they have learnt by way of behaviour or education from their parents.

Parents must talk to their teen children, and maintain a relationship which makes it possible for what they say to matter to them, it is necessary for parents to remember what kind of a world we all live in. Some parents were brought up in a society which lived by different standards, such as children and their parents didn't talk about sex, it will be easier going if parents make it clear to their children that they understand that things have changed. If culture becomes a problem in which parents are not able to speak to teenagers, then confirmation classes should take up this role as a ministry of caring for them. As a result of this new process, we (church leaders) will be preparing them from unnecessary problems of teen pregnancy.

## 2.10 PREGNANCY PREVENTION

Trying to prevent pregnancy by offering abortion is not an acceptable procedure for many Christians. Terminating a pregnancy does not deal with the root cause of the behaviour. Primary prevention, birth control, gets caught up in lengthy arguments on the moral dilemmas of providing contraceptive information and materials to teenagers. Much of the success of using contraceptives to prevent pregnancy relies on level of cognitive development that many teenagers have not achieved.

Attitude of teenagers towards sex can play a major role. Programmes that do not involve the parents as key participants do not work well in schools or churches. There is a need for a teenage pregnancy prevention plan/ programme that is focused on a change of attitude towards sex by teenagers and full participation of parents.

It is not only this conservatism and restraint that makes teenagers to abstain from premarital sex, but also the fear of being isolated by the church as the result of their sexual behaviour. Susan Moore and Doreen Resenthal writes the following regarding religion and premarital sex; **“Religiosity has generally been found to be negatively related to premarital sexual behaviour, religious persons regardless of denomination are less likely to be sexually active, as sexual values encouraging conservatism and restraint are promulgated by most religions”** (1993:76).

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

Teenage pregnancy and parenthood will continue to remain part of our social fabric for years to come. It's up to the church in conjunction with the whole community and places of learning to revisit our attitude and engage our teenagers meaningfully concerning sexuality and sex education and this must for part of the confirmation class curriculum.

Although the Bible does not specify sexual intercourse outside of marriage as a sin, it is clear in saying that such relationship is for marriage. Some churches are afraid of the consequences of stating publicly a biblical view of sex and morality for fear of offending some of their members who fall outside the boundaries. This will do no favours for young people in the church who need clear and simple guidelines. The role of parents is primary in educating and discussing with their children about sex and sexuality.

## **2.12 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the researcher has learned a lot about teenage pregnancy and all the role players. One thing that came clear was the issue that both the parents and their children are to be held accountable for the rise of teenage pregnancy in our society. What was mentioned in this chapter was more on the negative side of teenage pregnancy, showing that there is nothing positive or glamorous by a child having a child. Faith, learning communities and the society at large needs to work together in coming up with prevention methods that works and are relevant to young people of today.

The next chapter deals with church policy the author gives an overview of where the church adopted her stance on sexual matters, and the use or misuse of the Canon Law of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa on matters like this.



## CHAPTER 3

### CHURCH POLICY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The church does not have a written policy on how to discipline her members, specifically the girl who has fallen pregnant out of wedlock, *or/and* the male person who has impregnated her. That is the reason why we see different denominations and individual parishes doing what they believe is right for them. The researcher will approach this subject from the African woman perspective, as the punishment is only one sided and it is applied only to females.

This brings to mind the (John 8: 3ff) story of the woman who was brought to Jesus by the Pharisees and the Scribes for she was caught in the act of adultery. They proposed that she be stoned to death for that act according to the Law of Moses found in the book of Leviticus chapter 20 verse 10 that says *“If a man sleeps another man’s wife, with the wife of a neighbour both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death”*. In the Story found in the Gospel of John no one asked or made mention of the male partner who was involved in the act with her. This is part of the problem that caused me to research this problem; the main idea is to analyze the church and its caring ministry.

In this chapter we’ll have an overview of the Early Church Fathers’ understanding of the role of women and her place in the church. And learn on how certain African customs

have influenced the church in adopting the approach of suspending only females who are pregnant out of wedlock.

### **3.2 EARLY CHURCH FATHERS' INFLUENCE**

The researcher will share with the reader about the possible origins of how and where the church got to formulate its ways / policy of discipline and attitude concerning sexual behaviour towards her members especially females.

The ideas that have prevailed in the Christian Church in the West were in large part shaped by handful men, theological giants who slowly built a Christian thought into a complex, highly structured body of ideas that dominated the medieval world. As Christianity spread through the Roman Empire, they had to reassess their position in the world. In certain things it was easy to reject Roman values. It is said that, **“a Christian could have reject licentious sexuality that marked Rome, but sexuality itself was too central to human beings and was difficult to be dismissed as easily as a gladiator match”**. (Salisbury 1991)

James Brundage, observed in his important work on law and sex in Medieval Europe, **that Christian intellectuals had to “account for the place of sex in the scheme of creation and to define the role that sexual relations ought to play in Christian life”** (1991:12). The author disagrees with this, as it is not up to the Christian intellectual to define and formulate a way for people to act sexually because they are Christians.

People's sexual relations are part of who they are and no one need to account on their behalf what they do and cannot; only they can be accountable. What people need is guidance and care.

When the Early Church Fathers discussed and made rules on the issue of sexuality, they had in mind women who were of age, according to their hierarchy consisting of virgins, widows then wives. They were not thinking of the twenty first century teenager who engage in sex and conceive a child out of wedlock.

The third century Christians was pre-occupied with the body and its relationship to mind and spirit. There were groups that were for and against this pre-occupation. The <sup>1</sup>Docetist raised questions about the reality of the body of Jesus, while the <sup>2</sup>Encratites were disgusted with the human body and argued that all have to renounce everything to do with sexuality. It was an age when even pagans were renouncing sexuality in disgust. On the other hand Christian teachers, then, like Clement of Alexandria, were forced to address these issues for the sake of their congregation, an interesting phenomenon developed, for example. Clement of Alexandria commented about the necessity of marriage and love between spouse and children, he wished that the married couples be sober in their lives in order to avoid all pleasures and to bring up the children, knowing that this was an honourable task and a duty that they must perform.

<sup>1</sup> A title applied to several groups of Early Christians who carried their ascetic practice and doctrines to extremes which were in many cases considered heretical. <sup>2</sup>In the Early Church a tendency, rather than a formulated doctrine, which considered the humanity and suffering of the earthly Christ as apparent rather than real.

The church was in a dilemma, which it had to challenge the wide spread mystique of continence, or face its own ruins. Second marriages were frowned on, and the combination of old age and sexual activity seemed particularly disgusting to most Christian Teachers.

Since many women were widowed in their late teens or early twenties, the church was faced with many young, independent women of whom they had to find an ecclesial place. As the male clerical roles were solidified, the continuing unnerving presence of women continued to present the church with a major problem.

The “Holy men” were apt to regard women as threats to male purity, and thus as less than human – as objects. Some suggested that if every woman was married, and allowed to re-marry after the death of her first husband, the whole problem could have been put away as there would be a husband (authority figure) who will put her in her place. In relation to women being seen as object, the author has found out is that since the era of the Church Fathers a woman was not seen as a full human being.

Aristotle maintains that, “**all human beings that differ as widely as the soul and body...are by nature slaves**” who must be ruled by patriarchal authority. Plato add into this, in describing his ideal city-state he say, “**freeborn women and children as well as slaves are no longer the property of individual male heads of households but the property of all elite men**” (Fiorenza 1993: 214). Miller adds that, “**the maintenance of**

**a dominant – subordinate social structure depends on the belief by subordinates in the rightness of, not so much their own position but that of the dominant” (1976: 6).**

Fiorenza’s take on this subject is that **“women are not flowers whose presence beautifies the church and homes, it is important that it is communicated to women that their intellectual, spiritual and caring gifts that they contribute to the church and homes are respected”** (1993: 52). The author takes this further by appealing to woman to not wait for men to communicate to them that there are valued and respected, it is upon us as women to challenge the views and ideas of the Church Fathers by empowering and affirming ourselves, though it is tough.

But Christianity offered women options other than marriage, and these options, paradoxically, always carried higher esteem with the clergy than marriage and motherhood did. In line with other third century developments, the solution adopted by the church was institutionalization.

For example women who were called widows, deacons and virgins were now assembled into ‘orders’ and eventually these ‘orders’ were assumed into the great monastic movements of the fourth century. This is how the church dealt with the issue of sex, morality and women behaviour. This treatment shows how women were treated as second class citizens, the main aim was to make sure women were virgins by the time they marry, and in some African customs they also perform circumcision.

### 3.3 CHURCH AND VIRGINITY

According to the Church Fathers the main aim of the *fall* had been to introduce a pre-occupation with sex, the way to recapture the angelic life was to strive for an asexual existence – ideally virginity, or at least chastity. Cyprian said; “**While you remain chaste and virgins you are equal to the angels of God**” (Salisbury 1991:14)

It appears that most ecclesial lives of virgins were post-marital. As mentioned in this chapter, there was an instant propaganda in the early church against second marriages. This created a workforce of women ministers for many communities, but also forced the church to deal with the presence among them of many very young women, who often were in control of very large inheritance, as many women were widowed as early as late teens.

Virgins had to be secluded from the world; all meetings with men had to be eliminated, as also meetings with married women. A church father is quoted saying; “**Virginity is a God-given cure to the carnality of women, since the *fall* (of Adam and Eve) the age of sexuality had reigned**” (Malone 2001:150). The author disagrees strongly with what is said above, it is made to look like virginity is an answer to all human problems, and this shows how the early church compartmentalized a human being, they did not see a woman as a being she had to be put into category of sexuality (physical) and spirituality (heavenly) virginity is choice and not a cure for women’s carnality.

The Church Fathers made a comparison between Mary and Eve, they found Mary the Virgin to be obedient, she said “**Behold your handmaid, Lord; let it be done with me according to your word**” (Luke 1:38). Eve was disobedient, to be sure, since she did not obey when she was still virgin, having become disobedient Eve made the cause of death both for herself and for all human races. Mary by her obedience she was made the cause of salvation both for herself and for the entire human race (Clark 1983: 38). Obedience is the essence of patriarchy.

This reminds me of the lyrics of a song that say “**Good girls go to heaven and bad girls go any where**” what the church fathers envisaged by comparing Mary to Eve was perpetuating the agenda of women being obedient to men and question nothing, and those women who obey are good like Mary and those who disobey are evil like Eve. This mentality still continue even today where a good woman is the one who keeps quite, the one who questions is being seen as disobedient.

In this situation, **it is said that virginal women had become male and have learned to practice ‘mainly virtues’. In this way, they guarantee their eternal salvation because, in the next life, all will be male; beside, having a virgin in the family guaranteed salvation for all** (2001:100). The author believes that this was a pure propaganda by the church fathers, they wished to see all human beings male, and they attributed virginity to maleness and indoctrinated families to believe that without a virgin in they home salvation is out of reach for them. As we will read in the next sub section of

church and marriage this was their way of discouraging women to marry, and the church will not have to deal with married woman, widows and their sexual lives.

### 3.4 CHURCH AND MARRIAGE

From virginity let us now analyze marriage. To understand the nature of the flesh as the Church Fathers did, we must begin with the *fall* of humanity from the Garden of Eden. The early church fathers saw the *fall* as somehow connected to sexuality, it was believed by early father Jerome that, “**before the fall, Adam and Eve were virgins in Paradise, but after they had sinned, and were cast out of Paradise they were immediately married**” (Salisbury 1991: 14).

Marriage conjured up negative images; **the Fathers warned of the trials of marriage for women: caring children, ordering the house and pleasing the husband. For the early fathers, marriage did not change the reality that in a world split between good and evil, spirit and flesh, sex was evil** (Salisbury 1991: 15). One of the problems faced by the author is that Eve is addressed and Adam is left alone, so the mistreatment of women and exclusion of men started long ago.

The Early Church Fathers may have thought they have established a Christian view of sexuality and articulated its place in a Christian life, but theirs was neither the last word on the subject, nor the most influential. For Augustine sexuality was not an imperfection, an accident brought into being by Adam and Eve’s sin, but part of God’s plan.



Unlike the Early Church Fathers, Augustine did not see sexuality as a primarily a female quality, a part of woman's mysterious earthiness, but believed sexuality was demonstrated and defied by male lust (1991:39). The author supports Augustine's statement, as Augustine challenges the double-standards of the church fathers, where it is okay for a man to be sexual and wrong for a woman to be.

The Church Father's dislike of a woman and all that a woman stands for blinded them to other realities, such as God's active participation in the life of Eve and Adam as alluded by Augustine say this could have been God's plan and not accident brought into being by Adam and Eve. Augustine being an African understood better the role and importance of marriage in the context of a community and the importance of sexuality in marriage.

In other quarters of the ancient world marriage was regarded universally as a civic duty in order to repopulate a world 'grazed thin by death'. In this matter, young people had no choice, their marriages were arranged for the benefit of both families and the young woman passes from the authority of her father to the authority of her husband. Under Stoic influence, there was also a wide spread belief that intercourse in marriage was solely for the purpose of procreation<sup>3</sup>.

There were another views to marriage; **"Since the wives were frequently younger than their husbands, land holding widows were commonplace, and a strong king might compel a wealthy maiden or widow to marry some royal favourite.**

<sup>3</sup>Stoicism, a Greco-Roman school of philosophy found at Athens by Zeno of Citium.

**Favourable marriages could bring wealth and greatness to a family; marriages of love alone were luxuries that no noble person could afford” (Hollister 1998: 180).**

This is some how similar to the teen pregnancy marriages, where teens marry because they are forced by their parents, they want to give the child a name, and they feel is their “payment” for making a mistake. Such teens don’t marry for love they marry because some one expect them to, because they think that is the right thing to do.

Apart from acknowledging the need for sexual intercourse for procreation, Augustine never found a way of removing intercourse form the realm of sin. Beside encouraging men to be manly, there is no discussion what so ever about the role of fathers in marriage. This might be the reason that some remained celibate and monks.

Their marriages were not perfect, there were infidelities, the church condemned adultery as a mortal sin, but the society looked tolerantly on the escapades of husbands. Their wives, however, were judged by a double standard that demanded wifely fidelity to ensure the legitimacy of family line (1998:180). Since children were considered to be the property of the father and master, female virginity before marriage and female chastity in marriage were strictly enforced in order to ensure that the child id legitimate. This double standard of male “wild oats sowing” and female virtue is still persistent in this present century.

The thoughts and ideas of the Church Fathers have caused the author to think about the ways Africans treated this subject.

### **3.5 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Some African cultures have regulations that govern sexual relations, such as; a man shall not seduce a girl who is in her teenage years; a woman shall not become pregnant before her circumcision ceremony has been performed. Among the *Abasante* tribe, pregnancy is an abomination if the puberty rites have not been performed, and the prospective mother and father may be banished (Oduyoye 1995: 21). I'm of the opinion that when people go to church they do not leave who they are behind, their culture and socialization does influence how they worship.

Girls' sexual activities are regarded as a capital importance. A girl, it is said, should come to her marriage a "perfect woman", in effective, relational, as well as sexual terms. In traditional societies, a girl's upbringing in sexuality, while inconspicuous, was very harsh and very strictly regulated. These activities were all the more important for her in that she risked remaining single for life unless her upbringing had been seen to be in suitable fashion. A failure to marry would have meant shame, for the entire family; but also and especially, it was devastating for the personality of the ostracized girl.

In Democratic Republic of Congo, amongst the *Bakongo* tribe, a girl who is not a virgin cannot marry with honour. If she manages to marry at all, both families concerned must be informed and the mother of the bride will not receive the “virginity gift”.

In many tribes, a girl who had lost her virginity before marriage has a grievous burden of guilt to bear – one that she might have to bear all her life until death. In some African customs if a girl is no longer a virgin, her initiation would now include a *clitoridectomy*, with the intent of preventing her from experiencing sexual pleasure and the possibility from succumbing to the temptation of adultery after her marriage. Marriage is regarded as the sovereign social regulator of sexuality (Oduyoye, Kanyoro 1995: 156).

The author wonders why the passage of rite such as initiation is being used a punishment tool by including *clitoridectomy*, what happened to elderly women teaching her about her role as a wife in the family and to her husband. The girls who lost their virginity did not only have to a burden of guilt to bear, they were also called name in Somali they are called *sharmuuto*, meaning a prostitute and no family would want to marry a *sharmuuto* for their son.

### **3.6 THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Working as a priest in the Anglican Church it is important to analyze my own church’s stance on this issue. I have already made mention of the lack of a formal legislative document in churches concerning the policy on the suspension of woman/girls who are

pregnant out of wedlock. Because of this, the researcher has chosen to use Canon 35 from the Constitution and Canons that govern the Anglican Church in Southern Africa.

**“When a priest shall perceive a Communicant to be in a state of open and malicious contentious contention with his/her neighbour or in open contravention of Canonical regulation of the church or other grave and open sin without repentance, he/she shall exhort and admonish the communicant first in private, and should this fail then in the presence of other communicants, in order to move him/her to penitence, amendment of life, and, where necessary, restitution”.**

This Canon stipulate the procedures that needs to be followed when a priest is suspending a congregant (both man and woman) who is found to be in a state of open and malicious contentious with his/her neighbour or in open contravention of Canonical regulation of the church or other grave and open sin without repentance.

It does not mention anything to do with girls falling pregnant out of wedlock or those who impregnate them. This bring to light that the practice of suspending them seems to have been unconstitutional (or it developed as a culture that was sustaining men’s life), unless they force it to fit in the category of “open sin”; as it has been said by some church people that falling pregnant out of wedlock it’s a sin.

Let me share another part of the Canonical law;

**Canon 35 (8): “Only if the Communicant fails to heed such admonition may the priest suspend him/her from Communion. In that event the Priest shall, within fourteen days, notify the bishop and the Archdeacon of his/her action and the reason thereof”.**

**Canon 35 (9): “When the Bishop or the Archdeacon (or Commissary) shall inquire into the circumstances of the case in order to satisfy him/herself as to whether or not the Priest has acted in accordance with the will of God as disclosed in Christ, the evidence of the Holy Scripture and the Canonical regulations. If he/she is satisfied that the Priest has so acted, he/she shall confirm the suspension; if he/she is not satisfied. He/she shall restore the Communicant to Communion forthwith. Where the investigation is conducted by the Archdeacon (or Commissary), he/she shall advice the Bishop of his/her decision. The Bishop may at anytime refer the matter to the Diocesan Tribunal, whose decision shall be final”.**

*Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa*

### 3.7 REFLECTING ON THE CANON

The Canon lays down the procedure to be followed especially clergy if they see that a communicant has been found to have done wrong and is not willing to repent of the mistake. The researcher's observation is that either clergy don't know this Canon or they deliberately broke it, not only them but also the lay leaders and congregants.

Falling pregnant can be a mistake or a deliberate act depending on those involved, the church needs to act in a caring and unbiased manner, labelling pregnancy out of wedlock a sin, raises many questions for the researcher, if it is a sin, what about the child conceived is he/she a product of sin? By saying this we have condemned the child forever. Following the Canon and referring it to the either the bishop or the Archdeacon absolve the clergy from wrong doing, rather it will help him/her to pastorally deal with the matter.

There seems to be a need for the Anglican Church clergy and laity to engage each other on this Canon and understand what is meant by, "*being in a state of open and malicious contentious contention with his/her neighbour or in open contravention of Canonical regulation of the church or other grave and open sin*". The lack of use or misuse of this Canon has given those in leadership a go ahead to be biased against women and oppress them.

### 3.8 APPLICATION OF METHEDODOLOGY

In chapter one the methodology which was chosen for this research consist of two theories, the first is Shepherding theory of Charles Gerkins (which will be used in chapter four) and the second is Positive Deconstruction of Nick Pollard. In this chapter the researcher will use the Positive Deconstruction theory.

This is what the process of Positive Deconstruction is all about; **“this process recognizes and affirms the elements of truth to which individuals already hold, but also helps them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed”** (1997: 44).

Pollard uses an analogy of having a classic car that has a good chassis and the bodywork was okay, the engine was worn out the gearbox crunched and suspension was broken. The car wasn't much good. Then he heard of the car that was on sale the same model and make that was involved in an accident and written off. He bought it and set out to look care fully at each part the ones that was good he kept them the worn out ones we thrown away, the good part from the written off car were used to replace the worn out ones on the other car. **He says this wasn't a negative deconstruction of a vandal but, rather the positive deconstruction of a mechanic** (1997: 45)

Looking at the subject at hand of females being suspended for being pregnant out of wedlock, the researcher finds that not everything about the suspension is wrong, the



problem is how and to whom it is being done. The problem will be Positively Deconstructed; Let us now apply this theory to the issue of suspension of girls versus Canon law.

The problem is treated in the following way;

- **Current situation**

- a. Priest/ lay leader suspend the girl in her absentia informally.
- b. She is dictated to what she will be permitted to do and not to do.
- c. A symbol of shame is publicly displayed for all to see in a form of a uniform/ sinners bench.
- d. No one pays much interest on who is the father of the child, as she could not have made the child by herself.
- e. Parents/ guardian are left to deal with the situation of shame, especially for those who are congregants.
- f. After the child's birth, the mother has to attend confession class, because she has a child out of wed lock, and the baptism will not be conducted the same way with that of children who are born in wedlock.

g. The father of the child continues to be left of the hook, while the woman is punished.

Pollard will be helpful in addressing the above issues with the method of deconstruction.

**- Positively Deconstructed Scenario**

- a) Priest and lay leaders call the girl and her family to discuss the pregnancy, and agree on the procedure to be taken from that point.
- b) Identify the father of the unborn child and involve him in the discussions, if he is unwilling find legal ways of making him to take care of the child should be followed.
- c) In a caring way let the congregants know of the situation and caring methods that will be used to assist support the girl during her pregnancy.
- d) Let not the girl be isolated or stigmatized for her actions alone.
- e) Baptismal class preparation should be conducted the same for all.
- f) The mother and the child should continue to receive spiritual and emotional support.

This process will alleviate the issue of shame and humiliation experienced by the girl, while the young man enjoys the freedom.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

The issue of discipline in the church is important, yet it should be used equally between men and women because of lack of a policy in this subject, we have seen how the church could have picked and chose from the teachings of the early church fathers' on their stance on issues of marriage and virginity. The church father's made the rules for only women and men we left to do as they please, without question they are the head of the household, but his duty within the home and society seems to be reduced to demanding obedience from all. The patriarchal rule over women is still dominant to this day; the question to ask is when does God's image in a woman disappear when they have fallen in sin or pregnant? Secondly the church allowed itself to be influenced by culture and customs of the world.

Another thing that has contributed and empowered the church to act is some of the African customs where a girl who lost her virginity and then falls pregnant out of wedlock is perceived to be damaged goods, and no man will want to marry her. This issue is not even supported by scripture.

Other churches like the Anglican Church must surely have rules that guide its members, it might be possible that they are not adhered to by clergy and laity. Positive

Deconstruction theory moves us to re-examine the practice and leave what works and fix what is not working to make an inclusive and take caring, unbiased – centred decisions.

These are serious matters and need to be addressed.

In the following chapter I will be sharing case studies of girls who have been at the receiving end of this oppressive practice and I will share with the reader the caring methods that can be applied by the care giver to those who are affected.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the author will present four case studies of girls who have been pregnant out of wedlock and have been suspended by the church. Also I will outline the caring methods that the church may use, in addressing the situation of those who fall pregnant out of wedlock, concentrating on pastoral caring elements.

### 4.2 CASE STUDIES

The author came across a number of young women who fell pregnant at their teenage years; most of these young women were once very active in their respective churches, they were abruptly halted by the suspension handed to them by their church due to being pregnant as a teen. The researcher will present two case studies. Some of these young became co-researchers as they helped the researcher to clear understand what happened and is happening to girls and young women like them.

#### 4.2.1 CASE STUDY 1

*This is the story of Mapule\* (not her real name)*

She was 17 years old when she fell pregnant, a girl who came from a family of three raised by a single parent (mother). Mapule was a member of St Mary's Guild, (*St Mary's*

*Guild is found mainly in predominantly black parishes it caters both for young women who're in their late teens still perceived as virgins, and also for those young girls who have children out of wedlock when they get married they move to Mother's Union, there is also St. Agnes that is for girls under the age of 16, when they get to their late teens they graduate to St Agnes), a Sunday school teacher. Both her sister and mother were active too in the same church, and they were known by everyone in the church*

Mapule was also interested in other denominations young people's ministries especially on the way they coordinated their Sunday school's. In one particular denomination, she got romantically involved with a lay preacher who was in his early twenties and pursuing a vocation to the ordained ministry. For Mapule this was a perfect person for her, he is involved in the church and is intending to be a priest, he was to Mapule a perfect guy and could do nothing wrong. Mapule's mom encouraged this relationship, as she saw a secure future for her daughter, a number of people were aware of the relationship at both their respective denominations.

After a year of dating, Mapule found out that she was pregnant, in both her mind, and her family there was no doubt regarding who is responsible for her situation. Informing his boyfriend about the pregnancy he asked her not to make mention of this to anyone including his family nor the church as the church will not allow him to pursue fulltime ordained ministry, because he would have gotten someone pregnant outside of marriage. He vowed that he will take care of her and the baby, and will marry her soon. Mapule's

mom was not happy with the arrangement but agreed to it because she didn't want to spoil her daughter future as well as the young man's career.

Some members of the church found that she was pregnant; they went to the priest and told him that she should suspend her from the teaching Sunday school as she would not be a good role model. They also demanded that she should stop attending St. Mary's Guild as that guild is for virgin girls, and she has no place there. The priest being pushed to act called lay leaders to discuss this issue, in order to get a way forward, they did not have the policy on how to deal with this matter, so they decided to suspend her from all church activities (with no time frame), her mom was told to convey the message by one lay leader. She did not question it; despite all this she knew that the reward will be a marriage with a future priest for her daughter.

It was tough on Mapule's side because she had to deal with the consequences of pregnancy alone, the fact that she was not involved in determining her future regarding the present situation; her mother was made to be the bearer of bad news, and her boyfriend who didn't want his family or the church to know about their pregnancy, was left free. At the end the young man did not keep his promise.

The current situation is that this guy is a priest in his denomination, married with kids to another woman. He denies fathering Mapule's child and shields himself by saying, if it was true his family and the church would have known. This has left Mapule to raise her

child as a single parent and bitter towards men and the church. And no one is perusing this matter or doing any thing including Mapule's family.

#### **4.2.2. REFLECTION ON THE CASE STUDY**

The issues that the researcher has picked up in relation to the above case studies are as follows. Mapule trusted and believed that her boyfriend who was a lay preacher and perusing the vocation to the ordained ministry will be honourable and keep his promise. Here we see authority of the church office being misused for self gain and gratification. Mapule saw in this guy a saviour who will care for her and their child.

Mapule's mom encouraged the relationship in order to secure a future for her child to the point of collaborating in making his identity of the child's father unknown. They did this not for themselves (Mapule and mom) rather for the man, so that his future plans are not destroyed by his action. To make sure that he gets away with this he promises marriage and family life for Mapule and child, which Mapule wanted for the sake of her child, especially the dream of raising the child in a family atmosphere of Christian principles.

The church leadership played a biased role, because they were only concerned with her pregnancy and not the one who got her pregnant, she had to be suspended from the church and to add insult to injury her mother is used to convey the message. There was no caring process in the way the matter was handled; no care is shown to her and her family the local priest does not exercise his pastoral care ministry. The traumatic thing is



when the boyfriend forgets about his promises and starts a new family that does not include Mapule and their child. The cycle repeats itself, where trust is betrayed and another single parent is created. The trust issue not only affected the breaking of the promise by the young man, but the participation of leaders of the church protecting the young man.

The correction of this process, when handled well, will bring healing to the young girl, challenge the young man and make him a responsible father and help both families in facing the truth. Once again we see how the church exercises its discipline among people. The author is aware that Mapule's family did not disclose who the father is, the question to ask is, what if they did will they have handled the matter in the same way?

#### **4.2.3 CASE STUDY 2**

*This is the story of Zodwa \* (not her real name)*

A 20 years old young woman named Zodwa and her family, who are loyal members of the African Independent Churches. Her father is one of the elders in the church, and her family is respected both in the church and in the community. In line with the church's custom, members are not permitted to marry outside their church, they marry amongst themselves as a worshipping community, and it was clear to Zodwa and her parents that her future husband will come out amongst young men in the church. True to the custom Zodwa fell in love with a young man in her congregation, their relationship was known to many and was some-how encouraged by both sets of parents as the young man came

from a respectable family. One would also take a risk of saying it was blessed by the church.

Six months into the relationship Zodwa fell pregnant, her father was the most disappointed and her made her to feel that she has brought disgrace into his family. He was worried about what the church and the larger community will say. He wondered if this will make them question his parenting skills and moral standing. Though he knew who was responsible for Zodwa's pregnancy, he was not impressed by the fact that they could not resist the temptation, and wait until married. Why have sexual relationship that will bring shame to their families, the church and the community.

The African families have a process that they follow when a girl is pregnant. This is another way of sorting the future for both families. Zodwa's family followed the African custom by going to her boyfriend's family in order to present to them their daughter who has been impregnated by their son. Zodwa's boyfriend accepted the pregnancy and stated his intentions of marrying her. Though the families have followed their customs and agreed on the way forward, it was not enough, they had to face the council of elders who were going to deal with this matter in the church way.

The church elders met (with Zodwa's father in his capacity as an elder) and decided to expel her from the church until she gives birth, her church uniform will be taken from her and hung outside the church's door as per church custom. (This had two meaning to it, first it was to announce to the church and those who visit in worship that there is an

unwed female who is pregnant in the congregation, and secondly it was to humiliate that female and send a message to other unwed woman/girl not to be sexually active outside of marriage). This is where the problem of this research comes in.

The way the church handles the issue of discipline is brutal, there is no caring, no sign of forgiveness. The author raises a question in regard to this manner; ‘What would Jesus do with such a case’?

Another important factor is that Zodwa’s boyfriend was not suspended nor reprimanded he continued worshipping there without worrying about any punishment coming his way. He was also not called to the council; the author is worried about the double message given by the church.

#### **4.2.4 REFLECTION ON THE CASE STUDY**

Zodwa’s story highlight the fact that this disciplining of pregnant un-wed girls is not confined to particular denominations it happens across the denominations. The concern is with the model of caring that is lacking, she was expected to marry a fellow congregant, after being intimate with a boy friend from the church and consequently becoming pregnant. She goes through the difficult process of discipline without care, her family follows their African custom and intention of marriage we presented; her church felt that was not enough, they had to humiliate her with her father being part of the body that took this decision and was force to exercise it on her daughter.

The question that comes to mind is whether the father participated in making this decision because he wanted to save his image, and looking for a way to be seen as a moral and “in-control”? Because when he heard about the pregnancy he was very disappointed and felt that it tarnished his image and that of his family. Interesting, not tarnishing the image of God, let alone dealing with the issue of forgiveness.

In this case study the girl is not only punished but rather humiliated by the act of hanging her church uniform at the church’s entrance. In all this her boyfriend is untouched, what happened to all being equal before the eyes of God- all being created in the likeness of God, Paul in the letter to the Galatians says “**there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all you are one in Christ Jesus**” (3:28) the researcher is of the opinion that the image of God was destroyed in Zodwa by the council of elders.

#### **4.2.5 CASE STUDY 3**

This is the story of Daisy\* a 20 years old young women, a member of a Pentecostal Church, she joined this church because a number of her friends worshipped there and they will regularly shared with her about how great the worship and the pastor is, she decide to give it a try and was hooked. She attended and participated in mid-week bible studies and was one of the ushers on Sunday worship. In other words she got involved in a position of leadership.

At one of the bible study sessions the pastor single her out as one of those who are spiritually growing and needs more exposure to the things of God. She was promoted from being an usher to being part of the prayer group that meets regularly to pray for the church and its needs, most of the prayer group members held leadership positions in the church. Daisy being a member of this group, meant that she was going to spend most her time with the pastor, she was excited and believed that this will help her to have a close relationship with God.

One Saturday evening after the prayer meeting the pastor offered to take her home, she agreed, and on the way the pastor was over friendly with her, she was confused and did not know how to interpret his behaviour. The following day (Sunday) she was asked to remain behind after the service by the pastor, he told her that there's a prayer request that they need to urgently attend too. They prayed after the prayer the pastor invited her for lunch with his family, she accepted the invitation. The relationship began to develop with difficulties from her side.

After lunch he took her home, and on the way he told her that it was revealed to him through the dream that he needs to mentor her as she has a spiritual gift that needs nurturing. This time Daisy believed everything her pastor said. He arranged that she comes to his house one morning, she got there and the pastor was alone in the house, he started caressing her and telling her how beautiful she is and if he was not married, he will take her as his wife. Daisy said at that moment she did not know what to think or do, he started undressing and kissing her, on the floor on the lounge he had sex with her.

After that act he told her not to tell any one, because that will put her in deep trouble, as no one will believe that he did that. It will be their secret.

Two months later Daisy found that she was pregnant; she knew that she had not engaged sexually with anyone except the pastor, she went and told him about her status, on hearing what Daisy was saying, he told her to go and do abortion because he could not handle problems of a child being married, let alone baptise that child in secret. She did not know who to tell and what to do. In that state of confusion deliberating on what to do and who to tell, on Sunday the pastor preached about promiscuous females who chased after married men, and want to destroy their families, he warned the congregation to be alert of those females, and if he finds that there is one of that kind in his church he will throw her out, and pray for God's wrath to come upon her and her offspring's. The reader is now aware how the pastor is misusing his authority and power given to him by virtue of ordination.

Daisy was so hurt by those words and she could not recognize the man standing there at the podium, he was not the man who overwhelmed her with attention and showered her with praises, she decided not do abortion. When the pregnancy started to show the pastor instructed that she be told to stop from participating in church activities and stay home. That hurt Daisy so much; she left that church and has never been to any church since that day, her child is 5 years old now. The caring church through its ministers is destroying souls of young teenage girls. We read a lot lately of these scandals as they appear on newspapers about ministers who take advantage of young girls.

#### 4.2.6 REFLECTION ON THE CASE STUDY

Daisy became a member of the church through friends and she too loved what she saw and experienced. She was faithful and honest in participating in the church's life and activities. Through the Christians relationship that was established between her and her pastor, she believed him when he told her about the dream and the need to mentor her and expose her to the things of Christ. It is clear from this that the pastor wanted to isolate Daisy from the group so that he can act on his desires.

Daisy did not suspect anything sinister; all she wanted was to have a meaningful relationship with God. Though she was confused by the over friendly behaviour of her pastor, she did not read anything more to it. Being invited to lunch with his family was a way of the pastor to win her over and make her to trust him. We see this by his request that he comes to see her one morning, it might be that it was not for the first time she was requested to come over and nothing otherwise happened that we see her going again on this particular morning.

When the pastor started to kiss and undressing her she froze which is a common thing that happens amongst those people who have been sexually molested, and raped by people they trust. To the pastor it might have seemed like a consensual sex, but to Daisy it was more of a rape, the question is whether the pastor did think of that when he told her not to tell any one as no one will believe her, she should keep it as their secret.

It was un-pastoral, immature and irresponsible of the pastor to use a pulpit in order to discredit Daisy, by preaching about promiscuous women who are after married men. Donald Capps disagrees with how the pastor used the pulpit; and the author agrees with his, he says, **“preaching is itself an act of pastoral counselling. When preachers enter the pulpit, they become counsellors; they proclaim the gospel, exhort parishioners to lead more godly lives, instruct them in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and speak out against social injustice. But the main purpose is to give parishioners wise counsel for dealing with life’s problems”** (1980:13).

The pastor used the pulpit to cover his tracks so that the day their “little secret” comes out he will be absolved from his wrongs. That kind of behaviour changed Daisy and her faith for life. She never trusted men in particular clergy, her choice to leave that church and not attend any after, this shows the hurt, betrayal and breakdown of relationship between her and God as well as men.

#### **4.2.7 CASE STUDY 4**

This is the story of Rose\*

Rose had been attending her church for a number of years, she was one of those parishioners who used the revolving-door policy, and she regarded her self as a churchgoer and not a church member. She was in her early twenties, employed at a local retail shop.



One Sunday at church she heard it being announced that all young adults (between the ages of 22 and 35) meet after the service as there was a need to establish a fellowship group for them. The reason that was given was that, this age group find themselves too old to be at the youth group and too young to be members of women's or men's' groups in the church. With interest she went to that meeting and found it to be a church group that she would like to be a member of. It was agreed that they will hold their meetings on Saturday afternoons.

The priest asked one of his church elders to be a coordinator of the group until the group members know each other better are confident enough to choose their own leadership. The elder that was chosen is an influential member of the church and two of his children are members of this young adult group. He was welcomed by the young adults and everyone liked him they found him to be 'young at heart and in spirit'. They said he is in his fifties, but acted looked like young man in his thirties.

Two months into this group's formation, they planned a week-end retreat, that was to be held at the local retreat centre, everyone was excited to go on this outing, the elder and others who have car's volunteered to give rides to those who were not mobile. Including his two kids he took Rose in his car to the retreat centre. He acted fatherly to the group and Rose was drawn to him and liked how he related to his kids. Rose grew up without knowing who her father was.

At the retreat centre the elder spend most of his time chatting up with the female contingent of the group and no one was suspicious of the behaviour. He did pay much attention to Rose, during supper he asked her if she had a boyfriend and she said no, he told her that he knows a man who will be for her, a man who will love and spoil her. Rose did not take him serious she thought that he was just him making small talk with her, and being a father figure she thought he wanted the best for her.

Two weeks later he called her at work and asked to see her during her lunch break, she agreed and during lunch he reminded her of the conversation they had about finding her a boyfriend, Rose laughed and asked him if he was serious because she did not think he was. He responded by saying he was and is still serious, he told Rose that he believes he can be that boyfriend for her. From that day he and Rose became lovers. Because he was friendly with women no one suspected anything wrong between him and Rose.

Rose started becoming an active member at the church, she was involved in planning a number of activities for the young adult group; many people began to notice her and love her spirit. Six months into the relationship with the church elder she discovered that she was pregnant; she told her mother who insisted to know the identity of the man responsible.

Her mother was in shock when the identity of the man responsible was revealed; she cried bitterly and could not talk for a while. When she had regained her composure she told her that this man is not only a church elder, a married man he is also a man who

fathered her. This church elder was romantically involved with Rose's mother when they were teenagers, when Rose mother fell pregnant his family denied that their was responsible, they vowed that their boy could not do such a thing, they said Rose's mother wanted to destroy their son's future and they took him away to further his studies in another province.

Rose's mother and the elder never had contact and they continued with their lives separately. Rose's mother did not know that she was living in the same city with him and that her daughter was in the same church with him.

Rose was more than devastated by what her mother told her, the man he loved and was caring his baby was her father that she never knew, she felt sick by the news her mother told her. Rose mother insisted that they should go to the church and inform the priest. Hearing the whole story the priest promised Rose and her mother that he will deal with this matter and he will keep them informed of the progress.

The following week Rose was told by the priest that she is suspended from the church with immediate effect, he said this is per the church custom; Rose was suspended from the church activities. The elder was seen in church continuing with his duties, without any care in the world.

The priest informed the elder about Rose and her mother coming to see him and that they say he is responsible for impregnating Rose. The priest left out the part of him (the elder) being Rose's father. From that the day the elder stopped all the contact with Rose.

When nothing came forth from the priest Rose's mother sought help from her family members, it was discovered later that Rose was not the only girl/woman to be impregnated by this man, and because he was a wealthy man and supported the church financial and respected in the community no one dared to challenge him or discipline him.

#### **4.2.8 REFLECTING ON THE CASE STUDY**

Rose from being a churchgoer to being a full member of the congregation, drawn by the group that welcomed and valued her contributions, she could not have predicted what nor bargain for the events that were to follow her in this church.

She was happy to have a coordinator that cared for them in a fatherly manner and that was something she has never known, a fatherly care and attention. Because of this, I wonder if she confused her need for a father figure with his promise of loving and spoiling her. Did she get into this relationship expecting to be treated like a daughter or a lover?

Rose seemed not surprised by the pregnancy, was it something she wanted or did she and this man plan it? She informs her mother about the pregnancy and the mother demanded to know the identity of the man responsible, it might be that the pregnancy of her daughter reminded her of her own pregnancy and the rejection she received from the family of the boy who impregnated her.

As they say history has a way of repeating itself, the same man who impregnated Rose's mother has done it again, this time with his daughter not knowing that. Being a married man and cheating on his wife, he was not concerned with knowing the family of his suitors, because if he did he would have known that this is not another conquest but his daughter.

The role the priest played in this case is that of a coward who is looking after his own interests, he did not want to upset his donor – cash cow. He trades his calling and pastoral care for money. As the family discovered, Rose was not the only girl or woman whom he fathered a child with, and maybe she won't be the last. Fortune say that, **“the church does not adequately reflect the needs and interest of society, certainly of woman in society; and that it does perpetuate biases and unjust structures, particular with regard to women. The structural power of the church is still dominated by men, while the grassroots population is mostly women”** (1989: 123). The author agrees with this statement, because the man who impregnated Rose was wealthy and in leadership in the church, which means participate in making decisions that are biased to woman. He

continues to impregnate female and no one will touch him because the structural powers of the church protects him.

### 4.3 APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY

The researcher has pointed out in the first chapter that she will use the methodology that is made up of two theories. In this chapter the researcher will use one of the theories, **the shepherding model** of Charles Gerkins –where the pastoral care giver (clergy) assumed the role of a shepherd. **“This theory is most clearly captured in the imagery of Psalm 23, here God is depicted as the good shepherded who leads the people in the paths of righteousness, restores their soul, and walks with them even among their enemies, and the shadow of death”** (1997: 27).

Gerkins wrote about the role of a shepherd from his Western perspective, the researcher will approach the shepherding model from her African perspective. African people respects shepherd(s), a shepherd is someone who cares for flock not only leading them to graze in good place, but also by providing security and also willing to die for his flock. The flock responds only to his commands as they have learned the methods he uses in communicate with them and they know his voice. When the shepherd is grazing his flock far away from home, at night he sleeps very close to them and defends the against their predators. The relationship between the shepherd and sheep is important.

Like the shepherd, **the pastor care giver, caring for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of injustice and moral integrity in the life of the people** (1997: 25). In the case study of Daisy we see the pastor being the one who is unjust and lacks moral integrity and his actions led to a broke of trust between himself, daisy and God. He violated professional ethics.

The care giver as a shepherd needs to confront those who seek to hurt the flock, by continuing the practice of suspending girls without proper care structures in place, priests add to the number of those who hurt this girls. As a result the flock stray from church, shepherd and God.

The shepherd prototypical image can be applied to both clergy and lay leaders of the church. The clergy assuming the role and being identified as a shepherd is expected not only to pay lip service but rather actively act out this role and opt to care without discrimination or fear especially for those who are marginalized, poor and the afflicted, this ties well with how Gerkins' sees the **pastor in the modern world as holding three functions in him/herself, which means he/she has to provide liturgical celebrations, be the mouthpiece of God and help people in their day-to-day life** (1997: 23). Pastoral care giver assumes the role of a healer, sustainer and reconciler.

The shepherd without an understanding of the work he/she does or a lack of communicating with the flock will find it difficult to deal with the every day matters.

This is evident in the way clergy and elders have dealt with the issues at hand, they are quick to punish, without even show any form of pastoral love and care.

Shepherding model as a caring model requires that clergy should account for those in their care and not toss out because they have ‘sinned’, they (clergy) have to lead us to a better understanding of God’s unconditional love through the sacraments and lastly a shepherd should have a knowledge of where the flock graze (community environment and challenges).

A pastor or care giver is the representative of God in serving God’s people. A pastor resembles God who is caring and tender. The shepherd is the one who leads, guides, natures, heads, seeks out the lost, brings the scattered flock back together and protects it all forms of harm that might come their way.

#### **4.4 CARING METHODS**

Edward Wimberly when writing about pastoral care and life crises alludes to the fact that, when members of the church community are facing predictable life transitions they often call on a priest and lay people. These transitions which occur through the life cycle are sometimes referred to as developmental crises. And these crises usually are growth opportunities, and while they may present some difficulties for those who face them, priest and caring lay people can respond with empathy and compassion in ways that help those in crises to grow. (1991:49)



He continues to suggest four ways to deal successfully with life crisis and they are as follows, (1) facing the problem head on; (2) working on the various emotional and social tasks presented by the problem; (3) coming to some understanding of what one is experiencing; (4) talking with those who care about the situation (1991:50). The author agrees with Wimberly, as this step gives the care giver or priest plays an active positive role in assisting a congregant in crises to be an active participant too in finding a way forward in and begin the process of healing.

As this dissertation contains a chapter on teenage pregnancy, we learn that pregnancy is a crisis for the pregnant mother as well as for those whose lives are impacted by the pregnancy. This process disrupts the ordinary ways the mother thinks, feels and relates. The church plays a significant role when the clergy and caring members enable *her* to use *her* natural faith tradition in helping the expectant mother and significant others to be drawn into the unfolding story of God. Baptism preparation can be used to help the family discern the upcoming event as part of God's unfolding drama.

Clergy and caring laity's role is to help those involved to (1) understand what is taking place as a result of the pregnancy; (2) facilitates the expression and acceptance of the feelings of those whose lives are directly impacted; and (3) help those involved to mobilize resources for responding positively to the crisis. (1991:51)

Vernon in agreement with Wimberly writes that, the church needs to respond to the teenage pregnancy by, (1) don't condemn (2) don't condone, (3) love unconditionally,

and teach unequivocally (1997:72). The author is of the opinion that the church is quick to condemn any one to hell whom they feel has committed ‘sin’, what Vernon present is a model that we see being practice by the father in the story of the prodigal son, where the father welcomed his son back to the family, did not condemned him nor condone his acts, yet he loved him unconditionally (Luke 15:11ff).

Let the researcher elaborate on these points;

- *Don't condemn*

Vernon reminds us that whatever we may think about or feel towards the young person/people in this scenario, the situation has occurred and nothing will change the fact. Young people who come to pastoral care givers seeking advice, as they come in a state of high anxiety and confusion. What they don't want to hear is care givers condemning them. The author agrees that when young people come to care givers they need not to be condemned, yet they need to be made aware of their faults and that there are consequences to our actions and behaviour.

- *Don't condone*

Clergy need to be clear about where they stand regarding biblical teachings on the matter of sex. The church needs to speak up and protect the sheep not condone young lovers living together unmarried and those who believe love equals sex, jealousy, status, money and other this that are very superficial and not real. The time has arrived for the church to talk and teach about sexuality.

- *Love unconditionally*

Many young people are engaged in sexual activity in an attempt to secure love and security. For those who took chances in this and lost, the church especially clergy need to respond by showing unconditional love; as love accepts, listens, cares, helps and makes no demands. The author is of the opinion that, as clergy we need to teaches by actions, and teaches our young people how they can love themselves, as they misinformed by media and their peers about what love is.

- *Teach unequivocally*

Vernon encourages clergy and lay teachers not to shy away from using biblical principles as basis for guiding young people regarding sex, as young people are seeing and hearing confusing messages all the time. As mentioned above there lot of misleading information fed to our young people about love and sexual relations, the author believes that the church fails to address this matters as it always condemns and not providing platform for young people to engage with this issues in a Christian environment with Christian resources.

The researcher will demonstrate to the reader how the above has been put into practice by a congregation that has had its fare share of 'young un-wed mothers' and the manner it has dealt with this in a caring way. The Presbyterian congregation in Alexandra Township north of Johannesburg, has formed a pastoral care committee that is made up of the local priest and few laity who are interested in this issue. The purpose of this committee is to give pastoral care to those congregants who find themselves in situations

or crisis. They will meet with the girl or boy involved counsel, care and be guided whether they have the person suspended, but also write the letter to the church where the partner belongs. In other cases they will arrange a meeting for both families in order to help boys in particular to be responsible.

This committee has an inclusive approach of care not only to the expectant young parents but also heir families. They are intentionally including the boys/men who impregnate the girls as in many instances they are left out or exclude from receiving care and participating in this process, as many cases the attention is channelled only to the expectant teenage mother. What are the ways we can care for the young people?

- The role committee is:
1. After identifying or being told about the pregnancy of the girl in their congregation, they will meet her and if she is active in the church she will be asked to cease participating in her group or other church organization until her matter is dealt by pastoral group, and later the church council.
  2. She will attend a catechism class for three months where she will be taught about parenthood, spiritual life and preparing her for the baptism of her child.

3. Get the identity of the boy responsible for the pregnancy and the church writes a letter to his minister. In a case where he is not attending a church, an agreement is made to write his parents.
4. Meet with the girl's parents so as to find ways of assisting the girl during her pregnancy, spiritually, emotionally and physically.
5. The local priest will initiate a meeting with the boy's priest so as to synchronize the teaching and preparing these young people for the responsibility and role of parenthood. If the boy does not belong to any church he will have the option of belonging to the same church the girl who he impregnated belongs to, giving them a chance to journey together through this period in their lives.

This is a process that is developed as a way of caring for the girl, boy and parents.

Another challenge is of girls who will face the daunting task of raising their children as single parents because of a number of reasons. And this challenges the church to look at the definition of family and who makes up family, as the traditional understanding of family does not apply to many households.

This is not just another committee that suspends people because they have “sinned” and let them see to finish with their crisis situation. The approach that this pastoral committee takes is the one of not shaming the girl and her family; rather it is of acceptance, restoration and empowerment, not condoning their actions. This is a model that can be adopted by a number of congregations irrespective of the denomination, and it can be adjusted according to the context. At the end when the girl is restored the young man is invited to be part in worship and baptismal of his child.

Lartey refers to the above as therapy that manifest itself in the shape of pastoral care, therapy derived from the Greek word *therapeo* meaning to heal. And healing happens when there has been illness (medical terms) and in theological terms that can be perceived to mean ‘sin’ or ‘alienation’ from the source. In this case the task of pastoral caregivers is to remove or correct, what is wrong and somehow return the sufferer to functioning order (2003:55).

Fiorenza talking to the academic staff and students of Norte Dame University, says, “**The church must consider the policy that expels pregnant unmarried women students but not their male partners from campus housing**”. She suggested that the university should provide nursery and day care facilities that would allow student mothers to finish their studies while their babies are cared for on campus, and also create housing on campus and scholarship that would allow unmarried women students (if they wish to do so) to bring up their children with dignity (1993: 52).

The author agrees with Fiorenza, as she is looking beyond the problem and coming up with caring methods that the university can apply in caring for its female students. She raises again the problem of double standards that is seen in the church but also in church sponsored institutions of learning where only the female is suspended and misses out of furthering her studies, while the man is left untouched.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

In this chapter case studies were presented to the reader and the reflection were made, one thing that stands out for the researcher is the different understanding of what sin is and who the sinner is and how the sinful are punished. Little or no love has been shown to those who were suspended and not only by the church but also by their families and significant others. Gerkins methodology redefines the role of a pastor and uses the shepherd as a model, it was important that caring methods be suggest so to empower those clergy who are faced with similar situation(s).

The following chapter deals with liturgy, in this instance we look at what is baptism and the baptismal liturgy that can be used by anyone regardless of denomination, for all who will be baptized (born out-of-wedlock or in-wedlock).

## CHAPTER 5

### BAPTISMAL LITURGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to have a positive baptismal rite and have a meaningful and inclusive baptismal liturgy.

As alluded in this research work that there is a practice in some churches, where women who had babies out of wedlock, are being subjected to having their children baptized on a Saturday (with the congregation not present) they are told this by their respective priest who believes that the Sunday baptism (that takes place in the context of Eucharist) is only for those children who are born to married couples. This act has caused more hurt to many women and their families, and made them feel as ‘sinners’ and ‘outsiders’ in their own spiritual home. The main question is how will the priest explain the issue of forgiveness, especially following the above process.

In this chapter the researcher will be looking at the liturgy to be used at the baptisms that is inclusive and applies to all those who will be baptized regardless of whether they are born in wedlock or out of wedlock.



## 5.2. DEFINITION OF BAPTISM

Baptism is the rite whereby a person is made a member of the church. It is to be celebrated normally on Sunday in the presence of the local community whether at mass or at some other time of the day (A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship).

## 5.3 DEFINITION OF LITURGY

Liturgy is the activity by which we worship God; liturgy is an act of worship. Mc Ewan recommends that the words ‘liturgy’ and ‘worship’ can be used interchangeably (2001: 3).

Before we can get to talk about baptismal liturgy we need to understand what liturgy is and where it originates from.

The Greek word *leitourgia* (verb: *leitourgein*) is made up from the noun *ergon* = “work” and the adjective *litos* = “belonging to the people” (derived from *los* Ionian *laos* = “people”). Literally translated, the, *leitougia* means “work of the people”. In practice, it was understood to mean services performed for good of the people, whether by affluent citizens or by whole city. Firstly it was limited only to the arts and artistic life of the Greek, later on, the term included any public service; from the second century on it included cultic services as well. (Adam 1992: 3)

Milner and Ott two of many contributors of the book ‘The Study of Liturgy’ have this to share about the definition of liturgy; **“Liturgy does not lend itself to definition, but if one is to be attempted it could be stated as follows: it is the communal celebration by the church, which is Christ’s body and in which Christ and the Holy Spirit is active, of the paschal mystery. And the purpose of liturgy is ‘to give glory to God’”** (1978: 28)

Galineau believes that Liturgy does not belong to the Priest; it is a service of the people, it can function as a motivation for ethical behaviour or as a source for ethical reflection (1978: 68). That is to say, liturgy may function as a norm for the way Christians live good life and how they think about questions of right and wrong, good and bad, justice and virtue (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993:87). Nothing in the liturgy exists invisibly without being manifested, and nothing is manifested that does not concern the realities of the faith.

The liturgy is the on-going story which forms God’s holy people, but the people must demonstrate some degree of holiness (evidenced by charity, hospitality and justice) in order for liturgy to be credible. (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993:96)

In a general sense liturgy is an artificial construct; actual liturgy takes place in concrete communities. The historical background and present circumstance of particular communities influence their understanding and practice of worship (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993: 88).

Liturgical Theologians and Christians ethics recognize that there ought to be a positive correspondence between **‘the vision and values celebrated in worship and the practical attitudes and behaviour of the worshippers before and after liturgy’**. (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993:91)

For liberation theologians, justice among Christians must be established as a prior condition in order for worship to be authentic, or else worship will merely perpetuate the situation of injustice, since both the oppressed/victim and the oppressor/perpetrators are often supposedly members of the church (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993:92). The author agrees with this statement, in the case studies it was clear that injustice towards girls who fell pregnant whiles their partners were left alone, this double standard is continue with different kind of baptisms for those who are wed and unwed. This brings to mind the question of, whether our worships are authentic, do clergy tell people that they are all equal before the eyes of God?, whiles they know that there those who are more equal than the others. Are clergy truly taking an option for the oppressed and the marginalised?

Baptism and Eucharist, are not just ‘religious things’ that Christian people do...instead of being motives or causes for effective social work on the part of Christian people, these liturgies are our effective social work. For if the church *is* to have a social ethic, these actions are to be our most important social witness. The ceremonial intricacies of many baptismal rites are about integration into the congregation, so that the *initiate* is brought into a relationship with the various significant individuals through the course of initiation (Bradshaw & Spinks 1993:95). The author has realised through these statement that the

church continues to be an inward looking community, where everything is *for* the members, done *by* the members and *to* the members. Our liturgies and sacraments are to be a vehicle that moves us into engaging the wider society. I concur with the fact that baptism and Eucharist are not just ‘religious things’, but they are ministries directed towards nurturing and ‘up building’ of the community and are the prerogative and in the power of all the baptized. And the ‘up building’ is two-fold, firstly it is outer directed towards the whole world in proclaiming the gospel and ministering to those in need and powerless and secondly inner directed towards the church to nature, empower, enable and challenge the faith community.

Traditionally, as in the time of Ambrose, one was baptized by a triple immersion, corresponding to the threefold nature of the trinity, later on the immersion was replaced by pouring of water in the forehead, though the Swiss churches favoured sprinkling. The author has chosen to use the immersion baptism, because that is the baptism that is used in the Anglican Church, which she is a members of.

#### **5.4 BAPTISMAL LITURGY**

Zimmerman had this to say about baptism; **“baptism is no magic moment. The celebration of the ritual of baptism is the manifestation of a faith dimension in our life that has only begun and will continue throughout our coming to full stature in Christ”** (1993:78). And the author agrees with this statement.

We commit ourselves through baptism to be members of the Body of Christ who constitute and participate in Christian tradition. We also celebrate baptism and Eucharist as ongoing realities that express our living the Paschal mystery.

Adam writes that; **“in the view of all the confessions baptism is the most important and basic event of Christian life; it is an ecumenical sacrament”** (1992: 114). The author agrees with Adam, firstly baptism is an entry point (initiation) for many people who become Christians, and secondly he moves it from an individual church to a wider church, the I have realised that we are not baptized or baptizing for a specific church we belong to, we are baptizing for God’s Church.

## **5.5 THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM**

Adam writes the following on he believes is that importance and significance of baptism.

- Baptism has its origin in a directive of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 28:19; Luke 16:16), it will remain a mystery unless we decide to take seriously the traditions regarding the missionary mandate of Christ.
- The conditions a person must meet in order to receive baptism are a conversion and faith in Jesus and His message. And this needs not to be seen as an independent achievement, rather as a dependence on the grace of God.

- Baptism incorporates human beings into the church as God's people of the new covenant; it is therefore a sign of a call and of salvation. Incorporation to the church is the primary basic effect of baptism, at the same time; it is likewise the means by which we attain the fullness of baptismal grace.
- In Christ, the baptized are drawn into the saving mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ; they share in His paschal mystery.
- Baptism is a gateway to new life; it is a rebirth, a new creation in which divine omnipotence is at work.
- Baptism does away with the separation of human beings from God, it brings forgiveness of all sin; it also gives human life a new fullness of meaning and the hope of an eternal life in communion with God.

This shows that baptism is not simply an external rite of acceptance into a human organization. Taken from God's side, it is a proof of God's mercy and saving will (1993: 115).

The author has realised how power this sacrament of baptism is, especially in terms of forgiveness and reconciliation both to God and people, and people to people. If baptism

was understood in this manner in the context of the case studies things could have been different for the three girls, their children and their families.

## **5.6 INFANT BAPTISM**

Baptism has never had anything to do with the candidates parents sexual lives, what clergy and pastoral caregivers need to do is to minister with care to the children who are to be baptized. Making sure that they are adequately prepared for baptism and are welcomed into the community of faith so that they will not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

We can hardly deny that the same Christ is present at baptism and in baptism, in fact is Himself the baptizer, who in those days came in his mother's womb to John. In baptism he can speak as well through the mouth of the priest, as when he spoke through his mother. Since then he is present, speaks and baptizes, why should not his Word and baptism call forth the Spirit and faith in the child as then it produced faith in John?(Bradshaw, Spinks 1993:23). Priests need to be able to help these girls as they come to baptize these little ones at the service of forgiveness.

Roger Grainge writes the following about infant baptism and sin: "The idea of inherent sin, of a tendency towards disobedience that has become part of human nature itself, accords with the practice of infant baptism. A baby's sin must be 'original' if he/she needs to be baptized at all – and to this extend the practice of baptizing infants id

justifiable by the dramatically explicit way in which fundamental theological point is brought home. There can be no other reason for taking the most innocent people we can find and make public ceremony of washing their sins away. (Grainge 1988:48)

Those who are baptized are baptized into Christ death and resurrection and are therefore made one with Christ. Baptism is understood to be a rite by which a person enters the community of believers and receives full membership into the Christian community. The Anglican Prayer Book of 1989, the extracts from the preface on baptism says; “Baptism is to be understood not merely as the rite of a moment but as the principle of a lifetime. On the other hand, the administration of baptism is once for all, like birth and death, Christians are baptized ones either as infants or as adults” (pg 361).

## **5.7 THE RITE OF BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN**

This rite is adapted from Adolf Adam, as it simplicity and structure that does not leave the child on the outside, because he / she is born out of wedlock. It might be similar with certain denominations baptismal liturgy, it does not exclusively apply to one denomination, it can be used by any denomination, and it gives any priest a structure to build on.

This baptism is to be celebrated in the context of a Sunday (worship) Eucharist service. As I have mentioned this is a structure that can be build on things like hymns, choruses



and other symbols that apply to that particular denomination can be fitted in where it is needed.

The author agrees with McEwan when she says, “**In planning a liturgy one is planning a process which enables members of the congregation to worship their God together, develop their theology and spirituality and explore how these interact with the world we live in. It is primarily a communal action.**” (2001: 17)

### **Introductory Rite**

- Greeting the community assembled for the baptism
- Dialogue with the parents
- Dialogue with the godparents

This is where the clergy person will welcome those who are present the baptismal service. The priest will remind the parents of their obligation to raise the child in the Christian faith, and then gives them the opportunity to express their readiness to do so. The godparents are asked whether they intend to aid the parents in their task.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

- Reading(s) and homily / sermon
- Intercessions

The purpose of this part of the liturgy is to strengthen the faith of the parents and other participants, deepen their understanding of baptism, and intercede for the fruit of the sacrament. The intercessions are not only for those to be baptized they are also for the parents, godparents, and participating members of the community.

### **Celebration of the Sacrament**

- Blessing of the baptismal water
- Renunciation and profession of faith
- Baptism

The priest will use the font to baptize; he may use a prayer of blessing the water. The water to be used for baptism should be true water and clean, for both the sake of the authentic sacrament symbolism and for hygienic reasons. Before the priest can baptize the parents and godparents must renounce Satan and profess their faith.

### **Explanatory Rites**

- Giving of the baptismal candle

The giving of the baptismal candle that will be lit from the Easter candle will be given to godparents, as a sign that the newly baptized have become children of the light and are to walk as such.

### **Concluding Rites**

- The Lord's Prayer
- Blessing

The priest will then bless the mother of the newly baptized child, their father, and the godparents. Then all will join in praying the Lord's Prayer (1992: 114ff).

### **5.8 BAPTISM – AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE**

Mbiti in his book "Bible and Theology in African Christianity," says these regarding baptism for/by Africans.

In Africa baptism is understood as a rite whereby new members are admitted into their community...The members are presents at the baptism to welcome the newly baptized into their midst and to share in their joy. This day is important as it is likened to the day of salvation as the day when the new members are incorporated into the community; other church activities are suspended on that day. The feast continues after baptism, in the homes of the newly baptized.

Baptism to a number of Africans is a rite through which sins are forgiven and also it is viewed as protection, which is another dimension of salvation. For the independent churches members, baptism repels the devil every time the evil power gets near the baptized. It protects the baptized right from the moment of baptism from the devil and his

unremitting harassment. Baptism offers this protection because of the significant, but permanent sign it leaves in the soul of the baptized.

Since the name of Jesus can exert such an exorcising effect, baptism in His name is consequently an anti-demonic rite since it remits the previous sins believed to be caused by the devils influence. When one is baptized, he/she has put on Christ at the very moment of baptism. The author believes that this is not relative to all, while to others baptism is an anti-demonic rite to others, is a mark that says we are children of God who are part of a Christian community.

Therefore, baptism protects them from misfortune, ill-luck, danger and disaster which the devil might cause. The condition on the part of the baptism recipient is faith in Christ (for the infant faith in his/her parents and godparents). It is believed that baptism without faith cannot help (Mbiti 1986)

## **5.9 SUMMARY**

It is of importance that those who perform the liturgical rites and sacraments understand their origins and significance. It is when we lack knowledge that we misrepresent the original intention to the act. What the researcher learned in this chapter is the understanding of the Western and African Baptism, both are somewhat similar are done in the context of a family Service and require fellow congregants to be witness is of this initiation process to the Christian community. The baptismal rite that is recommended

can be performed by a priest or a designated lay person; it too requires the involvement of a congregation and performed in the context of a family service. One thing that needs to be noted is that clergy are the performers and God is the one who ratifies.

The following chapter we look at the results of the questionnaire that was administered to clergy/ lay leaders and pregnant teenager; findings of this research and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK

The author had set out to interview 8 clergy, 8 lay persons, the lay people chosen are people who are in leadership positions in the church and also are involved with the priest in baptismal preparation. The 10 girls who the researcher have chosen are those who are currently pregnant (at the time of the research being done) and those who when they were pregnant were suspended by the church due to falling pregnant out of wedlock. The researcher had initially indicated that she will interview 5 of each from all parties concerned. Because of reluctance and resistance that came from lay leaders and clergy, I had to extend the scope of those to be interviewed and that led to more girls' being included in this interviews.

The clergy and lay people, who were uncooperative, gave no reason for that except that they are busy with other things and that they wish the researcher good luck with her research. The author found out later that they (clergy) were not willing to participate in this research because they have not given much attention to this subject before they continue with what they have found from those who were there before them. On the other side others other were uncomfortable with this as they felt that this was a ploy to “out” them and expose them morally and what ever they say might be used against them.

## 6.2 RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEW

### CLERGY QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the results of 8 clergy who participated in fill in the questionnaire.

*Q1. How many teenage girls who are members of your parish fall pregnant in a year?*

**A. 3 – 6**

*Q2. Do you suspend them?*

Yes	NO	No answer given
4	2	2
If yes for how long {no time frame}		

*Q3. Do you lead confessional classes?*

NO	YES
6	2

*Q4. Who conducts baptismal classes?*

Lay Ministers	Ordinand	Lay person
4	2	2

*Q5. Is there a syllabus that is taught?*

YES	NO	NOT SURE!
1	5	2

*Q6. Do you treat the boy/men who impregnated the girl, in the same way as you treat the girl?*

**A. This question did not receive any answer**

## GIRLS QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the results of 5 girls who participated in fill in the questionnaire.

*Q1. How long have you been a member of your church?*

<b>Since childhood</b>	<b>Less than five years</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>

*Q2. How old were you when you fell pregnant?*

<b>14-15 Years</b>	<b>16-17 Years</b>	<b>17-18 Years</b>	<b>19-20 Years</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

*Q3. Were you suspended after it was discovered that you are pregnant?*

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

*...If Yes, by whom and for how long?*

<b>Priest</b>	<b>Lay leaders</b>	<b>(no time frame)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	

*Q4. Did you go for confessions class?*

<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>-</b>

*Q5. Are you a single parent?*

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>



*Q6. If yes, do you feel morally and spiritually supported by your church?*

NO	YES
9	1

*Q7. In which way(s) do you feel the church should deal with the teen pregnant girls?*

- **Stopping being judgmental;**
- **talk openly about issues of sexuality;**
- **Tell married men to stop proposing love to young girls;**
- **treat both girls and boys equally.**

Doing the questionnaire with the girls the author found that there is a lot of hurt, resentment and anger that the girls have towards the church and also those who fathered their children. Some of them feel as outcasts in their communities and the church, they say the community has labelled them as promiscuous and the church sees them as sinners. On top of all this they are raising their children as single parents, without financial support from anyone they are relying on the government social grant (South African Government pays out monthly grant to new born babies until the age of seven who are raised by single parents from poor households).

### **6.3 FINDINGS**

The researcher has found that the clergy do not question much of the practices that are done in their churches. And because all this has not happened to them and their immediate family members they feel no need to disturb the status quo. Even this practice

of suspension is employed by different denominations no one has really come out questioning it and the way it traumatize and affects those who go through it especially the girl and her family, and the way the church is supposed to care. Those who have been engaged in this research have begun the process of asking questions and from the answers they will get positive or negative will change how things have been done and need to be done from now on. The question of the where is the father of the child, what role is he playing in this situation, who is punishing him or even cares for him, has been raised a number of times.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher will like to recommend to those who will have had the opportunity to read this research to start the process of engaging their ordained, lay leaders and the church especially those who publicly or privately still suspend girls, who are pregnant out of wedlock to find why they do it and how they can pastorally care and love them. Clergy need to understand the laws that govern the church and interpret them in a correct way; this will help them to account for the actions and decisions they make. The church has to seek to establish the identity of who is fathering the baby and he needs to be involved in the process so that he can be helped to be a responsible and available father. It will be helpful to have an academic literature on the role the church in this matter the researcher has found out that most of the reading materials she used were penned by Western theologians on the Western experience of teenagers and very little on the role the church in this subject.

## **6.5 AREAS OF STUDY**

The area of study that can be researched in the future either on Master's or Doctorate level is on the role of the church going men or boys who father children out of wedlock. How are they dealt with, who is dealing with them and what role are they playing in church. Are they young boys or older men?

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

This research has opened a world that many of us did not know it existed or what was happening there. The reality is that teenage pregnancy is at the increase and many of those teenagers belong to different denominations and some are committed members of their churches. In times of challenges and predicaments they count on the church to be there for them and not be it that inflicts pain into the already painful and traumatic situation. The tools that have been provided in this research will help those who will utilize them especially clergy. And the case studies provide a window to look at what happens to the girls after suspension and the impact it has on their children and how those who have done the suspending have spiritually and pastorally bankrupt / deprived their fellow congregants.

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire for Girls

1. How long have you been a member of your church?

Since Childhood

Less Than 5 years

2. How old were you when you fell pregnant?

14-15 Years

16-17 Years

17-18 Years

19-10 Years

3. Were you suspended after it was discovered that you are pregnant?

Yes  / No . If Yes, for how long and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you go for confessions class? Yes  / No . If yes who was conducting them? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a single parent? Yes  / No . If yes, do you feel morally and spiritually supported by your church? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which way do you feel the church should deal with the teen pregnant girls?  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. In which way(s) do you feel the church should deal with the teen pregnant girls?

## Appendix B

### Questionnaire for Lay Leaders and Clergy

1. How many teenage girls who are members of your parish fall pregnant in a year?  
 2-4       5-6       7-8
2. Do you suspend them? Yes  / No . If yes for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you require them to attend confession class? Yes  / No
4. Who conducts baptismal classes? Clergy  Lay Minister
5. Is there a syllabus that is taught? Yes  / No . Support your answer.
6. Do you believe falling pregnant out of wedlock a sin? Yes  / No . Support your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you treat the boy/men who impregnated the girl, in the same way as you treat the girl? Yes  / No . Support your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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