

CHAPTER 5

5.1 INTROSPECTING THE CHURCH

When we commence with any introspection of the church it is important to first recall the calling of the church. Whilst the author shall be dealing with in this calling through a way of introspection of the same, it comes out of his interest to quickly highlight the brief history of the church denomination this whole work is based upon, the UCCSA. The challenges and pastoral care given by many givers happens to be given with the tone and prescripts of different church denominations. The way everything is handled and done is substantiated by a numbers of doctrines and constitutional phrases and clauses. It is the reason the introspection of the church is important. This is done because the church happens to be his background, and naturally where his experiences have found foundation.

5.1.1 FROM OUR POSITION

The church is seen and known by the Congregationalists' as follows: They reckon that 'the word translated in the New Testament, but comes from a Greek word "ecclesia". It is a favourite word in the New Testament and is used hundred and fifteen times. But the idea it embodies appears far more frequently than that. The New Testament often speaks about 'the people who belong to the Lord', even when the word ecclesia is not used.

The above must always be borne in mind by everybody who acts in the name of the church. It forms a foundation of responsibility when any person commences with pastoral care from the church perspective. It is pronounced here to remind people who loose the church's intended purpose in the event of giving pastoral care to the bereaved during the time of sudden death. The loss of purpose results in people aiming at profiting only on church membership, or any

other way other than the real purpose that has got to be, not because people are converted but because they can pay their pledges. It is thus important that people are reminded now and then about the foundational basis of the church. They should be reminded that the church is not an instrument that serves them but a body that is there to worship God.

The meaning of this word is no longer a gathering of people summoned by the herald to meet in public place as it is supposed to be. The idea is a common one in African society, where the chief frequently calls a meeting of all the members of the tribe. In the Setswana tradition and language the word used to describe such a meeting is 'Pitso', which conveys the meaning of being called. The word *ecclesia* is used in a special way in the New Testament, and it seems to have come from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which speaks of the "ecclesia of God". This is a phrase which the New Testament writers took over from the Greek translation of the Old Testament and the word 'ecclesia' is used in exactly the same way to describe the people called out by the Lord. In the event of sadness and grief, it is these people who come to journey with fellow people. They come with the knowledge that sad and grieving human beings are seriously tested in faith. Some even lose the comprehension of the personality of God. As they are called by the same God, and proclaiming this loving God, they must really come together and share in the pain. The sharing of the pain yields and ushers condolences in various meaningful ways. This is known and has been felt by those who have ever grieved for something/someone very dear.

It is the kind of community that goes with what the church used to and should be, that enabled closeness with the bereaved at anytime

of need. Mourning in those times of church origin fell naturally inside the region where it would be practically impossible to miss to care for one another.

The Greek word then which is translated Church in English, links the calling of the old Israel with the calling of the New Israel as 'the people of God'. This connection between the Old Testament people of God is clearly stated when St Paul calls the church "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16).

To understand the relationship mentioned above better, we make an enquiry from the systematic theologians, and see how Lohfink and Zenger depart from a point where they remember the public discussion on religion between Martin Buber and Karl Ludwig Schmidt that took place in January 1933, at the Jewish Lehrhaus in Stuttgart. They quote the memorable words by Buber then, which have often been cited in recent decades as:

"I live a short distance from the city of Worms, to which I am also tied by ancestral tradition; and from time to time I visit there. When I do so, I always go first to the cathedral. It is a visible harmony of members, a whole in which no part deviates from the norm of perfection. I walk around the cathedral, gazing at it in perfect joy. Then I go to the Jewish cemetery. It consists of cracked and crooked stones without shape or direction. I enter the cemetery and look up from this disorder to the marvellous harmony of the cathedral, and it seems to me as if I was looking from Israel up to the Church. Here below there is no suggestion of form, only the stones and the ashes beneath the stones. The ashes are there, no matter how they have been scattered. The corporeality of human beings who have become ashes is there. It is there. It is there for me, not as corporeality within the space of this planet, but as corporeality deep in my own memories, back into the

depths of history, back as far as Sinai. I have stood there; I have been united with the ashes and through them with the patriarchs. That is a remembrance of the divine-human encounter which is granted to all Jews. There is perfection of the Christian God-space cannot divert me from this; nothing can divert me from the God-time of Israel.

I have stood there and I have experienced everything myself. I have experienced all the death that was before me; all the ashes, all the desolation, and all the noiseless wailings become mine. But the covenant has not been withdrawn for me. I lie on the ground, prostrate like these stones. But it has not been withdrawn for me. The cathedral is as it is. The cemetery is as it is. But nothing has been withdrawn for us.” (Lohfink and Zenger 2000: 1-2).

The author accepts the above as a way in which Buber was citing his experience at that particular day, something that connected him spiritually with the already departed then. This is one manner in which he viewed the current church as holistically connected to the early church, the people of God and/or Israel. The triangle in which he finds himself, where one vertex is the people he lived with, the other vertex the cathedral, and the other the cemetery which constitutes in him rich spiritually that still can be referred to by the current church as she crafts pastoral care surrounding sudden death, and the indelible meaning the graves of such people departed has on the living and grieving. Lohfink and Zenger continue to remember and randomly quote how the above statement by Buber has subsequently influenced the church. The reason of their remembrance comes to them as a healing tonic to their troubled mind. Commonly in many Christian denominations of churches, it is preached and known that the dying person becomes ashes at one stage of their death. This is always pronounced by the liturgy that we use at the committal that we do. To Lohfink and Zenger, it ushers to them a counter conviction

that, though the ones they so much loved has departed, there is a need to march on with life and embracing their (the departed) presence in their memories. It is one old method that is inherent with many rituals the church employs to this date. The same situation is replicated in our lives, and to some of us yields depression, in some way or another.

The situation with regard to pastoral care that is necessary, and is a responsibility of the church is not very much different today. The triangle as seen by Buber is still there, and can be seen and felt by many persons who are victims of grief and mourning the death of people who became prey to sudden accidental death. One may claim how Buber was superstitious about everything, something which many still claim today, and something that causes a discord to the church pastoral care when looked against various complements of human life such as culture and tradition.

They (Lohfink and Zenger) mention how Pope John Paul II, echoing the same sentiments on November 17, 1980, in Mainz by calling the Jews “the people of God of the old covenant that has never been revoked by God.”

The Pope continued to quote and base his speech on a number of documents such as the declaration ‘Nostra aetate’ that was passed at Vatican II on October 28, 1965, about the relationship of the church to non-Christian religions. It was here, that particular significance of some articles of the declaration was found such as article four, which relate the Catholic Church to Judaism and to individual Jews.

The dialogue of the church with the Jews and with Jewish tradition that had begun on many levels since the council and that had to continue, despite immense ‘problems over language’ was and still is, as constitutive element of the Church’s life, an act of return to the roots--- and a conscious search for companionship with contemporary Christians and other religions of this world all the way.

The same happens to be a missing link in the dialogue between and amongst Christians themselves, and among religions of the world in the event of stress and depression that comes as a result of sudden death. The church, in some ways or another, fails in the dialogue they must engage in with the traditions which happen to be hosting them. These ideas must be carried by the church and all her members today, so that they know the origins of this body in order to know what that church can and cannot do in times of sudden death to prevent unfortunate circumstances of stress yielding all undesirable responses such as depression.

It is important here for the author to remind the reader that a closer look on the church is made to re-assess whether the church is doing and/or answering to her calling as she is called to be in the face of stress inflicted by sudden death. The same is also viewed against what the church used to integrate herself with the civilisation and culture in the olden days where the current challenge was not known.

With due respect to the relationship of the Church to Judaism, all was standing before a new beginning: the 'rediscovery' of ongoing theological significance of Israel. This has never confronted the traditional teachings about the Church, yet at worst; it has confused contemporary Christians in terms of their own identity especially at the point of introducing their customs and traditions. It is a few Christians to date who have set to do their best in understanding the confusion of identity, which is somehow found to have characterised the church right from the beginning. Acts 15 is quoted a number of times as one of those texts exemplifies this. Any enquiring mind then asks about the origins of this church and her purpose, in order to judge whether the church is out of the way or not. In the face of depression, all who give pastoral care in the name of Christ the Head

of the church must know and understand this body. For purposes of this understanding we need to revisit our meaning of the church.

5.1.2 UCCSA ORIGINS IN A NUTSHELL

The congregational church hand book, Pilgrimage of Faith, has the following account on the origins of the Church.

The Christian Church began as one of the smallest religions in the Roman Empire. For three centuries, followers of Christ were persecuted by the imperial authorities and, while they met in secret, deep fellowship among themselves and courageous witness to Jesus as Lord were the distinctive features of their gathered churches. Whilst fixing all our minds and thoughts on the depression that results as a by-effect of sudden death, and which the current church happens to be proving to be more on the losing side than the winning in terms of her pastoral care, we need to revisit the historical roots of this church. As it was alluded to in the chapter one, the author will trace the roots of the Congregational Church. This is done with the goal of checking the contextual situation of this church in those years, and later comparing that with the current. It is significant to do so because it is in this comparison that we shall be able to see what the distinction is, something that will possibly inform us about what we lack that our fore-fathers had, and that made the church functional in the face of all her challenges. The reason for this is a personal notice that the cases of depression were not as many during earlier years as there are in the current years. This will clear a suspicion that the problem of the strength of the muscle of the church against depression might be located in the contextual situation of the current church.

Right from the Emperor Constantine's time and visions of a cross of light inscribed conquer, the church through her leaders went through mistakes and victories. The church has witnessed support from different walks of life and has gone through serious divisions in some countries and places.

Differences were based on various issues some which did not to relate to the church but such are historically factual. Europe has befallen a host to the church being formed on strong foundations and also shaken by challenges to the church and faith communities, doctrinal strife and internal tensions.

Some of these still exist between and amongst churches today. In some cases it has yielded various tensions even in the kind of pastoral care that is appropriate to people bereaved through sudden death. Sometimes this is out of the unhealthy competition that the church is immersed in due to differences and strife by various powers. It aches to note that some conflicts in the church are of very old roots, and these caused wounds which happen to be unhealed up to this day. Some new ones are based in many ways on old wounds and has confused the current Christian community right through the world.

This spiritual desolation and political despotism ushered in a number of things including the, so called, Dark Ages, variation in the wealth of the church, corruption in the church and enormous suppression of the truth.

At times, the light of faith burned very low and the truth was under huge suppression, yet the church was able to produce saints, apostles, prophets and martyrs---of whom St Bernard, St Francis, St Theresa and Mother Julian of Norwich are just but few. These emerged during the time when hope was very minimal. This bit of history can in itself fuel new energy and commitment on people who give themselves to pastoral care giving, and fresh courage to those who are at the brink of giving up their congregants and fellow worshippers due to loss over stresses caused by sudden deaths of all kinds.

The repudiation of many Roman practices by Wycliffe in England, and the later emergence of names such as Huss, Luther, and others led to a new way of studying scriptures and a new understanding.

Following all names of reformers, the author has come across in the book as far as the historical account of the church is concerned, that more content to say their base has ever been the Bible and their faith. In everything they challenged they based themselves on the Bible. It could not be different to them to shift from this base if they were to face any pastoral responsibility including depression during their times. It is noteworthy to remember the difficulties of the said times, and encouraging to remember that they ultimately emerged victorious over such and through, amongst others, their faith basis and the Bible. The problem question now is depression that troubles the church and her people. This depression might be resulting from shallowness of the roots of pastoral caregivers delegated by the church, or the loss of focus of leaders of the church in circumstances of depression. It might also be right to infer that the current church has forgotten where the church comes from, and thus easy for the church to loose focus and direction. The author sees the need to bring important landmarks by some persons who made research strides in guiding the church and faith communities. In particular, the congregational church must practically keep this history as a heritage. Thus, when all seems not to be working, we enquire from the past. Coupled with all the names which church denomination members mention with pride are Zwingli, Calvin, Henry V111, and Wesley, all of them coming from different places and directions in the world, yet with a common purpose.

It is just by the end of nineteenth century, that there were Black Christians, who were not happy with the White, dominated structures in the mainline churches and founded parallel independent churches. This fuelled unhealthy competitions and a scramble for membership, and a lot was compromised by the church. A huge neglect of needy people resulted. With a few years, these independent churches had grown in numbers and

in influence. In more recent times churches, like the Zion Christian Church, which place a greater emphasis on African traditional modes of worship, have been on the increase and today they account for more than one-third of all Black Christians in Southern Africa.

With all this background, the Christian church and her scramble for membership became the key issue for individual denomination. A gross compromisation of the church herself, and her mission became evident. During needy times of grief, the church failed to know what to do or say. Even when at times the said scramble was healthy and informed by doctrinal-basic stands and theological insight, it was contaminated by self centric thoughts that became incumbent of individuals in the whole ecumenical church, and the central figure who is Christ, was in a way lost by many. The church as an institution that was so powerful over various human needs became weaker and weaker in handling stress and depression as her head Jesus Christ would. Remembering the reformation that occurred on the church and all doctrines that in some ways founded the way Christians handled their troubles and concerns, one would agree with any body who pronounce today that 'in the context of stress and depression the church has grown weaker and is in dire need of reformation of stances in the way she functions under such conditions'. It is crucially important to refer to the unison purpose of all the Christians and reformers known to us and used as examples, and consider how far they all were from one another; yet how common they were in the mission of the church and understanding of the Bible. By uniting in purpose with one another, we shall be able to share in good faith and develop common ways of dealing with serious problems that challenge us during our times of having to deal with families during bereavement through sudden death.

Sudden death surfaces as one of the first challenges to the Church today given the contextual circumstances. This is exemplified by the church

shortfalls in its pastoral care in general, but it is more conspicuous in the way the church handles many funerals. This has seriously necessitated self introspection by the church, and that the church claims her rightful stage among the communities she serves.

While there are many problems that the people have with the church today, several are widespread and deep-seated. These include the fact that the church is:

- Individualized,
- Privatized,
- Bureaucratic,
- Invalid in practice.

5.1.2.1. Individualized

A great deal of misunderstanding and even hostility to the church results from the individualism that saturates cultures. Some of the most powerful cultural myths and images, for instance of the American cultures, center on the self-made and independent individual who achieves success in life without assistance from others. Independence rather than interdependence is their cultural bias, and this has an impact on the prevailing understandings of Christian life. The author has observed that in the South African societies and communities, this problem that has even gone against African cultures. A sense of importance to the community is, of course, not entirely absent from modern Western societies, but characteristically, however, the groups or denominations to which the self-sufficient individual or private person belongs are 'voluntary societies', the groups one chooses to join and in which one remains a member for as long as they meet one's needs and serve one's purposes. This somehow translates into a self-centred piety in which the church is quite secondary and frankly speaking, unnecessary. The church sits with the problem of striving to grow numerically, and in this event she confirms Christians who believes being a

Christian is an individual matter and is not essentially bound to life with others. This individualism hides the profound hunger for companionship and community that runs beneath the surface of life in South Africa, or any country.

5.1.2.2. The Church is privatized

Very many church denominations operate as private structures serving private people. The world of work and public affairs is separated from the world of 'domesticity', leisure, personal nurture and religion. The process of privatization severs the message and mission of the church from the larger questions and struggles of life. If any purpose of the church is recognized, it is to serve the needs of private individuals and small homogenous groups. This is hampering the institution called the church, and has painted a different picture of this institution from the one our fore-fathers had, the one from whom we derived our faith.

5.1.2.3. Bureaucratic organisation

Another obstacle to a proper understanding of the church is its accommodation to bureaucratic organisation. Bureaucracy is a system of administration marked by anonymity, adherence to fixed rules, hierarchy of authority, and the proliferation of officials. The ultimate in modern bureaucracy is the reduction of relationships between people to communication with a 'machine'. The church is subject, like all organisations, to bureaucratic pressures. Out of forgetfulness of its own essence, the church attempts to mimic the organizational structures and managerial techniques of profitable corporations. When the church succumbs to these pressures, it loses its true identity and its distinctive mission in the world. One of the results is the fact of new loss of authority over challenges, sudden death as an example. The UCCSA speaks of

congregationalism and do practice the model, at best, when everything is working well in the church, but there are those times where in any organisation misunderstandings happen, and this is a time when words and terms such as 'Theocratic' are sounded sometimes without the consciousness of the practical meaning of the same to needy circumstances such as sudden death. It is unfortunate that in various instances, many ministers abuse the term to equate it to bureaucracy.

5.1.2.4. Invalid Practice.

It is very disturbing to find the church having a conspicuous discrepancy between her expressed faith and her actual practice. Nietzsche write in *Migliore*, "They would have to sing better songs to make me believe in their Redeemer: his disciples would have to look more redeemed!" He continues to motivate that resultant from the above, the language about the community called church sounds shamelessly triumphalistic and unreal. The same is exemplified by cracks in pastoral care of the church in times of need due to the failure to practice what the church preaches. This sounds like a stern message to the church to practice a pastoral care with all pastoral interventions which are equal to their faith. The following phrases will be pronounced with better care:

5.1.2.4.1. *The church is one.*

It only appears to be broken into countless racial, national, and class factions.

5.1.2.4.2. *The church is holy.*

It is only a community of the very fallible and sinful people.

5.1.2.4.3. *The church is catholic.*

It is only an illusion that the church is often provincial and hypocritically self-interested.

5.1.2.4.4. *The church is apostolic.*

It only appears frequently to have set itself above the apostles.

The holy church which is one, catholic and apostolic will understand care in a better way. This church will be Christ-like, so much so that community in the face of challenges, including death of all kinds, will empower sufferers.

Migliore continues to recall to mind the statement by Joseph Haroutunian pointing out how embarrassing and upsetting it becomes every time the statements like the four above are mentioned, because it is known that the church is different from what it is said to be. To the extent that Israel and the early church were a people up against the wall---poor, weak, and in peril--their language about the reality of the people of God had a dignity. It was intended to comfort and to support God's little, marginal, often persecuted people. But when the same language is used to describe the church as we know it today, the language becomes false on us. We know that the language is only cosmetic, and we become embarrassed or angry. This is because of their sensitivity to this predicament, a favourite motto of ecumenical church leaders in this century has been 'Let the church be the church'. Let the church live and act like the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the servant of God. The life of the church then will help complement pastoral care in different ways in various times of need.

This is a summons to the church to stop preening itself with all sorts of metaphysical complements without any corresponding social reality and praxis. (Migliore 1991: 187-188).

The words by Migliore and Haroutunian as they observed what the church is as opposed to what it has to be, challenges every Christian who today still harbours true aspirations of being the Christian, and really has faith and knowledge of the beginner of the Christian faith and subsequently the church. Christian faith will be in a position to claim her authority over death, and grieving will be more meaningful to all the bereaved.

Missing in the individualized, privatized, bureaucratic and cosmetic forms of Christianity today is any real understanding of the inter-connectedness of life that is expressed in all the basic doctrines and symbols of classical Christian faith. Christians confess their faith in the triune God, whose reality is constituted by the welcoming love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christians believe in God the creator, who wills not to be alone but to have a covenant partner; in God the liberator and reconciler, whose costly grace in Jesus Christ inaugurates a new freedom for relationship with God and with others; and in God the Holy Spirit, who is the power of new community-in-freedom that anticipates the redemption of all creation. The Christian understanding of God as Trinitarian communion and of salvation as the free participation of creatures in God's society of love, highlights the importance of the church for Christian faith and theology. The same will be acted and made to be seen during the times of sudden death handling, both by those who are stricken and bereaved, and those who give pastoral care.

Thus, the call for the reform and renewal of the church today does not derive from a 'craze for modernity' but from a fresh apprehension of the gospel that gave the church life. When we honestly admit the problems of the church--- which have their roots in our forgetfulness of profoundly social meanings of all the articles of the faith as well as in our failure to hold together faith and praxis---we may begin to catch sight of the mystery of the church. The mystery is that through the free grace of God in Jesus Christ at work in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit, God is breaking down all walls of separation and making 'one new humanity' (Eph. 2: 15). The mystery of the church who gives existence to others, shares life and power, and lives in the mutual giving and receiving of love. During grief inflicted by sudden death, the bereaved lose sight of this mystery, and can only find it through skilful pastoral care. The church is called to be the beginning of new human life in relationship, solidarity, and friendship beyond all privatism, classism, racism,

and sexism. It is this kind of the church that can conquer over current challenges by anything including the monster of inability to handle by-responses of stresses inflicted in various ways in our lives.

5.2. THE BIBLE AS THE NECESSARY POINT OF DEPARTURE

In the New Testament the *ecclesia*, or the church, refers to the new community of believers gathered to praise and serve God in response to the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The word church can designate either local assemblies of Christians or the universal Christian community.

If one goes on to probe deeper, one finds that the *ecclesia* as described in the New Testament refers to a unique and transformed way of being human in relationship with God and with other persons. It designates a distinctive form of human community characterized by mutuality, interdependence, forgiveness, and friendship in their true sense. In *ecclesia* power and responsibility are shared and there is always a special concern for the poor, the weak, and the despised. Ecclesial life is a new community of free persons centred on God's love in Jesus Christ and empowered to service by the Holy Spirit.

Frequent revisits to the Bible must be done to clear the foundation of pastoral care given by the church. The reasons for doing this include the affirmation of knowledge of the mess that is done to the bereaved during the period of mourning their dead through the use or misuse of the same Bible. The author has alluded to this in chapter 1, and has gone on to articulate the resultant feelings in many people when this happens. The being and calling of the church can thus not be felt, and therefore the meaninglessness of any form of care from the church that cannot be effective, especially in her own main text.

In the New Testament the church and its ecclesial form of life are related to but never identified with the coming reign of God. The Church is a sign and provisional manifestation of the reign of God. The triumphalistic identification of the church with the reign of God has been the source of a lot of arrogance and destructiveness in the church history. The church anticipates and serves the coming reign of God but does not fully realize it. The New Testament describes the church, or ecclesia (literally, those called out) in many different images and metaphors.

“In his book, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, Paul Minear lists some ninety-six different images or analogies of the church found in the New Testament. Clearly, there is a surplus of Biblical images in regard to God and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Among the many images of the church are:

‘the body of Christ’ (Cor. 12: 27), ‘the salt of the earth’ (Matt. 5: 13), ‘a letter of Christ’ (2Cor. 3: 2-3), ‘fishers for people’ (Mark 1: 17), ‘branches of vine’ (John 15: 5), ‘the field of God’, ‘the building of God’ (1 Cor. 3: 9), a building on the rock, (Matt. 16: 18), ‘the bride of Christ’ (Eph. 5: 23-32), ‘God’s own people’ (1 Pet. 2: 9), a ‘new Jerusalem’ (Rev. 21: 2), ‘the household of God’ (Eph. 2: 19), ‘strangers and foreigners’ (Heb. 11: 13), and ‘the poor’ (Luke 6: 20). (Migliore 1991:189-190).

The minister/pastor who knows the above images and has fair command of theology can be guided accordingly when trodding into a situation where he/she has to represent the church in counselling the troubled hearts that are in grief. From this rich inventory of New Testament imagery of the church, four major clusters may be identified. These are:

- The people of God
- The servant people
- The body of Christ

➤ **The community of the spirit**

The pain that is experienced as result of sudden death by the people who needs the church to animate these imageries in their care. When they see and feel fellow Christians communing with them, they will beat stress disorders in numerous ways. It might be useful here to elaborate of the said imageries.

5.2.1. The people of God

One of image centres in the description of the church as the people of God, and especially the exodus people of God. The theme of the covenant between God and God's elect people is deeply embedded in both the Old and New Testaments. 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people' (Lev 26: 12). 'You are God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called out of darkness into his marvellous light'. (Pet. 2: 9). According to this cluster of images, the church is not primarily a building or organization but a people, a community, and specifically the people of God who have been called by God. Relating to this image of the church as the people of God are images such as the chosen race, holy nation, sons and daughters of Abraham, remnant and the elect. A basic function of this constellation of images is to connect the Christian community to historic Israelite community of God based on the covenant promises and to describe these people as an exodus, pilgrim community, a people called out for a special task achievements of the Second Vatican Council was to give renewed prominence to this image of the church as the people of God. The family that is broken hearted and has lost meaning through grief has to be reminded all this with care and skill, to enable them development of meaning as they wrestle with the realities of sudden death.

5.2.2 The Servant People

The second set of images describes these people of God as a servant people. This is a very prominent motif of the Old Testament. Repeatedly, Yahweh calls for the liberation of the people of Israel 'that they may serve me' (Exod. 8: 1; 9: 1; 10: 3). The theme of a servant people is no less important in the New Testament. Just as the Lord of this community is a servant Lord, so the community called by God is to be a community of servants. 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10: 45). Christians are likewise to be servants---'servants for Jesus' sake' (2Cor. 4: 5). Called to serve God and others, the church is not to exercise power in a self-cantered way or to lord it over others but to be ready for costly service (Matt. 20: 25-26). There are many images that cluster around this service image. The people of God are co-workers, helpers, ambassadors, and witnesses. All of these images suggest that this particular community has its reason for being not in itself but in its task, which is to serve God and the world created by God. The church's service of God finds expression in its worship, prayer, and praise; the church's service to the world takes the form of witness in the world and in deed to God's grace and God's call for justice. These two aspects are of the service of God and our neighbours.

5.2.3. The Body of Christ

The third set of images focuses on the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ. This description of the church occurs in the Pauline letters, above all, 1 Cor. 12: 12-31. The community participates in one Lord, one Spirit, one baptism, and thus becomes 'one body'. This organic image of the church as a body whose head is Christ has been enormously influential in Christian theology and in the history of the church. The

image conveys the mutual dependence of all members of the community on one another, their variety of gifts, which are for the enrichment and edification of the whole community, and the common dependence of all members of the body on the one head who is Christ. The unity of the church as one body is indispensable if it is to be effective in carrying out its mission in the world.

5.2.4. The Community of the Spirit.

The final set of image portrays the activity of God in creating a community of the end-time, a community of the Spirit, filled by the gifts of the Spirit. In the renewing experience of the Spirit of God, the New Testament church sees the important evidence of the fulfilment of the promises made by the prophets (Acts 2:17ff). Racial, gender, and class divisions are broken down (Gal. 3:28); strangers are welcomed; the sharing of power replaces domination. Empowered and guided by the Spirit, the community is God's 'new creation', the first signs of God's new humanity, the first fruits of a glorious new age. This cluster of eschatological symbols of the church all point to the racial new beginning of life realized in the coming of Christ and his Spirit and the promise of still more comprehensive renewal and transformation still to come. The church serves and suffers but also celebrates and hopes, because it already experiences a foretaste of new life and joy in the koinonia and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The church is thus a sign of the kingdom of God. As an 'alternative community' in which a new Spirit of freedom reigns and in which the most wretched are included and even enemies are welcomed, the church gives the world a reason to hope.

5.3. THE CURRENT CHURCH MODEL AND ITS FAILURE

Looking into what the church and our ministry do to all people today, in the church itself, in families, in communities and generally in our lives, it necessitates the importance of review the church. Instructed by the above stated New Testament images of the church, it is possible to review critically some models of our church both past and present. Whereas images and symbols constitute the more immediate language of faith, the term model refers to a theoretical construct that is employed to deepen our understanding of a complex reality.

Avery Dulles has identified several models of the church. These are as follows:

- Institution
- Mystical communion
- Sacrament
- Herald and
- Servant. (Migliore 1991: 192).

In the following paragraphs, the author will tease more meaning into the models mentioned above and explain their understanding in secular world which unfortunately happens to be their conception by most members of the church. This is where the failure of the church in pastoral care in many angles including during these times when people are in grief is based.

5.3.1 The church as an Institution.

Among the most influential models of the church is an institution of salvation. This view defines the church primarily in terms of divinely authorized structures, officers, procedures, and traditions. As institutions, the church has a definite form and organization. The chain of power

and authority is precisely determined. Some organizational features--- structures of leadership, patterns of worship, authoritative writings--- are, of course, already evident in the church of the New Testament period. Within a century or two, the structures of canon, bishop, and doctrine had become well developed and provided stability and coherence to community. But an institutional view of the church was characteristic neither by the patristic period nor by the Middle Ages; as it achieved dominance only in the nineteenth century. (Migliore 1991:192).

Institutional structure belongs to the humanity of the church. Some kind of structure and order is a necessity in any historical community. It is sheer romanticism to suggest otherwise. But the institutionalist view of the church, especially when it has entered into alliance with state power, has done more harm than good.

An example of how this institution has harmed the concept the church was seen when Mr Brown (not his real name), a well known public figure and high ranking official in the government because of his ruling party, Developing Assembly Party (not real name) died of car accident yet did not know the church or any of his family members. The church acted and painted a wrong picture in everything they did in the form of pastoral care because the church went against a lot of what the church preached before. This was done to impress the state powers and not really to care for the bereaved, never mind the whole church. The reader must not construe the author here to be advocating care for the church members as many churches feel today, including even the said church, but is concerned about the lack of consistency in the message of the church depending on who is involved. This is harmful to the church that is called to being by Christ, and robs the church of her credibility a great deal, something that adversely affects the care by the church in rightful ways.

It stands to reason that this institution has not resisted the temptation to see the purpose of the church as institutional survival and domination rather than costly service. One might describe the characteristics of the church according to the institutional model as being rather like those of an imperial state. Typically, order in this church is hierarchical rather than representative or interactional. Power always flows from the top to the bottom. Furthermore, power is centralized in the hands of the few who are supposedly ordained by God to rule over the silent and powerless masses of believers. Above all, there is the mentality of maintenance of the institution and, if possible, extension of its power.

While all this is portrayed in Protestant polemics as the typically Roman Catholic version of the church, the truth is that the tendency of the institutional structure of the church to grow and harden into institutionalism has proved to be very real in both Catholic and Protestant ecclesial life. When this happens, hierarchy triumphs over community, and the mentality of survival supplants the spirit of service. In the Reformed churches, there has been a lot of emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, and on ordained ministry as functional rather than metaphysical, and on the stirring motto 'ecclesia reformata semper reformanda' meaning (The church reformed, always in need of being reformed). Such principles fight against the tendency toward institutional sclerosis, but they have often been honoured more in the word than in practice. Whereas Roman Catholic institutionalism identifies the church with the hierarchy, Protestant institutionalism identifies the church with its own patterns of organization and tests of orthodoxy.

The strongest criticism of the over-institutionalized church comes today neither from liberal Catholic nor classical Protestant sources but from Latin American liberation theology. We do not rightly understand this theology unless we recognize that one of its important concerns is critique and

reformation of a hierarchical, over-centralized, and anxious institutional church. In the judgement of liberation theologians, the institutional church all too often exercises power in a manner resembling that of totalitarian governments and exploitative corporations. It disappoints anyone trying to view this kind of church and find it to be just like a business enterprise with the elite in charge of the capital, which in this case would be the sacraments, and with the masses who would be the members of the church and the entire community reduced to mere consumers. Because the church is not immune to the temptation to seize and abuse power, the structures of the church must be continuously challenged and converted by the gospel and its summons to risk-taking service.

5.3.2. The Church as the Intimate Community of the Spirit.

Another model of the church portrayed is noted to be an Intimate Community of the Spirit. According to this view, the church is not so much a formal organization as it is a closely knit group whose members share a common experience of God's revivifying Spirit. Whereas the church in its traditional form is large, hierarchically organized, impersonal, and often insensitive to the needs of individuals, the typical spiritual community is small, personal, loosely organized, and develops a strong sense of belonging and mutual support among its members.

The principal task of the church so conceived becomes the facilitation of spiritual experiences and the promotion of interpersonal relationships. The church as intimate community takes different forms. In Catholicism, an ecclesiology of mystical communion, developed partly in reaction to deadening institutional hierarchical structures, has encouraged a more personalistic understanding of the church and has recognised the importance of the gifts of the Spirit to all the people of God. Protestantism

has produced a variety of understandings of the church as a spiritual community.

One appears in the charismatic movement, which emphasizes the gifts of the Spirit and special experiences of spiritual healing and renewal. Individuals who have had these experiences often form close, mutually supportive groups. The model of the church as an intimate community undoubtedly addresses real human needs. Many people in modern society are desperately lonely and battle-scarred. They seek a safe refuge and community where they can feel at home. Some are physically and spiritually broken by their efforts to survive in a depersonalized and indifferent social order, and they cry out for spiritual healing and new meaning for their lives. With its emphasis on prayer, meditation, spiritual exercises, and exchange of personal and experiences, the church as intimate community cultivates a more personal and egalitarian experience of life in community than the institutional model of the church does. Whatever its limitations, such ministry to individuals in need is an essential element of the mission of healing of the sick in body and spirit (Mark 1: 32-34).

But there are some weaknesses in this model as well. These become especially evident when the understanding of Christian community is uncritically borrowed from movements in contemporary culture and ecclesial life become indistinguishable from encounter sessions, sensitivity groups, and other kinds of therapeutic-religious communities that are so popular today. It is not always clear what distinguishes such communities as specifically Christian. An ecstatic experience of the holy or an experience of intimacy and bonding with another does not necessarily constitute an experience of Christian faith. Moreover, therapy-oriented communities tend to concentrate on the individual's growth at the expense of larger social responsibilities of the community. Currently popular New Age spirituality proves evidence of this fact. A church that copies such patterns of

spirituality and intimate community becomes simply a haven from an insensitive and bureaucratic society and its depersonalizing effects. It becomes, in other words, an escape from, rather than a renewing critique of, the larger society that is in need of transformation. While the church is indeed the community of the Spirit in which all gifts and in which power is shared, the New Testament views this new Spirit-guided community as called to serve God's purpose of both personal and world transformation.

5.3.3. The Church as Sacrament of Salvation.

Another known model of the church yet not very commonly referred to is that 'a church is a sacrament of salvation'. This model is increasingly prominent in the Roman Catholic Church theology since Vatican 11. It emphasizes that in its worship, witness, and service, the church is the sign of the continuing presence of grace of God in Jesus Christ in history. As interpreted by some theologians, the model draws attention primarily to the church's own sacramental life, and particularly to participation in the Eucharist. In the community nourished and renewed by Eucharist action, the redemptive work of Christ is extended to all humanity. One of the strengths of the sacramental model is its combination of the objective and subjective aspects of the life of the church, which tend to be separated in the institutional and mystical models. This understanding of this imagery of the church can energize the church better in her exercise of pastoral care during needy times of sudden death.

But the model of the church as sacramental also has its weaknesses. It can lean toward ecclesiocentrism, often in the form of liturgism. Christ and the Spirit are thought to be at work primary in the rites of the church. This may result in a decline of emphasis on the social responsibility of the faith community. While some Latin American liberation theologians have adopted the model of the church as

sacrament, they use the phrase to refer to the church's embodiment of God's redemptive activity in history through the praxis of solidarity with the poor. (See Gutierrez 1988: 143). As a sacramental community, the church should signify both in its internal structures and in its social praxis as the liberation of life that it announces.

5.3.4. The Church as The Herald of Good News.

The fourth prominent model of the church is that of the 'herald of good news'. This is the understanding of the church that has been primarily in the Protestant traditions. It is based on the conviction that the church's mission is above all to proclaim the Word of God and to all the nations to repentance and new life. Men and women are to be summoned to put their faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. All matters of institutional structure and satisfaction of personal needs are to be subordinated to the task of proclamation and evangelization.

An evaluation of this model of the church as the herald of good news must begin with the acknowledgement that the proclamation of the gospel is indeed a primary task of the community of faith. However, this task has often been construed in rather narrow terms. When this model dominates or even excludes other models, it is easy for the church to take a patronizing and self-righteous attitude toward people and cultures and never listens. If the church as herald is not to be an instrument of domination, it must be willing to be instructed by others on how it might best be of service to them and, equally important, what they may have to give as well as receive. Moreover, a holistic understanding of service is often missing from this model. Preoccupation with the delivery of the message may override the concern to meet concrete human needs for food, shelter, medical care, education, and other basics of dignified life.

5.3.5. The Church as the Servant of the Servant Lord.

This is one model of the Church that can be regarded as a diaconal model. According to this view, the Church is not primarily an institution whose purpose is survival and expansion, nor an intimate community designed to foster the personal growth of individuals who feel neglected and depersonalised by modern society, nor merely the herald of a message. The church is a servant community called to minister in God's name on behalf of the fullness of life for all of God's creatures.

Having gone through all the above mentioned models the reader will virtually conceive in his/her mind on some denominations of churches that we have today for each model. In other instances when a particular church comes against these models, one sees either a combination or a confusion of a number of models. As a result, churches spend time and money in organising and sometimes indoctrinating members to a particular model. Sight has thus been lost on pastoral care which is a key to church under hurting moments such as times of bereavement.

Migliore points out that the church serves God by serving the world in its struggle for emancipation, justice, and peace. (Migliore 1991: 196-197)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the other hand defines the church as the community that exists for others. He says that the church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating but helping and serving. This model of the church for others, a church that is a servant rather than a master of the world, has been influenced in many modern ecclesiologies. It plays an important role both in the emphasis on the church's mission of reconciliation in the midst of conflict and in the call to the church to participate in the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed. (See Bonhoeffer 1967: 204)

The servant model of the church has a lot to contribute to the life of the people today. It can contribute to the pastoral care of pastoral caregivers holistically. This will embrace the much needed support to church representatives during times of need such as when pastoral care is to be given to the bereaved and grieving. At its best, it helps to overcome the split between the spiritual and the mundane, between concern for evangelization and the struggle for justice, a split all too frequent in other models of the church. Like Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth insists that the church exists for the world, because God first and supremely exists for the world, the church is to exist not for itself but for others. The missionary character of the church is not incidental but quite essential to its being as the people of God.

One must as well be careful of the dangers posed by this model. The church may forget what the basis and the goal of its service is, with the result that ecclesiology is reduced to social function. Further, the church that understands itself as a servant of the world may tend to subordinate nurture of the spiritual life to zeal for political action. Closely related to this is the ever-present danger of an uncritical identification of the reign of God with a particular program of social and political change. This is frequently accompanied by a loss of self-criticism and openness to reform. Social activism may overlook the many forms of bondage from which human beings need to be liberated: the sins of pride, greed, apathy, presumption, self-indulgence, no less than structural forms of sin as economic exploitation, racism, sexism, and domestic and state-sponsored violence. It makes little sense to set these various liberation concerns against each other.

5.4 The Possible Turning Point

Acknowledging the enormous amount of work that has to be done if the church really want to be of better service to her congregants and the communities, the church must re-look on to herself and her directions in what she does as far as pastoral care is concerned. Lyall remembers Freud's notes of 1927 (see Lyall 1995: 131) when he refers to the religion as an allusion and asserted it had no future. Religion has survived as potent phenomenon in contemporary culture many years after this. Freud would have perhaps been surprised by the fact that religion is frequently inextricably bound up with psychotherapeutic endeavours that are rooted in his concepts and professional practice. Some religions did truly find realities in his work, and the work of the therapists who have built on his ideas, which have transformed their understanding of those caring relationships that belongs within communities of faith. He discovered that this was also noted in the 1960s, that the future of the religious illusion looked decidedly problematic. This was a decade of secularization and a further marginalization of the institutional church. This argument was such that, if Christianity as a religion is to survive, the Gospel requires a secular meaning for secular locations in which God is 'dead'. The decade also saw the proliferation of the humanistic therapies and the offer of salvation through self realization. It has been suggested, with reasons, that these humanistic therapies sometimes felt like new expressions of an optimistic faith.

The quest for meaning continues unabated as the life of faith continued which in Miglore's eyes was interpreted as living faith, when faith seeks meaning and understanding. It is by this reason that the contemporary context of every form of counselling is characterized by a religious pluralism. The mainstream Christian denominations, with some congregations exhibiting signs of excitement and vitality amidst apparent institutional decline, continue to function alongside charismatic and

independent churches for which church growth is a reality. It is perhaps not entirely accidental that the emergence of a more pluralistic society and the disappearance of these commonly held stores, beliefs and values have been accompanied by the growth of the counselling movement. In the age and era when shared stories seem to be losing their potency, it becomes more important than ever that people should make sense of their own personal stories. The pastoral care disciplines above, have shown how meaning is found in people's own personal stories, than meaning that is imposed by either the church in some way or the pastoral caregiver. This is stressed by Gerkin's perception of the pastoral counsellor as 'not only a listener to stories, he/she is also a bearer of stories and of a story. This raises volumes of importance of the awareness by the pastoral counsellor of the stories present in any counselling situation. These include:

- The client's own story
- The counsellor's story and
- The stories and myths that may be part of a shared culture or community of faith.

The author can say with a level confidence that the task that the church must examine from time to time when evaluating how the church gives service to the community is being done is 'how and how far are their ministers trained in the specifics of pastoral care'. I make stern reference to ministers here because they become the custodians of pastoral care in any angle where the church is serving. It is pathetic to date to live with the reality that some ministers of church denominations are being 'ordained' into their ministry without any training but their dreams. This is to the church what Paul referred to as 'a thorn in the flesh' in 2Cor.12:7.

5.4.1 The Education of Ministers.

The Universities and theological colleges where men and women are trained for full-time ministry are undeniably doing good work in equipping

ministers with their pastoral studies of high profile today than years ago. Priority is given to classroom in the area of pastoral studies, together with supervised field education in local church settings and secular agencies. In the local church setting as a focal point in this work, the supervisory duty of the minister is very high and crucial; and there are indications that such theological colleges are taking seriously the training in the appropriate skills of those with hands on responsibility for the field education of ordinands. Surely, the system is expected to produce clergy with a degree of self-awareness and competence as pastoral carers.

There is a bigger room for development as one looks into the system against its production of skilful pastoral counsellors. Pastoral care is not given adequate time when it is treated as a one brief module to satisfy the work of ordained ministry. Given today's need of pastoral counselling under the complex situation, some of which sudden death is one, ministers who are not well founded in their development of:

- The pastoral task
- Knowing something of the relevance of human growth and development task
- Realizing the need for active listening as opposed to giving of advice
- Gaining some understanding of the dynamics of loss and
- Becoming aware of pervasiveness of transference and counter transference in the pastoral relationship;

These ministers may be found wanting under the said circumstances. The other aspect of consideration in the preparation of ministers for their work was correctly picked up by Bradbury, the Director of Pastoral Studies at an Anglican theological college, as

'not so much of aptitude as of attitude', (Bradbury 1992: 10).

It is taken for granted in the culture of psychotherapy that ministers will be enabled to get in touch with those needs of their own which have brought

them onto training. Lyall believes these needs are wrapped up in piety. Bradbury's concern was that 'it had not yet dawned on candidates that in order to train as a pastor they would be training to use their selves as a tool for their work'. The author locates the same to be generalised as one the inherent attributes of one's CALL to ministry by many churches.

“There is much to be said for ministers training in secular settings. It is more theological insights that they need at such a point, but a thorough grounding in counselling theory and practice, with the kind of supervision that challenges their presuppositions. Unless they are determined to live in two worlds, good supervision also helps them to integrate new theoretical insights and practical skills with their personal theologies, both explicit and implicit.” (Lyall 1995: 138).

Noting the same, David Tracy described it as 'beginning to make mutually critical correlations'. (Tracy 1983: 65).

Practically speaking, the setting says it all that, the encounter with human suffering causes new questions to be addressed to their academic theologies; their own appropriation of the Christian story becomes part of their pastoral understanding; theology becomes alive and relevant; practice is deepened and perfected, clearly, a minister is being made a minister.

5.4.2 Ministers/Pastors---The Rightful Bereavement Counsellors.

Today many ministers and pastors hesitate to engage in anything that might be viewed as professional counselling or psychotherapy, something that is a crucial need in the practice of theology today. This professional counselling and/or psychotherapy happen to be a skill that is appropriate during the pastoral care at a time of death, and in many instances when it is

sudden. Sometimes this is due to the fact is mentioned in the chapter one of this research, congested programme, just delegation that is everywhere in the sectors of our current life or just a beyond my scope syndrome mentioned. It must be noted by churches and her leaders that bereavement counselling is one of the very important and inescapable part of their work. Whilst remembering all that, it is natural that the Church will be represented in the form of personalities/human beings to do all that the church is expected to do. From a congregational understanding of the church responsibilities including pastoral care, the minister/pastor may either attend to the responsibility or send laity for the same. The main function must be borne in mind by anybody whose direct task it comes to be, and the identity the church attains through that person(s).

It is simple logic to assume that all ministers are aware of their identity in the event of counselling the bereaved through sudden death, and to locate this awareness in their education as pastoral care practitioners. Inferring from what the understanding of death is to people, and what all responses of families and communities when such deaths strike, skilful pastoral caregivers know that they counsel:

- ✓ Believers
- ✓ Nonbelievers
- ✓ People of other faiths

Believers--- the minister's task is different when faith is present and when it is not. Let us assume that we are dealing with the loss of someone for whom the bereaved had real love and affection, (it is always the case). Such people must be approached with absolute respect for their privacy, though with knowledge that a skilful pastoral caregiver can discreetly trespass here and there yet with prudence for him/her to be of any help to them. While such grief is in some measure our common lot as human beings, whose personal fulfilment has its necessary condition in intimate relationships, each person's experience is uniquely personal. Given these considerations, a

'standardized approach' would be clearly inappropriate, and a researched pattern of comforting words would be an insult. The pastoral caregiver should make an approach as the one who comes first of all to learn what this loss means to the mourner in his/her own words and then to share some truths and perspectives from our common faith. The objective in sharing this time of sorrow with those who have known God's presence at work in their lives is to discover God in the present. If for some reason God seems hidden, then the objective is to work through their immediate reactions in a way that will facilitate their rediscovery of the foundation faith that is in them. It is this faith in God's love and goodwill that enables them, first, to entrust the beloved dead to God's care and, second, to find peace and purpose in picking up the threads of daily life again. Both of these aspects are well expressed in the following short prayer:

Oh Heavenly Father, help us to trust our loved ones to thy care. When sorrow darkens our lives, help us to look up to thee, remembering the cloud of witness by which we are encompassed about. And grant that we on earth, rejoicing ever in thy presence, may share with them the rest and peace which thy presence gives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(Schoenberg 1980: 185).

It is one of the wonderful short prayers that believers can keep in their hearts to strengthen themselves in times of sudden sorrow.

The pastoral caregiver must assess with prudence the situation around the bereaved, because at times, guilt over real or fancied shortcomings in past relationships with the deceased functions a high attention-getter that distract the bereaved for the underlying sources of faith and hope. Such problems have to be identified and be resolved. In this sort of counselling, the minister often has an advantage over the secular counsellor because the minister can go beyond merely clarifying the problem and can indicate

the way to forgiveness provided by Jesus Christ in the shedding of His blood. The minister, however, sometimes has the disadvantage that congregants are hesitant to reveal their shortcomings to him/her. It must be remembered by the pastoral caregiver here that:

“Death has now made it impossible to ask directly for the forgiveness of the departed; but, properly understood, the divine forgiveness and the possibility of meeting again in the divine presence can provide closure of this unfinished business. It is, on the other hand, also impossible now to express forgiveness directly to the deceased for hurts and insults that have produced lingering resentments.”(Schoenberg 1980: 185-186).

The above can become a source of grave concern, and paradoxically, of fresh guilt for the bereaved. It is an opening the pastoral caregiver has to sort to close through counselling that is directed toward the understanding of these feelings, so that they can be seen in proper perspective and left behind to proceed with life that is otherwise inevitably proceeding.

Nonbelievers---the task of the minister is quite different when working with nonbeliever. Just as listening is important to one who shares faith with the counsellor, it is important to one who does not. It is actually one main requirement in any counselling session. If the Church is to fulfil its task, the goal for the nonbeliever must include a concern for this person's long-term relationship with God. This will not imply a lack of sympathy or concern for the immediate experience of grief or for any of the other personal and emotional problems that may trouble the bereaved; it means therefore that the minister or any pastoral caregiver must be conscious of a wider perspective to work with these problems effectively. Therefore, it might be necessary to first lay the ground work in order to deal with the bereaved with effect, preparing them for the encounter with God. It follows logically then that listening and understanding can ensue, followed by appropriate sharing of

ideas and/or experiences, and also sharing own faith and hope. This ushers some measure of hope and comfort to the bereaved. There might be some theological problems, such as anger at God for taking away the loved one, but it is for the minister/pastoral care giver to sort divine wisdom to deal with such in attempting to respond through his/her skilful counselling. There is also no need for the minister/pastor to force discussions with people who do not want to share any conversation with him/her. Thus, the focus of the church through her ministers/pastors must be kept on to the death that has stricken the family so sudden and its effects, rather than any other thing that might spark any misunderstandings which are un-necessary, and more importantly at this particular point of the family vulnerability.

5.5. LIFE WHEN DEATH IS THE CONTEXT

In all the literature on bereavement, mourning, and grief, there is never any doubt that the person(s) has lost in some way or another. Attachment, separation, search and remembering the relationship, all these make sense to anybody looking at life and animating the context as death due to how death is common in all shapes it comes to us today. How we get affected by all kinds of death is discussed above already, and it can be noted as one inevitable path that we mourn when that time comes.

Bregman remembers Worden's declaration saying:

“in my view, mourning is finished when the task of mourning is accomplished”. (Bregman 1999: 108).

The statement should give better light that mourning does not have any stipulated time. This must preserve the bereaved from unwarranted pressure to move through stages of mourning quickly so that they meet conventional expectations. The same knowledge challenges secular life

seriously in that all persons are expected back to work few days after burying their beloved, no matter how they died. However, knowing how reasonable all are given the importance of general economy, this does not really fall on to this discussion; but should be known and worked on by the caring church.

Rando in Bregman favours what she calls “the six R processes of mourning”. These are:

- Recognize the loss.
- React to the separation.
- Recollect and re-experience the deceased and the relationship
- Relinquish the old attachments to the deceased and the old assumptive world.
- Readjust to move adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old.
- Reinvest. (Bregman 1999:108).

The above processes are also mentioned to be occurring and experienced by a person who is dying like Kubler-Ross’ noted in her stages, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. They all became favourite ideals for several decades of thinking and practical care, even as almost everyone agreed that the stages did not appear in sequence, and that the model worked as a moral ideal more than as a psychological description. From personal experience and also acceptably broad conference with bereaved people through sudden death, the same stages do apply in various events of bereavement, grieving and mourning. This was evident in the case of the author’s entire family during the sudden death that was mentioned in chapter 1, and it went on to occur at intervals in the various other deaths (which were also sudden) that followed. No matter how often and insistently Kubler-Ross and other familiar with the model claimed their purpose was to meet each dying person where that person was,

emotionally, socially, spiritually, the sequential structure encouraged the aim of moving through the stages as quickly as possible.

Bregman notes that:

“this model rests on a presumed parallel with the process of mourning. There is a gradual, orderly process of recognizing the anticipated end of one’s life, recollecting and re-experiencing the important relationship and ties of that life, and relinquishing one’s attachment to it. The R-process seem to correspond closely to the denial, reactive depression, and acceptance stages of Kubler-Ross’ scheme. It stands to reason that, when Kubler-Ross proposed her scheme, she seemed happy to see it applied to the soon-to-bereaved families, so that their anticipatory grief parallels the stages of the dying person herself. Yet by now, the multiple problems with this assumed parallel should be obvious. The death of the self is simply not the same as the death of another. “Search”, in Parkes’ sense of an intense urge to re-find the missing person, is an alleged biologically based adaptive young primate. That is its origin in our remote proto-human past. Search in this sense cannot be applied to oneself. The struggle for identity in the face of impending death cannot be modelled on this behaviour pattern. Notice how different the possible meaning and application of this term might be in the two situations, and the whole parallel becomes filled with dubious equivalences.

Another obvious misfit between the death of another and the impending death of oneself, is the role of denial in the two situations. Denial in the context of one’s own anticipatory death is found universally, although it is rarely total. It is exemplified by statements such as, “When I get out of hospital..., I’m only a bit run-down.... They mixed my X-rays with someone else’s....” A frantic search for miracle cures, refusal to follow dietary restrictions and false claims of physical improvement are considered behavioural signs of denial. Denial not only shields the self, but has an adaptive function in maintaining

relationships that would end without it. Defined this broadly, it certainly seems to be present in virtually all dying persons to some extent. By contrast, true denial in the context of bereavement is rarely the problem. When Rando lists “Recognize the loss” as the first R-process, she does not imply that many people flatly refuse to accept that a loss has occurred. They do not pretend that the person who has died is still alive; they plan funerals; they behave realistically on the surface. They may need to recognize the loss at the deeper emotional levels that clinicians find important, but it is a rare case of bereavement where denial is truly the pervasive problem as it is among the dying.” (Bregman 1999:113-114).

Considering all this R-processes by Rando, it surfaces and clarifies a basis for the necessity of some stress during grief times. This is not in dispute by any person especially the one who has gone through pain of losing the beloved person through any means. The Batswana have a poetic expression saying: ‘pelo e senang phufa, selo ga se sa yone’, literally meaning, ‘a heart that does not have a single grain of jealousy for something, that does not belong to that person’. This says, and has always been used by many to ‘judge’ the relationship with the departed. The consideration of all this by the bereaved brings all the processes mentioned above into vigorous application. It is and must challenge the church when the situation, due to its context, becomes out of control and unbearable.

A third difference between the two situations is how the time works in each. One of them recalls that Lindemann originally thought that a year was sufficient to complete grief work. Many dying persons have at least this much forewarning of their deaths, and so clinicians imagined a parallel of intense anticipated grief work for oneself, lasting a finite

period of time. Within this picture, sudden death is a problem insofar as no anticipation on anyone's part will have occurred.

The dying person will have avoided the whole process, and the family will be unprepared, will not have experienced any anticipatory grief. This is a breeding ground for problems of stress that sometimes is under no control. However, as we have seen the notion of a set time frame for mourning is now believed to be misleading and unhelpful. Mourning in the sense Attig and Rando understands it is a lifelong accommodation to loss. If so, no parallel with the situation of dying can be relieved upon. Or rather, specific factors in the prognosis, the progression of the illness, and its medical treatment need to be acknowledged as directly relevant to the scheme of coming to terms with death, as they were not in the original Kubler-Ross model. In the case of illness known to be fatal but where a very long period of time is given between the initial prognosis and the time of death, there will be too much time to devote entirely to the psychological tasks of the R-processes. For instance, cystic fibrosis has its own trajectory, as anthropologist Myra Blueblood-Langer's study of afflicted children and families shows. After the initial diagnosis, some of the processes of coping with impending loss were experienced, but the families then focussed on daily living and care for the sick child, and adapted to a steady situation medically by bracketing off all concern with the eventual anticipated death. Only when the illness started to assert itself dramatically and catastrophically did the children's families' attention turn back to the impending death. The changed experience of living with AIDS is an ever clearer case of how a model of constant anticipation of one's own death shifts to an assumed period of relative health prior to the final onset of a cascade of illness. Once these aspects of dying, particularized to the individual illnesses and disease processes, are noticed, the weakness of the parallel between death of the other and the anticipated death of self is plain.

Yet, surely there are some similarities, some truly parallel features of the two situations. The parallel assumes that both call on the self's resources for coping with the massive threat and disruption. The mourner and the one who is dying must struggle to "relearn the world" and question their own assumptions about it. They must reflect on the meanings of the past and attempt to form a life story that will ring true. In this, the parallel still makes intuitive sense. Most of what Kubler-Ross discussed under the category of 'reactive depression' (unfinished emotional business) correspond to the third and fourth R-processes (recollect and re-experience, relinquish). If so, then to speak of a life review is more appropriate than a global label such as 'depression', which is easy to confuse with the psychiatric condition. This is where the medical and psychiatric worlds will prescribe a host of drugs mentioned in chapter 3 and more than that. The reality is that, not all dying persons engage in this, like as well, not all mourners who are stricken by sudden death do this. But the parallel works when it is confined to R-processes that focus on reviewing and reassessing the past, rather than on any other dimensions of the situations.

"These specific processes are the fundamental material for stories of anticipated death. The protagonist must struggle with recollecting, re-experiencing, and relinquishing the past, just as Ivan Ilych did.

Normally this yield more sense of the past's inner worth, its secret treasures, its living heritage. Stewart Alsop's autobiography, *Stay of Execution*, starts when he is sick from a blood disease. He recollects his life as a journalist, a father, and finally as a soldier who escaped wartime death in France. All the while he knows he will not escape this time and will soon die. This focus on questioning, recollecting, and re-experiencing the past and its relationships is what the situation of anticipating one's own death and mourning that of another seem to share." (Bregman 1999:116).

The problem with what Bregman shares above here is not that it cannot be of any use to the church and pastoral care today, but the impossibility of telling the stories of unanticipated death/sudden death. Such stories are all untold, and the livings have to face with the mourning that most of the times does not make sense to them. Beyond this, the parallel fails completely. Recall how the thrust of all contemporary studies of mourning as a process assume that its ultimate outcome is to reinvest, to return to new life. 'To move adaptively into the new world'. Rando's fifth R-process is a sensible goal insofar as there is a 'new world' out there for the bereaved. Even when stages of mourning are discarded, the process of grief work presupposes recovery as a desirable consummation. In the case of the dying, acceptance and relinquishing attachments to life are the aim. Death is an ending, insofar as it is a natural event as the death awareness movement advocates. Whether one is fully alive right up until the moment of death, as the hospice philosophy insists, or whether the dying moves into a borderland where special states of consciousness and unusual experiences are normal, there are no equivalents to Rando's fifth and sixth R-processes for the dying. In this sense, dying is loss and purely loss.

But is one's own death "loss"? is it only ending? The model examined focuses attention exclusively on this, while insisting that such a loss is appropriate, ultimately acceptable. One of the ironies of Kubler-Ross' initial presentation of acceptance is that her example of an accepting patient, holds a thoroughly different view of what his death means: 'I do look forward to meeting the Lord, but at the same time I would like to stay around on earth as long as possible. The thing I feel most deeply is parting of the family.' This is clearly not the same as pure letting go or loss, although separation is indeed an aspect of dying. The more traditional understanding held by the dentist mentioned above (Dr. G.), treats death as a transition, a process of letting go but also anticipating

what lies ahead. Bunyan's pilgrims could not have used a loss model at all, for however dangerous the river crossing might be, on the other side lay their long-anticipated destination, the Celestial City. They will, one assumes, readjust to move adaptively into that world and be eager to forget the old world through which they have travelled so painfully. They have already reinvested their energies into that future by leaving home in the first place.

Thus, Rando's fifth and sixth R-processes cannot truly be made to fit into a model of dying. To the best of my knowledge, no one among contemporary spiritual writers has tried to construct such connections between the 'readjust' and 'reinvest' of mourning, and transition to a transcendent, eternal existence after this life. In the contemporary literature of the death awareness movement, there is an openness to spirituality, but not---in the psychological literature---a thorough and theoretically grounded renunciation of the loss model as a way to image death. As a fact, even to imagine taking R-processes 5 and 6 and applying them to preparation for a life everlasting seems thoroughly bizarre, well outside the range of possibilities available through the death awareness movement. The appropriation of the death awareness movement's language and imagery by Christians has not taken this pathway. It is a crucial need today.

Returning to our focal point, the difference between the death of the other, for which mourning is the appropriate response, and the death of the self. Death as loss directly fits the former, and the best of the contemporary empirical research confines itself to this situation. There are many more problems assimilating the death of the self into a model of grief work. Even with the image of loss, the parallel is strained. Without stages, what remains are some parallels with regard to third and fourth R-processes (recollect and re-experience, relinquish). The experience of denial in the dying does not parallel the first two R-processes, but is far more pervasive. Finally, there is the overall aim

inherent in all contemporary studies of bereavement: the assumption that the goal is to move into new relationships, new ties within the world. This is a goal that cannot apply the dying, unless one moves outside the model of loss and dying as natural. Important and obvious as these differences are, in the last thirty years at least, it has been common to conflate the two situations. If loss is the major contributions of the death awareness movement, it can well address the experience of mourning, but flounder in comprehending the experience of dying. If this is recognized, the exact shape of the death awareness movement and its interactions with Christian faith will become clearer.

5.6 A GLANCE THROUGH THE THEOLOGY OF THE FUNERAL

Death, sudden death and the funeral in some ways image, one another in current practice. Thomas in Rogers et al, notes that:

“Though death is clearly the focus of the funeral, the funeral is performed by the living for the dead. A funeral also reveals how death is related to various issues of life in this world and to notions about time and reality that are theologically interrelated. It celebrates a life and so involves the notion of the meaning of life---a specific life and life in general. The minister proclaims the message of life’s meaning which is a word of hope at the time of despair and a word of comfort to mourners. In the funeral the deceased passes out of the context of our daily business and into history so that at the very heart of the funeral service there is the theological issue of the new status of the person remembered and commended. Finally, in the message to the bereaved there is the proposal of policy of behaviour: we are encouraged to number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom” (Rogers 1997: 56).

One feels to consider the theology of the funeral because exclusively different from all the messages from fellow family members, neighbours, friends and all relatives in various forms of life, the Church has to present the message which is theologically based to comfort the bereaved, yet in many instances this is lacking and as a broader ecumenical church, that is where we are failing. It becomes worse when the message we (the church) give is completely out of relative to what it should be, as it happens many times. One speaks here of the theology of the funeral because the minister's message, at least, is expected to be different from normal message. A vital part of preaching must be the Christian message about death or sudden death in such circumstances. If death has become something about which we no longer speak, it is all the more important that the minister should continually expound the message of hope to the congregation. In the society I am living in death is shuffled with many things, sometimes not even making sense. But the funeral service is something which has become much neater and more efficient. Unfortunately consequence of this is that all too often the funeral service is anonymous. Rarely do the bereaved protest against this. Sometimes this is due to the fact that families gave everything about the funeral to the funeral companies. They are more likely to thank the parson for the 'nice funeral service' not mattering whether it was appropriate. All too often death is for many both comfortless and without fear, a non-event. Besides the psychological effects of such as the ignoring of death, there is the more important ethical consequence that we neither properly cliché that the subject of death is loaded with taboo; but, like many clichés, it is strangely illuminating. It illuminates our embarrassment which has something to do with metaphysics, ethics and theology. Taboo was always in abundance in my childhood experience of death---the tiptoe approach to the house of the dead or dying, the almost macabre interest in the coffin-cart, the funeral bier or

the funeral carriage with its magnificent black horses, the particularity of the dresses for both men and women, all the exclusivity of the rituals at every step of the way. Part of the taboo was the respect which, as far as I can remember, was never taught. It was so much part of my way of life that to this day that I cannot witness a funeral procession without showing respect. In contemporary reactions to an impending funeral, I see something of a polarization of attitudes. On the other hand, there is the extreme logical development of the quest for efficiency in those guides to funeral services, reminding us that neither a parson nor even an undertaker is legally required. On the other, there is the very different aesthetic development witnessed by the popularity of the revival of funeral processions --- and of the horse-drawn carriages. While there are many interesting philosophical problems involved in undertaking the meaning of sudden death, I feel like turning at once to the theological issues and take the traditional doctrine which Milton encapsulated in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* with his reference to 'man's disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste brought death into our world' in many phases. On and on the original sin and the fall of Adam in the garden is discussed in many inputs, but it is interesting to see that Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* rejects original sin and argues that Christ redeems mankind not from original sin but from loss of immortality. "Death then entered, shrewd his face which before was shut out and not known" (Locke 1958: 26). For Locke it was perfectly clear that there is no sense in which sin can be culpable if it is not one's own. This fact is remote from many of our brothers and sisters in ministry, particularly the lay-preachers we are bound to deploy to serve the various bereaved who are mourning their beloved through any form of death.

We can consider the traditional view in both Protestant and Catholic theology. Of the former, two examples can be mentioned namely: 'the entire penalty of the law including all the spiritual, physical and eternal

penal consequences of sin is called death in Scripture' (Hodge 1972: 548). For Litton death 'is the consequence of that primal prevarication by which man fell' (Litton 1960: 545). The Catholic position, likewise, is that death is a consequence of original sin. But having made clear in his essay, *The Theology of Death*, that he dissociates the possibility of death from Adam's sin, Rahner has clarified the complexity of the scriptural basis to theology of death in his *Foundation of Christian Faith* thus:

"The biblical story about the sin of the first persons in no way to be understood as an historical, eyewitness report. The portrayal of the sin of the first man (sic) is rather an aetiological inference from the experience of man's (sic) existential situation in the history of salvation to freedom actually is the way it is experienced and if is accepted as it is." (Rahner 1987: 114). This comment necessitates critical analysis of Genesis to allow understanding of historical flaws and evidence of various kinds. It shall then ring awareness to anybody who has to handle a funeral service to do the same with caution that will guide him/her to being appropriate in responding to the needs of the same funeral.

5.7. SHARING WITH VICTIMS OF SUDDEN DEATH

5.7.1. Mancwe's Story.

Mrs Mancwe is a young woman who became widowed at the age of 23 through a road accident that took her entire family of 4, husband and three children. They were then a young family that was promising to succeed in life. They had marvellous dreams for themselves and for the entire extended family.

She agrees that there is this thing called sudden death given her situation. She even continue to argue that the 'suddenness' of the

death may vary relative to how many people you lose. For her situation, the death was very-very given the four people nearest to heart she lost at once. She finds the whole incident very unfair to her yet having no one to blame.

Responding to the church activity during hurting period of time, Mrs Mancwe said: “the church did nothing different from what I had seen happening in all the funerals I attended before. There was nothing to acknowledge the loss that happened and hurt I personally was. I found myself wanting with regards to support that I needed, but thank my family for being there for me in all respects. At least, the church should have concentrated in supporting the family that supported me. I might have been demanding too much from them but, really, there was nothing that as different.

It is very difficult, if possible, to change some things, it must actually be accepted that there are some of those things that cannot be changed. It was really more beneficial to me to do everything to accept things as they were and still are, so that I can move on. However, I was privileged enough to be able to attend some counselling sessions with a professional, and I survived. I call it survival because at that time I had no meaning attached to life and suicide ever crossed my mind. So, it was survival indeed.

In the confusion state of my mind then, I could not really judge what was right or wrong for the particular funeral. To be honest, this funeral had come at the time that I never thought of a befitting funeral of any kind. I was just there and had to rely on what was planned and done by families (mine and my in-laws). But finally, I find them to have done the best for me. There was nothing I looked down at.

I think given the difference of people's personalities, people are vulnerable in the situation of bereavement through sudden death of this magnitude. I can attribute my help to the psychological counsellor, but believe strongly that one must be willing to take the first step to counselling him/herself. There must be usage of every thing at one's disposal that is believed to help in way, whether traditional or otherwise. The church will only be active during that time of the funeral and will disappear forgetting that there are still people left behind who need on-going support".

As the lady was talking about the incidence, one can actually see signs of relieve and feelings of victory in her face, yet there are still marks of sadness as she remembers what happened. She continued to tell that she find herself having to compare her times, the times then and now. She still gauges all her successes with what they would be had the incident not happen in her life. "It is hurting a lot to remember". She said.

Mrs Mancwe happened to have been in the accident herself and survived. So, at the time of the funeral there was also confusion on how she felt. Whether it was pains of the loss of the family or the injuries in the accident it was unclear. But she only remembers that in being taken to the doctor for consultation she was handled and treated as if she was complaining of simple influenza. "These doctors don't care how you feel, they just give you the medication they have" she said with contempt.

She affirms that sometimes one finds oneself in a situation that warrants him/her to expect too much from professionals, only to find that they are either not equipped for the same or they do not have the said skills. The corner stone and the point of departure in everything in this matter

of bereavement is to accept and move on. But counselling in any form must be given to the affected families in case of sudden death, and supporting them through cannot be over emphasised. She describes the situation as just bad, people wanting to help yet not knowing how given their inexperience of the situation, and others just bothering one by feeling sorry thereby intentionally or otherwise clouding the bereaved person's time and hindering him/her in dealing with the hurt. She cannot thank her family enough in all that it did at the time of her sorrow.

5.7.2 Mrs Mahlatsi Story.

Mrs Mahlatsi happens to be one of the relatively young, very mobile progress-wise and constructively initiative ladies the author came to work with. At the time of the interview, the lady was also newly divorced. She was married to one of the conservatively traditional men living in one the outside villages of Ganyesa known to be Cassel. She lost her second born son, the only child born in her marriage about two years ago through suicide. This is one child, according to Mrs Mahlatsi, who had founded her marriage. "It pronounce itself" she said in a sad voice, "immediately after his tragic death the peace of my home which was had always been shaky, and was stabilised by his presence in a way, was completely lost. I finally lost marriage." She couldn't compare that particular situation with any other, all she kept sounding is that is very sad.

She remembers vividly, the difference of interpretation of many aspects surrounding death, and this particular death, with the church then due to the fact that she was not even a member of the said church denomination, only her ex-husband was then. It is, as it has always been the case that the church denomination belonging to the man

(husband) takes precedence over the issues of death or any tradition in a home. As a result, she was literally forgotten in the whole process, pastoral care was focussed on to her husband then. More seriously, she never even took cognisance of any rituals because she did not know or understand anything about such.

To her, this death was a perfect cold-hearted thief and still is due to her continuous grief for her beloved son.

In terms of the organisation of the funeral, she did everything she had thought to do, and here, at least she was at liberty to follow her heart.

Mrs Mahlatsi strongly feels she cannot be of any help to any body stricken by this kind of death because she is still not healed from her pain. She can still remember that due to their differences of beliefs, she and her husband, much she was ready to accept spiritual healing from sermons and pastoral calls they all received, she had to reason with a number of rituals from the husband's church and family. All this has left the chapter of the life of her son still open in her, which she believes cannot be closed. She still stresses, "He will always be my son as long as I live, and I have chosen to live that way, I have made peace with it".

She cannot exactly pronounce the amount of trauma that she was engulfed in, her nights were sleepless, and she was 'travelling through unending voyages' of thought. In visiting the medical doctor, she had done that with some level of conviction that she will be helped. All she received were drugs which led her to sleep up to time long enough for them to work in her body.

MaMahlatsi, as she is commonly known to the author and to many, "you do not look very much a full blown case in the trauma you talk about, at least you can sleep now, can't you? What happened? What was done for you? By who? Tell us. She was asked.

There is no price she can put to what her mother did to her, yet she fails as well to compare whatever her mother did to anything. She made her

accept what had happened to her, and encouraged her to move on with her life. The divorce then followed but it is another discussion. It is something that can put thrust on to the inherent importance of some people to our lives. The child lost had another bearing on holding the marriage and family together, and at his departure by death, moreover suddenly, all was lost. For now what she still cannot thank enough is the support her mother gave to her.

She could not exactly pick up a singular 'thing' her mother did other than just being general in it by saying, she gave her support she describe as massive. She spoke, putting it in her own words, 'sense to her', more than any other person. Though she still continues with a life she define as empty until today, and all feelings of defeat and failure in many aspects, she at least has some courage to soldier on with her life and all challenges.

5.7.3 Mrs Veronica Malepa's Story

Mrs Malepa is commonly known as sis Vera and she really had a very short story to tell about everything that occurred to her about the husband she lost through suicide. She sadly remembered how in those days there was some miss-understandings between the two of them, as it was something common thing in their family. It was not anything that could have, by anyway, driven him to limits of suicide.

She is to this day very certain that their lack of understanding cannot be anything that has contributed to the action, but struggled to get the real object that triggered the same. What is like a pain that seems would be carried to death is the fact that her in-laws suspected her so strongly that in specific corners it was gossiped that she is the one who caused her husband to commit suicide---this is untrue---yet it was withheld as a new gospel.

“In reality”, she said, “I have never allowed myself to care what was happening or who did what during my husband’s death and funeral, I only focussed on the body being buried and I had to enter into mourning ‘alone’ after all that. The reason is that we were not in very good working terms with almost everyone, and I was somehow operating a little remote from reality. So, I buried and gave myself in to every after effect then. But what I can say to you is that our relationships got so strained that I feel all is irreparable. I remember that I left the church I worshipped at during our marriage and joined another church. But that does not really mean I had any particular reason pertaining to how they handled my sorrow. But I feel I have healed adequately now with all the time that has passed”. Sis. Vera is still very confident that the church today can be of great help to those who are trapped in this kind of a problem of sudden death, but also asserts that the relationship between the church and the same person or persons must be sound. Asked why about the statement she pronounced her view that, it is the only way the church can be of any influence to such person(s). She encouraged all churches and ministers to put effort into help given her experience of how lost one can feel in such times and conditions.

With treasure to seeing how happy she looks today, I must admit that she has healed in her own self, but was left with crucial questions about her relationships, but this ended our talk.

Looking into all who shared their experiences of sudden death, and scrutinizing what the church did then and as well considering the usual practices by the church, one finds it important to take a look into the church’s reasoning and grounding about what they do. It is a reason enough to mention that the church with all the church denominations is grounded by and in their liturgy to give meaning to all what they perform at every service they do. It might be questioned and rightfully

so 'what is in this liturgy?', and what good is it to people especially when they are in grief.

5.8. LITURGY AND ITS CONTEXT

One point that is a paradox to the situation of sudden death and all its implications to people today is the area of liturgy. It is a paradox because it happens to be crux in characterising any pastoral care in some important ways, yet by way of its form, it is the very point that fails to bring distinction between particular deaths and how various people mourn their grief. Unfortunately, this is one aspect which, given experiences drawn from this same work, the minister has to be both initiative and theological, but at point that is open for laziness either influenced by the church doctrines or regulations, or just the minister him/herself. This is so because liturgy is kind of prescribed by different churches for different services. Thus, for the church today, death has been death ever over the course of time, and therefore sudden death has got no provision.

The root of the contemporary problem is that with theological framework that has a much weaker view of the eschaton and where in any case seems delayed indefinitely, does the individual come to the judgement seat of God at the moment of his or her own death or is there a provisionality about everything until the end. Interestingly, both Catholic and Reformed theology have tended to go with the former yet, to be truthful, Scripture, inasmuch as it has a single and systematic view, tends to the latter. Classic Protestant theology within Anglicanism believes that prayer for the dead is improper because at the moment of death eternal destiny, for better or worse, has been decided.

Contrary to that, Classic Catholic theology permits prayer for the dead, because the departed one, judged at death worthy of salvation but in need of purgation to be fit for heaven, may properly be supported by

the prayers of those on earth. (see Rutherford 1980, 111-113). But both are working from a model that sees death as the key moment and both play down that corporate consummation to which the New Testament writers looked forward.

The traditional words and one of the most said statements about the departed---'grant them rest', have mercy on their souls', give them refreshments, light and peace' are pronounced many times and have specific meaning at the time of pronouncement. Nothing is said of the dead that is not said of the living. In some way, during such sudden death incident which is very tragic, the prayers are said in the liturgy which say what many want to say yet say a lot less that what many want to say.

There remains a basic difficulty with the official rites, the difficulty that alongside the theological poverty of the texts, has contributed to the abandonment of legal forms. This difficulty lies not in the rites themselves, which stands Full Square within the historic tradition. It resides in the radical change in the kind of community, if 'community' be the word, which gathers for a funeral. There are occasions, of course, when the funeral is that of a committed Christian, with church-going family, an articulate Christian faith among the congregation, and all set within the church and perhaps the Eucharist. Such funerals are most attended by the church members, but the content of pastoral care during the whole funeral proceedings is sometimes questionable. A funeral service is a worship service, and in any such service the usage of liturgy is prominently important. Tripp has the following combination of believes:

- Without the practice of worship there would be no theology at all.
- Without the liturgical assembly there would be no Scripture.
- Worship is the only corporate activity in which all Christians profess, verbally or otherwise, what they claim to believe.

- Education in liturgy is needed by the whole church, and by ministers who serves it. (cf Jones et al 1997: 565-570).

Pastoral care during grief and mourning due to sudden death cannot only be the verbal words said by caregivers as many churches believe, especially when care is in the hands of laity. It was mentioned how faith comes under test during times of sudden death in chapter 4, it happen to be the time when sound theology has to be complemented by well grounded liturgy to stabilise faith that is under test.

In the past the mourners, more often than not, saw the funeral service as but one stage in a series of (mainly shared) experiences that took them through the grieving process. Sudden death in not a new phenomenon, but in the past more people died surrounded by family, visited in illness by friends. Fewer people arrived at a funeral protected from any involvement with the dying and the mourning until that moment. Today, the funeral has to carry so much more of their shock or grief. Sometimes there is the guilt felt by family members who lived too far away. Sometimes the death is not real for them until they enter the building and see the coffin. The funeral has to ritualize for them so much more of the taking leave than in the past. Mourners were also a greater support to one another in the past. They knew one another and talked to one another, and knew how to comfort one another. Today, very often they are strangers to one another, even within families. All they have in common is that in different departments of his or her life they knew the deceased.

All these factors put more emphasis on the fact that today 'much more is demanded of the minister and of the liturgy', resultantly meaning it is not enough for ministers to only follow or do what they found their former ministers and predecessors doing, it is not enough as well to only depend on the liturgy that is found in our prayer books in the event of various tragic deaths we come across. It is noteworthy that often

there is no community that gathers to mourn but individuals who need to be drawn into community for a short time to mourn together. There is no longer much of shared expectation, faith or culture. This is a result of our many beliefs and cultural origins we share in families, some due to in-marriages and other reasons. The minister needs a liturgy that can provide all these.

Thus, the minister, first of all, needs a liturgy that binds people together, that gives them some sense of direction and a common cause, so that he/she can instil some hope of responding specifically to their grief.

When one sits to meditate on what kind of liturgy to use for which funeral, there can be a long list but it is prominent that in every liturgy the following needs are catered for:

- Confident and sensitive proclamation of the Christian faith;
- Provision of space to remember;
- Articulation of sense of sin, guilt and failure;
- Recognition that actions speak louder than words;
- Identification of a moment of farewell or committal.

Skilful and pastoral good sense is needed by ministers and all pastoral caregivers in the selection of their texts, and grounded theology allows the person in the leadership freedom of saying even more than what prescribed liturgy propounds without knocking anything out of its purpose.

Perham in Rogers et al, *Interpreting Death*, asserts that:

“the need for space to remember is more fundamental than the need to be told a life history. A funeral service has to have the proper blend of the universal and the objective with the personal and subjective, but there is an art to be communicated to those who lead funerals that will enable them to say just enough to create an atmosphere in which each can remember in the silence. It does not all have to be told, and the funeral address or prayers that read like a biography will hardly ever create that atmosphere as telling as a very few carefully chosen

words that set the memory free, followed by silence to let that process develop”(Rogers 1997: 164-165).

Looking at our current form of pastoral care to the mourners, who are bereaved in so many common ways today against the above statement, it becomes both clear and saddening to notice the disservice that we are doing to our congregants and communities. The need for calling the church back to her responsibility has never been more crucial than this. And striving to be spot-on onto the needs of the family during their bereavement, one has to really be a shepherd that is portrayed in chapter 1 through the eyes of Gerkin who insists on how knowledgeable the pastor has to be on his/her rituals, Hiltner and Campbell who can be said to be founders of ‘modern’ pastoral care. Having enquired closer into what pastoral care is or should be in the event of sudden death and the rituals that form various services by the church, one notes a lot that might have fallen deficiency in the side of the church during the handling of our victims of sudden death above. This, however, is said from inference from the fact that nothing really was done in the eyes of the victims or that involved them consciously.

5.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter much was dealt with in revising the real being of the church and what it should be or should have been. The chapter has more than anything reminders to ministers and pastors about their responsibilities especially on counselling the bereaved. It cannot in anyway be over-emphasised the importance the calling of ministers into ministry and their education. It is still encouraging to hear even from victims, the belief that there can be turning points in attempts to rescue the church in her means and ways of the proclamation of the gospels, especially during times of bereavement, grieve and mourning.

The urgency of care with and in mourning is critical, and must be noted as such by any element that consciously constitutes the church for credibility of the same here-to-fore.

The following chapter will close the whole work by looking into lessons that have been learned from the exercise, and will continue to suggest those that can make further research about the subject.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 LESSONS THAT I HAVE LEARNED

I must hasten to confess right from the outset that I never thought I would go as far as this with this work. This was not based on looking down at self in anyway or any kind of laziness, but based on conviction that death happens to be a natural course. The common statements--- Death is natural; it is a part of life---are pronounced by almost everybody. We should accept death as a natural part of life. Like birth, death is a natural event. This has been heard quiet frequently by many in my ears, and as far as I can remember, I have also pronounced the same to some. As a result they are repeated with literature of dying and death quite often. With this, I had to ask questions like, what can one do to a natural thing such as death and more over if it is sudden. It became a rhetoric that challenged me and my grounds of ministering to the bereaved and grieving seriously.

But the best lesson I can be bold anywhere to have learned is how pastoral care is continuing to be rediscovered, and the new ways it can be applied to better the life of the church through the common and almost primitive Psalm 23.

With a little bid of exegesis, this psalm came alive, with new understanding, especially because it paints the image of the Lord as the shepherd, a model against which this whole work is done. The psalm became a necessary screen against which ministers have to view their ministry for better pastoral care. Having gone through a re-study of the shepherd and shepherding as explained by the likes of Hiltner, Gerkin and Campbell in chapter one, the shepherd leadership of ministry by the church is found wanting in the instances mentioned above as it did in the case of my own sister, and continuing in other people who are struck with grief of beloved person through sudden

and accidental death. This is a grey area in the entire church ministry. The reader will now naturally ask the new understanding of this Psalm, given the primitiveness of it in all Christian circles and homes. Secular class provides what it provides but shepherd is:

A LEADER. First of all, shepherd leadership is a way of thinking. During the field, sheep are not famous for their strategic planning. As far as we know, animals do not have the capacity to visualize the future. The shepherd's first job in the field is to think and to think ahead. In the time of sudden death even human being sometimes are not proper in thought due to all psychological and philosophical terms mentioned, and it is here that they need a shepherd minister to be somewhat a good travel guide for them in this unfamiliar territory. The mind of a shepherd leader must always be ahead envisioning the next destination and the best way to reach there, anticipating the green fields and the dangerous valleys. This leadership is a way of being with the follower. By 'being with' I mean going beyond doing, things for the follower. This should not be abused to think short-sighted that sheep-shepherd relationship means only sheep benefit as noted cautiously by Hiltner. The various benefits of the shepherd should not be overlooked. Shepherding is not a remote form of leadership, it is instead high touch. Therefore, such leaders are there with the sheep and they correctly discover the various needs. They listen primarily to understand, to hear between the lines, and not to be understood.

The psychological profiling David used, known as the Birkman method, shows in several categories how people act in their normal, everyday strength; what needs they have; and how they respond if their needs are not met. When particular needs are met, one becomes strong and performs at top levels. When they not, one moves into stress, exhibiting behaviours one can come to recognize sometimes and not sometimes. This is an area the qualities of a shepherd are really quite different from just any leader. The shepherd is not a driving, pushing kind of a leader

but rather is characterized more by patience, insight, persistence, diligence, and care. These are precisely attributes needed by the shepherd leader who will assess the needs of the people. This leader then will lead his/her people in the right path. The understanding of traditional shepherding of leadership of sheep is a question as always here, whether from the front or herded from behind, but human beings prefer to be 'drawn' not driven. Obviously, the leadership into the right path means that the shepherd would be in the right path him/herself. This is the reason why the congregation is looking critically on to the life of their minister, until they sometime become unreasonably critical. I have noticed as well that life in practice, has exemplified the various valleys and the mountain tops that we come across in our ministry, and at time when we are challenged by having to give pastoral care to the bereaved through sudden death of so many kinds that we face in our life. The comforting role of the shepherd is never forgotten by David. "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." (Psalm 23). This often is quoted in many funerals and memorial services noting the spiritual notion that lies at the heart of this remarkable statement as the comforter and protector. Until today, my walking around the various cemeteries of our land one find this psalm still inscribed on the majority of tombstones and messages of comfort to the bereaved.

6.2 BEREAVEMENT RELATES WITH FAITH

Christian faith is life-affirming. It accords to our human existence meaning, purpose and worth. This sense that human life is supremely precious is expressed in scripture in a variety of ways. Our people, the church that we serve currently agree with this assertion. We are made in the image of God, while the price that was paid for us is really

awesome; it was paid in precious blood...the blood of Christ. So, the value of our human life is affirmed. But the experience of intimate bereavement through sudden death would seem to be the ultimate challenge to any such affirmation. Here faith falls under test. The experience raises, with inescapable sharpness, the spectre of meaninglessness. Feelings and statements such as 'someone of such potential, such vitality, someone apparently so precious for me' arise and the moment is broken and destroyed, thus meaning and worth is affected.

The pain of grief through sudden death can seem unbearable. It was mentioned in chapter 1 of the cry of King David learning of the death of his son. A lament for eternal loss echoes recurrent and haunt in its hopelessness. He went up to the room over the gate and burst into tears weeping and calling "My son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! Would I have died in your place! Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam 18: 33).

Even after so many years working as a minister and caring for congregations pastorally, hearing such words still makes one the intruder, blundering where he/she has no right to be, in the overwhelming anguish of people who are stricken by sudden death. The voice of grief is particular and must be listened to with the ear that hears. Sudden death bereavement commonly brings, mingled with the numbness, the aimlessness, the exhaustion; times of such searing pain when we are confronted, inescapably, by the enormity of our loss. That sense of loss is devastating. It has been likened many times to an amputation, the tearing away of part of oneself, leaving you maimed, crippled, stumbling and empty, drained of life and purpose. And the loss is absolute. During these times balance is regained slowly but surely in the faith that one has. And faith here, enhance the total believe structure that one way or another makes part of the person. Thus rituals become helpful and purposeful. This was noted in chapter 4

to be forming one common spots in the view of various fields including psychology, medicine, psychiatry and theology, and one we can all build from in avoidance of unfortunate disorders that comes with stresses inflicted by all such feelings.

We all struggle with our whole being when we are confused by this mystery of sudden death. Lewis in trying to cope with his wife's sudden death wrote:

"I look up at the night sky. Is anything more certain than that in all those vast times and spaces, if I were allowed to search them. I should nowhere find her face, her voice, her touch? She died. She is dead. Is the word so difficult to learn?" (Lewis 1966: 16).

This is the deepest fear, that the dissolution death brings is total, that sudden death is an abyss of nothingness into which everything falls. When the ear listens and hears the sadness of death that says everything that people say when death strikes, one would understand that the choice of such images such as 'the pit', 'the abyss' etc is not accidental and that is very closely aim at expressing what the person truly feels. Expressing a stark and terrible vision of death as the ultimate loss and deprivation, it is deeply rooted in the Old Testament when we look at it against the Christian faith. The psalmist talks of death as a fearsome thing. During such times questions are asked.

"Do you perform miracles for the dead? Do they rise up and praise you? Is your constant love spoken of in the grave, or your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Are your miracles seen in the place of darkness, or your goodness in the land of the forgotten?" (Ps. 88: 10-11).

To every question the context demands the answer, no. Death robs us of those we love, and sudden death does so brutally and disrespectfully. But it still has a more awesome power; it can also destroy our world. Let me hurry to explain this. Though not everyone may or can articulate it, the experience of ultimate bereavement, the

destruction by sudden death of a close, deep and crucial relationship, can seem to strike a deadly blow against the very idea that human existence has meaning. Through one's faith, though unbearably painful, a bit of meaning is regained very slowly. The importance of a pastoral caregiver to be sensitive of the believe structure and faith of the bereaved and grieving person is thus made explicitly crucial. When we draw from our experiences, we find that life is so intimately interwoven as it is, we have invested so much of ourselves, our love, our hopes, our dreams, in relationships. This is truly what makes a living person live, it is also a sad paradox to note that again it is relationships that heal. This was evidenced by feelings and statements by all victims interviewed, how family members came in at all vacuums created in the offered pastoral care. But then the shattering of that relationship knocks away one of the foundation pillars on which our world stands, and we are left all at sea, adrift on the waters of chaos. Stress results, and unfortunate circumstances are borne. A lot is demanded out of pastoral care, including the cooperation between and amongst the fields of science.

Whilst Christian faith does speak of life and living until the end, death reminds us of mortality. It threatens to break through the brisk and brittle facade of our own self-assurance. As long as we can hold it at bay, as long as we can maintain our denials, we will. But our own grief is inescapable. Attempts to evade our own pain bring, not peace, but deep-rooted psychological and emotional disturbance. The church must learn to teach this fact, and while also attending to the church's exclusive responsibilities in all events of sudden death.

6.3 GROUNDING ON CHRISTIAN GROUNDS

The fact that pastoral care has been there very long supplies every investigation with what has been done in the olden days, very long before we were born. The use of shepherding method has also informed this work with information that shepherding was done in many ways by our fore-fathers/mothers without consciously using and doing it in Christian grounds. The natural location of our parents that happens to be Africa suggests many times that one is confusing Christian grounds with African. Having enquired so much into the church and her calling, and her relationship with the people the church serves, the author must reiterate that the study is done and based on Christian grounds of the church. This might be viewed as loyalty to the Christian religion but animating the practical value and African context to make the church credible.

The study has done a lot to remove the church from the sky to bring her to level of the people she serves. The invitation of opinion from psychologists has breathed a lot of life in the message we preach as church, and has enlightened caring care givers.

6.4. THE USE OF TOOLS

Working through this piece of work has also tapped on the use/misuse of the tools that we have as the church. The big questions would be whether there are tools to be used in pastoral care to people bereaved through sudden death or not, and whether there is any particularity in those tools if they are there. But the quick answer is paradoxical because it is, 'yes there is', and 'no there is not'. But clearly it all depends on how good/skilful a pastoral care giver is in using the same. The Bible was examined as a point of departure, the selection of texts, the actual preaching, the contexts varying from family to family in

terms of rituals of closure, all these are tools adequate enough to help all people to mourn meaningfully, and to ultimately close the chapters of life of their beloved with psychological side-effects that may cause stresses of various kinds and levels. In the view of David and his psalm, shepherd leader who is with the sheep knows the valley, and in times of any kind of conflict just as there is trouble in the field, the shepherd transform conflicts, create healthy space for this conflict and also space for reconciliation. This coincided with my own knowledge and understanding of the shepherd and his/her duty.

It is was also critically noteworthy for me that the present Christian and Christianity are relatively just static, bounded collections of doctrines and images, focussed on traditional thinking about Jesus' death, salvation and eternal life. For many people and especially in the event of sudden death, this is a problem. I notice the importance of Christianity to become more tolerant and interactive with particular life stories and ideas of individuals. In that way, the church can be more meaningful in times of sudden death as a source of pastoral care.

As a way of responding to questions pronounced in chapter one about the appropriateness of pastoral care in the event of death, the author learned through the study that, pastoral care cannot be prescribed for any situation due to differences in individuals' life stories, but pastoral caregivers can be better skilled to be able to know what they should do and say in any situation. That is, real pastoral care is both Pro-Active and Re-Active at the same time.

Pro-Active because the church has to embark is a huge teaching mission about pastoral care to all caregivers, and possibly the community the church serves. Also, that the church and caregivers can be in a position to anticipate what will happen to and by the people during incidents of sudden death judging , for example by their

actions and statements, and what should be done to save such situations. Re-Active because sudden death is unfortunately as it is--- sudden and stimulates in various ways--- and the entire system of affairs, the network of relationships have to react to it.

This charges the entire church with a huge responsibility of being an answer to evident questions asked by natural situations in the event of sudden death.

It has also become clear in knowledge structure that the church, in a way, suffers from a syndrome kind of problem of robbing the bereaved and grieving families and friends of their opportunity to mourn meaningfully. This result due to occasional invasions we do in their territories in the event of any tragedy, and most unfortunately, we do this in the name of pastoral care. The same questions our skill as the pastoral caregivers and the entire church. I emerge out of this study as the one who would advocate the church to remember herself and her position in the journey with people who are grieving and mourning. I discover as well that between and amongst sciences, i.e. medicine, psychiatry and theology, there can be cooperation that would benefit the church and the people more than harm them if all were used with care and skill. But it is unfortunate that the church is found lacking and unreliable to all the other sciences because reading from the education of various ministers, pastors and pastoral caregivers, some of them are really not worthy to entrust any person to for pastoral care especially in the event of stresses due to sudden death. This is one painful reality we have to live with until there is something that can be done about it.

6.5. PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY USE

I am bold to say that the study gave me a better understanding on African pastoral care rituals and practices. This necessitated new ways of interpreting Christ's work here on earth. I realised the need for initiative in the development and modification of funeral liturgies, and where possible compound the liturgy of closure by bereaved families and the church in the event of sudden accidental death.

6.6. VALIDITY OF THE STUDY

While studying about sudden, accidental death and pastoral care, I have discovered the richness that faith offers to Christians and the church, and that if all are done well, the church can grow into another resource that can be used to effectively counter act the unfortunate circumstances that are found in families especially those families that are not very privileged to afford psychologists and all other sciences due to practical reasons.

6.7. FURTHER POSSIBLE RESEARCH AREAS

One has first to acknowledge with satisfaction that the intention and aim of dealing with and taking care of the grieving and the mourning through pastoral care in the congregational context was really done, however, also sadly note the challenges that go with it. A mention of a fact may be made here that ministry is seen by many as just one career where people can make life. This has brought a strong wing of economy and economical impurities into it, and as a result pastoral care by the entire church has received very negative effects. The following are realities in church and in life:

- There is a serious challenge to reach the grieving people by pastors and ministers (who have theological education), given the number of fatal accidents today against that of ministers.
- Many churches in rural areas are not financially viable and cannot afford a minister, and these are dependent on laity.
- The credibility of the message of the church, during sudden death and in general remains a question due to (1) lack of theological basis and (2) disintegrated and 'lost' practice as alluded to in chapter 5, (where ministers and pastors has lost sight of the need of pastoral care and only concentrates on gaining more members or scoring personal glory).

The author also notes with humility some areas which this work has not covered, which can be pronounced as further possible areas that can be followed in research. Those are:

- ✓ The common ground, if any, of the church which can be the foundation of credibility in the lives of secular world.
- ✓ The 'taboo-ness' of general death then (in the olden days) and the romanticism of it today (in the current years).
- ✓ The relationship between the rituals and the belief system, and how all this generate courage and power.

I feel the research in these topics can make a lot of difference in the church and her pastoral care giving, and can also claim the stage the church and theology is or should be if the church really has to be viewed as a product of the mission of Jesus Christ, and the church herself being missionary.

The topics are given as they come with thought through the process of this work, but can be reshaped to suit research as reflection is done into them and better thoughts and ideas flow through.

But at the end of it all, pastoral care is still a tool that can be used to shepherd and care for those people who are stricken by sudden death.

Used properly and with skill, with the cooperation with other sciences, human race can grieve, and mourn their beloved ones meaningfully, and will emerge out of such situations not as losers but as experienced victors. The church is still the basis of all this.