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Summary
Traumatized adolescents’ search for hope: A pastoral model

South Africa has a high incidence of crime where violence is particularly being committed against adolescents. Trauma has a disruptive influence on the development of adolescents. There is a lack of research focussing on pastoral counselling from a postmodern perspective regarding adolescents who experience acute trauma. This study makes use of three theories to make a meaningful contribution namely those of Rudolf Otto (1869 – 1937), René Girard (1923 - ) and Donald Capps (1990, 1993, 1994,1996).

This study finds Otto’s theory about the numinous useful to assist traumatized adolescents on the road to healing. A numinous experience causes two results namely an overwhelming feeling of awe and a feeling of fear that comes from respect and distance. Traumatized adolescents should be guided into a meeting with God in a confusing post-modern world. Through the appropriation of the numinous adolescents can reach infinitely more than only being a “seeker”.

Girard’s (1978) theory on mimetic violence and the scapegoat mechanism has been used in this study since it throws some light on the manner in which traumatized adolescents process trauma. The scapegoat mechanism theory helps one to understand how violence can be processed by scapegoating someone or something else. Girard’s theory also enlightens on the theme of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the key to overcome the horrors of the past. Adolescents particularly need role models. These role models can be found amongst other things, on television. Role models teach adolescents about revenge and reprisal. This study demonstrates that by applying Girard’s theory to the cross of Jesus, the traumatized and crucified Jesus becomes the role model for the “seekers” rather than identification with the peer group. Girard creates a greater understanding to manage trauma by exposing the scapegoat mechanism.
Capps’ theory about hope and reframing on the other hand is useful in the sense that it gives hope for the future to adolescents. Hope therapy entails reframing since the situation needs a new perspective. The work of Capps, *Reframing: New method in pastoral care* (1990) was used as a framework.

Narrative therapy is used because it assists the traumatized in their search for meaning. Ganzevoort’s (2000) theory regarding personal narrative identity proved to be useful in pastoral care to traumatized adolescents. The same applies to Erikson’s (1963) development theory, which includes the concept that the virtue of hope develops during childhood. It can also be associated with Moltmann’s (1974) view of hope as an alternative future for suffering persons.
Adolescents: Individuals in the life cycle between childhood and adulthood.

Development: A lifelong process of change in the structures and function of organisms.

Maturing: Changes and growth in the structures or functions of organisms as result of the evolution of genetic potential.

Perspective on the organism: Change is stimulated from inside the organism.

Perspective on the mecanism: Change is stimulated by the contexts and environment which in turn change the child’s behaviour.

The ecological system theory: Seen from this perspective, development takes place within the complex system of relationships which are influenced by multiple levels of the surrounding environment.

Acute trauma: A sudden, unexpected and terrible single event.

Chronic trauma: Trauma experienced repeatedly over a period of time.

“Tremens” [= the present participle of the Latin verb tremo, “to tremble”]: A feeling of awe which refers to a special kind of fear and anxiety in the presence of something mysterious.

Absolute profanity: A term used by Otto to indicate that an experience of the numinous gives cause to a feeling of utter worthlessness in a person’s perception of his/her existence.