

**EXAMINING AND ANALYZING THE TRAUMATIC EFFECTS OF  
EXCOMMUNICATION OF THE MALE CLERGY WITHIN THE  
PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**

**By**

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Alongside these are the countless multitudes queuing in the excommunication death row. May these find solace nowhere else but in the LORD. Whoever I might not have acknowledged, I plead for pardon.



## DECLARATION

I hereby do declare that this is both my original and unaided work which has not been submitted to any other university for any degree

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Mpiyakhe John Kubeka

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Date



## **SUMMARY**

**Title:** Examining and Analyzing the Excommunication of the Male Clergy within the Pentecostal Church.

**Department:** Practical Theology

**Faculty:** Theology.

**Promoter:** Prof M Masango

The study undertaken aims at establishing the relevance, importance as well as justification of the practice of excommunication. The practice is interrogated through the literature review. The main era in which this practice is investigated is the Reformation era under the period of Martin Luther. This is a critical era of a person who is said to have influenced more than 400 million Christians from his time to date. He was the victim of excommunication himself.

The study employed a qualitative research method which augmented the literature review by interviewing the victim survivors of the same practice, who shared their ordeal encounters with the kind of brokenness that called for maximum empathy and identification.

In the final analysis a comparison of the Pentecostal's constitution against the mainline denomination's was done. This reflection revealed a deeper lack of consistency in the exercising of the ritual of excommunication. It is ultimately recommended that a conducive environment should be sought for where the victim survivor will appreciate the excommunication ritual so exercised on him/her.

Furthermore, the procedures and processes are encouraged to be observed up to the letter of the word so as to finally bring about the desired healing to the offender when executing excommunication.

Excommunication should not be seen as a wielded axe intending to terminate the existence of the weak or the offender. The study recommends a variety of Pastoral Care Methodologies ranging from authorities such as Charles Gerkin, Ann and Edward Wimberly and many other Pastoral Care scholars who advocate for a therapeutic approach when dealing with the wounded victim survivors.

The Impact and Effects of Trauma were analysed in minute detail as a window into understanding a person who has undergone excommunication. This information led to the examination of the various behavioural patterns or characteristics resulting from excommunication. Stress resulting from trauma was analyzed as a means of helping with the understating of the desired approach when dealing with the victim survivor of excommunication.

Finally a method of Pastoral Care is recommended which is informed by the literature consulted as well as the interviews conducted. This method proposes an establishment of a sound, unbiased and balanced system of approaching the victim survivor from the first phase of inquiring about the admission of guilt to the last stage of the enquiring processes. The system culminates with the therapeutic role the church as community meant to care should embark upon.

**Subject:** Examining and analyzing the traumatic effects of excommunication of the male clergy within the Pentecostal church.

**Keywords:** Pastoral, Pain, excommunication, communication, victim, communal.

**Definition of terms:**

**Excommunication/Suspension:** The act of being removed from active ministerial activities in the church. These two terms will be used as synonymous in this work since they are assumed to carry the same meaning in the oral and traditional practice of the concerned church.

**District Council:** The regional leadership representative of the church in discussion.

**Policy:** The constitution of the Church in discussion.

All definitions are as understood, provided and practiced in the church being discussed.

**GGP:** Global Gathering of the People.





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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The study will focus on the excommunication of the male clergy within the Pentecostal Churches in the Vaal Triangle. However, the author will look at the excommunication of the female clergy in his PhD.

The problem began in 1991 when the youth in the church the author was pastoring in Soweto requested to host the historic 1976 youth massacre commemoration service. For the purpose of this exercise the church in question shall be called: Global Gathering of People (not the real name because of confidentiality). The church board agreed that the service could be held in their premises. A few weeks later the author was approached by the district council, and excused him from active church ministry. He was not given reasons nor any form of explanation as to the reasons for “being temporarily removed because Rome was on fire”, quoting what was said in that meeting. Nonetheless, he could only attribute the excuse to the event explained above.

He later wrote a letter to the superintendent of the church, the national youth president, and the national chairman of the Men’s Fellowship requesting that they should excommunicate him according to both the church’s constitution as well as the Biblical provisions. Since this avenue was not given any form of consideration, he then took the matter to the press.

I was then soon reminded of the scenery in 2 Kings 7:3, of the four leprous men who were sitting at the entrance of the city gate waiting to die. Humbling impressions of the thought that the destiny of these people was forged by some heartless community haunted the author who most unfortunately found himself in the position no different from theirs. They were cast out of the normal community life and so was he.

The author felt left alone in the cold. There was no caring displayed in this situation of which in his article on caring Masango states, “The concept of caring is a gift from God for all human beings, as well as animals” (Masango 2005:915). Maybe the worst still was that no one sympathised with his request to be excommunicated. The scripture in discussion reflects the brutality of the community that would go all the way to send an ill person into the outskirts of the city. In considering what Christ meant when He mentioned that: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to find that which was lost”; the author was passionately moved to identify and to look at the wounded others in almost similar situations. These problems reminded the author that this is the reason why Christ ascended the cross to both identify with and die for sinners.

There are men and women daily sacrificed at the merciless altars employed at the discretion of those with power to decide on anyone’s fate, to the extent that such suits the accusers. There is another fascinating aspect to the story of the defenceless lepers at the city gate. They did not succumb to the dictates of their unfortunate situation, but instead chose to take a positive

step into the camp of their enemy. This resulted with positive fruition to their liberation and deliverance of everybody in the city.

It is this analogy which propelled me to choose this unfortunate encounter as my subject, for the sake of those who follow and experience persecutions. The degree of shameful imbalances in organisations and institutions meant to be advocating for the truth, love and Justice Christ died for is evidenced in the kind of silence the abovementioned church has displayed to its own servants of the Lord. If no one could respond to the press media coverage of the encounter the author had taken them head on with, and if his guilt, sin or crime is unpardonable, could it have been for such an indefinite period i.e. from 1991 to the time of the writing of this dissertation without being contacted as it was said: “We will call you”.

Without being judgemental or defensive, the author found a grey area, which could as such contribute to the field of active modern knowledge. This posed a challenge that argues into the defence of the defenceless minority who are the victim survivors of an almost similar plight.

“From a Christian perspective, pastoral care means to ‘accompany’, to ‘walk with’, and to travel with a person especially during difficult times. Pastoral care is never, therefore, merely a theoretical point. It is the final analysis, an act, a verb. In other words, for a Christian, pastoral care remains firmly in the realm of praxis (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:219). In support of the values Waruta advocates, the author believes that the Church should have rather exercised its mandate in a therapeutic manner.

## 2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The intention of this statement which is also known, as a thesis statement is to determine whether excommunication is an effective tool of bringing about healing in a member who has violated the operational principles of their particular denomination as originally outlined in the biblical requirements. “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17). This is an example and a model of how a sinning brother should be treated in the church provided by Lord Jesus.

Neethling states the following: “Empathy on the other hand is something completely different. It is the ability to see and experience things from the perspective of another, and consequently we do not only understand how others feel, we share those feelings, we also feel for them with our very being. (Neethling 2002:23)

The open invitation and point of consideration in the problem statement is therefore to ultimately attempt to weigh as to whether the engagement in excommunication serves the therapeutic intention outlined in biblical excommunication requirements.

The author as such supports the notion upheld by Steinmetz who states that: “God does not ask for human virtue as a precondition for the justification, not even in the sense of a perfect act of contrition. He asks for human sin (Steinmetz 1986:10). On the basis of this reasoning the author will be looking at what matters in man’s relationship with God.

The question becomes therefore: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The intention of the author is to attempt to establish the root cause of what appears to be a problem of a global nature. Hunt/Hinkle and Malony state the following: “For example, according to a 1988 report commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention, an average of 116 denomination’s 37,000 churches dismisses their pastors each month (Hunt/Hinkle and Malony 1990:91).

The problem the author will attempt to solve is whether the excommunication practice is practiced the biblical way amongst the Pentecostal churches. He will also try to check the consistency of the practice in the light of the pastoral care principles as well as whether the intention is to eliminate the victim survivor or is it to give such a person an opportunity to repent and acquire healing through such a rite.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Empirical Study**

The research will be conducted in the churches around the Vaal Triangle, in the Sebokeng region. The Pentecostal churches will be the focal group.

The method that will be followed will be the qualitative method. This method will seek answers from the interviews that will be conducted with three people from three different churches in Sebokeng. This broad spectrum of the source from which the interviewees will be drawn will at the end of the research be instrumental to advise on whether the excommunication

ritual is still carried in the biblical way, as well as pave the pathway to create a method of healing in terms of “Tending Christ’s sheep” His way.

### **3.2. Literature Study**

An academic study will be done through an intensive literature study on the ritual of excommunication. The study shall be conducted in a manner that will seek to answer the questions related to the origin, method, order, authority, and historic amendments that were carried out in a certain historic period of the church and what needs to be amended now. The particular period which the author will look into will be the Reformation Period in the Martin Luther era. This period is interesting because reformers were questioning certain practices of the church which did not serve the people.

The data will be derived from journals, press media cuttings, current court cases and various church councils’ decisions.

### **3.3. RESEARCH GAP.**

The author will attempt to be the first Pentecostal who will theologially and critically look at the discipline of excommunication of the male clergy. The only work that exists along the same subject is the excommunication of young girls by the church as dealt with in the scholastic thesis by Vincentia Kgabe. Nothing has been done in this area among the Pentecostal churches. The disciplinary measures are done and no one dare question the head of the church.

### **3.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.**

In order to achieve the purpose of the research the following objectives are set.

#### **3.4.1. Primary Objectives:**

- To establish the objectiveness of the practice of excommunication when exercised.
- To establish whether the practice of excommunication has any therapeutic effects to the victim survivor.
- To map the way towards either reaffirming the model or challenging the current practice.

#### **3.4.2. Theoretical objectives**

The theoretical objectives will be to establish through literature the application of excommunication as well as the extent of its therapeutic nature if it has any.

The purpose of the study is to critically look at the consequences of the act of excommunication, the necessary causes of the practice, any of the inherent therapeutic benefits of the ritual, as well as the evaluation of whether the practice does serve the purpose for which it was initially intended. Since the subject is considered in the church, it is necessary to weigh the redemptive potential of the ritual.



The study therefore intends to interrogate the measure of justice, truth, honesty and love when excommunication is practiced, with the ultimate aim of not only restoring the victim survivor but to fully bringing him to the sense of appreciating the ritual as a necessary chastisement act. It emerges from the early writings of theologians such as Luther that excommunication had always been used as a process of discipline by the church against a few.

Allen states that: “Thus, excommunication was being used to enforce the political aims of the papacy, and it was also being used to enforce economic aims of various branches of the church. For example, it was used to force the timely payment of tithes, annates, or other ecclesiastical debts, and to force town councils to stop taxing religious bodies, which were selling beer, wine, fabrics, etc Allen (1974:35)

The author disagrees with the manner in which excommunication was exercised and sees this practice as an unbiblical imposition of power to the defenceless subjects and people who were meant to be rather recipients of the gospel of grace. This shows that the ritual was not based on the word of God or even exercised, as Christ Himself would have done. This is apparently the spirit that was handed down to the descendent ecclesiastical generations.

#### **4. Target Population.**

The author does acknowledge that the females may go through worse situations; however, it is not the purpose of this thesis to analyze this issue. The focus of this work will be to look at the male victim survivors.

## **5. Instrument of data collection.**

Questionnaires will be given to participating interviewees. The necessary confidentiality documents will be completed towards the protection of the anonymity of the interviewees. See Appendix A in page (126).

The author prefers this method in the light of his concurrence with the writers such as Hunt who argue that: “The primary purpose of the structured assessment interview is to obtain reliable and valid information from which to predict future performance of an interviewee” (Hunt/Hinkle/Malony, 1990: 114). The suggestion is therefore that the instrument will provide valid and reliable information which will help to qualify the provided data.

## **6. Classification of Chapters.**

### **6.1 Chapter one: Introduction to the study.**

The background to the study will provide reasons for the cause that necessitated such a study.

The expected value that the study will add to the field of knowledge will be dealt with at length.

From the very outset the author will create awareness to the effect that: “The prophetic action is to speak out and “fear not” at the point of weakness. When that “fear not” is sounded, one begins to notice new sources of life where none was noticed, new vitality that had been declared null and void”(Shelp and Sunderland 1985:60)

This introduction will serve to lead to the ultimate intention of the study which is about asserting the need for the prophetic voice to come forward as the voice for the voiceless clergy sacrificed daily at merciless alters of tyranny and carnal attitudes.

## **6.2 Chapter two: Methodology.**

This chapter will provide the broader perspective of the literature that was engaged to address the subject in question. The author is going to use Gerkin's method of caring both for the individuals and the community as presented in his treatment of the subject of caring (Gerkin 1997:115).

The author agrees with Wimberly, when he states: "Thus, the restoration of our original relationship with God constitutes the source of our sacred identity" (Wimberly 2003:11). The theories espoused by Wimberly on the subject of Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity will be employed as a method of study.

## **6.3 Chapter three: The Impact and Effects of Trauma.**

This chapter will look at the effects, nature, behavioural characteristics or patterns and kinds of trauma resulting from excommunication. It will look at the impact of trauma resulting from excommunication. An overview of how excommunication was considered throughout the biblical books ranging from the Old to the New Testaments, the Prophets, Jesus Christ, and Paul's versions will be looked into. The history of excommunication during the Reformation Period of Martin Luther will be the focal period of the study.

The critical approach in this period will be analyzed with the view of its relationship to the current practice.

#### **6.4 Chapter four: Sharing the Stories of Others.**

This chapter will embark on real life encounters of other people who went through the brutality of excommunication. Their deep seated feelings will be revealed. Martin Luther will also be compared with the practice of the church in question.

Stories will be shared and analyzed as a way of applying caring methods. This will serve as a pastoral method of healing those male clergy who are excommunicated because of the misuse of power.

#### **6.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion.**

The conclusion statement will be provided.

General recommendations will be spelt out.

Specific propositions will be enlisted as recommendations into the development of the study for future usage.

The theological basis of what the study should mean to the current ecclesiastical generation would be provided.

Specific solutions will be proposed in terms of the existing problem on excommunication.

#### **Preliminary Conclusion.**

In this chapter the author dealt with the introductory part of the thesis. This part which he considers important in laying the foundation of his work,

served as a window into the study to be undertaken. He views his intended endeavour as a potential contribution to the fund of theological knowledge (Ortega 1995:1).

The study was introduced with the provision of the background which stems from the author's own experience of the subject. He draws an analogy from the lepers in 2 Kings 7:3.

The aims and objectives of the study are provided. The problem statement is introduced and the research methodology which will be employed as a tool to carry the scientific diagnosis of the study is also introduced. This methodology is going to engage an intensive literature review as well as carry out an empirical aspect of the research processes.

Chapters are introduced in a summary format and what each chapter is going to address is discussed under the following headings:

**Chapter 1: Introduction to the study.**

**Chapter 2: Methodology.**

**Chapter 3: The Impact and Effects of Trauma.**

**Chapter 4: Sharing the Stories of Others.**

**Chapter 5: Conclusion.**

The following chapter is going to give a detailed methodology to be employed in addressing the subject of excommunication. It will provide the base upon which the entire thesis will evolve in terms of the aspired therapeutic approach to the hurting and wounded survivors as they relate

with the church and themselves. “This approach is portrayed by Estadt in the following way: To be mature and well-integrated means to have a balance regarding the continuum upon which is placed the tension to be independent as well as dependent” (Estadt 1983:95). The author agrees with the notion upheld by Estadt that there is a need for a matured balance to enable the survivor the ultimate healing.

The pastoral care and shepherding model upheld by Gerkin will be employed: Reflection on the actions and words of Jesus as the good shepherd who knows his sheep and is known by his sheep (John 10:14) has painted a meaningful, normative portrait of the pastor of God’s people (Gerkin 1997:80). An intensive consideration of Wimberley’s theories on Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity will be also explored. He speaks of the concept of privileging conversations with God in order to move beyond conventional wisdom (Wimberly 2003:30).

In applying the methodology the author will be utilizing both authorities whose reasoning he not only agrees with, but further appreciates as relevant to the subject of excommunication, especially if the healing of the victim survivors is sought for. The author also introduces the concept of correct Biblical Hermeneutics which is an important subject to assist in interpreting the Biblical rituals, practices and traditions the correct way. He also alludes to the fact that it is only the perfect that is ultimately licensed to throw the first stone at the guilty as portrayed by Christ to the accusers of the woman who was caught in the act of adultery recorded in John 8:12.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **2. Research Methodology.**

#### **2.1. Definition of Term.**

The Webster's New Word Dictionary as a system of methods as in a science (Guralnik 1971:262). The research methodology, or method of collecting data, necessitate a reflection on the planning, structuring and execution of the research in order to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity and validity (Brynard and Hanekom 1997:28).

It is in pursuit of these scientific ideals the author contemplates to employ such a mode to elucidate some complications existing around the excommunication practice. The relation of the author and the subject in discussion is of an intimate nature since he is a direct survivor of the same practice himself.

To his humble experience and observation, he became victimized without any justifiable advance of the reasons to the act. Out of frustration he took the matter to the press, an act that in itself exacerbated the already flamed situation. It is this kind of situation the author seeks to address by crafting an instrument that will finally help survivors not to yield to the dictates of the forces that be. In his treatment of the subject on the theme of resignation Capps states the following: "This theme is reflected in individuals who are characteristically torn between two conflicting courses of action, such individuals seem to possess two "opposing wills" that cannot be easily

reconciled. But they recognize that this opposition must eventually be resolved” (1979:31). This kind of an undesired resignation from the responsibilities of life became the impetus prompting the author to desire to create a methodology that will serve as a sustaining vehicle to others who could be victims of the same situation.

The qualitative method, which employs literature review, will be followed in presenting convincing sources that speak for the subject. There will be maximum consideration that the territory that is aimed at is of an ecclesiastical nature; hence the primary source document will be the Bible.

Pieterse reasons out that: The Old and New Testament show that God champions and cares for the poor people in a very special way. When Israel was an insignificant, enslaved nation in Egypt, subject to oppression and poverty, God revealed Himself to Moses with these words: ‘the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them (2004:82).

In treating the subject of caring for the community of the Christian story, Gerkin explicitly states the following: “Care in the Christian sense of the word always involves both care of the community and care of persons involved in any situation with which the pastor is confronted” (1997:115). The author will employ Wimberly as the method of caring in his treatment of the subject of Claiming God Reclaiming Dignity. He spells out the understanding of pastoral counselling as a crucible for the formation of sacred identity (2003:43). This is the notion the author advocates for as an



important subject finding its pathway in the creation of man in God's own image. He will also borrow from Gerkin's shepherding model as well as the theories upheld by various other authorities. Such theories are critically important in reclaiming the human dignity.

It is therefore evident that in handling the subject of excommunication, the whole Christian community is involved. The author agrees with Gerkin, Wimberly and Pieterse in their consideration that the excommunicatee is in the position of poverty and as such does need to be given the care so as to make the practice redemptive. It is in the light of such acknowledgment that the author believes that there is an obligation incumbent upon the church to remember that the excommunicator is equally human, and that God does hear the cry of the excommunicated people.

### **2.1.1. The Role of the Faith Community.**

The methodology will expose the Biblical expectations of the Faith Community of which Joel 2:1 state: Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand.

The author agrees with the call to caution as well as prepare humanity for justice and the imminent advent of the Creator. He agrees that it is in the knowledge of the imminence of the day of the Lord that humanity will be sensitive to one another and handle their responsibilities to one another with the care and diligence such deserve.

In reasoning that there is time for everything, Ecclesiastes 3:5 states that: A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones. This becomes a wake up call to the Faith Community, which the author intends to demonstrate through the research methodology. The wake up call is meant to address the caution upheld by Regele who states: “We control the unfolding of events such as our career paths, our family life and experience, and even how we go about being the church” (1995:27). The author agrees with both scripture and Regele that it is in this kind of reasoning the Faith Community will be empowered to know how to deal with excommunication in a rather caring manner.

### **Research Methodology.**

The qualitative methodology will be used, as this method will enable the author to elicit the desired information with the intention to benefit the field of knowledge in the future. Ministers from three different churches will be given voluntary questionnaires in order to complete independently of each other. (See Appendix A page 126). In the observance of the confidentiality ethical code of research, anonymity will be assured upfront.

The next phase of the methodology will be to allow the interviewees to tell their stories. The present epoch in theology is faced with many challenges and numerous voices such as Feminists, Liberation Theologians, Catholicism and Protestantism, are articulating their stances (Gerkin 1997:105). He therefore reasons out that: It certainly suggests that whatever paths in pastoral practice are taken toward new horizons need to be kept open-ended and flexible, able to accommodate further new developments. It

is this open-ended approach that gives an ear to everyone's appeal and cries the author agrees with as well as adopts as a model to pursue the methodology with the intention to bring about the desired healing to the survivors.

In his darkest and most trying moments John Wesley vented as follows: "I did seek after God, but I found Him not. I forsook Him before: now He forsook me. I could not pray. Then indeed the snares of death were about me; the pains of hell overtook me. Yet I struggled for life; and though I had neither words nor thoughts, I lifted up my eyes to the Prince that is highly exalted, and supplied the place of them as I could: and about four o' clock He so far took the cup from me that I drank so deeply of it no more" (Capps 1979:39).

The author echoes the same truism in that he equally believes it is only in venting out the pain one will be able to derive healing. The importance of confession, venting out the hurts as well as seeking an object to whom one can confide is attested by Oduyoye/Kanyore in their challenge of an undesired silence by stating: "Indeed, based on the New Testament concept of salvation that says, "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36), and "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17), By the same token, imposing any such traditional oppressive practices under the auspices of the Christian church is tantamount to putting old wine in a new skin, and conflict is bound to occur. This is a call to the church to re-examine its stand on the acceptance of some of the rituals, a re-

examination that most come under the full search light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1995:64-65). The wake up call is therefore of such a nature that the traditional practices inter alia, the very excommunication itself, do definitely need to be brought under the spotlight of the cross of Jesus and the purpose of His redemptive work demonstrated through His resurrection.

Both the completion of the questionnaires and the story telling by the participants will be equally helpful to provide them a leeway towards attaining their much needed healing and ultimate wholeness: the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whereas the purpose of both these exercises is to pursue an academic endeavour, the much more desired will be to lead the participants to ultimately come into the grasp and realization of an even bigger purpose than the academic which is the perfectly finished work of Christ on the cross even for them as individuals. A notion affirmed by Hennely as follows: The gospel is primarily a message of salvation (1995:65).

### **Justification of the Research Method.**

The author had been and still is exposed in one way or the other to the hurting sermons of the bleeding ministers who happened to be survivors of excommunication. One of the very old ministers shared with him that all other armies of the world take care of their wounded with the exception of but one, namely, the Christian army. He emphatically pointed out that this strange one army harasses, shoots at and molests its already wounded people. It is though as if they thrive in observing more blood oozing from

their own camp hence Gerkin reminds us of the Shepherding model. He portrays this method as one method that can be helping in entering into the world of those who are hurting such as the excommunicated and traumatized by the church.

Gerkin suggests different ways of handling pain as follows:

### **1. The Priestly, Prophetic and Wise Guide:**

“Recovery of the role of priestly care through the ritual practice of the church as well as the educational function the priests played for the people of Israel needs now to be undertaken with care and imagination” (Gerkin 1997:80)

This is an indication that there is an even greater need to revisit the original way of caring as was practiced in the early Biblical era.

### **2. The Shepherding Role:**

He further indicates that: “More than any other image, we need to have written on our hearts the image most clearly and powerfully given to us by Jesus, of the pastor as the shepherd of the flock of Christ” (1997: 80)

### **3. Mediator and Reconciler:**

There is a critical picture which Gerkin spells out in the illustration of the methodology of caring as a mediator and reconciler put as follows: “Our method of reconciliation must now more nearly follow the manner of listening, invitation to consider, and clarification of commitments” (1997:81)

**These methods will be applied as follows:**

There will be a clear consideration to treat the survivors as sensitively as possible so as to ultimately be informed of surviving mechanisms.

The survivors will be treated with the traditional caring shepherd system which will enable them to derive to the desired personal healing.

Gerkin falls short of using his Shepherding method as a way of entering into the stories of people who are traumatized. This is where Wimberly will be helpful. He categorically states that: “As pastoral theologians, we are not obliged to accept the wisdom that comes to us from secular literature. Our task is to evaluate all wisdom using criteria from our own faith tradition and from our experience as pastoral counselors” (Wimberly 2003:35)

This rationale further buttresses the notion that proper caring happens when we acknowledge that: “Humans are a complex mix of positive motives including the best of all possible intentions as well as some of the most self-destructive self-interests” (Wimberly 2003:36). In the light of the foregoing, the author supports the reasoning by Wimberly which admits the inherent self-destructive human virtue which is in itself a state of the fall of humanity. This he supports against Gerkins’ methodology that draws a lot from ancient Israel’s priestly role that gave little to people’s own ways to account for their personal lives.

The research method the author will be pursuing is informed by the knowledge and admission upheld by (A WCC Study Document: 1997: 72) which reasons out that: In authentic *koinonia*, rights and duties are

considered in harmony. The “individual”, as usually described, does not prevail over the communitarian, but neither does the communitarian suppress the individual.

This becomes the pivotal point the author will base his model and methodology on: the admission that neither of the two entities exists without the other hence a need to propose a model that will attempt to create a platform which will provide enough space for ventilation of the hurts and ultimately resolve dissensions in an amicable manner.

### **The Position of the Excommunicated:**

Humans are a complex mix of positive motives including the best of all possible intentions as well as some of the most self-destructive human self-interests (Wimberly 2003:36). In the light of these human complications, the author argues that the excommunicated needs to be exposed to a methodology with an interactive therapeutic mode.

This method is the kind that will expose the importance of the image of God and reinstated the affected dignity of which Wimberly reasons out: Rather the unfolding story of God’s grace in our lives leads us to transformation and growing toward the image of God within us (2003: 37). It is this image of God the methodology will endeavour to bring to the spotlight. In the same breath the author will seek to create a pathway for healing himself since he feels no less that an animal especially with the knowledge of how the lepers were treated in Biblical Historic days.

### **The Position of the Excommunicator:**

The church as the excommunicator through the faith community needs to handle this with care. Wimberly is the opinion that: The caring community has to be firmly grounded in a spiritual or tradition, although not all members will ever be at the same level of faith. To be rich in caring, communities must also have an abundance of active symbols that impact person's lives. Ideally, a caring community needs the wisdom of different generations, interacting in full participation so that meaning may be continually transformed and transmitted to others (2003: 41). The author agrees with Wimberly that there should be a sound and unbiased maturity displayed by the Christian community, which should be seen as exercising care in the real sense of the word.

There should be a commendable element of awareness in its action, which the church should take into account. In this score Gerkin says: There is a growing awareness, for example, on the part of pastors and laity alike of the powerful, often insidious, ways in which the societal structures of our culture shape and even determine many of the human problems that are confronted in caring work of the pastor and the congregation (1997:74).

The author agrees with both Gerkin and Wimberly in their disposition of the subject that the church needs to act responsibly in exercising its care, discipline and power. How much more in its responsibility as the executor of excommunication?



### **The Position of the Agent:**

The agent of excommunication will be the person who should execute the ritual on the excommunicated. Very much close to the practise of excommunication is the inherent power vested upon those who execute the ritual. Since this culture has been handed down throughout the corridors of ages, there is maximum wisdom required to practice it. Our attempt to focus on unresolved crucial problems which are the centre of the current crisis in OT theology has revealed that there are basic inadequacies in the current methodologies and approaches (Hasel 1975:129). The inevitable question that has arisen is: “Where do we go from here?” It is in the light of this uncertainty of the methodologies and approaches the author undertakes this study so as to bring about answers to the burning inherited controversial traditions. He as such agrees that there is a need to revamp new methodologies.

Gerkin states: “Some of these practices from the past will need to be modified to fit the changing situation of the time ahead, but their preservation is important because they have shaped the tradition of what it means to be a faithful pastor of God’s people (1997:79). The need for the consideration of the new approach in handling some of the age old practices finds its pathway in the argument by Hennely that: The heart of Jesus’ message is the announcement of the kingdom of God, a kingdom founded on the Father’s love for all humankind and in which the poor hold a special place. “Kingdom” signifies universality; nothing is outside it” (1995:287).

The author reiterates what both Hennely and Gerkin stand for. He believes that the pastor or any person appointed in authority to execute excommunication or any such rite for that matter should do it without bias or qualms. Gerkin further states: Pastors need foundational, organizing image of the whole of pastoral ministry that can give coherence to and inform all of the various functional roles that the pastor plays in the life of the congregation (1997:116). The method therefore, as the author agrees with Gerkin, calls for approaching the practice with full caution and knowledge, being fully cognisant of the original Old Testament practice as it relates to the current day demands in the light of the entire scripture.

### **2.3 The Research Model.**

The author will seek the method that will address the hurt incurred by the recipient. An element of dignity is affected once one is caught prey of the excommunication practice. Immediately a conversation channel with oneself is opened to the extent that one may be psychologically permanently damaged. It is in this light the author will employ and expose a method that will say a therapeutic avenue is both necessary and available to channel the energy appropriately. In support of this notion Wimberly states: “The concept of conversation is important for pastoral theology. As mentioned earlier, conversation is interpersonal communication. Thus, for Christians, conversation with God is necessary. And for us to have that truest sense of our worth and value, we need to look to the living God revealed in Scripture (2003:18).

The method will propose and recognize the inherent human worth of which Wimberly argues: The conversations offered by caring communities are different from those of the wider society. The community's conversations reflect the fundamental value and universal worth of all people. In caring communities relationships and relationship building are primary, and the commodification of persons is discouraged (2003:41).

Before going to the Bible College the author remembers how he was valued in the assembly and always, not sometimes or in other instances, but always as with the capital ALWAYS, will be quoted as a good example of one or a few activities. To his surprise when he was released from the church none of those who were cherishing him came to inquire or even pretend to be concerned like the friends of Job quoted in the Bible. He was soon reminded that, by the way, he was faithful and loyal in paying tithe and even more than it was expected of the nominal church contributions while he was working in industry before going to the Bible College. This evidently spoke to the concept of commodification Wimberly speaks about.

The desired method will serve as an educational tool to Christendom, which has become an imperative requirement in the church. Pollard backs up this need by saying: We need to be clear about what it means to educate people, whether about the inadequacies of non- Christian worldviews or about the truth of the claims of Christ (1997:75). The author believes that it is this educational model, which is required in the church now than ever before.

The model the author will employ will draw a clear picture on the meaning of the ecclesiastical purpose, which should serve as a home for the homeless of which (Wimberly 2003: 76) states: Home is the place to be because it makes you stronger.

### **2.3.1. Let the perfect throw the stone first.**

In the story of the woman caught in adultery recorded in John 8:1-12, Jesus gave an impressive response to the woman's accusers when He said in verse 7: "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." The author will employ the methodology that says: And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:3).

According to Carr there is a cost, which is harder to accept which is a central mark of Christian spirituality enlivened by the cross of Christ. He indicates that it is acceptable to absorb the blame we deserve yet beyond that of prime importance is to bear the cross of others, which is a Christ like spirituality (Carr 1989:161). This becomes a wake up call to indicate that even when we are thrown with the heaviest stones undeservingly, we should count it all joy for it works for the good of others. The model therefore teaches the excommunicated to accept the stoning process in a more matured and accountable manner first to the course of the cross and next to others. Of this Carr reasons as follows: This life on behalf of others is both the stance of Christ and the essence of Christian spirituality (1989: 161).

Once stones are thrown at any individual, it becomes imperatively important to create a reception mechanism. This necessitates a speedily understating of the two most important surviving mechanisms, namely Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counselling. Once the one who assumes to be perfect throws such a stone it is important to employ an effort to seek a faith group to offer healing, sustaining or guiding and further acknowledge such as a source for help. Further the excommunicated will acknowledge the structured help sought for. (McCullough, Pargament and Thoreson 2000:281), define the former notion as Pastoral Care and the latter as Pastoral Counselling. The author will employ this model to expose the survivors to a more meaningful approach of handling the stone thrown in a much more matured and professional method.

### **2.3.2. Correct Biblical Hermeneutics.**

Professional helpers have a particular form of knowledge and skill, which they put at the disposal of clients (Campbell 1989:37). Campbell clearly indicates here that professionalism in the pastoral work is a priority. The author upholds the same belief and further reasons out that with such acquired professionalism, there will not continue to be mishaps and uncalled for casualties in the Faith Community. The model will draw from authorities such as Wimberly who says: “God offers a grace that not only will not let us go, but that provides the unlimited power of love. This love heals guides, sustains, and reconciles such that persons can then reach out unselfishly to others (Wimberly 2003:37).

This scholastic engagement will help alleviate ignorance and provide an atmosphere of reasoning and discernment hence enabling the sound interpretation and application of judgment before the practices such as excommunication are exercised. The author agrees with Wimberly that the love that God provides heals, guides, sustains and reconciles; the very imperative elements required in bringing the excommunicated person to wholeness.

Fiorenza gives an opinion that so much cultural compromise is as a result of the lack of the blueprint for the organization of his community Christ did not leave His followers with. She further affirms that the process of institutionalization set in gradually toward the end of the first century (1993:85).

In his discussion on culture Palma states: There is always the possibility of patching the old garment with pieces torn from a new one: we may always, to change the figure, attempt to furnish worldly society with an ecclesiastical cupola or wing and so render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's according to the misunderstanding of Jesus' words (1983:6).

The author agrees with the views held both by Fiorenza and Palma implying that through the sound Biblical Hermeneutics the current generation of those that are ministering to God's people will not easily yield or even be tempted to repeat the mistakes of the past, hence the need to create a new pastoral mode into excommunication.

### **2.3.3. The Stereotype of Stigmatization.**

There is an English proverb that says: Once bitten twice shy. In an attempt to search for self-healing and creating a model that will help the ecclesiastical body in the future, the author does recognize and acknowledge the damage incurred by the victim survivors of excommunication. It is this damage that creates the withdrawal mechanism that finally necessitates the need for the new identity formation. Of this identity formation Wimberly reasons out as follows: The process of identity formation is a gift from God (2003:58). Since the survivor will be clouded with the noise of the encounter, the author does agree with Wimberly that it will take God's gracious gift to help repair the damage.

The ultimate negative evaluation of ourselves is vested upon the negative conversations around us. Wimberly qualifies the foregoing by stating: Negative conversations produce negative evaluations of ourselves. He further reasons out: Societal conversations are very powerful and have shaping properties for our lives (2003:17).

The model will address the fact that there is no better stigmatization than displayed by Christ as Campbell also puts it in the following way: "Christ, the Wounded Healer, restores the fractured relationships between God, man and the whole universe. We do a grave injustice to the incarnate love of God if we try to understand the suffering and death of Jesus merely as some kind of legal transaction paying the 'penalty' for man's sin in a distanced, 'objective' way. Jesus' wounds, in life and in death, are the expressions of his openness to our suffering. He suffered because of his love: his sufferings

are the stigmata of his care for us and for the whole world estranged from God. Such wounded love has a healing power because it is enfleshed love, entering into human weakness, feeling our pain, standing beside us in our dereliction (1989:38).

This is the finished work of Christ the author agrees with Campbell on, that in its light no one but no one ought to display a “Holy than thou” attitude over and above others and be the judge of others. The author further maintains the truth spelt out by John where he states: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

#### **2.4. Preliminary Conclusion.**

In this chapter the author introduced the method he will be employing to critically address the subject of excommunication in an attempt to propose a model that will be beneficial to the field of knowledge. He looked at the concept of privileging conversations with God of which Wimberly says: My intent in the lectures was to focus on the conversations contained in the book of Job as a model for developing a cross-cultural perspective on God-conversation (2003:7).

In dealing with the subject of excommunication Chirinda in her assignment argues that: The exclusion of a church member within the community because of stubbornness suggested by Retina (one of her interviewees), is the last thing care givers should do (2008:124).



In the midst of a countless number of voices the author is advocating for a model pursued by Wimberly, which speaks on recognizing the relationship and conversations with God as second to none. Wimberly's version on this subject states: "Putting any relationship on par with God is idolatry. Trusting only in God ultimately leads to meaning." The author believes that it is this meaning that has to be sought after as well as exercised by the ecclesiastical body in carrying its task on being the executors of justice, discipline and the righteousness of God.

According to Carr, the responsibility of the Pastor, a representative of Christian leadership, there is a need for means of holding the experiential aspect of Christianity such as the traditions in an evidential and accountable manner (1989:58).

Capps reiterates the same by reasoning out that the pastor does have rights to point out instances in which his parishioners are guilty and that this should be done in the context of equality of worth –as one co-worker to another (1979: 67).

The author agrees that it is in the context of respect and recognition suggested by both authorities he aligns his rationale with the opinions they uphold. He will as such look into the actual pragmatic impact and effects of trauma emanating from the practice of excommunication in the following chapter.



He will apply the theories espoused by psychologists, counsellors and theologians on the consequences of rejection and address its far reaching damaging results. This will serve as a platform to better inform the practitioners of the same rite about an element of consideration and sensitivity in executing such, especially from the pastoral care point of view.

## CHAPTER 3

### **The Impact and Effects of Trauma.**

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

This Chapter will attempt to critically look at the various aspects that constitute the necessary ingredients of the state of trauma. It will look at the impact and effects of trauma resultant from excommunication and how the practice has been handed down through ages.

The study will also look at the consequences of the impact and trauma resulting from excommunication. It is imperative to look at the scientific application of the ritual as it affects all the stakeholders and participants, be they active or passive.

An overview of various Biblical eras will be looked into which is a range from the Old and New Testaments, the Prophets, Christ's own views as well as the period of St Paul.

The Reformation era will be the critical period looked into with special emphasis on Martin Luther who is considered one of the Reformers of all times: In the present century much Luther scholarship has followed Holl in concentration upon the younger Luther. The presupposition appears to be that the creativity, vigour and distinctiveness of Luther's contribution to theology must be sought in these early years (Trigg 1994:3).

Thus those preaches of indulgences are in error who say that, by indulgences of the Pope, a man is loosed and saved from all punishment (Hyma 1928: 37).

The foregoing authorities provide a base that prompted the author to choose as a historic reference the person of Martin Luther. It is this fearless vigour, regardless of the price to pay that led him to being acclaimed: Believe me, I am exposed in this quiet hermitage to a thousand devils incarnate, than against the “spirits of wickedness, dwelling in high places” (Ephes VI,12) (Hyma 1928:70).

Luther stands therefore both as a model and uncompromising contributor to the theology that was later to usher in a new historic era.

This vigorous approach that led the transformation of various church practices and rituals is more imperative now than in Luther’s time, an opinion upheld by the author who is backed up by Gerkin: It is little wonder that the field of pastoral care is in a time of transition and controversy. How to sort out all of the diversity within theology and make use of it in setting new directions for pastoral care practice becomes an interesting but difficult problem (Gerkin 1997:105).

### 3. Definition of Trauma.

The Webster's New Word Dictionary defines trauma as an emotional shock, often having a lasting psychic effect. (Guralnic 1973:607). It becomes very evident from the foregoing definition that trauma is a deep rooted and deep seated long-lasting pain. The nature of the pain is drawn as having devastating effects which result with shock.

The notion of the wound defined by Guralnic is bolstered by Mills on the subject of alterity, pain and suffering who states: At the centre of atrocious pain is the tension between what can be conceived and what is. It is when domination and terror become absolutes...that we cannot discover in ourselves a possible scenario to explain what happened. We want to say, it is inconceivable, yet we know it was conceived. The likely response to such tension is to reconcile the balance on the side of "usual" meaning (Mills 2007:148).

The results of trauma as portrayed by Mills manifest themselves not only with false illusions but moreover, with misconceptions of the actual and factual realities.

The state of shock, the depth of the wound and the gruesome brutality of the shock is portrayed by Mills as follows: Atrocious pain is an embodiment of space in which pain passes beyond any normal borders, both materially and metaphorically. Like Absurd pain it calls on the reader to stay still, to be in

that space of uncontrollable violence and loss, to let it grow full, outside of giving it a good/bad profile (Mills 2007:149).

The author views both opinions as pivotal in the understanding of trauma as it is used in both the religious and secular circles. He therefore agrees that trauma is actually both the embodiment and personification of the incurred pain. The moral ethos of such a pain will be understood, internalized and interpreted differently by different people. This means that people differ in degrees of absorption of pain. There is an age-old adage in Sesotho (One of the eleven official languages of South Africa) which articulates: (*Bohloko base eta boutlwiwa ke monga sona*). An equivalent English translation would state: “The best interpreter of the pain is the recipient thereof.” The patent inference here is that the best person to relate with the pain at first degree is the one who had the first hand encounter with the plight, whatever its nature.

It is important at this stage to introduce the subject of excommunication and seek to understand its implications primarily within the religious context since the subject is dealt with in the church circles. This subject appears to be an abstract quagmire which has caused more damage than good within the church or religious circles. If the message of the gospel is to be presented with the care and sensitivity inherent in the reconciliatory intention of He who created humanity in His own Image, cognisance of what Gerkin notes should be taken into account: We schematized pastoral care as a quadrilateral structure involving care of the tradition, care of the culture,

care of the individual, and care of the gathered community of Christians (Gerkin 1997:57).

Any repulsive practice and behaviour contrary to the foregoing proposition by Gerkin will suggest that the adherents of the faith are mere confessors than the doers thereof. This tendency immediately qualifies the definition of excommunication provided by Guralnik: To exclude from the communion with a church (Guralnik 1997:204).

The nature of the relationship incumbent upon the community of faith should be such that there is an element of common inclusion in the Church, even to the offender, so that the entire faith community should be seen as not excluding or discriminating against any of its members. The author agrees with this defined proposition of inclusion by Guralnik.

He further agrees with Gerkin that the essence of the pastoral care should be holistic. Moreover it should be a multifaceted quadrilateral and accommodative environment characterized by care and providing a reciprocally beneficial atmosphere of safety where no member will feel threatened.

### **The Traditional Old Testament View of Excommunication Upheld by:**

#### **The Law:**

The Law of Moses believed in the cause of corrective action which took various forms such as being set in isolation. But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and

its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate the one who has the sore seven days (Leviticus 13:4).

Now if the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his moustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He is unclean, and he shall dwell alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. (Leviticus 13: 45).

Both Scriptures indicate that the fair portion for the ‘unclean’ person is a place somewhere in the outskirts of the city. The author sees the legalistic practice of the Old Testament to the isolatory and excommunicative rite not as having destructive effects but rather the redemptive overall intention.

## **2. The Prophets:**

The prophets were adherents of the law and as such believed in the full might thereof. And Hezekiah had said, “What shall be the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?” (Isaiah 38:22). This scripture indicates that leprosy, a symbol of dirt was treated through being denied access into the house of God and being cast out of the community.

## **The New Testament View of Excommunication Upheld by:**

### **Jesus Christ:**

Jesus indicates that the condition of excommunication should be when all other avenues of a corrective action are exhausted and the victim blatantly and deliberately violated such. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the



church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (Matthew 18:17).

### **The Early Church:**

In the Early Church practice of Excommunication the author would love to cite Paul where he states: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5: 4-5).

### **3 The Afro Centric View of Excommunication:**

The journey of Jesus with his Church is evidently one of encouragement, guidance and correction in its daily activities. It is his pastoral care for those who believe in his name (Waruta and Kinoti 2005: 219).

Contrary to the notion of isolation suggested by the definition of excommunication provided by Guralnik above, the author agrees with the concept of a bond and communal life advocated by Magesa, to the effect that this community translates necessarily into practical actions of affectivity in the form of active love (Waruta and Kinoti 2005:221).

Throughout the entire scripture as observed in the above cited references the intention of excommunicating an individual is an explicitly clear redemptive endeavour. The author agrees in no lesser terms that the survivor should be excommunicated with the redemptive overall objective as the scriptural synopsis suggest from the Old right through the New Testament writings.

The author further agrees with the Afro Centric redemptive emphasis espoused by Waruta and Kinoti as cited above. He aligns himself with the therapeutic and reconciliatory approaches proposed by scripture and backed up by Waruta and Kinoti to the effect that such a rite intends to bring one to ultimate wholeness.

### **3.1. Effects of Trauma.**

As a result of excommunication one will suffer the trauma which will manifest itself in various forms. This traumatic encounter will leave one with terrible scars and effects of which Herman reasons: Atrocities, however, refuse to be buried. Equally as powerful as the desire to deny atrocities is the conviction that denial does not work. Folk wisdom is filled with ghosts who refuse to rest in their graves until their stories are told. (Herman 1997:1).

As a result of the traumatic experiences people reflect what Patton portrays in the following way: Many people have a limited ability to share what has happened to them in their lives (Patton 1990:14). He further states: If persons are genuinely to experience their human being, they need to reflect on, re-create, and share what has happened to them (Patton 1990:15).

From the opinions spelt out by both authorities it becomes important to note that the practice of bottling up the emotions is the actual breeding ground for the realization of trauma as attested by Freud in the following way: The effects of the trauma are twofold, positive and negative. The former are endeavours to revive the trauma, to remember the forgotten experience, or,

better still, to make it real-to live once more through a repetition of it (Freud 1939:122).

Sipe and Rowe argue that: One must be cautious when forecasting the long-term results of trauma or of a deprived environment. The effects may not appear for many years (Sipe and Rowe 1984:153).

As will be evidenced in the following chapter, the author equally agrees with the above three propositions to the effect that it is at the point of venting out one's hurts that one will be able to combat the brutal effects of trauma.

### **3.2. Kinds of Trauma.**

There are various kinds of trauma resulting from an act such as excommunication. Drawing from the life of a prominent Biblical character called Paul, Freud highlights the following: Paul, a Roman Jew from Tarsus, seized upon this feeling of guilt and correctly traced it back to its primaeval source. This he called original sin; it was a crime against God that could be expiated only through death (Freud 1939:139).

A single trauma does not usually produce permanent damage. When a single trauma appears to produce permanent damage, it is usually found that other factors are present, such as separation, as during the trauma of hospitalization, or the manner in which the trauma was handled, for example, an absence, of emotional support (Sipe and Rowe 1984:153).

The effects of trauma carry an indelible damage, the impact of which will reflect late in life as indicated by Sipe and Rowe above. Even in Paul's life as proposed by Freud above, there is a dent of guilt feelings traceable to the primaeval source of which in his support of the same, the author reinforces the truism of the effects through the words of Estardt: One of the personal factors that impact the outcome of a crisis is part experience: Does this situation evoke an unsuccessfully resolved crisis in a person's life? To the extent that a person is relying on defence mechanisms that are maladaptive, there is the likelihood that a stressor in such a case will evoke longer-lasting disorganization (Estardt 1983:142).

It is worthwhile noting that trauma resulting from isolation is as old as humanity. During His earthly ministry Christ dwelt among a people traumatized by the class-stratified system of which Wimberly says: In this class-stratified system, a person's worth was value-laden, based on honour and shame. There were those who were considered highly valued, and there were those who were not. Those who were deemed unworthy were the marginalized and disenfranchised (Wimberly 1999:23).

The situation has not altered from the time of Christ's earthly ministry. The author is of the opinion that if the situation has changed in terms of classification and preferential treatment of people this day as compared to Christ's earthly era, it has changed rather for the worst.

### **3.3 Stress Resulting from Trauma:**

The stress element resulting from a traumatic encounter cannot be overlooked, hence an opinion by Estadt: Studies about stress show that

expectation is an important factor in how a person will experience stress. Stress is often the disappointment ratio of the difference between the expectation and the reality (Estadt 1983: 149).

In the faith community one would anticipate some form of system that can address issues in a rather Christ centric manner, notwithstanding the fact that wherever there are people there exists a likelihood of differences in many aspects of life. It is for this reason that everybody in such a community holds some form of hope of protection by the institution that advocates for values Christ espoused to the very cross.

Failure by the faith community to meet the requirements of the expectations result with the notion upheld by Oden: This has spawned a dilemma of self-esteem. The oral traditions of African traditional religion have seemed to have less value or authority than written texts. The comparison of orality to textuality always seems tilted and unfair. The cultural and intellectual richness of native African religion is wrongly thought to be largely primal and oral. So it imagines itself as burdened with a desperate disadvantage in relation to written traditions. This is not a fair playing field (Oden 1996:270).

In support of the foregoing arguments the author strongly believes that as a result of a people who are a law to themselves, who can hire and fire willy-nilly, this practice subjects the faith to vulnerable scrutiny and questions even the authority of procedures and disciplinary processes and mechanisms employed to execute discipline. It is this failure to meet the Christ-like

virtues and expectations addressed by Estadt above that processes qualify to be seen as only traditional in the words of Oden. Stress is bound to occur as a result of rejection since human beings are naturally belonging creatures Browning portrays as follows: Humans have social needs to belong to, cooperate with, and sustain the groups to which they belong (Browning 1996:169).

### **3.4. Behavioural Patterns or Characteristics resulting from Excommunication.**

There are distinct characteristics as behavioural patterns that will be observed from a person who has or was excommunicated. In the light of the definition of excommunication provided above it becomes evident that such characteristics or traits are both irresistible and inevitable.

The superego is not only the giver of laws; it is the source of self-satisfaction and self-esteem, the supplier of necessary elements of narcissism, elements which replace in part the praise and devotion of parents. To be loved and approved by one's superego becomes as important as being loved and approved by parents and other important people in one's life (Sipe and Rowe 1984:158).

The knowledge of being loved and cherished is extremely therapeutic as the author agrees with the echoed proposition by Sipe and Rowe. He further reasons out that the annihilation of the sense of being and degradation of one's esteem finds its pathway where one has been subjected to the torture and torment of rituals such as excommunication. This very notion is equally

supported by Wimberly who discusses it with emphasis on the process of forgiveness: To forgive prematurely, I emphasized, could lead us back into relationships that increase our shame and feelings of self-degradation (Wimberly 1999:11).

The natural tendency for one who feels rejected is to align himself with any odd conduct so as to create a defence mechanism. The victim survivor tends to show extremes of an uncalled-for behaviour. This picture is painted well by Wimberly in one of his interviews: Drugs and alcohol made me more sociable and less shy. I needed those substances to feel secure when I was around others. I always wanted to be popular and outgoing, and the drugs and alcohol allowed me to be more outgoing (Wimberly 1999: 107).

The ultimate shame, and one from which it is almost impossible to recover, is the feeling that one is unloved by God. The root of shame, according to Leon Wurmser, is believing that one is unlovable and will never be loved. If such a humiliating conclusion is true from God's perspective, then there is no ground for hope at all (Wimberly 1999:51).

Since the author is the survivor of a similar plight, he can deeply identify with the root cause of this hopelessness, which has created an even deeper hunger to consider including a chapter on the subject of being excommunicated by God in his PhD work. He unequivocally supports the state of shame Wimberly addresses. He understands and feels the deep-seated pain articulated by Wimberly in the conversations on Job. There is though an immediate solution which Wimberly proposes, namely: For

example, some conversations are self-esteem building and others are not. If we encounter negative conversations over and over again, they tend to have a pejorative impact on how we feel about ourselves. Negative conversations produce negative evaluations of ourselves (Wimberly 2003:17).

The author agrees in no lesser terms that the most helpful way out of the frustrations presented by the effects of trauma which ultimately lead to the sense of worthlessness will be the solution proposed by Pollard who is an advocate of positive deconstruction. It is in the state of self acceptance, the desire to breakthrough the prison of self pity and the courage to soar the limitless skies that we can derive our healing: The process is called ‘deconstruction’ because I am helping people to deconstruct (that is, take apart) what they believe in order to look carefully at the belief and analyse it. The process is positive because this deconstruction is done in a positive way-in order to replace it with something better (Pollard 1997:44).

### **3.5. Excommunication during Reformation.**

The theology of the church reached an inflection point during the Reformation era. The period of Martin Luther in particular informed the church anew of many fallacious practices which were adopted foreign heresies. He addressed the authorities and implied that they were drinking impure water and called them to return to the source of the Divine Word: You ask to be permitted to hear the Gospel in liberty. Can’t you change your residence and come here to drink at the source of Divine Word? (Hyma 1928:75)



According to Yule Luther was emphatic about the gospel which sees Christ in others (Yule 1985: 58). He actually went to an extent of advising about the dethronement of a certain people: My brethren, the peasants, the princes who oppose the propagation of the Gospel light among you are deserving of God's vengeance; they merit dethronement. But would you not be also guilty, were you to stain your hands and souls with the blood which you intend to shed? (Hyma 1928:75).

The author will love to reinforce the stated opinions by pointing out that though Luther was a victim of the ritual of excommunication himself, he also advocated for the same as pointed out in the notion of dethronement he addressed as noted above.

This argument leads us to the next level of spelling out some of the reasons that could lead one to being excommunicated.

### **3.5.1. Excommunication as a Result of Pursuing a Questionable Doctrine:**

According to Hyma: There was a time when the faith had no need of defenders; it had no enemies. Now it has one who exceeds in malignity all his predecessors, who is instigated by the devil, who covers himself with the shield of charity, and, full of hatred and wrath, discharges his viperish venom against the Church and Catholicism...What similar pestilence has ever attacked the Lord's flock? (Hyma 1928:73).

Against the practice of his day, Luther is stated to have reasoned out as follows: In the first part of the treatise, Luther argues that everything derives from faith. If a man has faith, he has everything; if a man has no faith, nothing else suffices him (Atkinson 1983:102).

Those in authority had seen another new and threatening theology introduced by one they called the enemy of the faith, who nevertheless derived the pathway of his theology in his focus on Christ: Faith, once it ceases to be completely other-directed (Christ-directed), becomes a self-conscious and self-reliant human piety, in other words, a work. Properly understood, however, faith “is a constant gaze that looks at nothing except Christ” (Trigg 1994:90).

The author sees two communities at loggerhead with each other: the authorities who have vested interests on the benefits of the status quo and the incumbent (Martin Luther) who is an advocate of “new theology”, as it was interpreted. In these circumstances he agrees with Gerkin who strongly believes that: Each community, with its unique story and its unique values, vies for the fidelity of its members (Gerkin 1997:145).

It was in this era that Martin Luther emerged to challenge the heretic teachings which were prevalent and vehemently perpetuated by the church to the jeopardy of the innocent and ignorant.

### **3.5.2. Martin Luther's Attitude:**

Suffering is unavoidable, but the proper understanding of it, and an ability to welcome and use it spiritually, was the acid test of sincerity and true godliness (Yule 1985:52).

It is two years since I published a small book, entitled *The Captivity of the Church in Babylon*. It has annoyed the Papists, who spared neither falsehoods nor abuse against me. I willingly forgive them (Hyma1928:74).

The author draws a new indispensable lesson in the life and character of Luther. He is reminded of the time he took his own "saga" to the press and can only wish he had learnt the therapeutic mode applied by Luther, namely, that of willingly forgiving them. He further agrees that though suffering is inevitable, there is a bigger course to stand for which the Lord Jesus taught His followers, applicable now as it was in His earthly ministry: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matthew 6:12).

It is this therapeutic attitude that carried Luther amidst the storms of his tests attested by Wimberly as follows: Just as nurturing faith and hope in the Holy Spirit is not a matter of presenting propositions, so also nurture is not simply a matter of the leading of the mind. Nurture is a matter of engaging our whole selves-of enkindling our minds, emotions, and behaviours to the end that we truly see, move, and have our being in life in response to God's Spirit (Wimberly 2004:58).

Martin Luther was fully aware of the extent and impact of the truth inherent in the foregoing reasoning by Wimberly. He had personally discovered the truth the author applauds as both credible and sacred: For I have not found in Latin or German a more wholesome theology or one more constant with the Gospel. Taste, therefore, and see how sweet is the Lord, where formerly you have seen how bitter everything in us is (Hyma 1928:32).

He challenged, fought and confronted the ills of his day and forged a way to leave behind him traits of integrity that would immortalize him throughout all history. Yet he maintained a very humble and sober attitude against his state of rejection and excommunication: Luther claimed to have created no new theology...I beg that my name be passed over in silence, and that people call themselves not Lutheran, but Christians. What is Luther? My teaching is not mine. Saint Paul did not want Christians to be called Paulinians, but Christians. (1 Cor.3) (Hyma 1928:70).

Only when the fullness and divine mysteries are experienced can one speak like Luther in a way that does not seek self glory, but one which acknowledges the emphatic truth stating: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

Labelling as a form of humiliation and psychological torture, just as was the case with Christ did not change Luther who was labelled as displayed by Nestingen who articulates: “One of the nicknames given to Luther and his early compatriots, besides the originally taunt “Lutheran,” was the “*sola-ists*.” The latter word, which comes from the Latin word for “only,” was intended partly as a barb. It was aimed at the Lutheran love for exclusive sayings, such as the word alone, grace alone, and faith alone” (Nestingen 1982: 27)

The author notes with appreciation the uncompromising spirit and courage with which Luther could not be deterred even as further emphasized by Nestigen as follows: “Whatever else Luther might have been-monster of the medieval midway or prophet of the new age, heretic or reformer, co-father of acquisitive capitalism or herald of freedom-he most certainly was a preacher. He understood himself to been called by God to be a witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether holed up in his office for the third straight sleepless night, off on a trade in a lecture, climbing into the pulpit, visiting with friends, or playing with his family, this calling shaped Luther’s life” (Nestigen 1982:27)

Even though he was treated with contempt and rejection as observed from the labelling he suffered, he stood for what he believed uncompromisingly as witnessed by Lohse who states: “Luther, however, was unique in his understanding of God and the devil as directly intervening in historical events. The principle is the same one Luther followed in understanding the meaning of the cross” (Lohse 1986:194)

Throwing more light in the general life of the excommunicated is the attention such people draw, which is in itself traumatic. Lilje spells this out as follows: “The attention of the public was directed towards Martin Luther. Insofar as the news system of the day allowed, the glorious advance of the Wittenberg monk had been followed across German” (Lilje 1983:61)

The author agrees with the consistency of the person called of God as depicted by Nestigen, Lohse and Lilje that such a person, though rejected and directly or indirectly rejected by the ecclesiastical body, should stay focussed on the One who called him and not be swayed for his reward will come from Him (God) and not from the church regardless of its status, fame and or publicity stance.

### **3.6. Rejection Resulting from Excommunication.**

The one realistic sense anyone will have to live with once a victim of excommunication is the sense of rejection. This kind of rejection manifests itself in various forms. In Martin Luther’s own life he was diagnosed as follows: Luther’s life was deeply marked by the kind of nightmare terror, now sometimes being identified by psychologists as birth or pre-natal trauma (Yule 1985:52).

Luther became a reformer out of urgent pastoral concern. It was not his first intention to begin a theological revolution; it was certainly not his aim to lead an ecclesial revolt. These steps followed, to be sure, but (as he himself later insisted) they were not yet in vices ‘when I began that cause’ (Yule 1985:72).

The originality of Luther's theology is in the way he interwove its anti Pelagian slant with the central affirmation of the Christian faith, that Jesus Christ, though of one nature with God the Father, became our brother man. His whole discussion took on a fresh and personal approach which was often lacking in the later Mediaeval Theologians whose works on this subject often read like a text book on symbolic logic (Yule 1985:87).

As I wrote in my treatise against the peasants, so I write now. Let no one take pity on the hardened, obstinate, and blinded peasants who will not listen; let anyone who can and is able, hew down, stab and slay them as one would a mad dog (Hyma 1928:76).

The author views Luther's engagement in the Reformation era as crucial; in setting and protecting the dignity and integrity of the Gospel. He agrees with his pastoral concern that prompted in him the desire to affirm the Christian faith to an extent of demanding the stabbing, slaying and hewing down of those who were hardened and obstinate. This he did out of the passion of protecting the Christian values and as such introduced extremely strict measures of excommunicating the victims. The pain of the rejection he experienced himself, as a result of his doctrinal stance, was automatically transferred to the other subjects who were meant to be recipients of his message.

The author agrees with both writers as such that in the heart of excommunication lays the pain, the scars of which can not be closed even by the movement of time. The rejection resulting from excommunication, the

author believes, equals in all aspects, the rejection experienced in incarceration.

It is in the light of these facts the author holds an opinion that the best of the worst that could befall a person is to be buried alive through the rite of an indefinite excommunication, the brutality of which is spelt out by Luther who calls for the stabbing and slaying of the peasants.

The author holds a totally different view from Luther though and believes that the victims of rejection, the excommunicated and the hurting need to be given a chance to be listened to before they are axed or stabbed. This belief is echoed by Wimberly in the following way: There is liberation available through talk therapy. But to be effective, therapy needs a mentor who exhibits care and who has the necessary experience to provide the kind of empathy that aids the care seeker to anticipate the future (Wimberly 2003:64).

Excommunication as observed in the Old Testament is dealt with in the following way:

**The Leviticus Code:**

This set of Law required that a person with leprosy be taken out of the community. “This shall be law of the leper for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination” (Leviticus 14:2-3).



### **The Four Lepers:**

In the book of Kings there are four men whose encounter is narrated as follows: “Now there were four men who were lepers at the entrance to the gate; and they said to one another, “Why do we sit here till we die? (2 Kings 7:3)

Both instances reflect the isolation and the removal of people infected with leprosy from the community of people. There was a point in time where such a person would be restored back to the community. In my case the church does not think of any form of restoration. This is the trauma I am referring to. Isolation was dealt with in the Old Testament as a way of protecting the community from being contaminated by the leper.

In terms of the church discipline where excommunication is done, it is done for the good of the church and person until such a person is restored. This poses a question beyond fathom in the author’s own encounter. The author strongly believes that whatever the cause of his excommunication, this could and can by no means be beyond the forgiving and restoring blood of Christ Jesus and grace of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

### **The African Concept of Excommunication:**

The African concept of excommunication is holistic in that it deals with the totality of the person in relation to his/her environment. It is a concept that has elements of *ubuntu* (humanity). This system works with a person until he repents, to the point where he will be fully restored to the community.

When it comes to a male person especially if excommunication is dealt unjustly, it makes the person react with violence, hence the need for an honest medium of empathy and ventilation of which Mbiti states: “African prayer seems to be very honest, very open, very sensitive to both physical and spiritual aspects of human life” (Mbiti 1986:94)

The author lives his life with impressions that the Pentecostal religion is only concerned with what one has to offer and not the total salvation and restoration of a person.

Mbiti further reasons out that: “So Christians do not theologize first and then pray afterwards. Prayer is a natural aspect of their life, as if there is an inbuilt inclination to pray” (Mbiti 1986:229-230).

It becomes evident that an Afro centric way of dealing with excommunication is more than disciplining a person but has the ultimate results in mind and intent which is to restore a person to unquestionable wholeness. This rationale is further attested by Kourie and Kretzschmar as follows: “Christian spirituality has for many decades been identified with a radical world-denying, anti-materialistic, ascetic philosophy of life” (Kourie and Kretzschmar 2000:12).

The author believes that the ecclesiastical body has to make an admission proposed by Mbiti that: “While God has made all things, he himself is not made” (Mbiti 1975:52). This admission will be therapeutic and create the

spirit of acceptance of one another and tolerance when dealing with excommunication.

### **3.7. Preliminary Conclusion.**

The author elaborated on the Impact and Effects of Trauma resulting from excommunication in this chapter.

He looked at a few Biblical eras ranging from the Old and New Testaments, the Prophets, The Pauline era, Christ's own era during His earthly ministry to the Reformation era, under Martin Luther in particular. He looked at the agility and dexterous courage Martin Luther displayed against the powers and authorities of his era. He engaged scholastic approaches into the subject of trauma and its effects on the behavioural patterns of the survivor.

The term pastoral is considerably more than an adjective referring to the clergy. Although in the various Christian traditions there have been a number of meanings for the term, most of those meanings have involved either a pastoral "attitude" or pastoral "accountability." The pastoral attitude, perspective, or way of looking at things has most often been interpreted through the use of the biblical image of the shepherd... Thus when the term pastoral is used in some contexts it inevitably means an attitude of care and concern (Patton 1990:64-65).

In his attempt to seek for personal healing in his own experiential encounter, the author will be looking at the real encounters of excommunication in the next chapter. These are the stories of the male clergy in the Pentecostal

church who were crucified and have borne the marks of the Cross of Jesus Christ of which Paul says: For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). These are servants who have paid a price.

The author believes that every single person who goes through this exercise shakes the mountain where Christ was crucified once again. He will as such allow three ministers from the Pentecostal Churches who are the victim survivors of the ordeal of excommunication themselves to tell their own stories in their own words.

Finally we view narrative unmasking as a vital way of renewing our lives and updating the purpose for which God called us as individuals, marital partners, and family members. This is what we call the unmasking of the master story (Wimberly and Wimberly 2007:40).

In the light of what Patton addresses as the biblical image of shepherding the author feels an obligation to consider the story telling exercise not as just an academic gimmick, but a rather practical tool which will help map a desirable instrument in the Pentecostal Church. This aspiration is backed by Gerkin in the following way: More than any other image, we need to have written on our hearts the image most clearly and powerfully given to us by Jesus, of the pastor as the shepherd of the flock of Christ. Admittedly, this image originated in a time and place in which the shepherd was a commonplace figure, and we live in a social situation in which shepherding is as scarcely known, even marginalized vocation (Gerkin 1997:80).The author



strongly supports the notion of the pastor as a shepherd upheld both by Patton and Gerkin. He will further allow the ministers to unmask their hurts and tell their stories as they happened without interfering so as to allow a healthy ventilation process for the emotional catharsis to happen as desired.

## **CHAPTER 4.**

### **Real Excommunication Encounters.**

#### **Introduction.**

In this Chapter the author will present the real life encounters of excommunication.

Before beginning to share these stories, let me position the Theology of Pentecostal churches in excommunication. Whereas the essence of excommunication is about protecting the honour of Christ, in the Pentecostal circles or maybe the one the author was exposed to as well as his interviewees, the victim survivors seem to be in the defenceless mercies of the powers that may be. These authorities exercise their powers whichever way that serves their best interests. This chapter will therefore analyse the processes in place within Pentecostalism by engaging the stories of three victim survivors.

In the previous Chapter the author indicated the Theological basis of both Old and New Testaments alike. To the contrary, modern Pentecostalism, the ones the author and his interviewees have been exposed to in particular, define and practise the rite in a totally different manner from the basic Biblical dogmatic manner. In his own encounter he was just removed without a hearing, charge of any formality or procedure, hence his going to the press as alluded to in the previous chapters.

The author initially planned to interview three ministers from the Pentecostal churches as indicated in the introduction of the study in chapter 1. As soon as he started engaging with the three victim survivors, something deeper than the study emerged, namely, the interviewees were more offended, hurt and broken than they actually knew, each in his own separate interview. This accorded the author an ample opportunity to listen to their stories with empathy.

More than listening to the stories told, this served as a window through which the author realised how much of healing he needed himself. In an actual fact, the interviews served as a breeding ground for the author's much desired healing.

The stories shared by the victim survivors of excommunication in this chapter reveal rather sensitive and emotional information on how people are mere objects of the powers that be of which Neuger states: A theology of ownership suggests that humanity was granted dominion over creation by God and that dominion was interpreted to mean ownership. Along with ownership is the tendency to objectify that which is owned so that the needs of the owner are considered primary and the purpose of the owned (or objects) is to serve the needs of the owner (2001:97).

Such abuse of power and display of ownership leads the survivors to feelings of insecurity and defenceless. According to Kalsched: One of the healing factors in this working-through period is the fact that this time, the

therapeutic “trauma” comes after a period of essential self-object “illusion” (1998:164).

The author agrees with Neuger that the misconception by those in authority that they own the flock of God leaves the vulnerable flock to the false illusions spelt out by Kalsched that the flock is meant to be mere objects in the scene. Gerkin warns strongly against this fallacious misappropriation of power and authority in the following way: The role of the pastoral leadership must more clearly and intentionally than in the recent past develop a quality of interpretive guidance (1997:114). He further continues to argue: Pastors have been taught to think of their ministry as a collection of specialized functions (1997:115).

The author believes that if the church leadership can start to consider itself as mere stewards of God’s mercies and not custodians of judgment and further view each individual as part of the whole, this reasoning can serve as a platform of healing and acceptance of those different from ourselves e.g. those with big noses like himself shall not be a threat that is meant to inhale all the oxygen and leave everybody else suffocating gasping for air.

#### **4.1. Understanding the Art of Story-Telling.**

In remembering our own stories and those told us by other members of clergy families, five interrelated themes of challenge consistently appear: the challenge of moving, the challenge of meeting expectations, the challenge of making family life count, the challenge of meaning-making in parsonage



living, and managing catastrophic events and other devastating circumstances (Wimberly & Wimberly 2007:20).

It is hoped, therefore, that Africa's genuine believers across the spectrum of faiths will keep radiating an unequivocal message of inner sincerity instead of outward show. It is also to be hoped that such a message, even if it is spread by small numbers of real believers, will have a decisive impact on the supporters of fundamentalism and related extremes of literalism, dogmatism, ceremonialism and traditionalism (Malan 1997:66).

The Wimberlys portray values of the outcomes of storytelling as helpful in helping to meet the challenges, the notion reinforced by Malan that in such a practice believers of all faiths will be helped to learn to portray inner sincerity as opposed to the outward show. The author aligns himself with both authorities that there is inherent therapy in dialoguing which is further reiterated by Malan: Usually the initial discussions lead the parties into the mode of negotiating, which can be as frank and direct as the discussions (1997:93). It is at the point of admitting that there is a need for discussion that the importance of listening to someone share their story can be viewed as valuable.

The author supports the above authorities to the extent he further agrees with Bujo: In the same way, African theologians too must speak with a prophetic voice. They should not begin by elaborating theories which they themselves do not put into practice (1992:72). This is a clear call to engage those in the clergy and the ecclesiastic community to be contextually relevant and allow

those they are leading to tell their stories while they themselves are prophetic in the execution of their duties, with special emphasis in the African context researched by the author.

#### **4.2. Story-telling: The Pivotal Practice.**

We want to emphasize here that story-sharing is pivotal to the discovery and ongoing formation of resilient faith through which clergy families discover an unfolding story plot through a vital relationship with God.... For all who embark upon the experience of shared story, it will mean making sense of the stories and envisioning not only what facing forward means, but also what must be done to move forward with the purpose and hope (Wimberly & Wimberly 2007:37).

The roots of pastoral counselling in many cultures lie in the healing and restorative activities and arts practiced by priest-healers in ancient times (Lartey 2003: 16).

The importance of the resilient faith espoused by the theories of the Wimberlys will be evidenced later in the stories shared by the interviewees. It is true that the unfolding of the story plot should be centred on a vital relationship with God. The author supports this notion which is echoed by Lartey who traces its way back from time immemorial when the priest was not considered only as a spiritual leader but the agent of healing as well.

Story –telling as a practice that seeks to bring about healing should take into account what Gillespie addresses in the following way: The foundation for

all Christian theology is the revelation of Jesus as attested in scripture (2000:12).

Anything in the church or anywhere else which demonstrates itself as superior to the aforementioned biblical requirements quoted by reputable authorities, is not only subject to intensive scrutiny but is bound not to result with the healing addressed in this work and hence tends to impose a fallacious superimposition aiming at nullifying the work of Christ on the cross.

### **4.3. Unmasking as a Tool for Healing.**

But, the full nature and depth of these stories may remain submerged or stilled within family members, while at the same time, there is a deep yearning to give personal account of what has happened or is happening, For this reason, unmasking is the first practice in the process of story-sharing. Unmasking refers to our allowing internal and unspoken happenings and circumstances of our lives-challenges and promise-to come to life in narrative form. Thus, we may also refer to sharing our stories as “narrative unmasking” (Wimberly & Wimberly 2002:37-39).

Radical and systematic approaches focus on changing social systems so that all their members will be freer to grow towards wholeness (Lartey 2003:86).

The author agrees that in an attempt to seek healing it is extremely important to unmask the past experiences and happenings. In this way one will be able to reach a place of emotional catharses, the ventilation that can only be

applauded as a platform for ultimate therapy. Of course, Lartey puts it in the most powerful way by conceptualizing of it as a radical and systematic approach that is capable of producing growth to wholeness.

This story-telling exercise allows us to be creative agents in seeing as assessing our lives and in envisioning God's activity and plan for our lives (Wimberly & Wimberly 2007:38). They further reason out that: Finally, we view narrative unmasking as a vital way of renewing our lives and updating the purpose for which God called us as individuals, marital partners, and family members. This is what we call the unmasking of a master story (2007:40).

The author agrees with the belief espoused by the Wimberlys in their conceptualization of the unmasking theory. He maintains in the strongest most possible sense that everyone does have an undiluted original story of their own; the whole world has long been waiting to hear. This is the story which is in itself the liberator from future fears and the trauma of the past, an original personal package second to none, of which Rogers indicate its need for genuine therapy in the following way: Therapy, it cannot be stressed enough, is not merely being "nice" to a person in trouble. It is helping that person to gain insight into himself, to adjust to human relationships, with their positive and negative aspects, in a healthy fashion (1942:105). It is this belief the author supports which basically creates a base for potential healing for the hurting, especially the excommunicated in the subject under consideration.

In this condemning world, there is an even greater need for a platform to unmask our hurts and frustration we daily encounter everywhere humanity is found. One such platform is described by Wimberly as follows: In addition to baptism, the sacrament of Holy Communion, also called the Lord's Supper or Eucharist, is a highly revered ritual in the life of the black worshipping congregation because of its nurturing effects... The event became known as the Welcome Table where no one is turned away and where the meal becomes the bread and substance of life or the spiritual food for the journey ahead (Wimberly 2004:117). The author agrees with Wimberly that the sacraments such as the Eucharist should serve as the platform on which people find solace even to vent out their personal frustrations in an environment of safety better described by Christ in His invitation He extends to everyone: Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

This invitation extended by Christ allows each and every person to unmask their stories with the assurance of confidentiality. In his treatment of the subject of privileging conversations with God in the character of Clifford, Wimberly has this to say: Now all other conversations had to be interpreted by this new, liberation conversation. His transformation healed him when he was able to maintain the privileged position he had given conversation with God, letting this conversation push the old, binding ones away. His transformation became healing for others when he began to tell his story letting others see the benefits of being God's beloved child (2003:23).

This is the attitude the author supports as desirable in the process of unmasking our stories since it does not only provide room for confidentiality and transparency but transformation and renewal of the true identity and the reinstatement of the true self. The author views this as classical rapport.

#### **4.4. The Mythology.**

In unfolding the master story the Wimberlys introduce the concept they call the mythology as follows: the beliefs and convictions of clergy family members form a mythology that cannot be ignored in the story-telling process. Indeed, the mythology may be a key factor in developing individual and family resilience in the face of challenges (2007:41).

At the centre of the Hebrew story is a God of compassion who suffers with the world to keep it from falling apart. A feeling of dependence on an Order-Of –Things and Beings beyond us and on an Ever-Ordering –Being or Vital Force which led Abraham to walk away from the delta that was gradually getting overpopulated (Oduyoye 1986:67).

In reinforcing the foundational truths echoed by the two above authorities the author would love to spell out his position that it is imperatively necessary for anyone to create a mythology of some kind. Be it for families, communities and individuals as the Wimberlys point out, or be it for a nation as pointed out by Oduyoye, the principle factor is all encapsulating. The mythology becomes the driving force, the sustaining gravity and lubricant during the most difficult times of our journey. An equivalent expression is

employed by Wimberly who states: ...becomes the bread and substance of life or the spiritual food for the journey ahead (2004:117).

The Wimberlys regard the family ministry mythology as often a nurturing influence when the family is in crisis, and it functions as a shared story that gives perspective and meaning to them in difficult times (2007:45).

There can be no valuable relationship in which each does not desire the well-being of the others (WCC 1997:24).

The author agrees with the Wimberlys that the family mythology is a helpful instrument that can sustain the family when it is going through a crisis. The principle is equally true for an individual. One can be healthily sustained during the most hurting moments if he/she has a mythology to reflect on.

The WCC Study Document back this reasoning out in an impressive manner by indicating the importance of the interdependence in human relations which is key in knitting together the validity of both the individual's and group's mythologies.

#### **4.5. Real Stories Told.**

In this section the author will record the stories of three ministers in the Pentecostal Churches in the Sebokeng area (a township in Gauteng Province, in South Africa), which happened to be the geographical territory he contemplated researching. They are between ages thirty three and forty five

years. They were all assured anonymity in the recording of their ordeal encounters. In compliance with the research ethical requirements they all had to sign the consent forms allowing the author to interview them (See Appendix B page 129).

The interviews happened voluntarily without any coercion whatsoever. The author did explain the background of the study to the interviewees and the importance thereof. He emphatically indicated that the intention of the study was not to throw stones at the church but to rather create an instrument which will be a reference point for Pentecostals when they contemplate to execute discipline to at least one of their own.

The author chose to use the names of the three characters in the Bible as pseudonyms for the three interviewees, the reason being that he regards these men as those on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them (Daniel 3:27). These three men: Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego had but one immovable testimony, namely: Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:17).

The heaviness of the conviction that sustained the three men who were cast in the lake of fire is the same that sustained by the three interviewees. This is best illustrated by the Wimberlys in their subject on the mythology (2007:41), the analogy which has become a helpful tool to the author himself.



The format, though not fixed, was guided by the following questions as mere lead questions to usher the interviewees into the discussion. In each case the author started by sharing his own ordeal and allowed the interviewees to unpack their own stories through the method the Wimberlys address as relating empathically and unpacking our stories (2007:44).

What actually happened?

When did it happen?

How did it affect you?

Your own recommendations (It is important to note at this point that the recommendations given by the interviewees served as building blocks towards the envisaged methodology, instrument and tool the author was attempting to create through this research as a means to employ in the future).

It is in the stories of others as they were venting out their bleeding past that the author was able to stretch his own hand and touch his own long overdue healing. The process was more than listening to the stories of others; it was about coming into grips with the realities that happened and as such touch one's own healing.

Due to the lack of a clearly defined Theology related to excommunication among the Pentecostals, the following sensitive casualties were treated with maximum confidentiality by the author.

## Story 1.

Shadrack (not real name), unpacked his story as follows:

I was a very active member of the church, so much so that the Senior Pastor would leave the entire church responsibility with me. This element of trust that had developed between us encouraged me to grow in faith and desire to seek the Lord and learn how I could best serve Him, His servant and the congregation.

I walked before the Lord and the congregation with integrity, trembling and fear. I was responsible for the finances and administration of the church. Not in a day was I ever accused of misbehaviour or mismanagement of my duties. I was also responsible for evangelism and very helpful in the arranging of the sound system in the church.

Everything took a right about turn for the worst when the elders called for a meeting in the presence of the Senior Pastor and advised that I should no longer help with the sound system since this engagement was degrading me. I was told it would be handled by some junior church members. At this point I was also told the church would buy me all necessary equipments and assist me to set up the evangelism ministry, something which was meant to happen very soon.

The same day in the evening someone came to my place and told me the Senior Pastor wanted to meet with me urgently. Excitedly I left hoping that

I was heading for Good News. To my humble shame and surprise, the Senior Pastor told me that I had to wait and put everything that was discussed in abeyance since he would be going to the USA. He would as such expect me to be responsible for the Church affairs in his absence.

On the contrary the Senior Pastor did not go to the USA. The elders even changed the position I used to sit in. I was now positioned right up front, in a more prestigious position. Little did I know that this was where I was going to be getting my answers from? I had asked the Senior Pastor a few days earlier on about the developments regarding the evangelism ministry since he had not gone to the USA. He did not answer me. I got fire and brimstone responses from the pulpit.

In one of those sermons he said: “Some play important in the church. They need special attention to the extent that they have even relinquished their roles and have assumed important positions in the church. They do this in the name of getting special attention. If you believe to be called of God, why then don’t you ask the same God, to provide for you and to set you up in what you consider your gifting in the fivefold ministry.”

In good faith I played it deaf to all those horrendous verbal attacks coming from behind the pulpit. It worried me that the river which was supposed to be gushing waters of life was gushing out bitter water. I pursued my cause by requesting for an audience with him and the church elders. The church elders told me that they understood everything but had little or no authority whatsoever to give me the go ahead. They actually indicated that the Senior

Pastor was the only one who could bless my intentions and I should approach him.

Every attempt I made towards the Senior Pastor was blocked by his body guards, who always told me that he was busy. My one time confidant, the Senior Pastor, was now miles apart and inaccessible. To crown it for the worst, he was tirelessly attacking me from the pulpit, so much so that some of the congregants were starting to question some of the sermons.

At this stage I was labelled as the devil worshipper, the label which not only troubled me but so affected me that even in my personal moments of silence I could hear the shout in my ears: devil worshipper. Not only was my integrity affected, but my relationship with church members was also strained. Some of the people, who used to be very close to me, started treating me with serious suspicion, especially that I was known to be the devil worshipper. No sooner than later, I decided to leave the church in search for peace and true tranquillity. Just a stone throw from his church, I planted mine.

## **Story 2.**

Meshach (not real name) welcomed the author for an interview which lasted for only three and half minutes after he had shared his own ordeal. This is how he told his story: In the year 2001 on a Sunday service, without any form of consultation, the administrator stood up after the church service and

announced that “Pastor Meshach will no longer be our pastor effectively from this very moment.”

To the author’s surprise Meshach said that was all. He refused to continue and fixed his eyes on the television until the author thanked him for his time. He asked him how the congregation responded to that and this served to unblock the impasse that had taken place.

He started opening up and responded as follows: This person, the administrator, must have been sent by the Senior Pastor since he was not in the church that day. He arrived just after the service and requested the congregants to heed the announcement. The congregants demanded an explanation but no one gave any. Though there was a constitution in the church, this was not utilized. The Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches do not observe the constitution. One is suspended or excommunicated at the will and spell of the Senior Pastor and maybe with the elders or church board in other instances.

The procedure was not available, no counselling was provided, and no pastoral care measures were entertained. In the Pentecostal Church when they excommunicate, there are no systems put in place for restoration. It is practically like people enjoy excommunicating others.

They will just excommunicate you and not check what happens thereafter. Excommunication is seen as such as a licence to send the culprit to hell. May be it is because people do not understand the reasons for

excommunication. The discipline exercised is more of punishing than disciplining with the intention to restore the offender. It should be noted that the excommunicated person is a candidate for repentance. I think the discipline should be about the maintenance of both the integrity and purity of the church. It is currently done haphazardly.

In my case the Senior Pastor must have felt threatened, apparently by my leadership gifting. We as Africans do not observe unity in diversity. Some important facts to note are:

We should know the reasons for excommunication.

Unity in diversity should be observed in the church.

Different gifts should not threaten anyone.

Concepts of understanding the ministry are important and should be known.

In conclusion we should learn to work together in tolerance.

Ministry should be understood to be about God. Pastors do not work together because people are working to build their own kingdoms and not God's kingdom.

In my case it was a blessing in disguise. Other people will fight you if you are blessed in their midst. Excommunication can have the positive side too, namely:

The Building of character.

Separating you from other people so that God can bless you apart from them; that is why God said to Abraham: Leave your own people.

I took it positively hence my success in the present ministry which I started not very far from where I was excommunicated without a reason.

Isaac Newton says: It was in standing on the shoulders of the giants that I could see the future. Today I am feeding three hundred orphans, victims of HIV/AIDS; I am running HIV support groups; I have three qualified social workers and a nurse fully available in the service of the church.

If you do not want to leave when God indicates that you should leave, be rest assured that He Himself will engineer you out.

### **Story 3.**

Abed-Nego (not real name) told his story as follows: In 1999 I submitted a letter to the Church Board and the Senior Pastor requesting to be released from active pastoral work as I was one of the assistant pastors. This was as a result of the perceived fears, stress and pressure I was going through. I was released and went to join another church. A month later I decided to come back and informed the Church Board and the Senior Pastor. I requested to be active again.

I was called in and asked what actually made me to require being passive at first now that I had changed my mind against my initial decision. One of the painful experiences I had was when one of the board members asked me how I would feel to be called an ordinary member and no longer a pastor. I told him I had no problem with that. He must have been angered by the fact that I could not be provoked. Little did I know that the worst was still to

come? He bashed me with the question I never expected. He asked whether I was HIV positive in full view of all board members.

This must have been the result of the depression I had suffered in the process of what I was going through. Then they told me the Senior Pastor had decided to excommunicate me in his personal capacity until he was satisfied. No reference was made to the constitution, nor was it actually used to execute the sentence on me.

This indefinite excommunication lasted for two years, in other words “until the Senior Pastor was satisfied.” I was attending the church as a regular church member even though the Lord would use me in an extraordinary way outside the church since I could not be passive even outside the church where my services were required and valued.

After two years of passivity, I was called by the Church Board and the Senior Pastor. They told me that on a certain day I should be available at church. I obliged and on this particular day they announced that they had tried all they could to make “it hard for me.” The meaning of this phrase was not explained to me. They further affirmed that I had proven that I am really called of God. As the church and the leadership of the church, they respect me. I was restored by public declaration. Since then it has become extremely difficult for me to hold any active position in the church. I am one of the pastors without portfolio for a period of ten years this day.



I am still passive by personal choice. God is using me outside the church where people value my services. But on Sundays if there is no outside invitation, I do attend at church. Whenever the Senior Pastor assigns me to assist with the crusades in the branches, I will carry on the task with pleasure. Should he require me to conduct a funeral or any other service; I do gladly carry on the duty. Whenever my services are required at church I serve with commitment and humility.

This encounters led the author to making an informed conclusion that:

1. Excommunication has no healing effects in the Pentecostal circles whereas the gospel of Jesus Christ advocates for restoration.
2. Restoration as portrayed in the Pastoral Care Theology advocated by Gerkin is lacking in Pentecostalism.
3. Jesus Christ restored Peter in fullness and even entrusted him with the task to tend His sheep (John 20:16)

#### **4.6. Lessons from the Real Stories.**

As each of the victim survivors shared their stories, the author was taken back to a point in time where he was an active recipient of a likewise encounter. The scars and the marks of the tale are as bright as though they happened yesterday. He was stirred in his spirit to seek for a deeper and more meaningful way of relating with the realities of his own nightmares.

He found solace in the realities about Niebuhr that: Despite a stroke in 1952 that slowed his pace, he made a two-thirds comeback and did some of his best work, journalistic and reflective, during the placid 1950s and the stirring

1960s. He produced more books that elaborated, complemented, and refined themes of theology and social philosophy set forth in the 1940s (Brown 1992:7).

Freedom of conscience has reference not simply to the constitution of ecclesiastical bodies but also to the unofficial “laws of society,” or what is called political correctness. Christian conscience is bound to God and not to the ideologies of a society (Leith 1993:205).

All the interviewees indicated that the constitution was overlooked, not considered or even not available in other instances. This proves beyond any shadow of doubt that what Leith points out is very true, namely, the fact that the freedom of the conscience does not have its reference point to the constitution but to the unofficial unwritten laws. It is this reality the author supports. He believes that if one can square his shoulders and define his own role and purpose in life, there is bound not to be unnecessary squabbles in the ecclesiastical gatherings. Instead, people will leave with an ever refreshing feeling of hope like Niebuhr who was renewed when there seemed to have been no hope in his state of affairs.

The stories of the victim survivors will be interwoven with some underlying theories of trauma and recovery as espoused primarily by Herman.

A journey that attempts to cover the incurred shame demonstrated by Wimberly in his *Moving from Shame to Self-Worth* will also be interrogated

in an attempt to seek the healing of the victim survivors who feel shamefully undressed before their onlookers.

#### **4.6.1. Withdrawal**

There are invaluable lessons Herman points out regarding the behaviour displaying itself through withdrawal. He draws the following picture: The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and **disconnection from others** (1997:133).

It is evident from the above submission that the experiences of the psychological trauma are not only the disempowerment aspect, but there is also a very critical element known as disconnection from others. The author aligns himself with this rationale that calls for a more sensitive pastoral approach when dealing with victim survivors of excommunication. This need is best illustrated by Wimberly who spells it out as follows: Pastoral counselling embraces a more nonjudgmental and accepting attitude while preaching embraces a more moral perspective in which people are challenged to change their attitudes (1999:7).

It is in the spirit of false acceptance of their own plight that people such as Abed-Nego are not only disempowered but also disconnected from others. This is verified in his confession that he has chosen to be passive in the church affairs for a period of ten years. This disconnection manifests itself through the yielding he is displaying by believing that it is the meekest, the most appropriate and humble conduct to be passive in the church.

The author agrees with Wimberly in this regard that the kind of pastoral care required is one that will embrace a more nonjudgmental approach so that the victim survivor will feel both welcome and challenged to change his attitude and live a life connected to others as displayed by Herman above.

#### **4.6.2. Guilt Feelings.**

As a result of the heaviness of the excommunication encounter, one is bound to internalize feelings of guilt. In addressing the subject of the human nature and destiny Brown states: The Christian understanding of human nature, Niebuhr pointed out appreciates the unity of body and soul as part of the goodness of creation. It further regards the human person as made in the “Image of God.” (1992:75). It is in the internalization of guilt feelings one will be tempted to overlook the reality of the completeness with which one is created, namely, the image of God, against which there is no standard measurement and that includes feelings of guilt.

In supporting his intention to pursuing the course of caring Browning states the following: It was from the beginning a concern to relate theology and social sciences to inform caring practices in concrete situations (1996:98).

In buttressing the trend of thought advocated by Browning the author strongly supports the notion of an informed minister; hence such a great need to educate the clergy about the importance of synthesising theology with other disciplines of social sciences. An informed clergy will at least know the basics of administration such as reference both to the Scripture and the guiding document of the organization i.e. their own constitution.

With this knowledge will also come sensitivity of dealing even with those deserving of the sanction such as excommunication. The primary objective of excommunication will as such fulfil what Brown addresses in the subject of human nature. Much as excommunication is not a desirable, the ultimate redemptive aim of restoring the beauty of the image of God in man will be appreciated by the victim survivor once this practice is carried in a more responsible and informed manner as alluded to by the above authorities.

The author further agrees that guilt feelings are precisely not natural feelings. These are deterrent feelings resulting from the imposition of circumstances, finally injecting one with gross ill feelings.

#### **4.6.3. Extra-cautiousness/carefulness.**

There is an English proverb that says: Once beaten twice shy. The implications are that once one has been caught prey of circumstances beyond one's control or a victim of an unfortunate situation, an extra measure of caution is likely to be exercised in all future similar circumstances.

On this subject Wimberly, though initially speaking on account of the youth, articulates the following: Given the current context of marketing forces affecting the lives of our black youth, and the relative impotence of the church to respond, black youth are left floundering without compass or rudder (2005:43).

In support of Wimberly's view on the forces that affect the youth, the author would love to agree and contextualize this very view to the fact that the Pentecostal Church does have a vacuum and as such reflect the lack of a rudder so much so that the church seems to live in the commercial world of commodification addressed at length by Wimberly (2005:42-43). This floundering in which the church is left due to the state of ignorance gives birth to the very fear inherent in the above quoted proverb whereby one would be propelled to exercise extra caution in whatever they do henceforth.

According to Brown, the law of human nature is love, a harmonious relation of lives in obedience to God (1992:75). The author affirms the inherent truth upheld by Brown to the effect that whereas it is a healthy practice to be cautious, but extra cautiousness or carefulness tends to be more of an ailment or abnormality than a normal conduct. This in itself affects and destabilises the relation of lives in obedience to God. One will automatically start to live their lives in full fear of the unpredictable future, hence affecting the harmony that should be existing in life.

To this end Oden gives a position that should rather be pursued by the church: Early African believers gave a lasting gift to world Christianity. The gift was not given without blood and torture. When the evidence is rightly digested, which has not yet occurred, it will again reshape modern African Christian identity and motivation (Oden 2007:124).

The author endorses Oden's opinion that as a way of resuscitating the belief the early African Martyrs emulated, it is incumbent upon those who would

love to stand for the truth to commit themselves to such uncompromisingly, fully knowing that like our forebears there is a price of blood and torture to bear. It is in this knowledge and practices that extra cautiousness or carefulness will be exercised with the joy of discipleship and boldness.

There stands therefore no need to live one's life in guilt, withdrawal and self-condemning extra cautiousness. Put in the words of Paul this truth is reflected as follows: There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1). This Scripture clearly shows that the spiritual home and environment should serve as the cushion of solace, a shelter for the homeless and a fortress for the destitute and not as an abattoir.

The world has countless abattoirs in their various forms, shapes and sizes. The church is as such portrayed as a place where all and sundry can come in and enjoy not only the fellowship but the flow of healing grace she has been bestowed with. The Psalmist draws the following picture about such companionship anticipated from an ecclesiastical gathering: Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1).

#### **4.7. Preliminary Conclusion.**

In this chapter the author looked at the real encounters of excommunication. The chapter journeyed through real life stories employing the Wimberlys' art of story telling of which they contend: As part of sharing stories of our lives

as clergy family members, it is important to create a safe space within which persons can experience catharsis. Cathartic moments are occasions when we feel freed to unburden ourselves by “telling it like it is” (2007:43).

The author shares the same belief with the Wimberlys that the telling of the story should not be sanctioned by any external stimuli if it has to carry out the desired therapeutic results. This has been proven to be true with the interviewees who shared their truthful moments of undiluted pain.

The chapter went on to discuss story-telling as a pivotal practice. Unmasking was introduced as a way of venting out the hidden hurts. The concept of the mythology, which every individual and family need to have was discussed at length.

The crux of the matter was reached when real stories were shared. These were the most emotional moments bearing real time lessons. They left indelible marks and brought back to life the encounter the author once went through while at the same time they served as what Kalsched mentions as: Archetypal defences, then, allow for survival at the expense of individuation. They assure the survival of the person, but at the expense of personality development (1996:38). This behaviour was noticed very clearly in the life of Abed-Nego who lived in the denial state of the reality that he was actually hurting hence his withdrawal mechanism from all activities of the church except when his services were invited. This is a clear indication of the survival of the person at the expense of personality development as pointed out by Kalsched above.



In chapter five, which will also be the last chapter of this work, the author wishes to spell out the conclusion very categorically pointing out the most important and recommendable propositions related to how best can the excommunication practice be exercised both within the Pentecostal and the entire church. This provision, as the author supposes, should come out as a functional and helpful tool bringing into being the reality espoused by Chapman in the following manner: A person's ultimate concern about life and death, hope and hopelessness, the feeling of being at home in the universe or being abandoned by all, and the need to be forgiven or left with a burden of sin because of real wrongdoing are real concerns, not just covers for something (1992:296).

The author fully agrees with the echoed ideals by Chapman especially in that they highlight that people are by nature willing to accept their faults and wish to elevate their moral levels from that of wrongdoing which can lead them to excommunication to that of an acceptable blameless life. Recommendations to be provided in Chapter five will be instrumental in helping to achieve these aspired ideals.

## Chapter 5.

### **Introduction.**

It appears that the ultimate aim of excommunication is not necessarily to punish a person with the intention to send them to hell. This reasoning is elucidated by the data provided throughout the previous chapters. In the previous chapter the victim survivors of excommunication told their stories in their own words as they actually happened.

This chapter will draw a systematic conclusion from these stories, the methodology discussed in Chapter 2 as well as the evolution of excommunication discussed in Chapter 3 as it was practiced in various ages.

The author will submit few recommendations informed by both the outcry and response derived from the victim survivors who shared their stories as well as the interrogated literature. He intends to create a tool that will not only be noted for academic excellence but one which will contribute to a pragmatic therapeutic wholeness of all parties involved in the excommunication process. The tool should be able to help each of the involved parties in the following way:

### **The Victim Survivor:**

It appears that excommunication, though a pleasurable endeavour from the executors, actually results with irreparable scars to the victim survivors. Rogers considers this ritual as an abuse portrayed in the following way: “Ritual abuse is sadistic and humiliating trauma that is systematic and

recurrent, and utilizes techniques such as conditioning, torture, and mind control to damage the physical, sexual, spiritual, and/or emotional health of a person. It is unusual for this form of abuse to be a single incident.” (2002:4).

In retelling the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, Wimberly states the following: “The wilderness is a significant place in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is a place where natural resources are limited. Water and food are scarce. Shelter from the sun during the day is practically nonexistent, and the nights are cool. Too many days and nights alone in the wilderness would severely strain a normal person’s will to survive.” (1999:31).

The author agrees with Rogers that such a ritual produces humiliating trauma and utilizes devastating techniques that would disempower an individual sexually, emotionally, spiritually and physically. He further supports the notion upheld by Wimberly which practically cements Roger’s rationale. He maintains that the countless number of days out in the cold alone should by now have achieved the desired results of those who removed him from active ministry with the pretext of calling him back. He has almost succumbed and yielded as his own will to survive has not only been strained but rather drained to full exhaustion.

The author now fully understands his own abnormal behaviour of refusing to greet people with a handshake at times. With all honesty and truth, this has become one of the most hurtful practices: the handshake. Given a choice, he

would unequivocally sign out of this age old traditional exercise which has no more meaning to him in what he considers a distrustful world.

In the words of Rogers this scenario is drawn as follows: “People who have been subjected to physical trauma of any kind may develop PTSD, especially if the physical trauma took place over a long time. One of the lingering effects of physical and sexual trauma is a distrust of physical contact. Body boundaries have been violated, and it takes time for victims to fully regain a level of comfort with even nonsexual touching. Therefore, it is important for pastors to know that expressions of physical contact such as the “passing of the peace” during a worship service can be difficult for some survivors. Well-meaning, friendly parishioners may routinely greet people with a hug without asking first if this is acceptable. Pastors should model sensitivity in this area and teach their congregations to be aware of the need for physical boundaries” (2002:6).

In the story of Abed-Nego his withdrawal from active involvement to being “passive by personal choice” as he states, fulfils the argument presented by Rogers above. This behaviour is as a result of an indefinite excommunication; which lasted for a period of two years. The victim survivor should therefore be able to adapt to the situation and fully appreciate that he is enabled to handle the rejection, labelling and loneliness of excommunication.

## **The Church:**

The tool the author envisages to create is a methodology that will attempt to inform the church to : “Create occasions as members of clergy families- children, youth, young adult, and adults- to explore your personal stories of and responses to arbitrary or non-negotiable expectations emanating from congregations, the public, the self, of family” (Wimberly and Wimberly 2007:58).

Wimberly gives a shocking version of what ultimately leads people to behave in rather wanting and questionable ways, especially those with power to make decisions for their subjects and subordinates. He puts this matter as follows: “Negative conversations with others affect our conversations with God. There is a long-standing psychological principle that our relationships with others color our relationship with God” (2003:28).

The author supports the opinion upheld by the Wimberlys that there is a need to create a platform in the church which will serve as a base allowing individuals and families to air their pain with the hope that they will derive their healing. He equally reiterates what Wimberly sees as the most invaluable virtue both for the individuals and the ecclesia, namely: positive conversations. He admits that the schisms, the inherent cacophony in the execution of unjust measures in excommunication, are all influenced by negative conversations that have taken control of the tongues of those in leadership within the church, hence the need for a sound and healthy method to administer justice in excommunication. All of these find their pathway in the avoidance of negative conversations.

In the story shared by Shadrack, negative conversations are evidenced. As the Church Board advises that he be moved away from the sound system and later he is attacked from the pulpit, this is a clear indication of the impact of negative conversations and the damage they can cause for the individuals and the entire church. The author therefore addresses means and proposes the system to address such conversations and promote positive conversations which will by all means and standard ultimately obliterate any form of need to excommunicate members since there will be open channels to engage in matters of a concession nature.

### **The Observers:**

These are the people who are not part of the ecclesiastical setting. Their critical observation of what is happening within the four walls of the church should be stimulated by a desire and yearning to be part of the community within the four walls of the ecclesiastical gathering. This should happen as a result of what Christ teaches, namely: “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12). The apostle Paul also teaches that: “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1Corinthians 13:13)

The author fully submits to Christ’s appeal that if the ecclesiastical community shows love, it shall be evidently seen that they are His disciples. He also articulates the same belief with Paul that there should be love in the midst of the saints which is actually a blanket that covers the nakedness of every single member in the body of Christ. Once the observers see this kind of behaviour and lifestyle, they will be attracted to the church and the

monstrous practices such as unjustifiable illegal, unbiblical and unconstitutional excommunications will not be a threat to those who are observing from a distance outside the four walls of the ecclesiastical gathering.

Observers can also be viewed as those who are in the neighbourhood or within close proximity to the ecclesiastical gathering who are either critically or compassionately looking into the church affairs from a relatively intimate distance.

Since this category is sought to be brought into the Kingdom, it becomes very necessary to display the love of Christ to them through the love the ecclesiastical gathering gives to one another. Therefore, the tool the author is envisaging can be conceptualized of as the tool of love.

### **The kinfolk of the Victim Survivor:**

Rogers presents an impressive argument that: “Members of the victim’s family can also play an important role in encouraging the individual to seek help and by providing support during the recovery and treatment process” (2002:15).

Wimberly on the other hand supports the same reasoning by stating the following: “God does not abandon us in life. God may be silent. God is, however, always present. God is not an abusive parent. Rather, God encourages us to express the negative feelings we have as a means of moving toward wholeness” (1999:60).

The author aligns himself with the notion upheld by Rogers that members of the family can be the rare hope when everybody else is no longer in the scene of our shame. When all the people we were carrying financially, spiritually, emotionally and otherwise, and those we nurtured in their early Christian lives, have turned their backs against us, it is comforting to know that members of the family can play a very supportive role as most probably, the only safe cushion.

He further reinforces Wimberly's belief that in those trying moments when God seems to be silent, it is imperatively important to note that He is rather very close to us and encourages us to vent out our hurts to Him since He is a caring parent and not an abusive one. This background knowledge will serve as a tool to kindle more closure from members of the family to be even closer to their hurting loved ones, especially those excommunicated by the church. The family will provide care, support and love and emulate the higher values of covering the nakedness and shame of their bleeding loved one the same way Christ ascended the cross to cover humanity's nakedness and shame.

It is extremely important to note though that the support system the family provides to their hurting one as a result of excommunication does not result with what Patton portrays as follows: "Certain knowledge may obstruct change rather than contribute to it. It may reinforce the passive dependency of the helping situation by solidifying the forces of "doctor" and "patient" in



a way that undercuts the counselee's responsibility for his or her life situation (1983:138).

The author supports this belief by Patton that the recipient of help who is a hurting family member should be assisted in such a way that he does not develop an unnecessary dependence syndrome which will in turn defeat the purpose of the desired results. The tool or envisaged instrument, as it will emerge towards the close of this chapter, is aimed at bringing a holistic approach towards the healing and restoration of the dignity of the excommunicated.

In this chapter he further looked into behavioural patterns or the characteristics likely to be displayed by the excommunicated and their need for support emotionally, spiritually, socially and psychologically.

### **An Intensive Analysis of the GGP's Excommunication Policy:**

This part of the work will seek to interrogate and present the section dealing with the excommunication, especially of ministers in the GGP. The clauses and the wording will be explicitly applied and quoted from the document in question verbatim.

### **Section 7: Discipline of Ministers.**

- (a) Any minister "walking disorderly" or guilty of "unscriptural conduct," or who changes his doctrinal view to be at variance with the Tenets of Faith of the General Council, or fails to work in agreement with the

District Presbytery of which he is a member, may be placed on Probation, Suspension or Dropped.

- (b) The District Officers shall bring the matter before the District Presbytery.
- (c) The District Presbytery shall have the power to recommend that the General Presbytery take the following action by placing a minister under Probation, Suspension or Dropped having regard with the gravity of the offence.
  - (1) A minister on Probation could continue with his credential and ministry, but would be under the District's observation.
  - (2) A minister on Suspension would have his credentials withheld and would have no ministry until he had met the requirements set by the District in his case.
  - (3) A minister who is Dropped would have no credentials and no ministry with the GGP.
  - (4) Any disciplined minister shall have the right of final appeal to the General Presbytery, provided he lodges his appeal within six months of being disciplined. He shall place his appeal in writing and if he so desires may appear in person before the General Presbytery.
  - (5) Any minister whose credential have been placed on Probation, Suspension, or Dropped shall automatically be deemed to be removed or suspended, as the case may be, from any office or position held by him in the GGP.

## **Section 8: Reinstatement of Disciplined Ministers.**

- (a) For Districts- Before a District makes application for reinstatement of a disciplined minister it should satisfy itself that the application for reinstatement has shown true repentance and has made restitution as fully as possible.
- (b) For the General Presbytery
- (1) The General Presbytery shall give consideration to any recommendation from a District Presbytery for reinstatement of disciplined minister. If questions arise, the General Presbytery shall reserve the right to refer such applications back to the District Presbytery concerned.
- (2) Should the application be favourably accepted by the General Presbytery, the applicant shall be issued with the same credential he previously held.

### **An Overview of a Different Organization's Constitution:**

Having explained the position of the GGP's practice of Probation, Suspension or Dropping of a guilty minister, the author would interrogate a different model from another denomination. He shall address this denomination as Peoples' Christian Fellowship (not real name), which shall be abbreviated as PCF. This he does for anonymity reasons.

He will quote their section on the discipline or excommunication of ministers verbatim as well, so as to provide the base for the desired dialogue of the two constitutions with the ultimate aim of creating as well as

recommending a rather informed instrument and methodology of excommunication in the final analysis.

### **PCF's Section on the Discipline of Ministers.**

PCF on the subject discipline stipulates the following:

Discipline is defined as “the enforcement of rules against the “marginally minded sheep” referred to in the first paragraph of the Foreword. This paragraph states the following: Law has been said to be for “the marginally-minded sheep” to help them to do what is lawful, to conform to the standards of the group as a whole.

PCF is dealing with discipline in a more intensive manner. For the purpose of this study, especially that the subject matter is on the GGP's processes on excommunication the author opts to rather extrapolate those sections that address what he contemplates to drive home from the PCF's constitution:

Section 1 deals with discipline in general.

Section 2 deals with ground for discipline.

Section 3 deals with forms of discipline /sanctions.

Section 4 deals with the structure of the church courts, categorized as follows:

- The Session.
- The Court of a Presbytery.
- The Court of a Synod.
- The Court of the General Assembly.

Section 5 deals with the disciplinary jurisdiction of the church courts/councils:

- The Session.
- The Presbytery.
- The Synod.
- The General Assembly.

Section 6 deals with the procedures in disciplinary cases:

Rules common to informal and informal procedures.

Informal Procedure.

Formal Procedure.

Section 7 deals with referrals.

Section 8 deals with appeals in disciplinary cases.

Section 9 deals with withdrawal of discipline.

Clause 18.62 of section 6 states the following: “As soon as possible after the Representative decides to proceed with a hearing and notifies the Clerk of the Court of his/her decision, the Clerk of the Court notifies the alleged offender in writing of the following:

- (a) Alleged act of acts of misconduct
- (b) Right to legal representation at own expense
- (c) Right to remain silent
- (d) That what is said at any stage in the proceedings may be regarded as evidence.

Clause 18.63 in particular states that: “Before the formal judicial procedure begins an alleged offender is offered the opportunity to admit guilt (i.e. to

confess to the whole or part or what is alleged) and to show that he/she has repented.”

Under the formal procedure section 6 clause 18.72 states: “The Clerk of the Court ensures that the accused receives a copy of the allegation(s) of misconduct for formal written statement of the allegation(s) of misconduct and the list of witnesses as speedily as possible.

Section 8 clause 18.109 states: “A Court finding an accused person guilty informs him/her that he/she may appeal to the next higher Court, and that this application may be made there and then, or be submitted in writing and delivered by hand, or posted by registered mail, to the Clerk of the Court within 21 (twenty-one) days of the pronouncement of judgement.

18.113 states: “If the defendant is granted leave to appeal to a higher Court, the Clerk of the lower Court transmits the whole record of the hearing, together with any relevant documents and exhibits, duly attested by himself/herself and the Convenor of his/her Court, to the higher Court. The higher Court considers the whole case. All parties in the case are entitled, on request, to a copy of the record and relevant documents.

### **A Dialogue of the Two Constitutions:**

As a prelude to engaging in a dialogue on the subject of excommunication the author would love to employ as his point of departure what Leith states as his understanding of the work of Christ: “Every Christian doctrine is determined by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christian

faith cannot be adequately expressed or communicated apart from telling “the old, old story of Jesus and his love.” When theology forgets the history of Jesus it becomes dull and unpersuasive. When the Christian life is severed from the history of what Jesus said and did it loses its unique and distinctive character as well as its vitality” (1993:124)

Waruta and Kinoti demonstrate another version of the Christian story as follows: Thus the priest ought to be a person who serves, not one who dominates. He ought to be a coordinator or facilitator rather an autocrat who rules by fiat of decree. He ought to be a person of wide and deep vision who welcomes constructive change in contest to a ‘dogmatist,’ in the negative sense of the word.” (2005:224).

The call by Waruta and Kinoti is evidently direct and clear hence the author supports it in that it is a call that indicates in no uncertain terms that there is serious obligation incumbent upon the church leadership to be transparent and visionary in terms of welcoming constructive change without being threatened by possible newness of operation. Waruta and Kinoti further indicate the importance of the leadership’s loyalty to but God and God alone: “Finally, his loyalty must, when all is said and done, be owed to God” (2005:224).

The author supports this notion of loyalty to but God alone since it is helpful and it will ascertain that if anybody is to be excommunicated it will be on pure basis of reverence to God and His restorative purpose. The author equally agrees with Leith about the importance of the Christian faith which

should be handled in such a manner that it does not lose its vitality. This becomes the most pivotal core point on which Christianity evolves. It is the pillar of the Christian faith that advocates that the truth should be told in love. It means excommunication should equally be exercised with love and accountability.

### **The Author's Position:**

Technically speaking, the author would not fall in either of the definitions of the disciplinary measures promoted by the church. He was neither Suspended, on Probation nor Dropped. He strongly contends that he was subtly orchestrated or engineered out of the church structure. He bases his argument among other reasons on the fact that he was not given a chance to present his side of the story. This practice is best explained by a Latin maxim: *Audi Alterum Partem* which means, listen to the other side of the story.

According to the WCC Study Document: “As Christ identifies with our suffering and enters into it, so the church as the body of Christ is called to enter into the suffering of others, to stand with them against all rejection and despair. And because it is the body of Christ- who died for all and who enters into the suffering of all- the church cannot exclude anyone who needs Christ (1997:44).

Eighteen years later, since the time he was release and given the hope that he would be called back, the author came across one of the GGP's top ranking Pastor who asked him how he was keeping and coping in life. He



emphatically indicated that he was still waiting to be called as he was promised and flatly refused to reapply for the pastorate as the rather concerned leader was advising him. He indicated that reapplying would be not only suicidal but both a fornicative and an adulterated act violating the principle of good faith which rests on the hope he was lead to hold on.

The author indicated to the leader that his waiting to be called was of such a serious nature that he has always been declining invitations to take the pastorate with numerous church organizations genuinely inviting him.

In his response to the the constitutions of the two church organizations stated the author would love to point out the following:

The GGP's section on excommunication is vague. It seems to have been written merely for the sake of the formality of having the document so called the constitution. It becomes an embarrassment in an organization that is meant to be constituted of a profound percentage of literate and assumably well learned clergy to be producing the clauses that do not show the redemptive intention of the work of Christ highlighted by Leith above.

On the contrary the PCF's constitution shows a remarkable consideration to the notion of the basic human rights and respect for the human dignity. All clauses cited above indicate utmost compliance to the maxim: *Audi Alteram Partem*,  
the call to listen to the other side of the story.

It is not the call to listen to the other side of the story alone which is advocated by the PCF's execution of discipline, but also the systematic procedures and processes that have been put in place.

Section 1 clause 18.3 states: "No member of the Church or any Church body may resort to secular legal proceedings concerning matters referred to in this chapter before the matter has been dealt with by the Church authorities. The process of Church authorities dealing with a matter is not completed until any of appeal(s) or review(s) provided for in this Manual has, or have, been completed or the time(s) for noting it, or them, has, or have, passed."

The provision of this clause explicitly indicates that the intention of exercising discipline is not to hang or condemn a person but to rather exhaust all redemptive avenues. Unlike the GGP's constitution that straight away indicates the Suspension and Dropping without consideration of alternative avenues, the PCF clearly indicates that it believes in the self worth of its members and that one is innocent until proven guilty. There is maximum rapport and transparency in their systems and operations.

Like in his own encounter, the author together with the three victim survivors of excommunication he was interviewing for this study, seem to have been deprived the processes that could maybe have solved their plights amicably.

## **Findings:**

There are very distinct findings which the author established. These are enlisted as follows:

### **1. The interviewees did accept they were hurting:**

Emotions were irresistible as the interviewees shared their stories. They were apparently not very much aware how much they were hurting. They each confessed to the extent of damage that had occurred in their lives, as well as accepting that they were truly hurting.

An analysis into the hurt the interviewees had incurred as well as the method of enquiry that the author employed to establishing such a need, prove beyond any reasonable doubt what Roos states as follows: “In times of crisis you need energy to cope. If you have “run out of petrol”, you will simply not be able to cope with the crisis. A healthy coping style includes a healthy body.” (2002:26).

In view of the need to find a healing space when people are hurting, so much of the realities emerge as they seek healing methods for themselves. Regele gives the following suggestion: “Nationally, people are moving from sustaining to abandoning a religious preference.” (1995:144).

In support of the opinions echoed by both authorities above the author supports the notion that as people run out of petrol they become vulnerable since their coping energy is exhausted and affected beyond their abilities to withstand adversities. He further agrees with the movement of people

outlined by Regele from sustaining to the abandoning of religious preferences. This critical finding becomes an answer to the well sought for solutions that asks deeply into the many new ministries that are founded on almost a daily basis. These are apparently founded as result of people exiting the ecclesiastical door with a hurt that no one could help carry or help solve at the least.

## **2. There is a need for a Therapeutic Environment:**

The need for the therapeutic programme is on those sensitive areas the author identified as a grey area. This could be researched still by other researchers intending to study the Pentecostals approach to excommunication in other areas other than the male clergy.

This need is seated and embedded in the inherent traumatic fear of annihilation Kalsched draws as follows: “Another example comes from the Old Testament when Yahweh became outraged at the excesses of man that he was impelled to destroy the world, he made sure that one part of the creation was saved-this part was Noah’ and to him were entrusted all the animal species, two by two. If we take Yahweh as Fairbairn’s antilibidinal ego in this narrative, we have a fairly accurate picture of what happens to the inner world of trauma-devastation and annihilation except for an encapsulated core of life which is retained at all costs.” (1996:143).

Oduyoye injects a very fresh conceptualization to the apprehension of God’s salvation which serves to inform the need for a therapeutic programme in a brand new way: “Our salvation is absolutely underserved. God heard our cry, saw our discomfiture, saw us distraught under our oppressors, and

liberated us. This liberation is for a purpose; it is in the plan of God to make us truly human. Therefore the memory of our being a redeemed people ought to make us obey injections laid on us.” (1986:105).

In his discovery and analysis of the need for a sound therapeutic environment among the Pentecostals, the author agrees with Kalsched that the Creator’s purpose is redemptive in nature. He is not out there to annihilate His creation all at once. On the contrary the traumatized have a completely different viewpoint using as its initial premise, a countless number of questions that enquire into their senses of self-worth.

He also agrees with Oduyoye that humanity was undeserving of God’s salvation. It came as a free gift, hence the need for an informed therapeutic programme.

### **3. Lack of Amenable Procedures and Processes Result with Conflict:**

The lack of amenable procedures and processes within the Pentecostal ecclesiastical gathering result with more harmful and intolerable drama best described by Bozeman as follows: “The word conflict has multiple ranges of references and meaning in the vocabularies of the West. On the plane of biography it usually stands for the inner stress and tension, as when the self evolves from childhood and dependency; when choices between rival moral challenges or courses of social action have to be made or when competitive ideas intrude upon the mental process of seeking certainty and truth.” (1976:3)

Gerkin speaks of a certain kind of leader who can actually close the gap and be accountable for the actions expected of a Christian community in the following way: “To be a pastoral leader of a community of inquiry means to help people articulate their own questions and help them find answers to those questions. It means that the pastor eschews the temptation to provide for others quick and easy answers to their questions even when it may appear that an obvious answer exists. In this way the pastor seeks to nurture inquiry rather than end it by presenting an authoritative response.” (1997:125).

The author established an amazing finding in support of Bozeman about conflict. He agrees that conflict results from the logjam reached between people who have different upbringings and approaches to what might be the common truth for all. Once people differ with the way they approach certainty and truth, conflicts are bound to happen and this is where their *modus operandi* is subjected to scrutiny and questioning.

He further agrees with Gerkin that the best way to set procedures and systems is to be pastorally caring by answering people into their questions without entertaining quick solutions. The lack of procedures and systems will lead one to presenting an authoritative response as is the case in the study that was conducted by the author hence the victimization of those who sought for answers which their denominations could not answer and as such chose to rather drop, suspend or excommunicate them all as a result of lacking proper procedures and processes or rather ignoring them and applying an authoritative measure.

#### **4. There is a need for support systems.**

This is a basic need for a platform where the victim survivors can vent out their hurts, frustrations and pain which did not seem to actually exist among the interviewees' own organizations. Roos indicates the following: "Choose the members of your support group very carefully.

Cultivate the relationship with members of your support group-stay close to them." (2002:25)

In his essays on Gillespie, Alston speaks of his friend who was refused entry in the music class because he was considered too old for the class, yet he was later advised to take extra lessons for six months (2000:200-201).

The lesson the author agrees with in the Alston's story is that with the necessary support system, nobody can be subjected to permanent earthly condemnation when there is so much scope to grow, repent and make up for one's wrongs in the world of the living. He further supports the notion upheld by Roos that the interviewees needed to choose the relevant members they could easily identify with in terms of their hurts and support systems.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The study culminates with specific recommendations which the author will spell out hereunder as a way of contributing to the Fund of Knowledge. He hopes and believes that such contribution will not go unrecognized within the Pentecostal settings, and the ecclesiastical movements at large. He further upholds the adage that stipulates: Do not throw the baby away with the bathwater.

In the case study of Meshach for example, the author established that he was feeding more than three hundred orphans who are the victims of HIV/AIDS. Meshach himself confessed that had it not been of his unprocedural excommunication, he would definitely have not moved an inch towards attaining his super ordinate goal in life.

## **Recommendations:**

### **1. The acceptance of being hurting:**

The elementary acceptance of being truly hurting is the first step towards attaining the desired healing. The acceptance of being hurting is drawn in the picture of Jefferson discussed hereunder. Like the author, Jefferson desired a decent execution for all his sins. This appeal to consider giving a fair trial and sentence is supported by the author as the first step towards bringing the desired healing of the victim survivor.

As a response to the findings spelt out above, which serve as an answer to the research gap pointed out in chapter 1, the author will elucidate recommendations which will be helpful to the execution of excommunication by the Pentecostal Church, especially the one in discussion.

He believes that he needed a rather decent death and burial so that his ghost can rest peacefully. According to Wimberly in his discussion on Jefferson he says: “One does not have to be outside the prison walls to be free enough to find God’s gift of personhood. The caring community can come into the prison, and this is what happened to Jefferson. The prison cell became a



crucible for God's care through a community of faith. A crucible is a pot into which materials are put and then heated to a very high temperature. In crucibles of various kinds gold is refined and steel is forged. Whatever is heated in the crucible comes out transformed." (2003:41)

Whilst entertaining the invitation to reapply the author was ministered to by the comforting words penned by the prophet Jeremiah: "The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (Lamentations 3:25-26).

The author considers it a privilege that God could be so gracious to honour him with the pain of being temporary removed from the pastorate with the promise to be called back. He agrees with Wimberly that in his crucible he will come out refined like gold with the blessings alluded to by Lamentations that the goodness of the Lord is tasted through waiting on Him. The salvation that God provides is different from what mankind provides. It is the hope that does not disappoint. The author therefore recommends that there should be a platform created in the church where people can air their hurts.

## **2. Setting up a Therapeutic Environment:**

The therapeutic programme is best defined by the nature of the community it stands for. Gerkin describes this scenario as follows: "A primary function of the Christian community is that of creating and maintaining a climate of relationship within which all members of the community are understood and

cared for. To experience such a community is to overcome the loneliness that pervades contemporary culture.” (1997:126).

The author agrees with Gerkin that a primary function of the Christian community is to create a conducive environment where all members will be understood and cared for. He believes that if members are understood the chances to desire to excommunicate them will be almost nonexistent. This is not a utopia but the desirable environment within which the ecclesiastical body should coexist.

Aligning himself with Gerkin’s opinion is Rogers who draws a counselling relationship which the author chooses to employ as an ideal model of an envisaged therapeutic environment within the ecclesiastical gathering. He discusses this as follows: “There would seem to be at least four definite qualities which characterize the most helpful counselling atmosphere:

- First the warmth and responsiveness on the part of the counsellor which makes rapport possible, and which gradually develops into a deeper emotional relationship.
- The second quality of the counselling relationship is its permissiveness in regards to expression of feeling.
- These therapeutic limits are a third and an important aspect of the counselling situation.
- A fourth characteristic of counselling relationship is its freedom from any type of pressure or coercion.” (1942:87-89).

From the analysis drawn by both Rogers the author agrees that the most pivotal aspect of the counselling relationship is its conduciveness. He therefore would love to propose the characteristics spelt out as imperative building blocks of the therapeutic environment. The recommendation he submits as such is that in order for healing to take place in fullness within the ecclesiastical gathering, there should be a platform of trust and rapport where people will feel taken care of.

### **3. Putting Sound Procedures and Processes in Place:**

In his examination and analysis of the excommunication of the male clergy within the Pentecostal Church, the author established that much of the casualties are as a result of the lack of sound, well definable procedures and processes.

#### **Some sections of the GGP's constitution state:**

Section 7 (c) (3): A minister who is Dropped would have no credentials and no ministry within the GGP.

Section 7 (c) (5): Any minister whose credentials have been placed on Probation, Suspension, or Dropped shall automatically be deemed to be removed or suspended, as the case may be, from any office or position held by him in the GGP.

Section 6 addresses the Ministerial Privileges as follows:

All ministers holding ordination or license credentials shall have authority to administer communion, baptize believers, dedicate children, pray for the

sick and bury the dead. They shall be entitled to perform legal marriages if they have obtained marriage officership. If they are not marriage officers they may solemnise the marriage after the legal registration of the marriage by a duly appointed marriages officer.

The author would love to point at this stage to the fact that he pastored a church from 1988 to 1991 when he was temporarily removed as he was informed, without credentials. He performed the duties that were considered ministerial privileges without any discrimination. However, the whole pandemonium erupted when he was removed without any procedure in place.

With the responses he received from the three interviewees it emerged such a behaviour is common amongst the Pentecostals hence the recommendation for an instrument that will set procedures and processes in place.

#### **4. Setting up Support Systems:**

Herman points out in no uncertain terms that: “It cannot be reiterated too often: no man can face trauma alone. If a therapist finds herself isolated in her professional practice, she should discontinue working with traumatized patients until she has secured an adequate support system.” (1992:153).

Roos addresses the subject of creating a support system in an impressive manner that touches on the three most important areas that need to be taken care of, namely, the physical support, emotional support and spiritual support. About the spiritual support in particular she states: “This is a

critically important kind of support. It entails building a relationship with people who could pray with you and support you spiritually.” (2002:25).

The author agrees with Herman that it is almost impossible to face trauma alone. Both the practitioner and the counselee are human enough to need an external support system. In the case of his study the author established that the victim survivors are left in the cold alone with no one to give them any kind of support whatsoever. Maybe the fallacious premise is that it is assumed the survivors are the clergies and can as such handle the bitterness of the traumatic experiences themselves.

The author feels very strongly that an informed approach twinned with sensitivity towards the victim survivors of excommunication should be developed. He agrees with Roos that such victim survivors need a prayer support team. The most patent recommendation the author therefore submits is that the victim survivors of the excommunication encounters should be involved in a community of people committed to prayer in the form of regular prayer support groups. This approach will be a helpful tool to help ameliorate the excommunication practice within the Pentecostal settings.

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The Manual of Faith and Order of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa VS Vellen-General Secretary

Research Questionnaire.

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Title of the Study : Examining and Analyzing the Traumatic Effects of Excommunication of the Male Clergy within the Pentecostal Church.

**PART A:**

1. What was the cause of excommunication?

Own short fall from expected conduct.

Vendetta against me.

Hatred.

2. Was the procedure followed in carrying out the excommunication?

Partly.

Not at all.

Yes it was followed.

3. Were you given a chance to respond to the allegations?

Partly.

Not at all.

Yes I was.

4. Did the exercise fulfil the biblical requirements?

Partly.

Not at all.

Yes it did.

## **PART B.**

Please tick a Yes or a N.

1. Excommunication is the correct biblical disciplinary method.

Yes.

No.

2. I will not hesitate using the method at all.

Yes.

No.



3. Excommunication is the only sound biblical disciplinary method.

Yes.

No.

4. Christ endorsed excommunication as a disciplinary method.

Yes.

No.

**PART C.**

1. Explain your personal understanding of excommunication.
2. Under what circumstances would you practice and recommend excommunication?
3. In your own circumstances how would you have handled the discipline?
4. Did the excommunication benefit you or not. If it did how, if it did not how?
5. What would you recommend if you were given a chance to advice on the practice of excommunication?

Signed at .....on this.....day of .....2008.

Subject's Signature: .....

Researcher's Signature: .....

**The informed letter of consent**

University of Pretoria  
Faculty of Theology  
Lynnwood Road  
Hatfield  
0083

**Researcher's name** : Mr. Kubeka M.J.

**Contact Details** : 073 478 1899.

**Student Number** : 27585639.

Title of the Study : Examining and Analyzing the Traumatic Effects of Excommunication of the Male Clergy within the Pentecostal Church.

This serves to confirm that I agree to be interviewed by the researcher for the purpose of the study he is conducting. The purpose of the study was explained to me thoroughly. I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am assured anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher will use a fictitious name when referring to me and the information will be treated as confidential.

Signed at .....on this.....day of .....2008.



Subject's Signature: .....

Researcher's Signature: .....