

## CHAPTER 6

### 2010 AND BEYOND – MOVING FORWARD IN THE SPIRIT OF *UBUNTU*

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

*Magoda agreed that he did look unkempt in his ragged clothes, so he left the village and went to a nearby river. He wondered if the horns would provide him with gifts other than food, so he struck the one horn, and asked: “Give me rich clothes, Oh Horn!”*

*To his great surprise, he saw finely woven cloth and ornaments appear from the horns. He put on these fine garments, and, when he had done so, he looked like a wealthy young man. He decided to return to the village.*

*This time, he received a welcome reception. Children stopped and stared. Young men went out of their way to ask what they can do for him. Maidens working at their homes smiled as he walked past. One young girl was exceptionally beautiful, so Magoda sought out her parents and they gladly offered him room in their home.*

*Time went past and Magoda produced food and wealth for all in the village. He was greatly respected by the people, and, when he asked the father of the household, the man readily agreed to Magoda's marriage to his beautiful daughter. The young couple were able to provide themselves with all the things they needed for a joyful home. Oxen for the kraal, servants work the fields, and children blessed the home.*

*(Adapted from Greaves 2004:110-111)*

Finally, our friend Magoda found the happiness and love he deserved after all the hardships he had to endure in his short life. Indeed an inspiring story to us all. Wanting to know more about Magoda who journeyed with us through this research process, also knowing that most African names have some deeper meaning related to them, I contacted a lecturer at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in the Department of African Languages, Professor N Saule who specialises in isiXhosa. He kindly assisted me via numerous emails with my enquiries.

Professor Saule remembers the isiXhosa folktale of Magoda and the magic horns as it was told to him by his grandmother some 50 years ago, albeit a slightly different version. When faced with adversaries the boy would sing a song calling out the name of the ox to summon some spirits to help the ox defeat the enemy. In the version he can remember, the boy did not have a name, but the ox did, which was also the title of the folktale. Unfortunately, he was unable to recall the name of the ox. Referring to the name 'Magoda' as it was given to the boy in this particular version of the story, Professor indicated that it comes from the old Nguni word '*igoda*' which refers to a particular rope made of a plant called *igoda* similar to *cisal*. Rope made from the *igoda* plant is very strong and long-lasting; he concludes that 'Magoda' would certainly be a reference to the strength and popularity of the rope, a symbolic reference so to speak. It could therefore symbolise Magoda's inner-strength and at the end of the folktale, his popularity with the rest of the villagers due to his caring and sharing nature. Pressed to give me an isiXhosa translation of 'The magic horns' title, he suggested '*Inkabi eneempondo ezingumlingo*' meaning 'An ox with magic horns', focusing on the ox as the main character in the folktale.

He (Saule 2010:Personal communication) went on to say that "(t)he performances of the horns were not 'magic' as we know it, but a manifestation of the good spirits which the ox represented. When the boy was hungry he would sing a song of entreaty to the horns, not smack them, and out would come what he needed".

This folktale and the alternative interpretations thereof, form a good backdrop to movement 7, the last movement within PFPT, which focuses on the development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community in research.

This chapter is therefore focused on looking at what we gained in knowledge from our research and the first six movements of PFPT as well as how this knowledge can maybe also benefit communities and individuals other than those who formed part of the TOL camps.

## **6.2 AN ISIZULU RIDDLE EXPLAINED: THE DISCOURSE OF *UBUNTU***

### **6.2.1 What is understood by the concept of *Ubuntu*?**

I started my presentation entitled: “*Ubuntu – Becoming through stories: A narrative pastoral care approach to helping Africa’s HIV and Aids orphans*”<sup>1</sup> at the 6<sup>th</sup> conference of the AAPSC (African Association for Pastoral Studies and Counselling) in Stellenbosch, South Africa in September 2009 with the following isiZulu riddle:

*Zulu riddle:*

*Guess you: A pumpkin plant; it is single, and has many branches; it may be hundreds; it bears many thousand pumpkins on its branches; if you follow the branches, you will find a pumpkin everywhere. You cannot count the pumpkins of one branch; you can never die of famine; you can go plucking and eating; and you will not carry food for your journey through being afraid that you will find no food where you are going.*

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<sup>1</sup> The AAPSC presentation and paper formed an earlier draft for the complete chapter 6 as presented here.

*No; you can eat and leave, knowing that by following the branches you will continually find another pumpkin in front; and so it comes to pass. Its branches spread out over the whole country, but the plant is one, from which springs many branches. And each man pursues his own branch, and all will pluck pumpkins from the branches.*

*(Courlander 1975:472)*

Are you as reader able to make sense of this riddle? What do you think it means? I also asked the delegates at the Congress to guess the meaning of the riddle. Two delegates, both native Zulus were to some extent able to explain the meaning thereof. Professor Maake Masango also from the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, even gave an explanation better than the textbook version itself. He referred to the African concept of *Ubuntu* in his explanation and said that it meant that Africans take care of their fellow man in need and that we are all, like the pumpkins, linked to other persons around us.

Courlander (1975:472) explains the riddle as follows:

***The explanation:***

*A village and the paths which pass from it are the branches, which bear fruit; for there is no path without a village; all paths quit homesteads, and go to homesteads. There is no path which does not lead to a homestead. The pumpkins are villages from which the paths go out.*

At a later stage, I also gave this isiZulu riddle to the TOL adolescents and asked them to try and decipher it and consequently to explain to me what they thought *Ubuntu* meant and how it can impact on the lives of young people such as themselves. We'll come back to their descriptions thereof (see section 6.3).

But for now, we need to look more closely at the discourse of *Ubuntu*. Broodryk favours the explanation of Dr Oscar Dhlomo and Mr Walter Sisulu who refer to *Ubuntu* in terms of the so-called cow phenomenon. They say that "... if you have two cows and the milk of the first cow is sufficient for your own consumption, *Ubuntu* expects you to donate the milk of the second cow to your underprivileged brothers and sisters. You do not sell it: you just give it" (Broodryk 2002:vii).

When asked, most ordinary South Africans might have heard about this concept, yet might experience some difficulty in explaining what they understand it to be. Broodryk (2002:9,10) agrees that "(t)o define *Ubuntu* is also not an easy task due to the dilemma of different perceptions. Humanness is a concept, for instance, which is viewed differently by different cultures". Difficult as it might be to construct an understanding of the concept, Broodryk (2002:3) however aims at tackling this bull by its (magic) horns. He tries to describe it as: "...*Ubuntu-Botho*, the indigenous worldview of intense humanness", which is observable "... not only in the cultural traditions of the people of South Africa, but also in the cultures of the people all over Africa". (Broodryk 2002:3).

Theimann and April (2007:30) link the movement for an African Renaissance and a call for a return to African values and indigenous knowledge systems to *Ubuntu*. They (Theimann & April 2007:30) state that literally translated, *Ubuntu* means 'I am who I am through others' which is in contrast to the Western tenet *cogito ergo sum* (Descartes' idea of "I think, therefore I am") and go on to say that the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is based on a certain sense of community" (Theimann and April 2007:30). Sarason (1974) coined the concept of 'psychological sense of community' which Theimann and April (2007:30) refer to (Orford 1992:9,257). Schutte (2001:27) agrees with this 'sense of community' as he states that "(e)ach individual member of the community sees the community as *themselves*, as the one with being in character and identity. Each individual sees every other individual member as *another self*."

Both Clarke and Schutte are in agreement that *Ubuntu* reflects the African idea that people only exist in relation to other people – to community members. Clarke (2007:291) says that “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*” mean(s) ‘a person depends on persons to be a person’” and Schutte (2001:23) adds “(t)his is why, in all African languages, there is the local variant of the Zulu saying *umuntu nguamuntu ngabantu* – a person is a person through persons. As African philosophers are fond of saying, ‘I am because we are’”. Broodryk (2002:13,14) follows in their footsteps when he defines *Ubuntu* “... as a comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family”.

Meylahn (2010:5) goes further when he aims at connecting the thoughts of Ramose (1999) on *Ubuntu* with that of Heidegger (1971) by saying:

It is clear from the above that my being (my *Dasein*) can only be, is only possible, because all these other things are woven together into the tapestry of my world, the tapestry of the dimension of my *Dasein*, namely the realm of my *Dasein*, the *context*, and thus *Dasein* is always a *mit-sein* – a being with others.

As can be seen from the discussion above, my own being as a person (my *Dasein*) is therefore interlinked with the *Dasein* of the other people around me – those people who together with me form a community. This being with others (*mit-sein*), if experienced positively, motivates a certain ‘sense of community’, that wills the desire to help others into being. Whereby we are willing to share our excess ‘milk’ with those in need, because we want to, and not because we feel we are compelled or pressured into doing it, knowing that should we one day need help ourselves the principle of *Ubuntu* ensures that we will then also receive the help needed from others.

### 6.2.2 Key values of *Ubuntu*

Broodryk (2002:x) is very optimistic about the potential of *Ubuntu* to influence not only South African, Africa as a continent, but also global society as such. He says that because "... *Ubuntu* encompasses what and how you think, talk, speak, act, value and arrive at the destinies of life. *Ubuntu* is about the African art of being a true you ...", whereby if everyone were to become their true (positive!) selves, the world would be a couple of steps closer to becoming "... a more human, caring and sharing open society" (Broodryk 2002:x).

Key values of *Ubuntu* are summarised as follows by Theimann and April (2007:30):

- Sharing
- Deference to rank
- Sanctity of commitment
- Regard for compromise and consensus
- The concept of openness

Van der Colff (2007:46) sees the following values as tenets of value sharing within *Ubuntu*:

- Interconnectedness
- Continuous integrated development
- Respect and dignity
- Collectivism
- Solidarity

Clarke (2007:291) also reflects on the values of *Ubuntu*, namely:

- Regaining dignity
- Developing respect
- Solidarity

- Sharing
- Compassion
- Moving beyond survival

Developing respect and compassion for others, sharing what you have with them and thereby helping them to regain their dignity and for both parties involved to move beyond mere survival, is according to Broodryk (2002:42) "... what humanism is all about: you are enlarged and enriched when you go out of yourself". Schutte (2001:30) agrees and says "... the morality of *Ubuntu* is intrinsically related to your happiness and fulfilment".

Holdstock (2000:202) links the concept of *Ubuntu* to the following aspects of Rogers' person-centred approach in order to establish sound human relationships:

- Empathy
- Positive regard
- Congruence

For Holdstock (2000:202) these three elements embody "... the way the concept of *ubuntu* comes to live in Africa".

Broodryk (2002:19) ultimately gives the most comprehensive description of which values can be seen as associated with *Ubuntu*:

<b>Core values:</b>	<b>Associated values:</b>
Humanness	Warmth, tolerance, understanding, peace, humanity
Caring	Empathy, sympathy, helpfulness, charitable, friendliness
Sharing	Giving (unconditionally), redistribution, open handedness
Respect	Commitment, dignity, obedience, order, normative
Compassion	Love, cohesion, informality, forgiving, spontaneity

In light of the above, Schutte (2001:30) takes the idea of becoming the true you as postulated by Broodryk (2002:x) and relates it to the ethical vision of *Ubuntu* as he sees it. He says that "... the moral life is seen as a process of personal growth. And just as participation in community with others is the essential means to personal growth, so participation in community with others is the motive and fulfilment of the process" (Schutte 2001:30).

So, in order for one to experience personal growth as an individual and to optimise your own well-being, one first needs to acknowledge that one's own holistic well-being is interdependent on the well-being of other members of one's community. And then to ensure everybody's collective as well as individual well-being, morality and value sharing of such values as discussed above, need to be in place and actively engaged in.

### **6.2.3 *Ubuntu* in a contemporary South Africa**

He who thinks himself too small to make a difference,  
should lock himself into a room with a mosquito  
- African Proverb -

Broodryk (2002:ix,x) states that in contemporary South Africa, *Ubuntu* is:

- the value base of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- part of the vision and mission of the transformation of the new public service
- a principle upon which all future welfare policies will be based
- the business philosophy of various companies in the private sector
- taught in all schools in the Gauteng province under the subject Guidancepart (sic) of the curricula of various courses at many tertiary institutions

- a basis upon which the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation was held
- the basis of several national youth development programmes and strategies
- regarded as the appropriate African approach regarding life skills
- the philosophical framework of the national Moral Regeneration Movement of the Republic of South Africa

The *White Paper on Welfare*, South African Government Gazette 2 February 1996, No. 16943, page 18, paragraph 18 describes the spirit of *Ubuntu* as follows:

The principle of appearing for each other's well-being will be promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. *Ubuntu* means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.

On paper – white or whatever colour it might be – the above statements might seem good and well intentioned: A call to responsibility for us all as South Africans, to do what we can to ensure an involved and caring society. For a short while in 2010, this spirit of *Ubuntu* rose up and had the citizens of South Africa united as one big family during the Soccer World Cup that was hosted here. Few people thought it possible, yet a feeling of elation was tangible in the air, even after the local soccer team Bafana Bafana was eliminated. Such a feeling of togetherness was possibly last felt during the 1995 Rugby World Cup – which maybe does go to show that sport has the ability to unite people – of all languages, cultures, races and religious orientations.

However, for most South Africans *Ubuntu* on a day-to-day basis seems to be just that – intentions, words on paper, and nothing more. Try telling a starving inner city HIV and Aids orphan left to his / her own devices, that the ignorant neighbours care about him / her, even though he / she is barely able to survive; or to a woman being raped whose screams are heard by neighbours, but ignored because they fear the consequences of getting involved. Especially in urban areas it seems this disinterest and un-involvement is becoming more commonplace than before. Even young children are becoming aware of the lack of respect for human life and the loss of the spirit of *Ubuntu*. Broodryk (2002:1153) quotes a beautiful poem by two of his class 7 pupils at the Ubuntu Centre outside Pretoria:

### **UBUNTU IS CRYING FOR HELP**

I am a word which has been  
on earth for many  
years  
I need you,  
mankind,  
to help me,  
I cry day and night  
But I don't find my answer  
The only way you can help me  
Is by carrying me  
In your hearts, your souls.  
Please let me stick to you forever  
And forever shall  
I remain  
In your hearts.

A poem like this inspires one not to try reinventing *Ubuntu*, as it still exists and clings to life in the few individuals who still show compassion and caring towards their fellow man. For me the facilitators at NGOs like PEN, who really take to heart what they are doing, are such diamonds. This poem seeks to find this caring attitude in all of us, to create a context wherein *Ubuntu* can thrive. The TOL camps, in my opinion, created such a context for the adolescents to care – not only about each other, but also about Juanita and myself.

### **6.3 THE CHILDREN OF AFRICA ANSWERING TO THE ECHOES OF LIFE**

#### **6.3.1 African storytelling and *Ubuntu***

In chapter 3, some of the focus fell on African storytelling as a tradition of interpretation (3.5). In this section we also acknowledge that the African conception of life includes both the physical and the spiritual and that it applies to everything (Schutte 2001:22), including the art of storytelling. *Ubuntu* and its life lessons were transferred in folktales from generations to generations (Broodryk 2002:2) like ‘*The magic horns*’ as well as in riddles like the isiZulu riddle above. In these folktales there are more often than not a specific lesson in life to be learned (Broodryk 2002:81).

The lesson of adhering to the values of *Ubuntu* itself is beautifully illustrated in the following folktale as related by Broodryk (2002:15,16)

#### ***THE ECHO OF LIFE***

*A sage (African wise man) invited his youngest son to climb with him the highest peak of a mountain being. Apart from physical healthy exercise, his intention was to teach his son of arriving at a very basic lesson of life. This lesson was about the meaning of life (sense of life).*

*Once they reached the top of the mountain, the son, overwhelmed by the beauty of the scenery he saw and the golden silence he experienced, exclaimed: "Baba (Dad), this view is fantastic!!!!!"*

*Immediately his voice and the same words he used were returned in the same volume, and they even sounded louder, by the mountain itself (so the son thought): "Baba, this view is fantastic!!!!!!!!!" The son was amazed and shouted excitedly these words again and again, and the words were returned to him twice as loud every time again and again.*

*Eventually he asked his wise father to explain to him what was happening. His father told him that it was an echo.*

*Whatever you scream, shout or say loudly, the mountain would echo back in its voice precisely what you said, only twice as loud.*

*"But, he said, this is also a lesson of life. Whatever you do to fellow human beings and life, your deeds will one day come back to you in duplicate twice as hard just like this echo.*

*Almost identical with this experience, but know it will come back to you in some way. Be therefore very careful about how you treat human beings, life and the ones you love, because in reaction they will always treat you in the very same way.*

*Always be nice, friendly, caring, peaceful, respectful and compassionate, and in return you can be ensured of a harmonious and joyous walk throughout the wonderful mountains and valleys of life".*

*Mountains are exciting because they exist as obstacles that must be conquered. The world consists of valleys as well, and if one cannot conquer a mountain one should leave it because one must leave what you cannot conquer. Rather enjoy the valleys then. Life is too short and precious for a human being to waste time to conquer the unconquerable.*

### 6.3.2 TOL adolescents' understanding of *Ubuntu*

As mentioned earlier, I used the isiZulu riddle above (pp293, 294) to elicit responses from my co-researchers during our last meeting. This formed part of the feedback looping process of our research as by then I have already identified *Ubuntu* as a possible discourse as it manifested itself clearly during our TOL camps.

Below are some of the adolescents' responses. (Unfortunately not everybody responded to this exercise due to time constraints during our last session):

Ubuntu - it is African humanity that shows and tells us that you are a human being or the person you are because of someone else, so you should also do something to help others and show the true meaning of Ubuntu.

With kids and children - When I think of Ubuntu, I think of love, peace, joy and happiness, so Ubuntu for children means that every elderly (person and) parents should treat every kid or teen as the own - **Annie**

For Annie, *Ubuntu* seems to refer not only to the fact that you are only someone because of someone else, but also that one needs to show love and caring towards other people by helping them, and for adults to commiserate themselves over the plight of children.

I think Ubuntu means an African humanity - **Dimakatso**

We can help children by being with them every difficulty that they are facing. We can be with them when they need us - **Dimakatso**

Dimakatso also states that children should be assisted if they are in need of help. She however distances herself from being a child herself needing help, by referring to the fact that ‘we can help’. She raises the issue that not only material help is important to assist children in need, but something as seemingly simple as physical presence when children need help, also seems to be important to her when she says that: ‘(w)e can be with them (children) when they need us’.

Well, the story kind of illustrates Ubuntu as very good thing indeed. You get to develop new good reliable skills or methods that could actually help the entire nation in a way. You get to work is hand in hand with each other, and in that way you define the true meaning of Ubuntu - **Victor**

Victor acknowledges the positive aspect of *Ubuntu* and says that by adhering to the principles of *Ubuntu*, one can develop skills and methods that can be applied to not only help children, but also the nation at large. Working together, this can be achieved and the true meaning of *Ubuntu* can be experienced by all.

What Ubuntu means is that people working hand in hand to help people who are in need of help and I think we can use this to help the little ones who are in need of help in (with) life’s challenges - **Wiseman**

Wiseman agrees with Victor that working together can alleviate the suffering of people in need, especially little children as he also – like Dimakatso – refers to him being on the helping side, and not on the receiving side of *Ubuntu*. This might be because Dimakatso and Wiseman see children in need – like so many other people for that matter – as the very young and vulnerable ones in society and in the process, the needs of older children, like adolescents, are overlooked.

## 6.4 MOVING BEYOND BEING THE ‘FORGOTTEN ONES’ TOWARDS BEING FORTUNATE: THE ETHICS OF *UBUNTU* APPLIED

When the roots of a tree begin to decay, it spreads death to the branches

- African Proverb -

Imagine if you will – a sickly, crippled old woman with festering sores all over her body, begging and dependant on others for survival, heading towards a slow and painful death. This is how Mama Africa is sometimes portrayed as – as a dark continent riddled with problems, especially by the West. Such a perspective is compounded by the ongoing, almost chronic challenges she faces – war, famine, natural disasters and the ever encroaching HIV and Aids pandemic.

Quite understandably, Mama Africa’s children are the hardest hit by the HIV and Aids pandemic. It is estimated that there will be around two million orphans in South Africa by the year 2010 (Landman 2002:270). This is largely due to the fact that “(a) generation of young adults is dying before its time, ..”. (Overberg 1994:3), leaving behind a “... generation of children deprived of their childhood” (Barrett & Whiteside 2002:199).

Dane (1994:20) specifically refers to these generations of children when saying that “(l)iving in the aftermath of death from Aids is often more painful for children and adolescents than the death itself”. Klein (1998:15) says that “(e)ven though people tend to think in terms of death as a loss, death is not the *only* loss we can experience”. Grief also occurs for losses such as the possible loss of home, social networks, routines, surroundings and possessions (Dane 1994:13). Children are also – especially in traditional African cultures – mostly kept away from an ill or dying person, and excluded from the rituals surrounding the burial of the deceased, even if the deceased are their own parents (Maseko 2005). Kübler-Ross (1970:157) adds to this by stating that when death pays a visit to families, the children are “... the forgotten ones”.

However, because Broodryk (2002:88) states that “(d)eath is a very serious and extremely traumatic experience in the *Ubuntu* society”, this research challenges this very discourse of marginalising especially HIV and Aids orphans during these difficult and trying times of losing loved ones.

Van Dyk (2001:61) – rightly so – states that “Africa is not doing well in her battle against AIDS”. Overberg (1994:1) adds to this by saying: “Aids is *our* disease, a disease of the human family”. Africa south of the Sahara is also home to the youngest population in the world (Watson 2001:12) and herein lies the future of Mama Africa – her children.

There is another side to Mama Africa known to her people than just that of an old sickly woman unable to fend for herself. It is the picture of a vibrant, energetic young woman singing and dancing to the rhythm of the African drums, renowned for her oral traditions and storytelling. Stories uniquely African in nature told by the people of Africa for the people of Africa. She mothers and cares for her people, especially her greatest investment – her children, in a way only she can.

This is where the concept of *Ubuntu* comes in. In isiNguni (Mnyaka & Motlhabi 2005:215) it is stated as *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Zulu), translating to something to the effect of – you are a person through people, you are what you are because of people. If you are a human (*Ubuntu*) then people will always respect and cherish you.

Bonn (2007:864) also identifies elements of *Ubuntu* as the following: compassion, tolerance, care, charity, understanding, empathy, equality, hospitality, honesty, trust, conformity, solidarity, mutual responsibility, taking care of everyone in one’s community, respect, dignity and a concern for others’ welfare.

By African standards, and in light of the discussions above, *Ubuntu* should be the safety net for children left orphaned and vulnerable by HIV and Aids. Yet, it is becoming more and more difficult for extended families to look after these children. Fortunately for these children, this is where NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) like PEN stepped up to meet the challenge.

For the boys, who all at one stage lived together in the same House of Safety under the guardianship of PEN, a ‘certain sense of community’, even a brotherhood of sorts was established between them. Currently, only the twins are still staying in this House of Safety, but their brotherhood with the rest of the boys was still very evident during the second TOL camp. Bonded by blood the twins, Michael and Shaun, form a subsystem within this brotherhood. While the bond between Victor and Wiseman is also very evident, even though they are not related by blood, they do indeed see each other as ‘brothers’ in life. As the oldest, Moses probably took responsibility to head up this brotherhood while he was also resident in the specific House of Safety. Even now, after most of them have moved out and on in life, the rest of the boys still look up to Moses as the leader of the little unique community. They truly care about each other and the rest of the younger children in the House of Safety, which for so long were not only their safe haven, but also home to all of them.

The two acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans, Dee and Zee, also share this ‘sense of community’ with each other and to a certain extent with the rest of the girls. They are both also resident in the other House of Safety under the guardianship of the PEN and this probably helped to establish their sense of sisterhood. It became very evident during especially the graduation ceremony of the second TOL camp, that the adolescents also regarded these camps, the others, as well Juanita and I, as part of a new unique community that personified the true spirit of *Ubuntu* in everybody’s involved lives.

## 6.5 A PASTORAL CARE APPROACH UNIQUE TO THE AFRICAN CONTEXT: UTILISING *UBUNTU* AND AFRICAN STORYTELLING

### 6.5.1 *Ubuntu* as personified in ‘*The magic horns*’

From the TOL camps and the implementation of the *TOL* metaphor during these camps, it became evident that our co-researchers were very open and receptive to not only this kind of metaphor, but also, and maybe more importantly so, to African storytelling as an alternative interpretation to their own life stories. Interacting with this receptiveness, I took the story of Magoda and the magic horns, and as part of the feedback looping process of the research, formulated some conversational as well as more specific questions for the adolescents to address. These questions and **Dee’s** answers follow below to illustrate the possibilities for narrative pastoral counselling from such an approach.

#### ***THE MAGIC HORNS. A Xhosa tale.***

**Some conversation questions pertaining to the story** – For group discussion:

- Why do you think the women of the village fed Magoda?
- Do you feel they exploited Magoda by expecting him to run errands in return for food?
- Was it the right thing for Magoda to run away from his village?
- Why was he so happy away from his village and the people there?
- Do you think Magoda’s father knew about the food and the gifts that could come from the ox’s horns?
- Why do you think the ox’s horns would only work for Magoda after the ox was killed?
- Why do you think Magoda did not want his ox to fight the second time?
- Why did Magoda feel compelled to help the village where he stayed after his ox was killed?
- Why did Magoda’s host take the horns after he saw what Magoda did with it and replaced it with horns from another ox?
- What emotions did Magoda experience when he realised the horns have been switched?
- How did it make Magoda feel when the headman in the next village looked down on him because of his ragged clothes and poverty stricken appearance?

- How did the magic horns help him to change his situation and feelings about himself?
- When Magoda settled down in the village, married and became a man of distinction and great wealth, why did he use the magic horns to help the other people in the village as well?
- Do you think his father would be proud of him for using the magic horns not only to help himself and his family but also the rest of the villagers?

We are not alone in this world. We are dependant on other people for many things in our lives on a daily basis – like food, shelter, education but most importantly love and care. Sometimes we are lucky enough to get all this from the people in our lives, but some people are not that fortunate. Just as we are dependant on other people to provide in our material and emotional needs, so too are other people dependant on us.

1. Have you ever felt like Magoda as he was feeling when we first meet him? Why is that? Explain.

Yes, because I felt trapped when I was living with my aunt that I have no other way but to take the abuse. Or else I'll be left without a school, food, shelter and family.

2. Do you sometimes feel exploited and misused by the people who are taking care of you? Give reasons for your answer.

Most of the time no, because they do everything possible to ensure my well-being. And yes when I feel a bit depressed; I think that when I succeed they will expect me to pay them back.

3. Have you ever felt like running away from home and your problems or hurting yourself in any way? Give reasons for your answer.

Yes, all of the above. I wanted to hurt myself when my mom passed away to decrease the pain. And I did kind of run away from my family they increased my emotional pain.

4. Do you sometimes feel you would be happier away from your life, as you now know it? What plans do you have to provide a better life for yourself?

Yes. I don't know since I have no resources that I can trust a 100% God just knows the plans and He will let me know as time goes on.

5. What kind of 'magic horns' (emotional gift or knowledge about yourself – talents / skills) did someone you love give you that helps you on your journey through life at this stage?  
Nothing that I can show, but I can say when everything was still normal my mom taught me discipline.

6. Do you think that person knew this would help you in life when life becomes difficult?  
I really don't know and can't say.

7. Why is this gift and how you can use it unique to your story?  
Well the gift was wisdom and obedience. And I guess that will help me make a path.

8. Do you think you have a responsibility to use this gift – your 'magic horns' to help other people as well as Magoda did? Give reasons for your answer.  
Yes, because it was only through interaction that I grew wiser so I must interact with others to bless them too.

9a. If you answered 'yes' to question 8 – who are the people you think you should help with this gift – these 'magic horns' of yours?  
Firstly myself to go to church and communicate with my Helper God.  
Then my pastors, friends.

9b. Why would you help those people and how will you help them?  
By taking (them) to church with me.

10. Would the person who gave you this gift want you to use it to help other people as well? Give reasons for your answer.  
Well the person didn't think (I think) would know that they were giving me a gift.

### 6.5.2 An alternative African solution to counselling

It has been mentioned that *Ubuntu* can play a role in helping bereft adolescents cope with their psycho-spiritual bereavement needs, and how *Ubuntu*, if applied positively and without force, can help in facilitating a ‘sense of community’ in a research group setting and possibly also in a therapeutic group setting. Broodryk (2002:96) suggests with consideration of *Ubuntu*, an alternative African solution to counselling. Although, a thorough discussion of his philosophical African approach to counselling falls outside the scope of the current research, it is interesting to note how this approach compares with a narrative pastoral care approach.

PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH	NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH
<p>“<i>Ubuntu</i> counselling is <b>philosophical</b>”. (2002:96)</p>	<p>Freedman and Combs (1996:xiii): <b>"problems are problems ... problems never define the person's entire being"</b>.</p>
<p>“It is not in competition with other disciplines in counselling since its focus is on <b>helping seekers of clarification to understand themselves</b> and issues of life <b>better</b>. This clarification is reached after the meaning of their own situations has been analysed by themselves, and direction to the discovery of a life vision have been created. The aim of philosophical counselling is not the healing of a patient, but the self-explanation, clarification and self-invention of a visitor”. (2002:96)</p>	<p>According to Morgan (2000:2) the narrative approach also seeks to <b>empower</b> the people coming for therapy in a sense that it allows the counselee to be part of the process of the therapeutic sessions.</p>

<b>PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH</b> (continue)	<b>NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH</b> (continue)
<p>“In philosophical counselling the individual is regarded as a <b>visitor</b> or customer and not a patient”. (2002:96)</p>	<p>Müller et al (2002:3) state that in narrative research the focus falls on the stories that our co-researchers tell us about the action. Note that Müller uses the concept ‘<b>co-researcher</b>’ when referring to <b>research participants</b>.</p>
<p>“It is therefore not only one isolated action or symptom expressed by the human being which qualifies for attention, but the <b>whole being in a holistic way</b>”. (2002:96)</p>	<p>Freedman and Combs (1996:9) describe the narrative approach as: "... an approach which permits people seeking help to <b>use their thinking, knowledge, understanding, power and emotions in a way that best fits their scheme of life</b>".</p>
<p>“... these counsellors appear to be masters in the <b>art of listening</b> attentively and tirelessly to pick up the essence of each word spoken, to observe every look, every gesture, every silence, in order to grasp their respective significance”. (2002:116)</p>	<p>Freedman and Combs (1996:44) emphasise the importance of <b>deconstructive listening</b>: "... in the face of permanent discourses and dominant knowledge, <b>simply listening</b> to the story someone tells us, constitutes a revolutionary act”.</p>
<p>“This leads to counter arguments and elaboration which reminds one of the Socratic arguments which were also based on <b>attentive listening</b> and <b>intense questioning</b> in order to find ethical and just solutions”. (2002:116)</p>	<p>Freedman and Combs (1996) <u>Tools of narrative therapy:</u>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <b>Active-responsive listening</b></li> <li>* <b>Deconstructive listening</b></li> <li>* <b>Deconstructive questioning</b></li> <li>* Not-knowing position</li> <li>* Externalisation</li> </ul> </p>

<b>PHILOSOPHICAL AFRICAN APPROACH</b> (continue)	<b>NARRATIVE PASTORAL CARE APPROACH</b> (continue)
<p>“Instead of categorising people into various psychological illnesses, which is anti-<i>Ubuntu</i> and inhuman, the philosophical counsellor should be empowered to <b>direct the visitor to discover his or her own solutions to his or her own problems ...</b>” (2002:116, 117)</p>	<p>Narrative approach also seeks to empower the people coming for therapy in a sense that it <b>allows the counselee to be part of the process of the therapeutic sessions</b> (Morgan 2000:2).</p>
<p>“By creating a relaxed cosy and harmonious atmosphere of <b>trust</b> the (counsellor) <b>inspires his visitors to talk and review problems themselves</b> and finding solutions themselves”. (2002:117)</p>	<p>Freedman and Combs (1996:21): “<b>be faithful to the story</b> as told by the research participants <b>giving voice to their lived experience</b>”.</p>

From the tabled comparison above, it would certainly seem like Broodryk’s (2002) suggested philosophical African approach to research might warrant some more in-depth investigation by narrative researchers and therapists who find themselves working in an African context.

This comparison supports in my view, my opinion as the researcher that the narrative approach to therapy and research can step up to a constructive dialogue with the African culture – which still to this day and to some extent, even in urban areas and communities, play an important role.

That which is good and constructive in the African culture – like the art of storytelling – needs to be cultivated, harvested and utilised in counselling. Africa needs to step up in addressing the needs of its people – especially the youth.

## **6.6 MORE STORIES TO EXPLORE: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As we are nearing the end of our research journey together, it is an apt time to look at suggestions for further research in this field of interest. Avenues of research that fell beyond the scope and limitations of the present research, that would not only make for interesting research, but that could maybe also make a significant contribution within the research field; not only within the broad research field of HIV and Aids in South Africa, but also within the field of practical theology, as well as within the field of bereavement counselling.

However, before we look at some suggestions for further research, I would like to reflect on how I think I would have done this research differently, had I to do it over again.

### **6.6.1 Alternative roads to the research journey**

Firstly, I think I would have changed my title to read – ‘other bereft adolescents’ instead of ‘other vulnerable adolescents’ referring to ‘other vulnerable children’. Yet, on second thought I might not have changed it – as the description ‘OVC’ forms part and parcel of the worldwide HIV and Aids discourse, and would therefore make this research more accessible to researchers and students engaged in this kind of research.

Regarding the TOL camps and how it was presented – I think I would still have done the TOL camps with all the adolescents, the acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans (Dee and Zee) as well as the other bereft and vulnerable adolescents, as I believe this was a life enriching experience for all involved. But maybe I just should have focussed the scope of the thesis only on the two acknowledged Aids orphans and how they coped psycho-spiritually with their parental bereavement.

If however, we did not have a follow-up camp as was initially planned, I would only had Dee's story to work with as Zee's orphan status only came out during the second TOL camp. And going onto the first TOL camp, we were only briefed by the PEN facilitators on Dee's orphan status, as they themselves were unsure if Zee's father had indeed died from HIV and Aids.

Furthermore, had I decided early on to only focus the scope of my research on the acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans in the group, I might have missed out on the relationship interplay between the adolescents themselves. The so-called 'brotherhood' and or 'sisterhood' of *Ubuntu* that became evident, evolved and that was strengthened during these camps between not only certain individuals, but also the group itself might have been overlooked. This 'sense of community' in the true spirit of *Ubuntu* feels like the sparkling moment, the a-ha moment of this whole research process.

Although not directly related to the stated psycho-spiritual needs of these adolescents, which formed the basis of this research, the social aspect of the human life does indeed form part of psychological issues people are confronted with – whether or not they feel part of a group or community socially or not. Do they experience a feeling of belonging, a sense of community? Or as Zee stated it in her TOL workbooks with specific reference to her and Dee's friendship –

Also my friend Dee, she is one special friend that means she is different from all my friends, she (is) my sister in a way - **Zee**

(The impact of the first camp on my life -) It made me open up a little bit, expressing my feelings and thoughts to my friend Dee. When something bothered me I could tell Dee about (it) unlike before I keep quiet about everything - **Zee**

Most of the adolescents also emphasised the role of spirituality – their faith, PEN, the church and the broader faith community – in their lives, as well as how this contributed to their feelings of belonging somewhere.

So by interacting in the group setting of the TOL camps, the adolescents not only acknowledged their psychological (social) needs, but also their spiritual needs by talking and interacting with each other about God. And so, something that seemingly looked like something new in the research process, the sense of community or feeling of *Ubuntu* if you will, actually forms an integral part of the research if you look at it in a holistic way.

### **6.6.2 Opening up more possibilities**

Suggestions for further research should in my opinion not be limited to only research ideas which to undertake, but also suggestions of how to approach research and the research process in a different light as well.

- Maybe we should move out of our research comfort of sitting at our desks and thinking out research problems – move out into the field, make it a more hands-on approach. Involve co-researchers from the start. Tell them you want to research them and then they can help you formulate, define and refine the specific research questions.
- Practical theology should move away from the stigma of being the stepchild to theology and other disciplines within theology should also be consulted and integrated in any research concerning practical theology. Other disciplines within theology could also form part of the interdisciplinary conversation that forms an integral part of the PFPT approach to research. By looking firstly on a micro-level closer to home – theology – before moving on to a macro-level – social sciences and even the economic and business sciences as well as medical sciences.

- Practical theology maybe needs to move out further in the field – show the people on ground level, those that you want to involve in your research by becoming co-researchers, that you are serious about their welfare and well-being.
- Involve other disciplines from the start. Make an appointment with other lecturers or specialists in related fields and ask their input on your discipline related research question, before you formally formulate it.

During the interdisciplinary conversations Jerry Streets (2010:Personal communication) made the following suggestion for follow-up research in this regard: “To look at a theological and psychological and pastoral reflection on depression and resilience in female adolescents and young adulthood might be helpful to consider as you move forward with the project”.

It certainly would be interesting and indeed needful to look at the following research areas in the field of HIV and Aids research:

- Depression under orphaned children – especially more verbally expressive adolescents especially from an integrated theologically reflective and psychological perspective
- Sources of resilience in orphaned adolescents who seem to function and cope successfully after the loss of a parent
- To look specifically at the above research suggestions from a gender perspective
- To look specifically at the above research suggestions from a developmental phase perspective
- Extend this research into young adulthood – and how this loss and bereavement and their coping with it affects them as young adults moving into the world. In a time when they are choosing and settling into a career and possibly choosing a life partner, as well.

## 6.7 CLOSING REMARKS ON CHAPTER 6

Everyone thinks of changing the world,  
But no one thinks of changing himself  
- Leo Tolstoy -

Reflecting on the whole research process, I thought again about my reasons for using the art of African storytelling as a metaphor for this research. It all started – I think – during the Masters course, when I was introduced to the narrative approach to therapy and research. My own love for stories and storytelling and special interest in the stories of Africa ignited this interest. Through doing my literature studies – both for my Masters and for PhD – I was confronted time and time again by how Western methods to therapy and education in especially the field of HIV and Aids failed time and time again in Africa – even in more urbanised areas. As was emphasised earlier in chapter 3 (section 3.5) by Courlander (1975:3) narratives have a certain power to them that exceeds all boundaries and speaks to most – if not all – of us. Living in South Africa – being born and raised here, I also see myself as an African – albeit a white African with Afrikaner roots – but still a true African, who cares about the well-being of Africa and her children.

What I intended to do in this research, was not only to tell and reflect on certain African stories as it pertains to research and therapy, but also to open the door for Africans to tell their life stories. Those Africans being the TOL adolescents and myself. In light of this, I would like to end this chapter with the words from a well-known Afrikaans song as it also tells the story of the children of Africa [Kinders van Afrika], before bringing the research process to a close in chapter 7 with my final reflection on the process.



### Die kinders van Afrika

(Woorde en Musiek: Lochner de Kock)

Die kinders van Afrika sit langs die vuur  
Krap in die louwarm as  
Verhale en mites vervlieg in die nag  
Die toekoms is 'n storie uit pas

Die jare het hul in die stampblok gemaal  
Met wette geskaaf en geskaal  
Hul gisters het hul in die nanag verlaat  
Verblind, afgesonder, gehaat

Maar die kinders van Afrika stook nou die vuur  
Blaas op die rooiwarm as  
Verhale en mites herrys uit die nag  
Legendes word weer aangepas

En die jare val weg soos 'n ou droë blaar  
Vergete, ontwapen, ontaar  
Die dae herrys as die nanag breek  
Soos 'n phoenix wat alles wil weet

En die kinders van Afrika loop deur die land  
Met fakkels wat die duister laat vlug  
Skadu's verhelder, verdwyn in die brand  
En die duister maak plek vir die lig

En die nuwe dag breek met 'n vrugwater vloed  
Helder en warm, vol bloed  
Met geboorte van kennis word die duister verdryf  
En met die stem van 'n kind wat uitroep

Kom kinders van Afrika, kom saam met ons  
Kom laat ons die ligdag begroet  
Vergeet van die duister se ketting en slot  
Kom laat ons mekaar nou ontmoet  
*n'Kosi Sikelel' iAfrika*

### The children of Africa

(Music and Lyrics: Lochner de Kock)

The children of Africa sit beside the fire  
Scratching in the lukewarm ash  
Stories and myths take flight in the night  
The future is a story not right

The years have grinded them in the pounding block  
Chafed and scaled by laws  
Their yesterdays have left them in the latter part of the  
night Blinded, isolated, hated

But the children of Africa are now stoking the flames  
Blowing on the red hot ash  
Stories and myths resurrected out of the night  
Legends adapted again

The years fall away like an old dry leaf  
Forgotten, disarmed, unveined  
The days break as night fall ends  
Like a phoenix that wants to know it all

And the children of Africa walk through the country  
With flares to ward off the darkness  
Shadows brighten, vanish in the conflagration  
And darkness makes room for the light

A new day dawns with the flood of new life  
Bright and warm, full of blood  
With the birth of knowledge darkness is driven out  
And with the voice of a child that cries out

Come children of Africa, come with us  
Let us salute the dawn  
Forget about the locks and chains of darkness  
Come let us now meet each other  
*n'Kosi Sikelel' iAfrika*

## CHAPTER 7

### EPILOGUE TO AN AFRICAN RESEARCH STORY – ON BEING QUESTIONED BY OTHERS AND ONESELF

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

*And so Magoda found true happiness, and he and his wife lived a long and contented life to a ripe old age - thanks to the magic horns of the ox his father had given him.*

*(Greaves 2004:111)*

The story of Magoda and the magic horns could have very well ended with the last paragraph of the story as related in Chapter 6, telling us – the readers – of the successful life Magoda was able to create for himself and his new family with the help of the magic horns. As a family, they had a good life and in the true spirit of *Ubuntu*, he helped the rest of the village to prosper as well, earning the respect and admiration of the other villagers. A proper ending to a beautiful folktale of a poor orphan boy growing into real manhood by relating to not only feelings of loss, sadness and loneliness, but also friendship and discovering one's own unique talents and gifts to be used to the benefit of all, I would say.

However, in almost a postscript to the story, the very last paragraph is added – which might even evoke further questions from the reader about the story, such as What constitutes 'true happiness' to each specific reader?

Similarly, after all is said and done in a research project of this magnitude, many questions still remains unanswered. The purpose of this last chapter is my attempt to address some – although definitely not all – of the questions that might be pertinent in the reader's mind after studying this research report, as well as those of other people and myself – people involved and affected by this research.

## **7.2 ADDRESSING THE FEARS AND HOPES OF MY CO-RESEARCHERS**

For this research to be true to the nature of social-constructionism it was important to go back to the co-researchers and ask their input as to the research process. After the second TOL camp, I had one last meeting with most of the adolescents who attended the TOL camps. Seven of the ten adolescents were able to meet with me at the Dutch Reformed Church Bronberg in Sunnyside, Pretoria on Friday 12 March 2010 in the afternoon for a couple of hours. Only Moses, Palesa and Zee were unable to make it due to study and work related responsibilities.

During this last session I specifically asked those present about the possible fears they might have had and maybe even still have about our research together and the writing up thereof, as well as any hopes they might have for the research. At a later stage, I also contacted Moses, Palesa and Zee by telephone and they kindly responded to my request via sms.

What follows below, is my attempt to address these fears and hopes as articulated by my co-researchers. Again, their responses are given according to their own language use and style – to be true to their own voices as individuals.

### **7.2.1 Slaying the Fear Dragon**

#### **7.2.1.1 A fear of the Unknown**

Annie and Palesa related fears regarding the fact that Juanita and I were strangers to them, which was possibly compounded by the fact that the PEN facilitators were unable to attend the first camp in its entirety with us, leaving the adolescents and I to each other's mercy during the two-hour drive to the campsite. Juanita followed in her own vehicle in order for us to have transport if need be. The following comments – I think – now explains the mostly quiet drive to the campsite:

At the beginning of the camp, I had many fears, because I did not even know Juanita, nor did I know Amanda. It was very scary and I thought they were taking us and going to abduct us and go sell us - **Annie**

The fears I had about the research was that I was afraid that what are (we) going to do with the white chicks and I was wondering that where are (they) taking us 'cause you (referring to Juanita and myself) never told us where we were going - **Palesa**

(25 April 2010 at 21:45:18 via sms)

In response to a reply sms from me joking about whether she – Palesa – is still afraid of us, the ‘white chicks’:

That was then but now since we actually met and known each other it was so amazing that you are a part of our lives and we love you guys for what you did in our lives am not scared of you anymore may GOD bless you - **Palesa**

(25 April 2010 at 22:06:03 via sms)

Zee took this fear of the great Unknown and personalised it to her own situation:

When I think of my future I fear because I don't know if I am gonna be successful one day. I know I have the ability to make my dreams come true, but where do I start. After the (brand new camp) I realized that the world out of school (is) different, challenging and that scares (me). "How is my life gonna be out of (the House of Safety)". That's the question I ask myself everyday - **Zee**

(1 May 2010 at 13:45:53 via sms)

### 7.2.1.2 People's perceptions based on the research

Wiseman expressed fear about how people might perceive this research on reading and interacting with it:

I just hope that some people won't take this research in a bad way or offend them in some way, that's my fears about this research - **Wiseman**

Dee acknowledged her fear of 'this is as good as it gets' by personalising this fear Wiseman expressed in saying:

That when other people read the research they will accept me to have succeeded. And I am scared that my victory story stops here - **Dee**

### 7.2.1.3 Fearlessly unconcerned

Some of the adolescents also stated that they had no fears regarding the TOL camps, the research or what was to be done with the data collected after the camps were over:

I do not have fears about the camp - **Dimakatso**

I just don't mind if anything is done to (with) the research - **Shaun**

Michael went even further by acknowledging the fact that he was just glad to leave his ordinary day-to-day life behind to go on a camping trip:

I did not really fear much, was just happy that I was going to the camp - **Michael**

Victor and Zee also brought up the issue of rapport and trust between Juanita and I as the researchers and themselves as the co-researchers by stating:

Actually, I've got no fear about the research. It is my pleasure to share my life stories with you guys, plus I trust you with every single (bit of) information that I shared with you as well - **Victor**

I didn't have fears about the camp, 'cos I trusted you guys and I felt very comfortable around y'all - **Zee**

(1 May 2010 at 14:14:26 via sms)

## 7.2.2 Hoping for a better tomorrow

### 7.2.2.1 Lead others to a better understanding

Annie touched on the hope that this research would help people reading it to gain a better understanding of their individual as well as collective experiences as seen through their own eyes:

(A)nd actually give them a brief description of the things we go through in our everyday lives - **Annie**

### 7.2.2.2 Helping others and ourselves: On becoming 'overcomers'

Some adolescents indicated the wish that this research will also help other people unknown to them that might be experiencing the same crises as they have:

I hope that this research will help other people - **Annie**

I just hope it helps others like us - **Michael**

I just hope this change is somebody's life positively - **Shaun**

I hope this research will help the people or in the same situation as we are and give them strength and confidence so that they can take on life's challenges - **Wiseman**

Zee personalised her hopes by referring to her life long dream of becoming a chef – like her deceased father whom she loved dearly – and one day even owning her own restaurant:

My hopes are me being a chef one day and hopefully own a restaurant -

**Zee**

(1 May 2010 at 13:45:53 via sms)

The hope that this research will also benefit Juanita and I was also expressed, and it warms my heart to realise how much these adolescents also care about us:

I just hope that it prospers and hope that both Juanita and Amanda will get their PhD's - **Dimakatso**

The wish that this process would help them all to heal emotionally from the experiences they faced in their brief lives thus far was also mentioned and brought to the table:

I also hope that this helps us emotionally - **Dimakatso**

The positive impact that this research has had on the adolescents' emotional lives already, has also been acknowledged by Palesa in stating her hopes regarding the research.

She also goes further by referring to them as 'overcomers' in their lives' stories. I like this word 'overcomers' Palesa uses it to refer to them. In the literature the concept 'victims' was used for a long time, yet this is such a negative concept, implying passive behaviour from the person affected and therefore most of the literature on people experiencing some kind of trauma recently started to refer to so-called 'survivors'.

The concept 'survivors' refers to 'living through' and surviving a negative ordeal of some kind, while the concept 'overcomers' might even go further than this by actively engaging them to overcome the trauma they experienced:

*Hopes was for you guys to help us to overcome our fears and challenges that we have been through when we lost our loved ones to be able to face the world in the different way to be overcomers. This research will help others as well. Aa hopefully. 'Cause it really help us a lot and we thank you - Palesa*

*(25 April 2010 at 21:59:31 via sms)*

### **7.2.2.3 God in us: Giving hope and inspiring others**

Helping other people by giving them hope when reading the stories and seeing the hand of God in these stories, as well as inspiring people to go out and do something good in the world was another hope for the research that some of the adolescents expressed:

(A)nd I know for sure that it will reach out and give hope to people that are in the same situation - **Annie**

That more than anything the research will see *God* in us than anything else that we have faced. But, mostly that others may be inspired by *Amanda* and *Juanita* to take action and go out and do something - **Dee**

I hope that whoever reads this / get to know the research actually gets inspired in a way - **Victor**

### 7.2.3 Fighting the monster within

It is not always easy growing up and especially growing up without good solid role models such as loving parents. *Moses* relates to the fear of not always being the best person you can be, but at the same time fighting back, to become the better person one can be:

*Ama* (short for *Amanda*) I fear that the more I grow up is the more I discover new things about myself and most of those things are scary. My dream is to become the best I can so that I can - **Moses**  
(28 April 2010 at 07:28:39 via sms)

I fear that as I get older my lemon tree also grows bigger and the bugs also grow older but believe that I have taken control of them especially with *God's* and you guys' help. I dream that my present lemon tree could just turn into (an) orange tree but anyway there will always be another one because life is full of challenges - **Moses**  
(4 May 2010 at 20:54:03 via sms)

It was an interesting experiment to ask my co-researchers rather bluntly about especially their fears as well as their hopes for our research. Their answers were in my opinion surprisingly honest, something I would ascribe to the positive rapport and trust that now exist between us.

Fear is instinctive to the human nature, and I would sincerely hope that the hopes my co-researchers expressed regarding not only our research, but also regarding their own personal lives and stories, would outweigh the mentioned fears and worries for them. That they would all be successful and prosper in their lives – how difficult and scary that might be at times – henceforth.

### **7.3 ADDRESSING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BY RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

It is not news that the media is continuously flooded by reports on HIV and Aids almost on a daily basis – research into the crisis, the statistics, the demographics, the treatment debacle and politically motivated involvement with this crisis usually make the headlines.

One might say that Joe Public is over-exposed to the HIV and Aids crisis and subsequent research on the topic. Many people – including Christians – on the street might even say that HIV and Aids does not affect us, at least not directly, so why the hype about it all the time? And what can I as an individual do to help curb a pandemic that is paralysing entire populations and even continents?

Maybe not surprisingly, in light of the above that I have been faced with similar questions by friends, family and even strangers while being involved with the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV AND AIDS project and while researching the topic for my PhD. I therefore thought it good to also include in this section three main questions – surprisingly enough voiced by fellow Christians – about HIV and Aids, my research and involvement in the field.

### **7.3.1 Why should traditionally Afrikaans Churches (Dutch Reformed Churches) and their training institutions become involved in this current 'hype' around HIV and Aids?**

My short answer to this would be that HIV and Aids affects us all and that Churches and training institutions like the University, have a responsibility to become involved and add to the growing but still inadequate research data on this phenomenon. This is because HIV and Aids and its related discourses can, in many ways, be compared to leprosy well known in the Bible. Largely, it has the same impact on the people infected and affected by it. The shame, the stigma associated with it and consequently mostly being shunned by not only the community at large, but also sometimes by one's own family and loved ones, make it – still to this day – a socially debilitating disease.

Speaking of disease – most people are at *dis-ease* with talking and thinking about it, because maybe at heart we believe – like children do – that if we ignore it long enough it will simply go away. Which we all know is not true.

While doing my Masters in Practical Theology I initially experienced problems locating AIDS orphans willing to partake in my study. Dr Wilhelm van Deventer, research associate of Prof Müller, informed me of children in the Brits area in the North-West province who lost both parents to HIV and Aids. No, not black orphans as some of you reading this might expect, but white, Afrikaans-speaking children from a Dutch Reformed background.

I did however by then managed to make contact through my congregation with people working with (yes, black) AIDS orphans in rural KwaZulu-Natal, and did not take him up on his offer to introduce me to these white AIDS orphans. This decision I regret to this day. It would have been an eye-opening experience not only for me but also, I think, for ignorant Afrikaans Church members.

Nonetheless, although currently it would seem like black AIDS orphans are in the majority, it isn't – and should never from a Christian perspective be – a crisis divided by race, language and even Church denomination.

A rather arrogant question like this brings to mind the very popular colourful rubber wrist bands sold at Christian outlets. Though, lately almost a cliché, the one with the letters WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?) rings true to a question like this. Therefore, some Dutch Reformed congregations in the inner city of Pretoria like NG Grootte Kerk and NG Bronberg are already heading this call and assisting NGOs like PEN with their infrastructure to be able to reach out to people in need in the inner city.

**7.3.2 It appears to be the latest do-good craze for almost all churches to have some or other kind of Outreach programme to a remote rural area of South Africa ridden by HIV and Aids, why all of a sudden?**

This question in a sense contradicts the first one. In this question, it is clear that most churches have already moved away from the stance of contemplating involvement to active involvement in the crisis. Yet, I would agree that I myself have also wondered about the motivation for this involvement at times. Must we not in the first instance address problems within our own congregation – like the plight of the white AIDS orphans mentioned earlier – before moving so far a field to offer assistance? As the saying goes – charity begins at home.

This begs the question – where as Christians is our home? Is this limited to our own families, our own congregations, denominations, South Africa as a country or the world? Involvement with the plight of others less fortunate than oneself is a very humbling experience. Charity and outreach should maybe not be seen as exclusive and privileging some, while neglecting others, but rather as a balancing act – looking after one's own while still extending a helping hand to others.

And, although some people may be getting involved for wrong and selfish reasons, the fact is they are in the process still doing something to better the lives of others. I believe that the beauty of God's work is that He can still use people doing it for the wrong reasons and their efforts positively. So be it a current do-good craze to get involved in HIV and Aids Outreach programmes that might blow over as soon as the next major crisis strikes, or a sincere attempt to reach out, this help is needed and does make a difference – how small and insignificant it might seem.

### **7.3.3 Why the involvement with HIV and Aids orphans?**

My sincere answer and counter argument to this question would simply be – why not? The way some people would phrase this question, it would seem like these children are already lost to society, so why bother? They are in their minds next in line to follow in their parents' footsteps and as such are a liability to society. I always get hot under the collar when somebody bombards me with a question like this and I am quite sure most people arrogant enough to ask me this have noticed my discontent with them for asking.

The Bible clearly states that widows and orphans should be everybody's responsibility, not just that of the State or the Church. So, for me, to live out and live up to the Word of God, we need to get involved in their plight. It might not be easy or even possible for each of us to become directly involved with helping not only HIV and Aids orphans, but for that matter, any child left orphaned and bereaved, but we can surely make an attempt at it.

In this I am guided by something my maternal grandmother used to say – You can judge a man's character by the way he treats animals, the elderly and children. My mother added that a child is a child. Children – especially after losing their parents – need love and acceptance and if by working with just a few of them, I could provide that for them, this whole experience was worthwhile.

## **7.4 ADDRESSING POSSIBLE QUESTIONS BY THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**

In light of the oral defence that is required for most PhD theses as part of the examination process, questions pertaining to the research and the research process by the academic community – especially members active in the field of Theology and more specifically Practical Theology – is inevitable. The broader academic community, especially disciplines related to social science and the Humanities might also have certain questions regarding the research and the field of research that might need clarification after studying the research report.

In this section, I aim to address some of these possible questions most relevant to this specific research endeavour, as it might be posed to me during the upcoming oral defence of my PhD research report. Consequently, sub-headings were phrased as questions and not as statements. Little text references are also made in this section, as would be likely during an oral defence, which focussed mainly on the candidate's personal understanding of the questions and relevant concepts. Text references are however properly acknowledged in the relevant sections earlier in the thesis.

### **7.4.1 Please explain in short the narrative approach to therapy and research and how adhering to this approach impacted on your research**

Coming from a pre-graduate and honours background in psychology that still operated from a modernistic approach to therapy when I was studying I would say that I experienced the narrative approach as very freeing when I was first introduced to it during my Masters studies in Practical Theology. (Psychology later also introduced the narrative approach to its discipline). Freeing not only for me as potential therapist and researcher, but more importantly for the people whom I would be working with.

For me the narrative approach whether relating to therapy or research is about stories – life stories or parts thereof of the people you are working with. At its basis is social-constructionism, closely related to postfoundationalism as proposed by Wentzel van Huyssteen. It is no longer about being the expert knowing it all (in therapy) or having a checklist of things to look into (in research). Clients in therapy aren't referred to as 'patients' anymore, a stance that assumes that something is wrong with them or that they are sick. In the same manner research participants are referred to as 'co-researchers' because they are now actively involved in helping to create the research story and are no longer seen as the passive 'subjects' of research.

Rather it is about the specific person's truth and how that person is experiencing it in his or her life at present. Certain storylines or discourses might be prevalent and favoured in a person's life, while other storylines are marginalised. The aim of the narrative approach is to move away from the modernistic view of the therapist / researcher as the expert and taking on a not-knowing position. Setting the ball in motion by asking some 'opening space' questions and then allowing the person to tell his or her story, helping to 'thicken' the storyline along the way by asking some follow-up questions. This all aims at helping the person or the research to achieve a 'unique outcome' or sometimes referred to as a 'sparkling moment'. Creating space for previously neglected storylines and discourses to become active in the person's life or in the research process.

#### **7.4.2 What would you say is the contribution of Practical Theology to the research field of HIV and Aids?**

As we have seen throughout this thesis, Practical Theology is about the living out and living up to God's Word. We as Christians are not alone in this world. We find ourselves in the midst of a community of faith, whether that be our family, our circle of friends, and / or our church.

We also find ourselves living in the world with its harsh realities and problems. In light of the scope of this thesis, one might ask what impact we as Christians can make in this world. How can we as Christians help and where do we start?

In order for us as Christians to know how we can help and where we can start, it is important to get to grips with the problems people infected and affected by HIV and Aids are facing. We can not – in a modernistic way – roll up our sleeves and jump in to start solving so-called problems, without even being sure of the validity of the problems we ourselves have identified.

In comes Practical Theology and research, especially research from a narrative, postfoundational approach. By actively involving people infected and affected by HIV and Aids as co-researchers in our research, together we can start to delve into the discourses informing problems identified by themselves and not by us as researchers, to help them find unique outcomes for their own problem-saturated life stories. In doing so, helping them to heal holistically – mentally, emotionally as well as spiritually.

#### **7.4.3 Briefly recap the seven (7) movements of Postfoundational Practical Theology (PFPT) and evaluate the chosen methodology of your research**

The first three movements have to do with the context of the research. The discussion on these three movements can be found in Chapter 2 of this thesis. In most qualitative research and especially in PFPT, it is important to not only study and analyse the research data gathered, but also to situate the data within the specific context wherein it has taken form, thus to contextualise the research. In order for the research data to be collected and analysed in an empirically sound and ethical way, it is therefore in the first instance important to describe the greater context wherein the research activity has taken place.

In the case of this study, the greater context has to do with the HIV and Aids field and more specifically as the stories of the adolescents are played out in the context of the faith-based organisation (FBO) PEN and related to us (Juanita and I) during the two TOL camps. We used the TOL camps to gather the relevant data to be analysed as well as using this as an opportunity for the adolescents to help us to describe, interpret and analyse the experiences as lived by them. My own context and motivation for doing this study also impacted on the greater context of the study and was discussed as such. For me the value of contextualising the research before moving onto collecting and analysing the research data was a very interesting experience. As I not only had to look at the experiences of the adolescents that were to form my data, but I also had to critically reflect on my own context as a student, researcher and as a Christian doing research.

The discussion of the fourth movement of PFPT is situated in Chapter 3, and is a description of how experiences are continually informed by certain traditions of interpretation. The context of HIV and Aids is influenced by many factors, and in turn influences the context around it as well. Much has been written about HIV and Aids, and it would have been an impossible task to write about everything. Therefore I chose to give only a short overview of HIV and Aids and related discourses in a creative way, by using cartoons, and to limit my literature study to HIV and Aids orphans, before looking at how theological interpretations also impacts on this field. Storytelling and especially African storytelling are explored as another tradition of interpretation, before integrating some of the creative activities of the adolescents as further traditions of interpretation.

What started out as a very difficult movement and therefore chapter to write actually became a fun activity when I moved away from the traditional discourse of interpreting the Aids phenomena and rather decided to reflect on it by integrating the Arts into my discussion of traditions of interpretation.

A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, that forms the fifth movement of the research can be found in Chapter 4. Since the research focused on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, it was important to look at how these adolescents experience and perceive God in their lives. Doing research within Practical Theology, this movement helped me tremendously in gaining a better understanding of the adolescents' experiences after losing loved ones.

What became a cornerstone in this research is the sixth movement of PFPT that is situated in Chapter 5. Here the analysis of the adolescents' experiences is thickened by interdisciplinary investigation. This relates to transversal rationality, as the researcher's own analysis of the data are strengthened by multiple perspectives on the data by professionals from different, but related disciplines. I was fortunate enough to have interdisciplinary team members from not only theology, psychology, social work, but also inputs from information science as a discipline as well as that of a life coach. These inputs helped me to elaborate on certain discourses that became evident in the life stories of Dee and Zee.

The penultimate chapter refers to the last movement of PFPT, namely the development of alternative interpretations that also points beyond these contextualised stories of the adolescents' and the local community to open up possibilities for the development of a pastoral care approach to bereavement issues within the African context.

Much research still needs to be done with reference to the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents, yet African storytelling as a tradition of interpretation opens up great possibilities for working with these and other children who have experienced the loss of their parent(s) or caregivers.

#### **7.4.4 What is the difference between the movements and the methods of this specific research?**

The difference between the movements and the methods relates to how the research is approached. The seven movements form the backdrop to how the research was conducted and subsequently presented in this thesis. It relates to postfoundationalism as a paradigm that was developed by Van Huyssteen.

The methods of research refer to the so-called research tools used to collect and analyse the research data – or as it is referred to in narrative research, the research stories.

The TOL camps and the *TOL* metaphor were used to collect and to a certain degree analyse the research stories in collaboration with the adolescents themselves as co-researchers to the research. This was done through the integration of narrative methods with focus group discussions, the Arts and specifically developed TOL workbooks.

#### **7.4.5 A great deal of theses submitted lately has focused on the topic of HIV and Aids. What would you say is your research's contribution to this research theme?**

When I started out with my research for my Masters in Practical Theology, I was very interested in looking at how children and adolescents experience bereavement – especially parental bereavement.

Prof Julian Müller consequently suggested that I look into the field of HIV and Aids and the impact it might have on parental bereavement as a phenomenon. It is true that much has been researched about HIV and Aids in recent years and how it affects people, whether infected or affected by it.

Yet, at the stage I subsequently embarked on conducting research for my Masters, much of the research published up to that point focused on physical and material support of these orphans some of whom were living in child-headed households. Little of the research available focused on the emotional and psychological needs of children left orphaned by this disease.

My Masters research with rural AIDS orphans in KwaZulu-Natal indicated the need to not only focus on these children's bereavement needs, but also to situate these needs within the realm of spirituality. I therefore focused the topic and scope of my PhD research not only on bereavement issues as such, but also looked at the role of spirituality in this phenomenon. I also looked at the phenomenon from the perspectives of adolescents mostly living in the inner city of Pretoria, some of whom are in the care of PEN.

Not all of these adolescents are acknowledged HIV and Aids orphans, yet they all share the experience of losing someone close to them and who were responsible for caring for them and that impacted greatly on their lives in the greater context of the HIV and Aids phenomenon.

#### **7.4.6 Why should this thesis be accepted in the Faculty of Theology and not another, say, Humanities Faculty?**

As was already said, this thesis focuses on the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of adolescents, some of whom are directly affected by the HIV and Aids phenomenon. Their bereavement has brought on certain issues that affect their lives henceforth, not least of this being their view of God and His role in the death of their loved ones and their subsequent bereavement. Their spirituality therefore informs other psychological and emotional needs these adolescents might be experiencing due to their bereavement.

Therefore, although this thesis might also be accepted in for instance the Department of Psychology in the Humanities Faculty, I am of the opinion that this thesis with its unique emphasis on spirituality would be best suited for submission within the Department of Practical Theology in the Faculty of Theology.

**7.4.7 With reference to the section on interdisciplinary conversations, how did these conversations help you regarding your co-researchers' view on God?**

For both Dee and Zee who recently lost their mother (Dee) and father (Zee) to HIV and Aids, religion, God and the faith-based organisation PEN play important roles in their daily lives. Both of them are cared for by PEN. Both girls view God in a protective and caring manner.

Although God is seen by them as the one responsible for the storms in their lives, He is also the one protecting them during these difficult times. It was clear that God had a great impact on both of their lives. Some of the interdisciplinary team members did indeed interact with these cues presented by the girls on their view of God. Team members such as the counselling psychologist, Ilze Jansen and Dr Jerry Streets with his background in social work and theology, as well as François Wessels the life coach and fellow PhD student, commented on the impact of God in the lives of these two girls.

It was of concern for François Wessels that Zee viewed God as responsible for the storms in her life, and how it might impact on her life story further on. Dee's spirituality as a meaning-making discourse was also mentioned by him as a possible concern. Yet, in my opinion he contradicts himself as he acknowledges the fact that, although most of her relationships are characterised by conflict, her relationship with Zee and her church does not seem to be.

Jerry Streets links onto this by emphasising the support from religious people and organizations such as the church that seems important to them as a source of strength. Ilze Jansen with reference to Dee's story also sees her spirituality as a positive aspect and mentions how her view of God could be used in therapy to help develop her coping mechanisms and resilience further in life.

I was a bit disappointed that not more of the interdisciplinary team members chose to interact with cues on how the girls viewed God, but I think this might have been related to their own presuppositions on religion and spirituality in research.

#### **7.4.8 How do you understand transversal rationality?**

Van Huyssteen in his exploration of postfoundationalism as a paradigm coined the concept 'transversality'. It can be seen as his attempt to engage different disciplines working within the same field, yet sometimes from different paradigms and with different perspectives in an attempt to speak to each other; trying to find common ground between the different disciplines in relation to the field of interest, while still acknowledging the differences between the disciplines.

Transversal rationality, therefore in my opinion is not endangering one's own discipline's paradigm(s) and work methods by exposing it to different disciplines' perspectives, but indeed helps to 'thicken' the research story with multiple academic inputs. It leads us to learn from one another's disciplines and in doing so may shed some light on possible 'blind spots' created by our own discipline regarding the field of research.

It may even lead to new research questions being posed and will hopefully contribute to future interdisciplinary research endeavours between the different disciplines ensuring a more holistic approach to research.

#### 7.4.9 Please summarise your research in a few statements

1. Various perspectives on the phenomenon of HIV and Aids exist, due to the involvement of different disciplines in the research field, of which Practical Theology only represents one such perspective. Subsequently it can only provide a limited focus on the needs of HIV and Aids orphans.
2. The epistemological positioning of the research lies in Postfoundational Practical Theology. The underlying research methodology is the narrative approach that is embedded within social constructionism.
3. This Postfoundational Practical Theological approach delves into the psycho-spiritual bereavement needs of HIV and Aids orphans and other vulnerable adolescents by listening to their descriptions of their experiences and how they relate to God's presence in their lives and context.
4. It is important to keep in mind the African context wherein these stories of bereavement are lived. As such, language and metaphors within this context needed to be acknowledged and incorporated in the research.
5. Interdisciplinary discussion and consultation related to the co-researchers' stories and in the field of adolescent bereavement is essential, in an attempt to broaden the focus beyond the perspective of Practical Theology.
6. What emerged in this research were the experiences of loss through bereavement, the integration of this loss through storytelling and the sense of community – *Ubuntu* – that came to the fore through storymaking.
7. An African approach to narrative pastoral care is suggested that focuses on the integration of the lived experiences with a positive view of the future.

#### 7.4.10 What did you learn from your co-researchers?

Some hip-hop slang words and a new hip-hop-and-happening dress code. Only joking! While on the subject of hip-hop however, Shaun especially taught me once again – as I have also mentioned in Chapter 2 – not to judge a book by its cover. Behind the brave façade, lay hidden deep hurts that needed to be given a voice.

In spite of all the pain and anguish these 10 co-researchers have already experienced in their young lives, they were all the paragon of resilience. Lesser people would have in my opinion given up hope a long time ago – even in less trying situations than theirs. They reminded me – in a time I myself needed to be reminded thereof – to always put my trust in God. To give my problems over to Him in prayer and at the same time doing what I can to better my own situation as well. For me the sparkling moment in my interaction with my co-researchers came when they let Juanita and I become part of their group and showed us that the spirit of *Ubuntu* – although in need of a bit of nurturing to once again flourish – was still alive in our South African society.

### 7.5 SELF-REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS: ON QUESTIONING MYSELF

Reflective thinking turns experience into insight

- John Maxwell -

As with many other people, I am possibly my own worst critic. My left brain kicks in at the most unexpected times to start asking all sorts of fear inducing and even down right debilitating questions. As a result, I was constantly questioning myself during this research process. I would be lying if I said I was sure of anything during this journey. I questioned my methods and motives almost on a daily basis. At times, I became very unsure of my ability to conduct and complete a research project of this magnitude.

At one stage – during the writing up process – I told Professor Müller that the process was more difficult than I would ever have imagined it to be, and he replied tongue in the cheek by asking me if somebody ever told me that it wouldn't be difficult. I guess it isn't supposed to be an easy process, why else would you need to complete at least three other degrees to get to this point?

This whole chapter up to this point testifies to this fact and represents an attempt at finding a creative outlet for the stress induced by my inner Critic. This is done by turning the tables on my inner Critic and applying it in a positive manner as a way of checking if I understood and clearly articulated my understanding of the concepts, the context and the process of the research. Also as Dr Lourens Bosman – research associate to Prof Müller – repeatedly reminded us during our PhD meetings, this thesis is not the writing of a book, but the documentation of the process of research; therefore it is equally important to reflect on my own thoughts and feelings during this process in order to progress in the process. This I have tried to do throughout this thesis by ongoing reflection on the process.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to become a writer. At school, languages were my strength and I actually thought becoming a writer might be a viable career option. That was up and until the day my brother read my diary out loud to his friends. Needless to say, it was the very last diary I ever had. Ever since, I was a frustrated writer – still enjoying writing, but at the same time being conscious at all times of how other people might perceive my writing to be.

Prof Müller's suggestion to keep a research journal to document the research process as it developed was therefore a scary prospect for me. Although still viewing myself in light of the young frustrated writer I became, I made a concerted effort in this research process to find my voice as a reflective writer. It was at times very difficult, but I tried and kept to it and think in my own way my attempt at it was successful and worth it.

## 7.6 MY STORY OF *UBUNTU*: BRINGING AN ELEPHANT INTO THE HOUSE

People helping one another can bring an elephant into the house

- African Proverb -

The very first thing I read in a dissertation or thesis I consulted in doing numerous assignments throughout my tertiary education, was the acknowledgements and dedications. I found myself fascinated with and drawn to it. It tells of a story of the author as a person and of the people who participated in and formed an audience to the author's achievements. A story most often silenced throughout the rest of the study by more traditional research practices.

This is my attempt to story my gratitude towards those people who helped me – not only in the completion of this study – but also in pursuing and achieving my life goals. After all, in light of the Zulu concept of *Ubuntu*, a person is only a person through other persons.

### 7.6.1 My brave new friends: The co-researchers

To all the adolescents whose stories in one way or another have formed part of this research project – a big thank you! From those whose stories were collected during the initial pilot study that was undertaken as part of the greater SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project of the Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, to the ten adolescents who had great fun with Juanita and I during the two TOL camps while sharing their individual stories with us. It probably took great courage to revisit these very sad incidence(s) in your lives and for that I salute you! Thank you for your willingness to trust us with your stories and I truly hope that by doing this, it helped you all to realise that your stories aren't over yet. So go out and look for that elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, because it is surely within your reach if you try hard enough!

Special thanks go out to the adolescents who attended the two TOL camps, the girls – Annie, Dee, Dimakatso, Palesa and Zee as well as the boys – Michael, Moses, Shaun, Victor and Wiseman. By having met and getting to know you, you have all in your own special way enriched my life – *ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

### **7.6.2 Personnel of the NGOs**

The field workers, facilitators and the directors of the three NGOs that took part in the greater research study of the Department – those of Heartbeat, PEN and Hospivision (Kurima). Thank you for taking the time to engage yourself in a study of this nature – thank you especially to Dr Sunette Pienaar of Heartbeat, Dr Marinda van Niekerk of PEN for being an inspiration to me as well as a source of encouragement, and Drs Andre de Porte and Simon Mailula of Hospivision.

A special word of thanks to Susan van der Walt and Jasmyn van Heerden of PEN's Teenage Ministry for helping me with issues surrounding the practicalities of the two TOL camps and especially for Susan that acted as a go-between between myself and the adolescents on many an occasion.

Three other PEN facilitators also joined us over the weekend of the first TOL camp – Louisa Taukobang, Timothy Qibi and Marumo Lekwankwa – thanks guys for participating in all the activities with such enthusiasm! The teens really enjoyed your presence and involvement. The love you have for them was evident and they are truly blessed to have such caring people in their lives who are positive role models for them! *Ke a leboga!* [Thank you!].

You all are the angels of this world. I can't put into words the thanks I owe you! *Dankie vir die leen van julle pragtige kinders!* [Thank you for entrusting your beautiful children to us!]

### 7.6.3 Sponsors who made the study possible

This study, as part of the greater SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS research project of the Department of Practical Theology, was made possible by generous research grants awarded to the research project by the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) and the Centre for the Study of Aids (CSA), University of Pretoria.

A PhD achievement bursary received from the University of Pretoria, as well as a Mentorship Bursary from the University of Pretoria that was jointly awarded to Prof Julian Müller and I funded the study itself.

I would also like to thank the following organisations and persons for the donated goods for the second TOL camp who helped to ensure that the adolescents felt very special and enjoyed this camp as much as the first TOL camp. Unselfish acts like these make me believe in the potential of South Africans and that the true spirit of *Ubuntu* is alive in this beautiful country we call home:

- ☺ Pick and Pay Head Office for the much appreciated gift card
- ☺ Sanex for the generous supply of toiletries
- ☺ Glodina for the beautifully embroidered towels and face cloths
- ☺ The Bible Society of South Africa for the beautiful Bibles
- ☺ SpecSavers, Kempton Park for the handy sport bags
- ☺ Sikelele Adventure Village, Magaliesburg, owners Tertius and Melanie Uys and Marco Coetzee and the rest of the staff for making us feel at home once again and graciously extending an invite to return for yet a next TOL camp
- ☺ My friends the Viviers family for the delicious Easter eggs
- ☺ Erik van der Slik for arranging urgent transport of the Glodina products from Durban and delivering it personally to me on short notice
- ☺ Bonga Tsebe for all her help relating to the administration side of organising the second TOL camp

#### **7.6.4 Helping professions: The interdisciplinary team**

One of the cornerstones of Postfoundational Practical Theology is interdisciplinary conversations between different disciplines in the field of interest of the study – in this instance the phenomena of orphans in the context of HIV and Aids. I am grateful to the following persons for participating in these conversations via e-mail, while being extremely busy themselves, and for some even while being abroad on holiday or work-related visits: Ilze Barnard, Mieke de Gelder, Hanre Hattingh, Suzanne Jacobs, Ilze Jansen, Tilda Loots, Corlie van der Bergh, François Wessels and Drs Andre de la Porte, Jacques du Plessis, Simon Mailula, Jerry Streets and Arnau van Wyngaard.

#### **7.6.5 Professional help with the completion of the study**

Special thanks to my promoter Prof Julian Müller. Thank you for opening up a world of possibilities by introducing the narrative approach to me. You have contributed much to my own story. *Dankie vir die vertroue wat Prof in my geplaas het en die geleenthede wat Prof aan my gebied het! Ek waardeer dit!* [Thank you for the trust that you have placed in me and the opportunities you have given me! I do appreciate it!]

Thanks to the academic information personnel at the Merensky library of the University – Retha Kruidenier, the information specialist for Theology, the personnel from the interlending service, for their invaluable assistance as well as Joy Wilson at the front desk, who were always friendly and helpful.

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#### **7.6.6 To true friends**

Fellow PhD student and friend – Juanita (Loubser) Meyer who helped to facilitate the TOL camps – *baie dankie vir jou ondersteuning en hulp Jua!* [Thank you very much for your support and help Jua!].

I wish to also thank the friends I made through studying and working at the University. Ilze Jansen and everyone at the Department of Biblical and Religious Studies – Nina Grundlingh, Proff Dirk Human en Piet Geyser. *Dankie vir al die ondersteuning deur die jare!* [Thank you for the support through the years!].

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*Dankie aan my vriendin Yolandi du Plessis vir haar belangstelling, vriendskap en ware omgee. 'n Spesiale woord van dank aan haar broer Deo du Plessis vir sy pragtige illustrasies van die Zoeloe stories – ‘Utshintsha nomnyana’ (Chapter 3) en “Uthingo lwenkosikazi’ (Chapter 7). [Thank you to my friend Yolandi du Plessis for her interest, friendship and true caring. A special word of thanks to her brother Deo du Plessis for his beautiful illustrations of the isiZulu stories – ‘Utshintsha nomnyana’ (Chapter 3) and “Uthingo lwenkosikazi’ (Chapter 7)].*

Thanks to a friend of mine Philip Trenwith who luckily for me is a great Information Technology (IT) student and for saving my computer and data just in time and at a crucial point in the writing of this research report – in fact more than once! As well as to his twin brother Gustav Trenwith for the development and upkeep of the SMALL SURVIVORS OF HIV/AIDS website – [www.hivorphans.co.za](http://www.hivorphans.co.za).

Thanks also to George Vorster for technical assistance to a self-proclaimed techno-phoebe as well as to Albert Coetzee of *ASAP Digital* for his technical assistance with incorporating the cartoons in Chapter 3. *Baie dankie julle ouens!* [Thank you very much you guys!]

*Aan my allerbeste vriendinne – Nadia Coetzee en Gerla Viviers – dankie dat ek jou storie hier kon deel Juffrou Coetzee, en dankie vir jou ‘ongeduldige geduld’ met my Gerla! Ook aan Nadia se familie – dankie vir julle jarelange vriendskap en liefde en Gerla se ouers, oom Gert en tannie Engela, vir hul ondersteuning en liefde. [To my best-est best friends – Nadia Coetzee and Gerla Viviers – thank you that I could share your story here Miss Coetzee and thanks for your ‘impatient patience’ with me Gerla! Also to Nadia’s family – thank you for your longstanding friendship and love and Gerla’s parents, ‘uncle’ Gert and ‘aunt’ Engela for their support and love.]*

### 7.6.7 My pillars of support: God and my family

*Laastens wil ek my gesin bedank vir hul hope geduld met my – veral die laaste paar weke terwyl ek (uiteindelik!) my tesis afgehandel het. Ek waardeer dit baie.*  
[Lastly, I want to thank my family for their patience with me – especially the last couple of weeks while (finally!) finishing my thesis. I do appreciate it a lot].

*Aan God – vir Sy groot liefde en talente wat aan my uitgedeel is – dankie!*  
[To God – for His great love and the talents given to me – thank you!]

## 7.7 CLOSING THE BOOK ON THE RESEARCH STORY – FINAL REMARKS

*UTHINGO LWENKOSIKAZI*

*The rainbow: The queen's bow*



*When it rains, at the appearance of the rainbow men say: "It is going to clear up, for the bow of the queen, the rainbow, has appeared". And it does clear up. Even though it rained heavily, it clears up at the appearance of the rainbow; it rains no more. Even when it has rained for two days, the sky clears up when the rainbow appears.*

*(Canonici 1993:58)*

I have set my rainbow in the clouds,  
and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth  
Gen 9:13 (NIV)

The above isiZulu folktale is in total contrast to the isiZulu tale of Tshintsha and the rainbow in chapter 3. It promises that after storms have raged the rainbow will appear – as a sign of hope for a promising tomorrow. There is a definite intertextual conversation between this tale and the story of Noah and the Ark in Genesis 9 and the covenant that God had made with His people. May this story serve to always remind my co-researchers of God’s unwavering love for them. My wish for my ten co-researchers is that they would – like Magoda who journeyed with us in an inspiring way – ‘live a long and contented life to a ripe old age’. May they through wise choices and being responsible with their lives as well as the lives of others, experience that which their parents never had the luck to experience – live to see their children grow up and be actively involved in their lives. May they find ‘true happiness’ – whatever their individual definition thereof might be and may they be willing and able to share and spread this happiness to other people by touching their lives in a positive way and in the true spirit of *Ubuntu*.

And so, we have come to the end of our research journey together. I hope it was as great an adventure and learning experience for you – the reader – as the research and the two TOL camps have been for Juanita, I, and our ten courageous co-researchers.

I wish to end with some words taken from the song *Somewhere over the rainbow* as sung by Judy Garland in ‘The Wizard of Oz’ (<http://www.lyrics007.com>) as an inspiration to all of us to always dream:

Somewhere over the rainbow  
Skies are blue  
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true