

# WHO CARES FOR THE PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE?

- A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL  
CAREGIVERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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**FOR ASHLEY**

I, Reverent Tobias Hertzog van Reenen Steyn hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my original work and has never previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any other university for a degree.

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Signature

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Date

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation concerns itself with the task of creating a pastoral care model in order to offer care for the people in Zimbabwe, whilst the political instability causes much suffering to these people. It was motivated from the author's personal relationships with various Zimbabweans and his understanding that Zimbabweans are his neighbours in need. Through Narrative Therapy, the author used his understanding of Christian hope, creating positive future stories with Zimbabweans.

The hope and focus of this dissertation is to research the problem in Zimbabwe, in order to help the Church in its role as prophet and pastoral caregiver. However, this dissertation would have been to no avail, if it did not attempt to create a model of caring which will empower the South African Church to become pastoral caregivers towards the Church in Zimbabwe.

- Firstly, the author will strive to clarify the problems faced by the Zimbabwean Church.
- Secondly, the author will seek to bring an awareness of this problem in Zimbabwe to the Church in South Africa, through its prophetic voice.
- Thirdly, the author hopes to create a model of pastoral care that will not only care spiritually for the people, but will also meet some of the physical and emotional needs of the people in Zimbabwe.

## FOREWORD

A wise man once said that the study of science, calculus or perhaps engineering happens within the parameters of a world out there, whereas the study of true theology will happen within the confines of the very persons' self. As we journey in the pages of our theological studies we continue to discover deeper within ourselves who and what we really are. What we are today lies within the secrets of the choices we have made yesterday.

“To be Christian means for us to see ourselves, the world about us, and human purpose within the interpretive vision provided by the metaphors and themes of the Christian story” (Gerkin 1986: 37).

How does the Christian see the life all people live upon earth? John Bunyan saw Christianity as pilgrims, progressing within life's journey, to reach a higher destiny. At the end of life's journey upon earth, humankind will wrestle face to face with the question whether we would want to re-live life the same way as the one we have just completed; - if only it was possible to have a second chance to live life over again. The answer to this urging question will forcefully bring us to evaluate the choices we have made during our earthly lives. We cannot escape the fact that our human life upon earth is filled with moments of choices; even the option not to choose will involve yet another choice.

Jesus said that one could recognize a tree by its fruit. The author discovered that the fruit on our human-life-tree is the silent witness to the choices we have made whilst living this earthly life. If only we read our diaries, we would know the real priorities we have placed upon our choices. Claiming to have a priority, yet our efforts spent do not reflect this priority; will urge us to reconsider the truth of our claim. Moreover, our willingness to suffer for the sake of these treasures will be the measure of the true value we placed upon our choices and the value we have placed upon these.

It is within the pages of this dissertation that the author came face to face with the real priorities in his life. This life upon earth is too short and precious not to prioritise the very things we treasure. On this journey of theological study, the author also discovered that for some of those who have found life's true treasure in Christ Jesus, suffering proved to be a reality. The author also discovered that the suffering of our fellow human can never leave the Christian untouched, and once we get involved in the pain of others, unchanged.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was confronted with the choice of doing his father's will. This choice that Jesus made, changed humankind forever as he cried out; *"not as I will, but as you will"* (Matthew 26: 39 - NIV). It was this choice Christ made, that caused him suffering beyond human understanding.

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "with His stripes we are healed" (White 1940:25).

Christ paid the ultimate price. No-one person can repeat that act of complete redemption. Yet, mysteriously, for those who accept this gift of utter redemption, they too will not escape life without feeling the pain of their fellow humans. That is the true paradox in Christianity; this suffering within God's purposes will become our true treasure. How else could we declare victory, when there was death upon the cross at Calvary? How could we claim to reign with Christ forever, (Revelation 22: 5) and yet, as Christians, the world crucifies us over and over again? This is the true mystery in Christ; there is victory in defeat, there is strength in weakness, there is life after death. For it is only the life lived within the will of God that will bring us to fullness in purpose. And that, ultimately, will be a choice we have to make.

(The Author)

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# CHAPTER 1

Over many years the science of theology has developed into many different faculties, departments and fields of specialties. In the author's mind, it sometimes becomes very difficult to define the precise area of a specific study. For the author it seems that these various faculties and departments have many areas of commonality and overflowing, and the borderlines between these are often tested. However, in the author's mind, the researcher should continually remind him or her self that a specific study is carried out in a specific faculty or department, and therefore should attempt to remain within the spirit or boundaries of that faculty or department.

In the light of the above, the author is of the conviction that Practical Theology needs to find its own motivation, within its own theology, in order to offer theology in a practical way. He believes that Practical Theology without actual theology, will not offer the sustained energy needed in order to keep this Practical Theology alive. For this very reason, the author has opted to depart in this dissertation, in the department of Practical Theology, from a point very close to what could be defined as systematic theology, in order to build a theology that will motivate his theology in praxis.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC OF PASTORAL CARE TOWARDS THE PEOPLE IN A CRISIS RIDDEN ZIMBABWE

Often Christians will give God the glory when another person comes to remorse of their sin, and enters into a relationship with God as their Saviour. That is right to do so. Most believers will also give God the glory when someone survives a horrific car accident, or praise God for protection in times of danger. Almost all Christians, including the author of this dissertation, have the perception that God will defend them from dangers and suffering. This theological conviction has caused much difficulty for the author's own spirituality, because, if God then gets the glory for these situations, God should also get the blame for the pain and suffering that so many people have to endure, and in the context of this dissertation, the people of Zimbabwe.

Adding to this already difficult predicament, the author, self experienced much suffering at the hands of fellow Christians. The pain that this suffering brought has sensitized him for the pain of people around him. If God is the God of Love, and if he is the one defending us in times of trouble as written in the book of Isaiah:

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flame kindle on you (Isaiah 43:2 – Modern King James Version).

-Why then do we still experience so much pain and suffering?

-Why is God not defending us?

As the author was wrestling with these questions, it dawned upon him that perhaps God is communicating something to humans through suffering. It struck the author that this communication through suffering is not only directed to the suffering church, but God also communicates to the church who is the spectator of this suffering. This becomes a double-edged sword.

There is a belief amongst many theologians that God is for the poor. This theological conviction is making God's communication, in the author's understanding, rather one-sided. In the context of this dissertation, the "poor" would be the people of Zimbabwe, who are marginalized and impoverished, by an abusive government. Buffel stated it blatantly as he wrote:

Just as God favours the poor, the church must do the same. Jesus Christ furthered this preferential option for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized in his statements and his ministry (Buffel 2007:52).

The author finds it very difficult to accept the categorizing of God's love and favour in this manner. In the author's mind, this theology of God's favouritism towards the poor, is a very dangerous theology. Does it mean that God is "dis-favourable" towards the rich? One also needs to ask whether God really favours the poor. The reason why the author finds this



teaching difficult to accept is rooted in Jesus' concern for all people. Zacchaeus, a rich tax collector, found favour with Jesus, when Jesus said; "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9 – NIV). God has no favour for one human above another, as the Bible explicitly states (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). In John 3:16, Jesus expressed God's love for the world, rich and poor alike. Davids strengthens the author's conviction in these words:

When we understand that God wills the salvation, development and progress of all His creation, it gives us the impetus to look at any context as a context in need of God's redemptive presence, not because we are scared or need security, but because God wills it (De Beer (ed) 2002:33).

However, the author is of strong conviction that God is not favourable towards the injustices, causing people to be poor. The author is also confident that God will oppose the acts of people who oppress others. Within this context, the author wants to plea with the reader not to be caught in the trap where it becomes, a they, and us, situation; -us the oppressed, they the oppressor; -us the poor, they the rich; -us the righteous, they the wicked. This is a very dangerous game to play. Rich and poor, good and bad, high and low, fat and thin; these are all very relative concepts, and difficult to qualify, unless one can measure it against a standard. In this instance of human standards for righteousness, this becomes extremely problematic, because believers are not measured against one another. There is a much higher standard

for measurement. God called believers to be holy according to his standard (Leviticus 11:44), and all humans have fallen short of this glory of God (Romans 3:23). In fact, we all are human and are in desperate need of God's grace, whether we are rich or poor, Christian or pagan. None of us can say that God favours us above another human.

In this dissertation the author has attempted not to become judgemental upon the people in Zimbabwe. In other words, what happens in Zimbabwe, whether it is right or wrong, causes people to suffer and it is the suffering of these people that has urged the author to do something practical for the people in need in Zimbabwe. One could, and most likely should do something to relieve the cause of this suffering, but this is a topic for another study, and falls outside of the scope of this dissertation. The author came face to face with the practical question of what he could do, in order to help the suffering people in Zimbabwe.

The fact remains, the author is an outsider to what is presently happening in Zimbabwe, but he could never become apathetic towards his neighbouring church. What is God communicating to the author, as part of the South African church, through the suffering of the Zimbabwean church? Could it be that God wants the church in South Africa to engage in a role in liberating the church in Zimbabwe pastorally? God is the one who will carry us through the fire and water (Isaiah 43:2), but the author believes that all Christians have a role to play in bringing comfort to the suffering church, and in this context, in Zimbabwe. In the author's

imagination he began to think, maybe God allows people to suffer, so that other people could care for them in a pastoral way, or could this be to far-fetched an idea? Could it be that Christian suffering becomes redemptive for other people? Again, this question falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Yet, questions like these helps to form one's own theological convictions.

People are suffering, and in this dissertation, the author will not deny that many people, especially the people of Zimbabwe, suffer. Neither will he seek deep theological arguments for the reasons why people suffer. For the purpose of this dissertation, the author is more concerned with his role in caring for those who suffer in a pastoral way. To the author it seems that Foster understood this notion well. He speaks of the role that Christians have in the suffering of others in these words:

Our Lord's unique service of redemption through the cross is unrepeatable. However we are called to serve through the many little deaths of going beyond self. And as we live out our lives for the good of others, amazingly we find ourselves; we discover our sense of place (Foster 1989:173).

Foster is saying that Christians should be involved in the suffering and pain of others, as we bring comfort and liberation to them. Jesus paid the ultimate price for human redemption. However, as Christians, we are called to die to self, in order to bring relief for suffering people (Matthew 16:24-25). From Foster, we learn that Christians, who live their lives

beyond self, will discover their own purpose in God. Could it be that God allows suffering in human life so that Christians could bring loving care to their fellow humans?

The author believes that God cares for the suffering church in Zimbabwe, even though God allows this suffering. It was this conviction of God's agony for His church in Zimbabwe, which caused the author to feel a little of God's pain for His people. God wants his suffering people to experience care, and the author began to understand, that he could not turn his back on the Zimbabwean church. It is the above convictions in the author's mind that was the point of departure for this dissertation.

This dissertation was shaped from the author's struggle to make sense of the hardships and suffering of people around him, more specific the people of Zimbabwe. These people are suffering, and God is allowing it. However, what is the author's role in bringing pastoral care in response to the suffering church in Zimbabwe?

#### 1.1.1 **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 1**

In chapter 1, the author introduces his reader to the topic of this dissertation by explaining his relationship with the church in Zimbabwe. He also explained the problems in Zimbabwe that cause Zimbabweans to suffer.

Secondly, the author grappled with the methodology used in this dissertation. For clarity, he distinguished between the methodology of the pastoral care he offered, and the methodology of the research in this dissertation. White's model on the Narrative Therapy forms the basis of the pastoral care model, whereas two questionnaires (Annexure A and B) form the basis of the research methodology.

Lastly, in the later parts of this dissertation the author attempted to clearly state the problem he seeks to address in this dissertation when he also speaks to the hypothesis within this dissertation. This chapter concludes when the author grapples with the aims of this research.

#### **1.1.2 A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 2**

In this chapter the author will give a brief historical and political background of the problems in Zimbabwe, in order to gain a better understanding of the suffering and the context, of the Zimbabwean people. He will also seek to clearly explain the problem in Zimbabwe, as he understands it. At the time of this research, the nature of this problem was ongoing. Hence, much of the information used in this chapter is gathered from the Internet, newspapers, television news and interviews, personal interviews with Zimbabwean people, and the author's personal experiences in Zimbabwe. The author also borrowed from other authors like Meredith (2002), Todd (2007) and Holland (2008). Meredith, a well-known author and journalist, is widely assumed as an authority on Southern Africa's political history. He was of great help to the author in

gaining an understanding of the background to the problems in Zimbabwe. Todd, the daughter of Sir Garfield Todd (prime minister of Southern Rhodesia), on the other hand, wrote far less scholarly than Meredith. The author could never doubt her good intentions when she wrote her book, "Through the Darkness". Yet, in spite of her good intentions, the author found it more difficult to engage intellectually with her book. However, Todd did help the author to gain a deeper understanding of the pain and suffering of the people of Zimbabwe. Heidi Holland wrote a book called "Dinner with Mugabe". In this book Holland attempted to tell the un-told stories of Mugabe as she tries to bring an unbiased report of the happenings in Zimbabwe. Holland is also helpful in gaining some historical background to the problem in Zimbabwe.

In his search for some understanding of the problems in Zimbabwe, the author will engage with these and other authors. Unfortunately, in the author's search to understand the problem he seeks to address, he could not find any recent books written by black authors on the present problems in Zimbabwe. However, the author did find, a few outdated accounts of the current problems from authors such as, Ncube (1991), Nkomo (1984), Mutasa (1983), but the nature of this research, restricted the use of these authors. However, the internet was helpful for engaging with black Zimbabweans in order to find a more balanced picture of the problem in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, during the course of this research, Zimbabwe had experienced many changes in its political arena and the author found it very difficult to remain true and current to the ever changing situation in Zimbabwe. Later in this dissertation, the author will return to this notion. In the later pages of this chapter, the author will also seek to clearly state the problem of caring for the church in Zimbabwe in a pastoral way. Why does the church in Zimbabwe need the church in South Africa to care for it?

### 1.1.3 **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 3**

In this chapter the author will attempt to unpack his understanding of Practical Theology, and why he chose to use this department of theology as the vehicle for this dissertation. He also grappled with the questionnaires (Annexure A and B) and why he asked the specific questions asked. Responses to question 4 and 2 in the questionnaire to the South African church urged the author to explore the meaning of church, the body of Christ and the community of saints. The author attempted to take these notions beyond the abstract, helping the reader to understand that being church is to be a community of saints, called into oneness and purposed to unite God's people, where it will express its praxis in charisma, through the body of Christ. In the context of this dissertation, the South African and Zimbabwean church will become a community through their purpose in Christ, and together they will live out the praxis of this oneness through the charisma only God can offer.

#### 1.1.4 **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 4**

Chapter 4 started with the author briefly glancing over some spiritual reasons why Zimbabwean people suffer. However, this chapter mainly concerns itself with exploring the pastoral care and therapy needed by care seekers in Zimbabwe. This pastoral care will create hope in care-seekers and, in the author's mind, hope is essential for creating a future story in the presence of God. Hope will urge the caregiver and care-seeker into action as hope will not exist in the care seekers future, unless he or she will be able to find hope in their past and in the present.

#### 1.1.5 **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 5**

In the concluding chapter, the author will evaluate the research completed in this dissertation. How much has this research contributed to the author's understanding of the problem in Zimbabwe? Did he find any answers to the persisting problems? During this research, many areas of possible future research became apparent, and the author will briefly point to some of these.

#### 1.1.6 **CARE AND PASTORAL CARE IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS DISSERTATION**

Under this heading, the author did not attempt to do an in-depth linguistic exercise, or to try solving a theological issue. He merely tested his own understanding of these two words he so often interchanged. The author wrestled with the concept of whether a person could really care for another person if it is not care in a pastoral way. In the same context,



could one offer pastoral care, separated from care? As the author pondered these concepts of care and pastoral care, he came to the conviction that for the purpose of this dissertation, these two words have the same meaning, unless the context of the specific use of the word brings a different meaning.

## 1.2 **THE AUTHOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE**

Neither prediction nor speaking in the name of God is the most important feature of biblical prophecy. The prophet is not sent to the people in order to demand that some particular act be done; he is sent because of a divine concern for the total existence of the people (Heschel 1975:251).

Because the author has a deep conviction that God is intensely concerned about his existence, he is able to be concerned about the existence of the people around him. I can love, because God first loved me (1 John 4:19). In the context of this dissertation the author's relationship with the church in Zimbabwe started a number of years ago. A congregation in Harare invited him to Zimbabwe for three weeks with the possibility of him being called as a minister to that congregation. During this stay, he became good friends with various people in Harare, Zimbabwe. Although the author did not accept the call to this congregation, he has maintained good relationships with the various people he met there.

According to Gerkin, one needs this kind of friendly relationship with people, in order to enable the pastoral caregiver the necessarily platform to offer pastoral care (Gerkin 1986:98). Hence, the care offered to the Zimbabwean church by the author, finds its platform upon personal friendly relationships between the author and some of the people in that country. Therefore the author understands that pastoral care is unlikely to be successful if the caregiver and care seeker are not in relationship with one another. There is an expression which says that, one needs to earn the right through friendship, before one should claim the right to speak.

Through his personal experience, the media and friends in Zimbabwe, the author became aware of the many problems these people are facing. The author was intrigued with this topic of caring for the Zimbabwean people because the South-African Government has failed to respond to what is currently happening in Zimbabwe. The author has perceived that those people outside of Zimbabwe are doing very little in order to offer pastoral care for the suffering people of Zimbabwe. Sir Malcolm Rifkind, a previous minister of foreign affairs in Britain, said in a news paper article that South Africa is the only African country that has what it takes to intervene in the Zimbabwean crisis, but President Mbeki failed hopelessly in this regard (Rapport; 12 August 2007). From this, one cannot help but conclude that Sir Rifkin blames the former president of South Africa for not intervening in the situation in Zimbabwe. The question is however, is it fair to place such blame upon President Mbeki? Could it be solely his responsibility to intervene in the problems of his neighbouring country?

What is the South African church's role in offering pastoral care for the church in Zimbabwe?

The more the author thought about the lack of involvement from the South African government, the more he grasped that it would be presumptuous of him to expect the South African government to act in this situation, whilst he himself remains apathetic towards it. Getz placed a tremendous challenge to the church when he said that [e]very Christian who is spiritual should be involved in the ministry of restoration (Getz 1986:63). In these words, Getz challenged the author's understanding of his personal role in the Zimbabwean problem. Not only is it a good thing, it is the author's Christian obligation to get involved in the problem of the Zimbabwean church's suffering. A wise man and personal friend once confronted the author when he said; "one can stand on the sideline and blame the world for all that is wrong, or you can get inside the world and change things for the better". Bauckham echoes this notion when he said:

Ascetic Christianity called the world evil and left it.

Humanity is waiting for a revolutionary Christianity which will call the world evil and change it (Bauckham 1999:77).

Tillich also picked up this topic:

Self-affirmation in spite of the anxiety of guilt and condemnation presupposes participation in something which transcends the self (Tillich 2000:165).

Life experience taught the author that the greatest problem solver for personal problems is getting involved in the problems of other people. Foster builds further upon this notion, and the author agrees with him, as he says that Christians will only fulfil their life-purpose in God, once they live a life stretched beyond the borders of self (Foster 1989:173).

In order to fulfil his purpose in God, the author believes that if he, as part of the church in South Africa, seriously responds and cares for the people in Zimbabwe, the South African government will see the example the church has set. In this the church will become God's prophetic voice to the world around it. God called the church to be the head and not the tail, in order to influence societies around them with the truth of the gospel (Deuteronomy 28:13). In other words, South African Christians should lead the way, offering pastoral care to their neighbours in need, instead of criticizing the South African government.

This change of attitude towards the problem in Zimbabwe helped the author to enter into even more friendly relationships with people in Zimbabwe and he began to have contact with people in many other parts of that country. Hence, instead of criticizing the South African Government, the author was freed to reach out to his neighbour in need. Again, the words of Getz helped the author in this regard, Getz wrote:

In Christ we are set free to minister to others, to love others as ourselves (Gal. 5:14). When we become Christians we are given new life – eternal life – and with

that great gift we are given the potential and the power to get beyond ourselves and experience the fulfillment that comes to those who serve others. (Getz 1986:12).

In his newfound freedom of not criticizing others for their lack of involvement in the problems of Zimbabwe, the author then began to explore ways to pastorally serve the church in Zimbabwe.

### 1.3 **WHY DID THE AUTHOR CHOOSE THIS TOPIC OF CARE FOR THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE?**

[P]ractical theology always takes place in the midst of praxis and is prompted by the situation of 'being in the midst'. ...In that sense practical theology is always, or virtually always, done 'on the run', so to speak, or in the midst of the necessity of action (Gerkin 1986:60).

From the above quote, one needs to ask the question whether the situation in Zimbabwe then requires action. This question urges us once more to look at the context of this situation. In the author's mind, the Zimbabwean church needs the South African church's care. However, the true question is, do the Zimbabwean people want this care offered, and in which way do they want this care to come? This question needs to be answered, before the author can attempt to create a caring model towards the church in Zimbabwe.

In this dissertation, the author will not attempt to prove God's call upon Christians to care for his people. The author will act a little presumptuously when he says; GOD HAS CALLED CHRISTIANS TO CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE. What is more, the author believes that the majority of Christians are aware of the caring duty God has bestowed upon them. However, many Christians are selective in the care they offer people. They will select when, where, and to whom they offer Christian loving care. Getz also challenges Christians in the area of caring for all people when he poses this question; "Am I committed to doing good to all people" (Getz 1986:91)? In Getz's understanding, this question is only the point of departure of a much deeper concept as he continues:

This is where we must start. In fact, we must be committed to doing good before we will ever touch others' lives in positive ways. But we should realize, of course, that we cannot literally serve 'all' people. Rather, we must not allow 'favoritism' to take over our lives (James 2: 1-2) (Getz 1986:91).

This selective way of caring is not a modern-day occurrence. An expert in Jewish law tested Jesus with a similar question; "And who is my neighbour" (Luke 10:29 - NIV)? The Scripture states that he wanted to "justify himself". The author pondered this in order to clarify why this person would want to justify himself. From this context, it seems this expert in Jewish law attempted to justify his lack of love towards people he did not recognize as his neighbour. It is not at all difficult to love the loveable people in our lives. But it becomes tougher expressing love

towards those we do not want to love. In response to the expert's question, Jesus told a story that later became known as the parable of the Good Samaritan. This allegory is still popular in motivating our understanding of who qualifies to be our neighbour. Who is the one that will be on the receiving end of our Christian care?

Campbell offers us a better understanding when he teaches that people become companions on the same journey as they pastorally care for one another. Our neighbour is the one who makes this journey with us. This journey the caregiver makes himself (Campbell 1981:82). As travelling companions, the caregiver and care-receiver will earn the right to become friends and comrades on this journey of pastoral care.

Again, the author was strongly challenged by the reason why he chose this topic. Why did he become involved in this very difficult journey of pastoral care for the church in Zimbabwe? Wise has great insight, and he puts it this way; "If our concern to help ends with those who require little cost on our part, then we will not help many" (Wise 1989:4). If God then has called Christians to care for their neighbour in a pastoral way, as a South African, one needs to ask the same question asked earlier; "And who is my neighbor" (Luke 10:29 - NIV)? The author came to acknowledge that God has given unto him the people of Zimbabwe as his neighbour, and he needs to care for them in a pastoral way.

When the author started out on this journey of caring for the people in Zimbabwe, he came to the conviction that this care he offered should go further than just his personal journey. As a solitary person, the author rapidly came to the end of his resources to aid the church in need. The Zimbabwean church needs more than what the author can offer. Furthermore, the author also came to the conviction that it would be wrong for the South African church to continue with an attitude of not demonstrating any care towards the church in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the author is not the only neighbour the Zimbabwean church has. The larger South African church is also a neighbour of the Zimbabweans. In this dissertation, the author will also seek means to persuade the South African church to care for its neighbour in Zimbabwe.

This naturally brings one to pose the question, whether there is any benefit for the South African church to care for its neighbour? The South African and Zimbabwean church might find neighbour-ship, but can any spiritual profit come from such a relationship? Patton answers this very clearly as he wrote:

The purpose of Christian community is not only to experience relationship, but also to experience relationship in order to empower ministry (Patton 1993:24-25).

From Patton we learn that this neighbour-ship will empower ministry, and the author understands that both the South African and Zimbabwean church will be empowered in ministry by such neighbour-ship.



With this, the author was challenged with the notion, whether the South African church should offer pastoral care to the church in Zimbabwe, whilst the church in Zimbabwe sits inertly, waiting to be served pastorally by the South African church. Hence, the author entered into this topic, because he is on a journey. And on the journey, the author has discovered that he is not alone. The church in South Africa as well as the church in Zimbabwe is journeying with him. Together, these travelling companions should find a way to care for God's people.

#### 1.4 **CARE OFFERED TO A NEIGHBOUR IN NEED IS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE**

In the later pages of this dissertation the author will seek to find some answers for the imperative questions on the how's, who's and where's of the care the South African church should be offering the church in Zimbabwe. In the earlier parts of this dissertation, the author wrestled with the notion; if God's purpose for humankind lays in a life lived beyond the comfort of self, and, if the Zimbabwean church the neighbour of the South African church, what would this suggest to the church in South Africa, in the context of what is happening in Zimbabwe? Could the South African church turn its back upon the church in Zimbabwe? In the author's understanding, this should never happen, and if it does happen, it will become an act of disobedience towards God's call upon his people.

As the author researched this problem in Zimbabwe, he came upon a number of congregations who are reaching out to the church in

Zimbabwe in various ways. The author discovered at least three congregations who, on a not so regular basis, take life supporting commodities like food and on a limited level, medicine into Zimbabwe. These congregations all experience financial limitations, difficulty in transporting commodities and problems at customs to export these commodities into Zimbabwe. It has been reported that some of the commodities taken into Zimbabwe were confiscated by the Zimbabwean authorities. However, all these congregations agree that the little they are able to take into Zimbabwe is not nearly enough to meet the need of the Zimbabwean church. Another congregation supports the minister of a congregation in Zimbabwe, because his congregation in Zimbabwe cannot afford his remuneration any longer. In this way they seek to build up this congregation in need on a spiritual basis. The reader should understand that this aid towards the Zimbabwean church is very limited when seen in the context of the enormity of the need in Zimbabwe. For this reason the author deemed it necessary to continue with this research.

In the course of this research the author also discovered congregations that have turned their back on the problem in Zimbabwe. One person even said the problems they are experiencing are created by the Zimbabweans themselves. Statements like these urge the author to consider the South African church's position towards the Zimbabwean church. Perhaps turning their back upon the Zimbabwean church is not quite the right statement for some of these attitudes. Maybe the author

should put it in even stronger terms as he observes apathy towards the church in need from many people. Turning one's back upon this problem means that one acknowledges the problem, yet chooses to ignore it. Apathy in the author's understanding is something quite different. Jesus vigorously challenged this attitude of indifference and apathy (Revelation 3:16), this attitude will even refuse to recognize the existence of suffering or even worse within this context, it simply does not acknowledge the church in Zimbabwe.

As the author wrestled with the problem of apathy towards a suffering church, he became deeply challenged through these words:

We work hard and play hard not because we are more industrious or more playful than our ancestors but because we dare not stop lest in the stillness we are overwhelmed by the sound of our own anxieties and fears (Tillich 2000:xvii).

Could this mean that the world, including the author, being so guilty of the same kind of offences that we see in Zimbabwe, we dare not speak out towards this unjustness, lest we are caught out by our own words? The problem with this ignorance is that when ignoring our neighbours in need, it becomes inescapable that the church will ignore God's call and purpose for its existence. The implications of this insubordination of the church will have extensive effects upon the church in South Africa, as Bonhoeffer forcefully challenged his reader: "Only the obedient believe. If we are to believe, we must obey a concrete command" (Bonhoeffer 2003:21). The

author once heard a wise man speaking on similar lines as he said: "The things we do, are the things we believe, the rest is just religious talk" (Unknown). This last statement stunned the author, he was largely offended with its suggestion. How could it be that the church's faith is measured in its level of obedience to act?

In digging more into this concept, the author learned that the word "obedience" does not share the same meaning as the word "willingness". Jesus was not willing to die on the cross when he called upon His Father to remove this cup from Him. Yet, He chose to obey His Father, and died upon that cross. From this we learn that Jesus' obedience did not come from His willingness to die on the cross. Jesus' obedience was an act of His will. Bonhoeffer continues in this notion:

When he was challenged by Jesus to accept a life of voluntary poverty, the rich young man knew he was faced with the simple alternative of obedience or disobedience (Bonhoeffer 2003:35).

Obedience or disobedience, a choice Christians make daily, where obedience can only follow a command. If Jesus did not call the rich young man to voluntary poverty, obedience would not have been possible as there was nothing to obey. Because of his choice of non-obedience, this young man was disqualified from entering into the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:23). The South African church's neighbour is in need. God has called the church to care for its neighbour. This brings the South

African church to the point of making a choice; will it obey God's call, or will it ignore its neighbour in need of care?

#### 1.5 **SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT CAUSE PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE TO SUFFER**

Under this heading and for the purpose of this dissertation, the author will not attempt to prove the existence of a political and economical crisis in Zimbabwe. Rather, the author will attempt to address the problem of suffering caused by these problems in Zimbabwe. Hence, the author will strive to highlight how the problems in Zimbabwe cause the people of that country to suffer.

From the Internet the author took the following extract, in order to bring the reader an awareness of the extent of the problems in Zimbabwe.

The Mugabe administration has been criticized around the world for corruption, suppression of political opposition, mishandling of land reform, economic mismanagement, and deteriorating human rights in Zimbabwe. According to most analysts his administration's policies have led to economic collapse and massive starvation over the course of the last ten years. Zimbabwe has the highest inflation rate in the world (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Whether this is very factual, depends upon the orientation of the reader. However, this situation is very real for many people living within

Zimbabwe. It is outcries like the above which has fervently confronted the author with the issue of caring for his fellow church in his neighbouring country.

Although the author has already dealt with some of the issues of the suffering of Zimbabwean people in the earlier part of this chapter, the author feels it necessary to help the reader to understand why these issues and problems causes suffering to these people. Hopefully, the reader will understand that, for the purpose of this dissertation, the author will not be able to highlight all these areas of suffering. The author acted a little presumptuous and chose only a few areas to highlight the suffering in Zimbabwe. In the author's mind, this dissertation will not attempt to prove that people are suffering in Zimbabwe. The focus of this dissertation is mainly to find ways and means to give pastoral care to those suffering in Zimbabwe.

#### 1.5.1 **THE INFLATION RATE IN ZIMBABWE IMPOVERISHED ITS PEOPLE**

SABC Television News announced on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2007 that the official inflation rate in Zimbabwe was 7 500%. However, on the illegal street market (also known as the black market), most people believed the rate to be much higher. On this date, some even thought the rate could be as high as 10 000%. This means that item prices upon the shelves in Zimbabwean shops increase at a rate of more than 100% monthly. In May 2006, the author experienced something of this when he bought a

packet of crisps for Z\$130 000. This very same brand and flavour of crisps in the very same shop cost the author Z\$320 000, a mere three weeks later, an increase of around 150%.

In Zimbabwe, the author met a married couple who had retired twenty years prior to his visit in 2006. On their retirement they received a pension of Z\$15 000 per month. This was quite a substantial amount and the couple could live with relative ease at the time of their retirement. However, at the time of the author's visit, due to the inflation problem, the couple's pension was not even paid out by the Zimbabwean bank because the bank charges for paying out this pension was more than what the pension was worth. This left the couple with no income and caused them great suffering. The reader can understand that unemployed people are also severely affected by this situation.

#### **1.5.2 DIFFERENT CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES LEADS TO MANY ILLEGAL FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS, WHICH IMPOVERISH THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE EVEN MORE**

The currency exchange rate between the South African Rand and the Zimbabwean Dollar changes constantly as the Zimbabwean dollar regularly depreciates against most currencies. The author found it almost impossible to pin down a value to the Zimbabwean Dollar. That is why; for the sake of this dissertation, the author chose a specific date to explain this problem of different currency values.

On 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the official value of the Zimbabwean dollar was Z\$16000 to the value of R1. The official exchange rate is the rate that one could exchange foreign money into Zimbabwean Dollars in a Zimbabwean bank. The Zimbabwean government dictates this exchange rate. Foreigners who wish to exchange money in a Zimbabwean bank will receive the official rate. This same rate also applies when businesses that earn foreign currency exchange their foreign earned currency into Zimbabwean Dollars.

This same government also created another exchange rate in order to encourage individual Zimbabwean people to earn foreign currency. For sake of clarity in this dissertation, the author will call this the expatriate exchange rate. For example, if a Zimbabwean earned South African Rand in South Africa, he or she can pay this money into a Zimbabwean bank account provided by the government. On this day of the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006, the Zimbabwean government would then have paid out to this person's family living in Zimbabwe a rate of Z\$27 000 to R1.

To add to this already difficult situation, on this very same day, the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006, one could exchange R1 for as much as Z\$39 000 on the illegal black market. These illegal money exchangers can easily be found on the streets of Harare and other cities. The author even learned that many private people would be glad to pay the black market value only to get their hands on some foreign currency because foreign currency is very difficult to buy through Zimbabwean banks. Some people even



believed it to be impossible to buy foreign currency in a legal manner in Zimbabwe. The reader will realize that the above leaves the poor in a difficult state of poverty.

These problems stimulated the author to wrestle with the question of why was foreign currency so difficult to buy in Zimbabwe. The author spoke to a well-known Zimbabwean businessperson about this strange phenomenon of the scarcity of foreign currency. The businessperson explained that this problem of different currency values leads to the impoverishment of those people who are willing to obey Zimbabwean laws. This businessperson believed the true value of the Zimbabwean dollar to have been something in-between the expatriate exchange rate and the black market rate. He went on to say that nobody knows exactly what the true value of the Zimbabwean Dollar is because of the manipulation by the Zimbabwe government.

Theoretically, according to the value set by this businessman, on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006, one could pin the real value of the Zimbabwean dollar to be Z\$31 000 to R1. This meant that one would lose as much as Z\$15 000 on every South African Rand earned, if it was exchanged in a Zimbabwean bank. The author understands that this is only a theoretical exercise, but it does help us to see the enormity of this problem. Because of this loss of Z\$15 000 to each South African Rand exchanged in a Zimbabwean bank, people are not willing to exchange money legally and that contributes largely to this shortage of foreign currency in the Zimbabwean banks.

This businessperson explained further to the author that this problem of different currency values has forced many high foreign currency-earning businesses to find ways to limit losses. Many of these businesses have found ways to keep their money in foreign countries. By doing this, the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe has escalated because the Zimbabwean government finds it hard to get foreign currency in order to pay for imported products; for example, huge shortages of medical supplies are experienced all over Zimbabwe and has caused a great deal of suffering to the people of Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean people also often experience fuel shortages because of the shortage of foreign currency to pay for imported fuel. These problems open doors for pastoral care, especially amongst the poor people in Zimbabwe.

### **1.5.3 PHYSICAL ABUSE OF PEOPLE THAT OPPOSE THE ZIMBABWEAN GOVERNMENT**

There is a widespread consensus among human rights organizations that the right to personal freedom and integrity are frequently violated in Zimbabwe. This is especially true for members of the political opposition. These violations are perpetrated by government supporters as well as law enforcement agencies. Violations of this nature include assaults, torture, death threats, kidnapping and unlawful arrests and detentions (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). For example, on the 15th March 2007 the Zimbabwean police physically assaulted Mr Morgan Tsvangirai, the opposition party leader, and 49 of his party members. Mr Tsvangirai was

severely injured and had to undergo medical treatment in South Africa for the injuries sustained in this attack (Rapport; 18 March 2007).

The above strengthened the author's belief for the need of pastoral care for the people in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the BBC reported:

According to human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch the government of Zimbabwe violates the rights to shelter, food, freedom of movement and residence, freedom of assembly and the protection of law. There are assaults on the media, the political opposition, civil society activists, and human rights defenders (BBC; 14 March 2007).

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2008, SABC News reported that the ruling party in Zimbabwe now has a torture room next to its head office in Harare (SABC, RSG NEWS 13:00, 20 02 2008).

#### 1.5.4 **THE MEDICAL CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE**

Zimbabwe's biggest state hospital has stopped surgical operations due to a breakdown of equipment and shortages of drugs. ... 'There is a critical shortage of items ranging from anesthetics to surgical equipment at Parirenyatwa Hospital,' Douglas Gwatidzo, chairman of

Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights told AFP (The Citizen, Monday 25 February 2008).

The author finds it difficult to stress this crisis any more than what this quote does. The financial crisis in Zimbabwe causes many thousands of people to suffer because they are denied urgent medical care because hospitals cannot function without this equipment and drugs. The reader can understand that this problem causes tremendous suffering to the people of Zimbabwe.

#### 1.6 **INTRODUCTION TO THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

Under this heading the author frequently asks questions. Some of these questions seem to be rhetorical and yet stimulating the mind to ponder the issue that is at stake. In some instances the author found answers, however, the reader might still want to debate the author's opinion and conclusion to these answers. Yet still, and in all honesty, many of these questions the author has asked are still largely unanswered. In fact, it seems that many of the questions that pastoral care and its methodology convey to us might never be fully answered because the world is ever changing and people experience different kinds of problems and difficulties.

If answers are so difficult to find then what could be the motive in attempting a research project of this nature? Lucado said that the devil's biggest deception is not stealing our Christian answers, but stealing our

Christian questions (Lucado 2000:51). On first glance this seems to be a cheap and sweeping-cliché-like statement. Nonetheless, the author was confronted by the gist of this question. Could this be true? As the author ponders this statement, he realizes that there is more truth in this statement than first meets the eye. Is it not true that most of life's deepest and most meaningful answers would never have become known unless difficult questions were asked first?

#### 1.6.1 **THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

According to Maykut and Morehouse, the researcher's methodology for researching should be "useful for goal development" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:169). As the author was contemplating upon this quote, he became more convinced that this concept requires a higher emphasis. One could rather say that the methodology we choose for researching the problem should never be separated from the goals we have set. Hence, it should not be the methodology that will be useful to set the goals; it should be the goals that determine the methodology we have opted for. For example; the author has focused this dissertation on the empowering of the South African church in order to provide pastoral care for the church in Zimbabwe. He has also set as a goal of this dissertation the involvement of other South African Christians on this journey of providing care for the church in Zimbabwe with him. The hope of the author is that the methodology he has chosen for the dissertation will support and help to achieve the goals that have been set. Because of the unique aim of this dissertation, the author has found it necessary to create, with the help

of many that went before him, a unique methodology to reach these goals. Does this imply that this author has created a methodology so unique that it is completely foreign to other researchers and needs to be called by a new name? No. With the above statement the author is saying that he has used existing methods and methodologies, created by others who went before him, yet still adds or changes some of the elements or emphasis, as well as taking away elements in order to create a methodology that will serve the purpose of this dissertation.

Maykut and Morehouse continues to say that researchers should frequently present their findings to the researched to "determine whether the researchers have portrayed a 'recognizable reality'" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:169). The author has learned to appreciate the truth in this, because he has had this experience from the regular feedback from the researched. Researchers will not only test their own understanding of the problems that exist, but will also take the researched on the same journey of the researcher, in finding pastoral care. By continuously giving feedback on the findings of this dissertation, the author hopes to bring on board the church in South Africa. Together they can offer pastoral care for the people of Zimbabwe, within the parameters set by these people.

In the author's research, and in his attempt to contribute towards the area of pastoral care for the church in Zimbabwe, he wrestled with the question of what method or methodology would serve the purpose of this dissertation best. There are many different methods, methodologies and

paradigms that can be used for such a study as this and, it becomes completely overwhelming. In fact there is so much information about different models that are available, that these many notations become confusing to the aspiring student and could even discourage a not so serious student. So often students would attempt to find just the right method to meet all the needs and goals set for their specific study. This way of thinking left the author frustrated because after a great deal of research, he was unable to find just one method that could meet all the his needs.

Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch, wrestled with this same issue. In their book they concluded that in a research project like this dissertation, one should rather explore in the region of methodology as to a method. They continue to explain the difference between method and methodology in these words:

...the term method denotes a scientific procedure; it is the specification of the steps which must be taken in a given order to achieve a given end. Methodology, on the other hand, is a concept of the next higher logical type, it is the philosophical study of the plurality of methods which are applied in the various scientific disciplines. It always has to do with the activity of acquiring knowledge, not with a specific investigation in particular. It is, therefore, a metamethod and stands in the same logical relation to

method as a class to one of its members (Watzlawick;  
Weakland; Fisch 1974:8).

From the above quotation, the author was encouraged to search for more than just one method of researching this problem of caring for the church in Zimbabwe. The situation in Zimbabwe and the problem of caring for these people is so complex, the author is of opinion that not one method would adequately serve this purpose in its entirety . For this very reason the author has attempted to design a methodology that can be used in this dissertation, in order to achieve the goals set.

#### 1.6.2 **TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS RESEARCH**

The author is very conscious of the changing and fragile nature of the problem situation, and the vulnerability of the people in Zimbabwe. He is largely aware of his responsibility to protect, in so far as it is within his ability, the people who have participated in this research with him, because, for some of these informants, this might become life-threatening. For this very reason, the author has gone to great lengths to protect the identity of the participants and their families in this research. Hence, very little detail will be sketched of specific situations and thefor the reader may perceive some scenarios to be vague. However, the author has attempted to highlight the problem within the situation, without exposing specific people.



In the context of the Zimbabwean situation, and in research work of this nature, the researcher is often confronted with the authenticity of the research he or she has carried out;

- How trustworthy are the statements and claims made by this person?
- How trustworthy is the methodology used in this research?
- How much has this research contributed in the area of providing pastoral care to the people it seeks to liberate?

Again the author is confronted with the fact that he himself is not a Zimbabwean; neither could he claim to be an expert in the history of this country; nor could the author boast of his expertise of the political situation of Zimbabwe. In the light of the above, one could be forgiven for concluding that the author might find himself out of his depth when he speaks about the problem in Zimbabwe.

Bush adds vehemently to this challenge he doubts the authenticity of most Christian academic research. He suggests that the researcher should embrace only the truth in its purest form. Could this suggest that Bush is of conviction that Christian scholars are guilty of accepting an academic standard and truth, which is unsatisfactory to its non-religious counterparts? Bush continues:

...the emergence of postmodernism has resulted in the stunning realization that the excommunication of Christian voices in academic practice is no longer tenable, or defensible, in a postmodern ethos. Until we

get this straight, the university will simply be continuing its search for truth in an authentic, and finally fraudulent, manner. But we Christian scholars must model the truest and best impulses of the intellectual mind. Christian scholarship should and must be the one scholarship most wholly and fearlessly committed to the truth – whatever that truth turns out to be and wherever we can find it. All true scholarship, according to this position, is seeking the same object – what I called earlier the sublime object of hope – whether practitioners admit it or not. (Bush 2005).

Bush paints the picture even darker when he said that "God is glorious, mysterious, sovereign, and clearly beyond our little peanut-size brains" (Bush 2005). This perception from Bush compellingly challenged the author in many areas.

- Does it mean that Bush advocates that it is audacious even attempting to understand God and His working upon peoples lives?
- Could this suggest that this attempt to find some meaning in the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, to be arrogant and this problem to be beyond human understanding?
- Does it mean that it is impossible to find a way to offer pastoral care for the Zimbabwean people?

Judging from this single essay, the author had to wrestle to get to grips with Bush's understanding of Christian scholarship. However, from Bush's

contribution, the author was challenged, and agrees that Christian scholars are required to "model the truest and best impulses of the intellectual mind" (Bush 2005). Maybe this subject of the authenticity of Christian research could become a topic for another research and therefore falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

To add to this already difficult state of affairs, the reader is required to understand that the situation in Zimbabwe continues to change rapidly. It becomes very difficult, if not impossible, to become an expert in the current situation in Zimbabwe. As an outsider it is necessary for the author to confess, that he constantly had to guard against his personal bias towards the political regime in Zimbabwe. The pain and suffering of Zimbabweans tends to evoke so much compassion within the caregiver, it tends to blind him or her to the true reasons why people are suffering.

Again, the author constantly needs to confront himself with the purpose of this dissertation. This research is not purposed in finding reasons for this suffering, but to determine the authors' role in giving care to the people who are suffering. When finding his role, the author will also attempt in creating a model with which to journey with other caregivers towards offering pastoral care to the people in Zimbabwe.

In the light of the above intricacies and complexities, the author has opted to build into this research methodology some safety factors, in an attempt to increase the trustworthiness of the dissertation. For this reason he has

used several methods, to create a methodology and collected from several sources, data and life-stories for this project; e.g.

- Questionnaires to the South African church and the Zimbabwean church via the internet (see appendix A and B).
- Personal interviews with various people he personally knows in Zimbabwe and South Africa, using these questionnaires as a guideline to help him find some uniformity in these interviews.
- Interviews with Zimbabwean people the author did not know before the interview.
- Interviews with family members of Zimbabwean people living in South Africa.
- Interviews with ex-Zimbabwean citizens.
- Interviews with illegal Zimbabwean immigrants living in South Africa.
- The author also dialogued with several authors of books, various magazines, articles and essays related to this subject.
- Because of the ongoing nature of the Zimbabwean problem, the author also collected much data and stories from newspapers and the internet.

Notwithstanding all this energy and effort spent, the author still found it extremely difficult to remain current and true to the problem in Zimbabwe. The reader should understand that the nature of this problem is very volatile, as it became virtually impossible to reflect the latest state of affairs within that country in a research dissertation such as this one. The

author is very aware that as the reader reads this dissertation, the situation in Zimbabwe might already have changed significantly.

In the context of the above and other problems in Zimbabwe, one should then ask the question; should this discourage the aspirant scholar in doing, or even attempting any research of this nature? The author believes that such discouragement would be unacceptable. In fact, the author would like to urge researchers to continue to seek answers in these situations. Oates reinforces this notion as he captures the energy of pastoral care when he defines pastoral as "to heal sometimes, to remedy often, to comfort always" (Oates 1974:7). Research of this nature is encouraging pastoral care in a sustainable way, not necessarily finding answers for these difficult situations. If caregivers seek to help only those who are easy to care for, and whose answers are freely available, he or she will not help many people in need. From Oates we learn that we might not find "healing", we often might not find a "remedy", however, caregivers should never refrain from bringing "comfort" to care-seekers. Morgan contributes to this notion when she wrote;

...stories ... remind me that I don't have to know the answers to people's problems to be helpful. ... [this] (author's own) adds to a sense of excitement when I meet with people – I am excited by what I might learn from them and excited by their strengths and abilities. I look forward to them (Morgan 1999:14).

Through the author's experience in Zimbabwe he learned that "comfort" is not found in the caregiver's wisdom in answering questions of pain and suffering, or an ability to solve these difficult situations, but rather being in community with care seekers. Later in this chapter, under the heading "Research in community", the author will elaborate more on this concept.

### 1.6.3 **A NEW PRACTICAL THEOLOGY URGES A NEW METHODOLOGY**

...the 'old' practical theology mainly applied the results of exegesis or dogmatics, which is often called a deductive or applied approach, the 'new' practical theology has to seek a methodology to study the 'lived religion' in its explicit and implicit multiplicity (Dreyer 1998:1).

In chapter 3 the author wrestled with his understanding of what Practical Theology is. He concluded that Practical Theology must actually do theology in order to meet the need of the people it seeks to serve. This has changed the author's understanding of what Practical Theology should bring. Practical Theology needs to source its energy from within theology, but the author is also concerned that the practical theologian should never lose focus of the fact that the result of its study should always bring the reader to the praxis of this studied and researched theology.

Because Practical Theology has such a strong focus upon the praxis of theology, the author believes that the methodology used, should

emphasize the practical nature of this research. The author's understanding of this wider focus of what Practical Theology should bring, urges him as a practical theologian, to rethink the paradigms he had upon the methodology, and its implementation in doing this theology.

In this dissertation, the author will seek to do theology. However, the author wants make it very clear to the reader that the motive for this theology is the praxis that this theology will bring. Hence, the aim of this theology is to create the energy for the praxis of giving pastoral care to the church in Zimbabwe. Theology in praxis will be the vehicle the author hopes to use in creating a methodology that will help him achieve these goals.

#### 1.6.4 **METHODOLOGY USED IN THE RESEARCH OF THIS DISSERTATION**

For the purpose of clarity within this dissertation, the author chose to clearly differentiate between the 'research methodology' and the 'practical care methodology'. When unpacking the research methodology, the author will seek to thoughtfully consider the methods he has used to collect the stories and data in his research of this problem in Zimbabwe. When the author explores the pastoral care methodology used in this dissertation, he will attempt to explain the methods he has used in creating a model for giving pastoral care to the Zimbabwean people.

However, the author is mindful of the fact that in praxis, the research methodology becomes an integrated part of the pastoral care methodology, because it creates a forum for care seekers to share their pain, and through sharing these painful stories, it becomes therapeutic in itself. These shared stories of the pain and struggling of the Zimbabweans will also help the author to bring an awareness of these problems to the South African church.

Hence, in this chapter, the author will firstly grapple with the methods he used in researching the problem in Zimbabwe. He will also converse with the questionnaires he used to collect some of the data and stories. In doing this, the author will wrestle with the questions he used, and how effective these questions were in bringing an understanding of the problem in Zimbabwe. Later in this chapter, the author will explain the methodology he used in creating a model, in order to offer pastoral care to the people in Zimbabwe. He will also grapple with his understanding of how well the methodology of research and the pastoral care methodology, married one-another in its attempt to bring liberation to the Zimbabwean people.

#### 1.6.4.1 **RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY**

In a paper presented at the 1998 meeting of the "Werksgemeenskap vir Praktiese Teologie" (Workgroup for Practical Theology), that was held at UNISA (University of South Africa), Pretoria, Dreyer said that a new Practical Theology is emerging, where it's focus is no longer as narrow as



pastoral theology only. According to Dreyer, Practical Theology now focuses upon "lived religion inside and outside the church" (Dreyer 1998:1), with much discipline and focus upon the "relationship of the researcher to the researched" (Dreyer 1998:2). The author also learned that this kind of relationship Dreyer speaks about, not only helped him in researching the problem in Zimbabwe, it also helped him to offer pastoral care for these people. It is through this personal relationship with the people of Zimbabwe, that true and practical pastoral care will take place . Dreyer went on to say:

...practical theological researchers will have to enter the lifeworld(s) of the researched. We have to seek to 'honour the integrity of the phenomena we study by trying to meet religious people on their own ground and on their own terms, and by not forcing phenomena into the moulds of our own conceptual schemes' (Dreyer (quote Krüger) 1998:13).

During the course of this research, the author learned the truth of this concept, when he was confronted with the attitude he had towards the beginning of this research in Zimbabwe when he blamed others, yet himself did nothing to help these people in need. He was convicted within this choice; one can stand on the sideline and judge what is happening in Zimbabwe or one could get personally involved and help to bring a change into this situation. At first glance for the author, this seemed to have been the only choice to make, either in or out. As the author

pondered this, he realized that only by personal involvement can pastoral care be offered to a suffering community in Zimbabwe, therefore it is not as simple as just being an insider or an outsider. It does not matter how much the author is involved in Zimbabwe, or how much empathy he has towards the suffering church, he will never become an insider. This problem of suffering in Zimbabwe will not become his personal pain.

Dreyer also wrestled in this area as he is saying:

In community-based action research, the role of the researcher is not that of an expert who does research, but that of a resource person (Dreyer 1998:5).

In these words, Dreyer forcefully challenged the concept of a distant approach to research of a situation as difficult and complex as this Zimbabwean occurrence. He also challenged the attitude of an expert solving the problems of the care seeker. In this context, the author is resolutely confronted with these questions;

- Who can ever become an expert in the suffering of people?
- Who will ever have all the answers that will prevent people from ever suffering again?

The researcher might never become an insider or an expert on the Zimbabwean problem, but he could be neither apathetic nor distant from this problem. From this paper and the context thereof, the author understood that Dreyer urges a relationship of pastoral caring between people, the one side a researching people, and on the other side a researched people. This knowledge caused the author to rethink his

understanding of who the researcher is, and who the researched is. The author agrees with Dreyer, because the author could not research the problem in Zimbabwe through the vehicle of Practical Theology, unless the author also entered into a relationship with the people of Zimbabwe. However it was precisely this relationship with the Zimbabwean people that blurred the distinct dividing lines between the researcher and the researched. Through this relationship with the Zimbabwean church, the author often found himself receiving care instead of offering pastoral care. This relationship has now lost its one-sided-ness, when it became people journeying together, seeking answers and bringing meaning to life.

In chapter 3, the author returns to the concept of communities when he endeavours to explain the concept of the body of Christ in community.

#### 1.6.4.2 **QUALITATIVE VERSUS QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH IN THIS DISSERTATION**

Various definitions and perceptions exist with researchers when they speak of the concepts of 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' methods of research. This urged the author to define what he means when he used these words. The reader needs to note that the notions of quantitative and qualitative methods, within this dissertation, are used in close relation to the questionnaires.

When the author speaks of a quantitative method, he means that questionnaires were filled out by people the author had no personal

contact with. Most often these personal contacts were deliberately avoided for the interviewees' safety sake. The reader can understand that this method posed several problems when offering pastoral care to Zimbabweans. However, this method helped the author to gain a deeper understanding of the pain and suffering of many Zimbabweans.

The authors understanding of the qualitative method, is that a personal relationship between the researcher and the researched exists. Sometimes this relationship can stretch over years, and will result in a deeper understanding and an appreciation between the researcher and the researched. However, some of these relationships are of a shorter nature, even lasting only the time of the interview. The authors' experience is that even these very short-term relationships, aided pastoral care for care seekers because of the personal contact between caregivers and care seekers. His conviction that personal relationships will aid in offering pastoral care, urged the author to incline more towards a research methodology of a qualitative nature. Dreyer strengthens this concept when he explained it in these words:

Qualitative research ... with its higher level of interaction between researcher and researched, will usually involve higher levels of belonging than quantitative research (Dreyer 1998:12).

Because the qualitative method brings a higher level of personal contact through its interaction, and helps in offering pastoral care, the author

often opted to use this method. However, the author could not strictly work within the parameters of qualitative research because of the sensitivity of some incidents which caused the author to be cautious about revealing too much detail, and careful not to expose informants through physical contact. Because quantitative research often requires less contact, people are less exposed when dealing with sensitive issues.

The reader might ask why the author then chose to use both these methods in this research, when qualitative methods clearly brings a higher level of care to the care-seeker. Maykut and Morehouse become helpful in their explanation that a researcher should purpose them self to "accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:174). For this reason the author used both qualitative and quantitative methods in researching this problem. Both these methods were very helpful in this research, the qualitative method helped the author to offer pastoral care to care-seekers, and the quantitative method

#### **1.6.5 METHODOLOGY IN OFFERING PASTORAL CARE TO THE PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE**

Why did the author prefer the Narrative Therapy as a basis for the pastoral care methodology used in this dissertation? Before the author could answer this, he needs to grapple with his own understanding of what he means with the term "NARRATIVE THERAPY". The author also wants to remind the reader of his conviction that Practical heology needs

to do theology to create its own methodology, in order to find the needed energy to be sustained in the praxis of this theology. Hence, in the author's mind, Narrative Therapy should find its motives from within its theological convictions.

The author used Narrative Therapy as a basis for creating a pastoral care model and found it necessary to create his own methodology within the parameters of this therapy, for reasons explained earlier in this dissertation. In the process of creating this methodology, the author will wrestle theologically to qualify his convictions for creating this methodology in the manner he did.

#### **2.5.1 BACKGROUND TO WHAT THE AUTHOR UNDERSTANDS AS NARRATIVE THERAPY**

During the 1970's and 1980's Michael White and David Epston developed what has become known as "Narrative Therapy". Morgan, a personal student and colleague of both White and Epston, wrote extensively upon this topic. She has largely influenced the author in finding a way to help Zimbabweans to create a constructive and helpful narrative of their life-stories. Morgan's attitude towards Narrative Therapy is that it "seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counseling and community work" (Morgan 2000:2). Using this therapy and approach, the author hopes to help Zimbabweans to unpack their life-stories of pain and suffering, which in itself becomes therapeutic and will help the author to care for these people in a pastoral way.

Because of Morgan's non-religious approach to care giving, she wrote that people have "their own expertise of the future" (Morgan 2000:129). Viewed in the context of what Morgan is saying, as caregivers we should allow people to decide for themselves where they see their own future. At first glance this seems to be a good way of viewing the care seeker's future, because:

- Is it not true that we live our lives by the choices we make?
- Is it not true that we will even bear the consequences of the choices we make?
- It is not also true that we should take responsibility for our own lives and the choices we make?

The author could even add to these questions to qualify why people are, and should be, the experts of their own future. In a real sense, the author also understands that people should decide for themselves where, what and how their future should look like.

However, while researching this problem in Zimbabwe and because of the persistent nature of the problem, the author has discovered that most of the people interviewed experienced continued cycles of bereavement and trauma. (This cycle of bereavement is discussed later in this chapter). Continued and ongoing suffering will largely influence the care seekers' perspective of their own future and what it should look like. It seems as if their future has become very muddled and unclear in their own minds. (The reason for this lack of clarity about the future will be discussed further when the author discusses this cycle later in the chapter). This

uncertainty and vague picture of what the future holds contributes largely to a feeling of despair and hopelessness. In chapter 4, when the author grapples with PASTORAL CARE, he will unpack the problem of being without hope for the future, and why this has become such a difficult place to be, in the care seeker's life journey.

Because of the difficulties most Zimbabweans face and their seemingly inability to see a better future, most people need to be assured that tomorrow might bring a brighter future. As a Christian caregiver, the author believes that God has the ultimate expertise upon human life and future. Andrew Lester's theory of hope in pastoral care is saying that humans are called into "an open-ended future with God" (Lester 1995:2). God is calling people into a place where we will have unlimited communion with Him as our Father in heaven. In this open-ended future where God is calling us, our fellowship and communion with God will be perfect because it will never end.

This all sounds very inviting and in principal, it could be theologically defended through various passages in the Bible. However, people in the midst of suffering, pain and death, finds this extremely hard to comprehend. For the suffering people, this could seem to be just another wild dream, when people misinterpret the biblical understanding of who God is. For many suffering people, God's calling of humans to Himself as His creation, becomes a twisted and misinterpreted understanding of who



God is. In his own time of suffering, the author was confronted by many demanding questions;

- Did care seekers just dream this up, in order to bring some kind of false liberation for their intense pain during their time of suffering?
- Could heaven then become a “pie in the sky, one day by and by”?
- If He truly is the God of love, why does He only love other people?

In his time of suffering and pain at the hands of fellow Christians, the author even questioned the goodness of God, since he was unable to experience it during this time. Throughout this time he continued to serve God in a very religious and structured manner, without experiencing a close relationship with God. It was only through the hope he later found in God, that the author could begin to make some sense of his personal suffering. In chapter 4 the author will also attempt to explain what he understands when he speaks about hope in God and why this never could become a “pie in the sky, one day by and by”.

Although the author could not agree with Morgan’s non-religious approach when she expressed her conviction that people have “their own expertise of the future” (Morgan 2000:129), he still found her very helpful in this dissertation. Her simplicity in bringing complex notations helped the author to get a better understanding of the narratives of the suffering people in Zimbabwe. The author hopes that Morgan’s understanding of Narrative Therapy will help him to help Zimbabweans unpack their life-stories of pain and suffering, while Lester’s theory of hope in God, will help him in his search for answers of how to bring hope to the hopeless in

Zimbabwe. What is more, the author believes that the church through its prophetic voice, should call all believers to a life lived beyond self, helping others to find hope in an open-ended future with God.

#### 1.6.5.2 **THE AUTHOR'S UNDERSTANDING OF NARRATIVE THERAPY**

According to Gerkin, humans live their lives within the structures of their life-stories:

...all things human are in some sense rooted in, or find their deepest structural framework in, a narrative or story of some kind. This is true whether we are members of a self-consciously identified community such as the Christian community or are acting within some orientation to the world that is more or less taken for granted and not articulated as a story (Gerkin 1986:26).

Gerkin strengthened the author's thought that human life-stories are an inseparable element from the humans' perception of whom and what they are. Lester confirms this idea by saying:

Human beings do not simply tell stories, or illustrate their lives with storytelling. We construct our senses of identity out of stories, conscious stories and those we suppress (Lester 1995:29).

In building their life-stories humans interpret their life experiences and, unless humans interpret their life experiences, consciously or un-

consciously, life will have no meaning whether positive or negative in its nature. What is more, it is only through the interpretation of these life experiences that humans are able to build momentous memories of their past. In the author's experience, and he believe that it is rather unfortunate, the most prominent memory of the lived past, will largely determine who and what people are, or rather, who and what people are in their own perception and understanding. These perceptions might, and very often are, untrue. Nonetheless, whether true or false, these perceptions largely impact people and dictate most of their behaviour, positively or negatively.

Freeman, Epton and Lobovits fundamentally support this thinking when they wrote:

We humans have ... used mental narratives to organize, predict, and understand the complexities of our lived experiences. Our choices are shaped largely by the meanings we attribute to events and to the options we are considering (Freeman, Epton and Lobovits 1997:xv).

As the author considers this quote, he realizes that this becomes even more complex as people live their lives in many different stories. Even the very same event will account for, "many different stories in the same person" (Morgan 2000:8). Adding to this already complex situation, people might also attempt to interpret events in other peoples' lives. For example, parents interpret events in their children's lives and teachers

interpret events in their students' lives. These interpretations might be and often are wrong. The fact that these interpreted life-stories are often wrong, does not prevent these narratives having the ability to influence people's lives in a negative or positive way. Morgan states that people are often branded as a problem person because of misinterpreted events. Sadly, the author has learned that people, who are branded as a problem person, will live their lives according to this interpretation. Morgan calls this phenomenon a "thin description" (Morgan 2000:12). When this happens, the narrative therapist's task is to find different interpretations for these events and form an alternative story to make this life-story "richly described" (Morgan 2000:15). These "richly described" life-stories are then interwoven with the history of these stories and the cause of the misbehaviour of the person. (The author will return to this idea when we un-pack the concept of externalizing of the problem).

Most narrative therapists believe that life-stories consist of "events" ...linked in sequence ... across time" and "according to a plot" (Morgan 2000:5). Morgan continues to say that people will link events together in sequence and over time, continuously interpreting their everyday-life-experiences in order to try and make meaning of it. This will form the plot of their life-story. However, the author cannot fully agree with Morgan, as he believes that the sequences of these life-stories are not necessarily in chronological order. The author agrees with Gerkin's understanding of these stories and his understanding was deepened by what Ricoeur said. Gerkin quotes;

...there is not a future time, a past time, and a present time, but a threefold present, a present of future things, a present of past things, and a present of present things, ...  
(Gerkin 1986:51).

Again from Gerkin we also learn that time is not necessarily the determining factor for creating a sequence in the life-story of the care-seeker.

It is through narrative that we humans are able to transcend time. In fact, our experience of time has inherent in it a narrative structure. The very notions of a past, a present, and a future are enfolded within a way of seeing time as a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. We look back and forward by means of an experience of time as story. Our present experience in time is giving meaning as it is connected with what has gone before in the story of our lives and the lives of humankind and what we anticipate may go on in the future (Gerkin 1986: 29).

The author wants to add to this notion because he has discovered people in Zimbabwe, telling their narrative in a way that has no chronology that is connected to time. Many people would tell their story as if the worst, or most traumatic incident, happened first. Sometimes these incidents are told last, or even, the same incident is repeated, bringing a new narrative

with it. The author also learned that seemingly disconnected incidents often are linked to form one and the same story. Sometimes these incidents would show similarities, giving some explanation why people would connect these stories. Yet often, these linked stories were completely different in nature, place and time. What is more, the very same event would bring different narratives from different people, and most surprising, the author even came upon people who created more than one narrative from the same event.

It seems to the author that some people have become emotionally blunted because of what they have experienced, and have even blocked certain events out of their memory, as if it they never happened. This became apparent when a farmer told the story of his neighbour being forcefully removed from his farm. The farmer related the story in great detail and expressed deep emotion concerning his neighbour in need. Yet as the conversation continued, the author was surprised to learn that this very same farmer was also forcefully removed, and at gun-point, from his own farm. At first glance it seems as if the neighbour's experience made a much deeper impact upon this farmer than his own similar (or even worse) experience. The author was confronted with this incident. How could this be possible? As the author pondered this, he found some explanation in the cycle of bereavement. Could this experience be so shocking and numbing that the man denies the truth of the incident? (The cycle of bereavement is discussed later in this chapter). How then can the author bring hope to someone so deeply distressed?

Stephen Crites also researched the phenomenon of Narrative Therapy. He was helpful in conveying an understanding that human life-stories and reality or truth are not identical. Crites said "it is not that 'reality' in itself somehow has a narrative form, but our experience(s) (Wiggins, ed, 1975:30). The author can partly agree with Crites, he also understands that reality does not have a narrative as such.

However, in the author's mind, it is not human life experiences that build human life-stories, but the human interpretation of lived life experiences, which build the life-stories. This conviction is strengthened several times over when the author came upon several people in Zimbabwe, and elsewhere, who had experienced the exact same incident, yet interpreted it very differently. These identical life experiences, whether positive or negative, impacted each individual's life-story in a different way. For one person this experience had a huge impact on his or her life story, yet for another person, the same incident seems to have little impact upon his or her life. Furthermore, this same incident could build a negative life-story for one person, whilst building a positive life-story for another person.

Zimmerman and Dickerson were very helpful when they encouraged caregivers to challenge peoples' interpretation of the truths of their life-stories, they wrote:

As narrative therapists, following the thinking of Michael White (1991), we would think of deconstruction as a practice of questioning or challenging what is considered

“given” or “taken for granted” or viewed as a “settled certainty” by looking at the factors producing these givens. In this way, externalizing conversation is a deconstructive practice, for it challenges the “truth” of problems as existing in persons (Zimmerman and Dickerson 1996:63).

The author realized that the above concept becomes problematic when caregivers and care seekers understand different truths. Cultural and gender differences, are but a few obstacles in finding common ground for mutual truths, and the caregiver might find it very difficult to find the "given" or "taken for granted" within care seekers' stories, because caregivers themselves will have to wrestle through their own suppositions for "given" and "taken for granted".

In the above quotation, Zimmerman and Dickerson touch on a vast number of concepts within Narrative Therapy. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, the author will highlight only two concepts mentioned in this passage. The first concept the author will speak to, is the "externalizing conversation" and the second is, "deconstruction".

#### 1.6.5.3 **EXTERNALIZING CONVERSATION**

Narrative Therapy seeks to separate the person's identity from the problem the person is experiencing; hence, the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem. By focusing on the problems' effects on



people's lives, rather than problems being inside or an integral part of people, distance is created between people and their difficulties. Morgan is saying that therapists should allow help seekers to separate person and problem, in order to help them create space or distance, in order for them to begin taking action against their problems. Separation of person and their problem will help the seeker to speak about self as being affected by the problem, and not themselves being the problem. Through this personalizing of the problem, the problem also gets a voice in which it can speak to the person. The manner in which the problem speaks to the person, can also add to the effect this problem will have upon the life of the person (Morgan 2000:24). In externalizing the problem, it is "not a part of the client but an opposing force which needs to be 'defeated'" (Gondim 2006:2).

Abels and Abels elaborate on this understanding, that people are not the problem. People need to deal with a problem. They helped the author to understand this better, they wrote:

Narrative practitioners would not suggest that the person does not have a problem with [the problem] (authors' own), but would help the client to see [the problem] (authors' own) as the problem, and not themselves. They would seek ways to help persons understand the impact that [their problem] (author's own) has on their lives, and map the impact it has on others they are connected to as well (Abels and Abels 2001:86).

They continue to say: "Externalizing the problem tends to take the feeling of shame, guilt, and often hopelessness, off of the person" (Abels and Abels 2001:87). Morgan further suggests that the therapists can help the seeker to separate the person from their problem by asking the seeker to give their problem a name. It is important that the name given to the problem should fit the experience of the seeker (Morgan 2000: 21). If fear is the problem, give it a name and call it by that name. This will help both the therapist and the seeker to separate the problem from the person who seeks help. If the problem is related to a relationship between two people, the other person does not become the problem. It is some elements in this relationship that is the problem, thus identifying these elements and giving them names.

Morgan continues to suggest that once the problem is separated from the person and given a name, the therapist should seek to learn more about the history of the problem by asking questions. The therapist should seek to establish the progression of the problem. How much does the problem influence the seeker today, and how much did it influence the seeker in the past? Was there a time when the problem did not influence the seeker at all? It will also be helpful if the therapist could establish how much influence the problem has upon the seeker, and how much did it influence the seeker in the past. Exploring the problem and its history will help the therapist to begin to understand the context of the problem and the influence it has upon the seeker's life. Because the problem was separated and personalized through giving it a name, the character of the

problem can be identified without threatening the character of the seeker (Morgan 2000: 37).

This concept of externalizing the person's problem seems to be helpful in most circumstances. However, to the author it seems that many people in Zimbabwe find it difficult to separate their person, and the pain they experience. It seems as if these people become a problem to themselves, within their suffering. Adding to this already difficult situation, the author also discovered that many Zimbabweans, found it difficult to trust their neighbour, because they suspect him or her to be an informant for the abusing authorities. Hence, not only do these people experience problems within self, they also find difficulty in expressing their pain to outsiders, and most often are too scared to give their problem a name. The reader can understand that such suspicion makes it hard for the suffering people to continue in healthy neighbourhood relationships because many attempt to bear their pain and suffering in secrecy, because they believe that by expressing their pain and suffering, this will add to their vulnerability, and will expose them to an abusive authority.

The author discovered numerous people in Zimbabwe who are experiencing a great deal of anger because of what is happening to them, which is quite understandable given the circumstances. However, the author was amazed to learn that many other people experience shame and even guilt feelings, because of what is happening to them and their fellow citizens. The author pondered this and began to suspect that these

misplaced feelings of shame and guilt could be a survival mechanism for them, because an expressed anger towards an abusive authority could bring more suffering and abuse.

#### 1.6.5.4 **DECONSTRUCTING THE NARRATIVE**

So deconstruction is basically a process of tearing 'it' down to its root state of polar opposites – always aiming for annihilation of the meaning of the thing itself but, due to the annoying omnipresence of infinity, the annihilation can never be complete (Kelly 2002).

Kelly is suggesting that the problem, or "it" (Kelly 2002), should be torn down, or basically destroyed, in order to rebuild a new truth. The paradox Kelly is bringing is that "it" can never be completely destroyed. As the author understands this, and in a real sense within the context of the Zimbabwean problem, people will never really be free from interpreting their life-stories. Again Kelly becomes helpful in saying:

Meaning does not pre-exist the interpretation of experience. One way to bring to light the meaning of the text is by a process of elimination of what the text is not saying, by identifying that which would be considered its polar opposite, so as to create a balance of the duality within the text (Kelly 2002).

From Kelly it becomes apparent that the caregiver needs to listen, not necessarily what is expressed in words, but very often to what is not said,

in order to understand the real meaning of the narrative. The farmer who told the author all about the pain of his neighbour being forcefully removed from his farm, did not say much about his own pain at first. Only after being prompted as to why he also left his farm, did this man tell of his own pain and experience. Abels and Abels also contribute in this area of listening to the untold stories:

One of the first tasks of the worker, requirement if you will, is dedicated listening. Not only listening for what is said, but also for what is missing from the story. Active listening is also an important indicator to the client that you care about what is being said. An important part of the listening process is assuming a “know nothing” frame of reference. That is, the worker asks the types of questions that arise out of the narrative, asking the client to fill in the gaps (Abels and Abels 2001:84).

The author understands this to mean that, the caregiver should be mindful that only the care seeker is the expert in the untold story. For this reason, it is important to test the untold story with the care seeker before these stories can be formulated, and an alternative narrative could be created. Hence, the caregiver should often test their understanding by asking whether he or she heard the care seeker correctly when he or she told their untold story. It is vital to note that even the untold stories are deeply affected and infected by the care seeker’s own worldview. Later in

this chapter the author will return to the notion of the worldview of the care seeker and that of the caregiver.

Morgan explains that the narrative therapist should realize that problems can only survive when they are supported by specific "ideas, beliefs and principles" (Morgan 2000:45). She continues that these ideas, beliefs and principles will be an essential part of the seeker's culture. Understanding the problem in the context of the seeker's culture will help the therapist to evaluate the influence the problem has upon the seeker's life. It might become necessary for the therapist to challenge some of these ideas, beliefs and principles to learn more about the seeker's culture. Yet, therapists should be aware that the problem remains the problem (Morgan 2000:50). Could it be that this farmer who did not tell the story of losing his own farm found it hard to express his own "weakness" in protecting his own? Or maybe the injustice done to him and his family, inflicted such pain, that it was too much to share with an outsider?

Through deconstruction, narrative therapists should help seekers to create an alternative story that will have a positive influence upon the seeker's life. Morgan suggests that these stories should also be given a name by the seeker (Morgan 2000:72). The telling of these stories by the seeker can be in various forms such as in a verbal conversation, telling the story through drawn pictures, written essays or letters or any other way the seeker is comfortable with (Morgan 2000:99).

#### 1.6.5.4.1 **LISTENING IN DECONSTRUCTING THE NARRATIVE**

In the counseling process we listen with many ears. We listen to the words spoken. We listen to the ways in which words are spoken – softly, loudly, hesitantly. We listen to the obvious meaning of words and sentences, and we listen to their possible meaning (Schön, Gower and Kotze 2005:49).

The author discovered that the most helpful tool in deconstructing a narrative in the Zimbabwean context is listening, more listening, and listen again, to the stories of pain and suffering. It seemed to the author that the people interviewed never got tired of telling their stories of suffering and pain. Jacobs urges caregivers to make time to listen to care seekers, he suggests that specific appointments should be made in order to make time to hear these stories (Jacobs 1982:4). Freeman, Epston and Lobovits strengthened the importance of listening when they wrote:

The term narrative implies listening to and telling or retelling stories about people and the problems in their lives. In the face of serious and sometimes potentially deadly problems, the area of hearing or telling stories may seem a trivial pursuit. It is hard to believe that conversations can shape new realities. But they do. The bridges of meaning we build with children [and their parents] (author's own) help healing developments flourishing instead of wither and be forgotten. Language can shape events into narratives of hope.

We humans have evolved as a species to use mental narratives to organize, predict, and understand the complexities of our lived experiences. Our choices are shaped largely by the meanings we attribute to events and to the options we are considering. A problem may have personal, psychological, socio-cultural, or biological roots – or, more likely, a complex mix of the above. Moreover, young persons and their families may not have control over whether a certain problem is in their life. But even then, how they live with it is within their choice. As Aldous Huxley once remarked, “experience is not what happens to you. it is what you do with what happens to you”. (Freeman, Epston and Lobovits 1997:XV).

The author discovered that Zimbabweans are most willing to tell their stories, but fear often forces them to tell it non-verbally. Sweeten states it very clearly that without effective listening, clear communication is not possible. Unless the caregiver clearly seeks to understand the care seeker, “both will end up on a total different wavelength” (Sweeten 1993:107). Sweeten continues to urge caregivers to use a method he called reflective or “Radar listening” (Sweeten 1993:101). Radar listening is a method where the caregiver continuously verbally tests his or her understanding of the story through questions and comments. Jacobs contradicts this when he says that caregivers should “keep what we say to a minimum” (Jacobs 1982:29). In the Zimbabwean context, the author wants to strongly oppose this notion, because he found the radar listening



skill to be very helpful in order to hear even the untold stories of pain. Through reflecting the told and untold story back to the care seeker, as the hearer understands it, the author was able to become more informed of the situation and circumstances of the care-seeker. Most amazing, through this method, the care seekers often were tested in their own words, or lack of words, and they often rerouted their line of conversation and tested their own understanding of their situation.

The author found this method of reflection in the conversations to be most helpful and a non-threatening way to learn from the care seeker. Epsen also dwells upon the idea that the caregiver becomes the non-expert, allowing the care seeker to bring his or her experience in the way they have experienced it. Epsen continues:

I decided to take ethnography as my means of operating. Rather than thinking of myself as possessing some "expert knowledge" that I might apply to those consulting me, I made seeking out fellow feeling as my primary concern. After all, in every instance, the various expert knowledge's had exhausted themselves of their very own expertness or frankly admitted that they could do no more than palliative care (Epsen 1999).

Morgan even takes this notion further when she suggests that people become experts in their own life stories:

Narrative Therapy seeks to be a respectful, non-blaming approach to counseling and community work, which

centers people as the experts in their own lives (Morgan 2000:2).

The author has learned that he might not agree with people's perceptions of their life-stories, and he might not share their sentiments. However, the fact that the author does not agree, or might even think he might have a "higher insight into the situation", does not make him an expert of the care seeker's perceptions of their experienced lives. Our approach in consultation should be one of a journey with many different ways or routes to reach our destiny, where the care seeker most often holds the key to which route should be taken. However, therapists should continuously test the route to determine whether this is still the best one to follow (Morgan 2000: 3).

#### 1.6.5.5 **THE SEEKER'S WORLDVIEW IN NARRATIVE THERAPY**

The person's world view is a set of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, values, and knowledge that influence a person's comprehensive outlook on life. The fundamental sources of this outlook come from all aspects of a person's life including culture, family, peers, gender, religion, sexual orientation, location, economics, and life experiences. It evolves into a frame of reference that organizes the person's perceptions of others and the world in general (Abels and Abels 2001:60).

From the above, the reader can understand that all people who have an opinion about something have formed this opinion through the vehicle of their personal "world view" (worldview). The author has learned that these different worldviews contribute largely towards the phenomenon that people create different narratives from within the same incident. Both caregivers and care seekers alike are not free from their own personal worldview. What is more, care seekers and caregivers seldom, or could the author dare say never, share the same world view. For this reason, Morgan advocates strongly that therapists should approach care seekers with "curiosity, and always ask questions to which you genuinely do not know the answers" (Morgan 2000:2). She continues in this paradigm of caregivers being learners; learning from care seekers' narrative of their life-stories. In this situation the caregiver learns from the care seeker, in order to learn the life-story of this person in need.

Morgan continues to say that seekers come to therapists for help, because the problems they are experiencing influence their lives in "an undesirable manner" (Morgan 200:43). It will also be helpful if the therapist could determine why this problem has such an influence in the seeker's life. The therapist is an outsider to these problems and can never know how much these problems influence the seeker unless the seeker tells the therapist. It is the seeker that decides how big or how small a problem is, and in what areas of life, these problems influence the seeker's life.

#### 1.6.6 **BEREAVEMENT IN NARRATIVE THERAPY**

According to the Oxford dictionary, bereavement means to be "deprived, especially of a relative by death" (Oxford Dictionary 1979). One needs to ask, within the context of what is happening in Zimbabwe, why then did the author choose to deal with the topic of bereavement in Narrative Therapy, because, not all people experienced death in their families as a direct result of the suffering in Zimbabwe?

In the authors mind, the above definition of bereavement becomes too narrow, when one deals with people in situations similar to that in Zimbabwe. In this context, Oates broadens our understanding when he speaks of separation from "something or someone". Oates continues:

Probably the most common kind of loss by separation is divorce. But broken courtships, job losses, broken friendships, and losses of homes through financial reverses or natural disasters are also forms of separation that are akin to the loss of someone by death (Oates 1976:1).

As the author researched this problem in Zimbabwe, he learned that people are often bereaved through continual experiences of loss and separation from that which is valuable to them. Sometimes this loss could mean the loss of life of a person, and sometimes more than just one person. However, the loss of a lived hope, or a future dream, very often resulted in a real sense of bereavement and separation from something

that was treasured deeply. Many people are bereaved when they have lost that which they worked for all their lives. It seems that the continuing nature of the problem in Zimbabwe causes people to have a continued sense of bereavement and loss, and it deepens as time progresses. When the author deals with the bereavement cycle under the heading; KÜBLER-ROSS' CYCLE ON DEATH AND DYING, he will elaborate on this in an attempt to bring a deeper understanding to this phenomenon.

Through the questionnaires to the Zimbabwean church, the author became aware of people who have a deep feeling of being deprived of their present and future life in their country. The author was amazed to learn that some people even felt deprived and separated from their past. As the author conversed with these people, he became very aware that they are bereaved in a very real way. This situation becomes more complex, because many Zimbabweans have experienced various difficulties and traumas in short intervals over a prolonged period. Often people do not have the liberty to mourn a situation, because the next traumatic incident already awaits them. One person whom the author interviewed said; *"I still had to deal with the loss of our house we worked for all our lives, when the police arrested my husband and son. If only they would leave us alone!"*

The reader can understand that these people find it difficult to cope with what is happening to them. As the author pondered the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, he realized that these people experience cycles of

bereavement, very similar to people who are bereaved because of the death of a loved one, with one significant difference; many Zimbabweans experience a continual cycle of trauma and bereavement.

Spiegel helped the author in his search to understand this process of loss, separation and bereavement when he said that to distinguish phases or stages, the caregiver can begin to gain some insight into this problem:

The nature of sorrow is so complex, its effects in different characters so various, that it is rare, if not impossible, for any writer to show an insight into all of them." One possible way of systematizing this complex phenomenon is to attempt to distinguish stages in the process of bereavement (Spiegel 1977:59).

In the light of what Spiegel said, the author will attempt to bring some understanding of the pain the Zimbabwean people, when he explores some of these cycles or stages of bereavement. The reader needs to notice that the author will not attempt to extensively research these cycles or stages of bereavement in Zimbabwe. (This could become a topic for another research.) Neither will the author attempt to categorize bereaved Zimbabweans into specific stages of bereavement. This will prove to be problematic because the author suspects most of the people he interviewed, found themselves in various stages within short intervals. However, the author is of a mind that an understanding of these stages or

cycles, becomes helpful in our search to grasp some of the Zimbabwean people's responses to what is happening to them.

#### 1.6.6.1 **KÜBLER-ROSS' CYCLE ON DEATH AND DYING**

Kübler-Ross did some ground breaking work on the bereavement cycle as it is commonly known to caregivers. She did in depth research about people who were terminally ill and were dying. She discovered five stages or cycles most people experience during this time. This became known as "Kübler-Ross' cycle on death and dying". The author found Kübler-Ross very helpful in understanding the bereavement cycle of the Zimbabwean people, and why people responded to the questionnaires in the way they did. Again, the author will not attempt to group people into the specific stages of the Kübler-Ross' cycle.

Adding to this, Oates also contributed to this already complex notion when he reminds us that it is not as simple as formulating cycles, and categorize people within these cycles:

[G]rief and separation are dealt with pastorally in two markedly different ways, depending upon how they begin.

There are two kinds of onset: the slow insidious, and prolonged onset, and the acute, sudden, and cataclysmic onset (Oates 1976:11).

These two categories from Oates are helpful and add to Kübler-Ross' work, however, the author discovered that many Zimbabweans not only

experience a slow and prolonged feeling of bereavement or separation caused by an abusive authority, these experiences are repeated through continued violence and oppression, and cause a continued feeling of bereavement and separation. Adding to this, and simultaneous to the prolonged bereavement, many Zimbabweans experienced sudden onset of bereavement in the death and separation of loved ones by the hands of an oppressing authority.

The reader should be mindful that, although the author placed this part of the dissertation under the heading of Kübler-Ross' cycle on death and dying, he used many other author's in his search for meaning within these cycles. Hence, Kübler-Ross' research formed the foundation of the author's understanding of these cycles, but many other authors contributed, and enriched the author's understanding of the various aspects of these cycles. Together they form and shaped the author's understanding of this difficult model.

#### 1.6.6.1.1 **FIRST STAGE: DENIAL AND ISOLATION**

Kübler-Ross combines the reaction of shock and denial, whereas De Klerk draws a distinct line between these emotions. According to De Klerk, shock often has a numbing affect upon people, and most often will switch rapidly to denial. Shocking news is often greeted with denial; 'this cannot be true' (freely translated from Afrikaans) (De Klerk 1985:103), and often this person "cannot cry or show any emotion at all" (Schön, Gower and Kotze 2005:120). The author came across people in



Zimbabwe that expressed little signs of this initial denial, as if they are so used to shocking news, *“nothing can shock me any longer”*, an interviewee said. Could this be true? The author suspects that the continued numbing effects of previous experiences are still evident in the care seeker’s story, and it leaves him or her in such a state of stupor, where nothing can shock the care seeker. However, the author wants to suggest that this inability to be shocked can largely be blamed on a denial of reality.

According to Spiegel, this denial is not always verbally aired, and the evidence of this denial might only become apparent after days, or even longer (Spiegel 1977:66). Kübler-Ross also states that denial is a vital stage in bereavement, because it becomes a temporary defence (Kübler-Ross 1969:40). She continues:

Denial functions as a buffer after unexpected shocking news. It allows the patient to collect himself and, with time, mobilize other, less radical defenses (Kübler-Ross 1969:39).

In the first stage of bereavement, some people might continue with life as if nothing has happened, and often speaks as if this incident never took place (De Klerk 1985:107). Clinebell believes that in this stage of shock and numbness, the biggest need in the care seeker is practical help and spiritual comfort (Clinebell 1984:221). The author came across a lady in Zimbabwe who claims that she no-longer cleans her house anymore. She could not explain this behaviour, other than just; *“I don’t feel like cleaning*

*the house*". It is very clear to the author that this lady needs practical help, someone to clean her home, but who will do it?

#### 1.6.6.1.2 **SECOND STAGE: ANGER**

According to Kübler-Ross' model, anger becomes the next stage in this cycle. Spiegel believes that anger very often becomes part of the denial stage, when people often switch between these two emotions of anger and denial, without any perceptible warning (Spiegel 1977:64). Depending upon the circumstance, Clinebell adds to this stage and says that people often experience feelings of guilt (Clinebell 1984:221), and the author needs to add, sometimes these guilt feelings are justified because of people's actions, or lack thereof. De Klerk believes that this emotion of guilt often leads to anger, which in turn could manifest in the form of depression (De Klerk 1995:109).

During this emotional instability, Kübler-Ross believes the anger stage can prove to be very difficult for the people around the bereaved person. She urges her readers not to allow these unstable emotions to bring negative feelings towards the care seeker, she wrote:

The tragedy is perhaps that we do not think of the reasons for patients' anger and take it personally, when it has originally nothing or little to do with the people who become the target of the anger. As the staff or family reacts personally to this anger, however, they respond with increasing anger on their part, only feeding into the

patient's hostile behavior. They may use avoidance and shorten the visits or the rounds or they may get into unnecessary arguments by defending their stand, not knowing that the issue is often totally irrelevant (Kübler-Ross 1969:52).

The author came across numerous people in Zimbabwe who experienced emotions of anger and depression, and sometimes these feelings are directed towards people who are as much a victim as the care seeker is. For example, the author spoke to people who are angry with shopkeepers because their shops are empty, or commodities are very expensive, and they could not buy what they needed. Through the author's experience, shopkeepers are not to blame for the low stock levels in their shops, as the author already explained earlier.

#### 1.6.6.1.3 **THIRD STAGE: BARGAINING**

...the stage of bargaining, is less well known but equally helpful to the patient, though only for brief periods of time. If we have been unable to face the sad facts in the first period and have been angry at people and God in the second phase, maybe we can succeed in entering into some sort of an agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening: "If God has decided to take us from this earth and he did not respond to my angry pleas, he

may be more favorable if I ask nicely (Kübler-Ross 1969:82).

Bargaining and feelings of guilt are connected when peoples' guilt feelings often stimulate an attitude of bargaining with God (De Klerk 1995:113). This feeling of guilt is not necessarily justified by wrong doing of any party. Collins believed that people feel guilty when "the individual violates his or her own personal standards or resists the urging of conscience" (Collins 1988:135). In the Zimbabwean context, the author believes that this definition becomes too narrow, because he came upon a mother blaming herself, because she went to town, and her child was kidnapped by war veterans. In testing her story, the author discovered that she did not think it wrong to go to town; neither did she feel guilty for not looking after her child. In the author's mind, these feelings of guilt came from her anger towards these war veterans, and not being able to do anything about her child's predicament. In these feelings of anger and guilt, she wanted to bargain with anyone who is willing to listen to her story. At the end of this interview, she asked the author to pray for God's intervention in this situation; "*maybe God will listen to you*, she said. What is the untold story in this short phrase? Did this mother ask the author to pray, because God does not listen to Zimbabweans any longer?

#### 1.6.6.1.4 **FORTH STAGE: DEPRESSION**

Kübler-Ross believes that this stage becomes apparent, "when the person cannot deny this no longer" (Kübler-Ross 1969:85). She also

categorizes this emotion of depression in two areas; "reactive depression" and "preparatory depression" (Kübler-Ross 1969:86) in saying;

...the second type of depression is one which does not occur as a result of a past loss but is taking into account impending losses (Kübler-Ross 1969:86).

Spiegel calls this the control stage, as the bereavement or feeling of loss exercises "control" upon the bereaved, and often would attempt to "control" the people around the bereaved (Spiegel 1977:66). The reader can understand that this control will leave the bereaved feeling oppressed and depressed. According to Spiegel, during this stage of control, the bereaved finds it difficult to make decisions (Spiegel 1977:67), because the bereaved is putting his or her "loss in a wider context of meaning and faith" (Clinebell 1984:221). Hence, this feeling of depression often is the result of the feeling of loss and separation (De Klerk 1995:117). For the author it seems that, during the time of this research, many Zimbabweans experienced this stage in bereavement. The author also realizes that most of the people he interviewed living in Zimbabwe, moved from stage to stage within the first four stages, not necessarily in a chronological order, and very few moved into the final stage of bereavement. Under point 2.6.1.6, the author will briefly discuss his understanding for this occurrence.

#### 1.6.6.1.5 **FIFTH STAGE: ACCEPTANCE**

If a patient has had enough time and has been given some help in working through the previously described stages, he will reach a stage during which he is neither depressed nor angry about his "fate." He will be able to express his previous feelings, his envy for the living and the healthy, his anger at those who do not have to face their end so soon. He will have mourned the impending loss of so many meaningful people and places and he will contemplate his coming end with a certain degree of quiet expectation (Kübler-Ross 1969:112).

In this Final stage, care seekers will be "reaching out to others experiencing similar losses for mutual help" (Clinebell 1984:221). The author discovered a multitude of Zimbabweans, who left Zimbabwe because of the problems in that country, forming little communities in South Africa. Through the interviews, the author learned that these people found comfort, sharing their lives with others who experienced the same pain.

#### 1.6.6.1.6 **KÜBLER-ROSS' CYCLE OF BEREAVEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ZIMBABWEAN PROBLEM**

The author realizes that the above overview of this phenomenon of the bereavement cycle is very brief, and much deeper research on this topic could become most helpful in the Zimbabwean problem. However, this falls outside the scope of this dissertation, and for the purpose of this

dissertation, the author believes that this brief overview is sufficient for explaining why so many Zimbabweans experience various emotions that could be identified within these cycles.

The question remains, why did the author find so many people caught, in what seems to be, the first four stages of this cycle? In the author's mind, these continued experiences of bereavement cause people to repeatedly go through these stages, not getting the liberty to deal with their pain and bereavement. Furthermore, the author discovered, "a wound buried, is buried alive" (Spruyt 2009).

Kübler-Ross' model helped to bring more understanding to the problem, but the author discovered that her model did not bring relief from the pain in Zimbabwe. This challenged the author to ponder the fact that this knowledge did not bring liberation, because these cycles are very helpful to diagnose the pain, but does little to ease the pain. Why is it so difficult for many Zimbabweans to come to terms with their circumstances?

Through the author's relationship with many Zimbabwean people, he realizes that many of them have no or very little hope for a better future in their country. It simply seems to them that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. For many it seems that their life cycle goes from crisis to crisis. The 2008 elections sparked a little hope for some people, but this hope was soon destroyed, because these elections brought no or very little liberation to most Zimbabweans. The hopelessness of these people

become evident when one considers how many Zimbabweans fled their country, even risking living illegally in places like South Africa. However, the author also discovered many people living in Zimbabwe, because they believe it to be their home, and they will not leave their country come what may.

#### 1.6.6.2 NARRATIVE THERAPY, THE CYCLES OF BEREAVEMENT AND HOPE

Hope is not a private dream. It unites us with the concrete human beings inhabiting our own historical time and place... To live with hope is to live in one's full humanity. So, first of all, hope is profoundly communal: it involves the communities to which we ally ourselves, including our classrooms, departments, schools, churches and synagogues, soccer teams, knitting groups, or whatever. All these communities must somehow manifest shades of hope. ...True HOPE is never for God alone but rather for an all-encompassing and never ending community, centered in God. By "community" I mean perfect unity among personal beings...a love transcending justice and fully expressed in the absolute affirmation of the other which occurs in self-sacrifice. Accordingly, if HOPE is for God, it is for a triumphal community – for a final and eternal reunion of God and his human creatures (Bush 2005).



As a closing remark Morgan wrote; "people have expertise on their own lives" (Morgan 2000: 129). In the context of the above quotation, Morgan is saying that people know what their future should look like, and caregivers should help care seekers to arrive at their own goal. In the author's mind, this could never be true because with such a statement we are saying that we do not need input from the outside to become a higher self.

The author uses the term "we", because he believes that he, the reader, Zimbabweans and all people, cannot be an island. "We" need "our" input, and from the "outside", meaning other people entering into our lives so that we become people with purpose and hope. With this the author is saying; people cannot build their future stories, isolated from other people and their environment. If Morgan is correct, then the author would find it very difficult to qualify his attempt to help Zimbabweans to rewrite their future stories, because their future stories would become their private domain, and totally inaccessible and out of bounds to the author.

Zimbabweans themselves find it very difficult to create their own future stories. When asked the question; "How do you see the future of the church in Zimbabwe", very few Zimbabweans could see any prospects of a brighter future. For most, the future was unsure, and unless something drastic happens, nothing will be left of their country. This left these people at a very difficult place because:

Person's lives are made up of countless experiences that they organize in ways that help them make sense of their existence. These events are stories, or narratives that are assigned relative meanings, and make up the "landscape of the person's life" (Abels and Abels 2001:1).

Abels and Abels strongly suggest that through different experiences human life stories are created, and these stories or narratives make up the "landscape of the person's life" (Abels and Abels 2001:1). When hope for a brighter future then disappears from this narrative, care seekers will find themselves in a place of deep despair, or could the author suggest, people will find themselves in the valley of the shadow of death? (Psalm 23). Without hope for a better future, this "landscape" will turn into a barren land. Why do so many Zimbabweans experience despair and bereavement? Could it be that these people have lost hope for a better future? In the author's mind it is not as simple as that, however he suspects that loss of hope, does play a major role in these feelings of despair. The continued experiences of bereavement add to the feeling of an unending cycle of loss and separation from hope for a better future. At this point Lester becomes very helpful when he says, that people can endure much and can go through very difficult times, as long as they experience hope for a brighter future (Lester 1995:12).

The author agrees with Wemberly when he suggests that we are who we are, because our stories have shaped us into our current state. But our current state does not dictate our future stories:

Although stories shape who we are, we can transform these stories and participate in shaping the stories that impact our lives (Wimberly 2003:25).

If Wimberly is correct, then the author finds much reason to believe that Zimbabweans can be helped by finding positive future stories, in order to find a glimpse of hope for a better future. But these future stories could never be sourced from within the care seeker, or the caregiver, for that matter. As a Christian, the author is of the conviction that our positive future stories can only be authored in the hands of God. If this hope for a better future is for God, it is manifested in the receiving of the Word of God, in which the depths of the divine reality are expressed. The gospel of John encapsulates this thought: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (NIV).

We should never merge the problem and the person into one being. The problem is the problem and the person is not the problem, yet, we can never presume that people have expertise upon how to live their lives to fulfil God's will. Through His Word, God has made known His will, and as Spiritual Counsellors and helpers, it is our task to help people to discover God's perfect will for their lives. In chapter 4, the author will return to this notion of hope for a better future, in an attempt to connect hope and the praxis of pastoral care in the Zimbabwean context.

## 1.7 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is important to note that the church is not perfect. Yet, the church is the instrument God has chosen to care for God's people. God called all Christian believers to care pastorally for people because they are the appointed, to be light and salt to the earth (Matthew 5:13-14). In other words, God called believers to influence the societies in which they live, with the gospel of Christ's righteousness and love. That is why the author believes that the church should never be silent in times of the kind of injustices we see in Zimbabwe today.

This care for the Zimbabwean people must happen in the midst of an ongoing political crisis. From 1 Corinthians chapter 12 we learn that the believers in Christ are the body of Christ. From this same passage, this author reminds us that when one part of the body suffers, the whole body will feel its pain. In the South African part of this body, our suffering might not be as physical as the Zimbabwean church's suffering, yet, as members of the same body we too are deeply affected by the Zimbabwean crisis.

Throughout this dissertation, the author wants to address the problem and hope to create a model of caring for the church in Zimbabwe. How do we care for the suffering church in Zimbabwe whilst living in South Africa? How can the South African church offer this pastoral care in such way and give a prophetic voice to the world of God's love for his people?

In the midst of this, one may never lose sight of the fact that this care must happen within the parameters set by the Zimbabwean church. What does the Zimbabwean church want the South African church to do for them? The author will also seek to find some answers on how it can be done.

#### 1.7.1. **HYPOTHESIS WITHIN THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The author is aware that this problem is not unique to Zimbabwe. As the author read and listened to world-news, he become very aware of many difficulties in the Middle East and also many other parts of the world. Political dictators and manipulators have been with the world for many thousands of years. However, it would be dangerous to cart-blance categorize all these problem-regions as the same. For the purpose of this dissertation the focus will be upon the problem in Zimbabwe. The author will seek to create a model for pastoral care and how it could be administered towards the church in crisis in that country.

#### 1.8 **THE AIM OF THIS DISSERTATION**

Without honest questions, one cannot find honest answers. In this dissertation, the author will critically seek to ask honest questions in order to find honest answers on how to care and liberate the church in Zimbabwe. The author hopes to create a model of care that will not only care spiritually for the people, but will also meet some of the physical needs of the people in Zimbabwe.

The author will seek not to lose sight of the fact that he himself is not a Zimbabwean and this problem of suffering in the Zimbabwean church is not his. Yet, as a believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ, the author is part of the body of Christ. That is why the author believes that he may never turn his back upon the suffering church because when one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body is also affected. It is in being part of the body of Christ that the author understands his obligation to care pastorally for the church in Zimbabwe.

### 1.9 **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In chapter 1, the author made an effort to help the reader to understand some of the problems in Zimbabwe. He also grappled with the methodology to offer pastoral care as well as the methodology to research this problem in Zimbabwe. At the end of this chapter the author needs to ask himself whether the methodology he has created served the purpose of this dissertation. As the author pondered this, he realizes that this methodology had limited success in bringing some of the South African churches to a place of gaining a little deeper understanding of the difficulties in Zimbabwe. The applied Narrative Therapy also aided the author in his attempt to offer pastoral care to Zimbabweans. At the end of this, the author must confess that the one single element that had the highest impact upon Zimbabweans was not the telling of their stories, or wise answers of the caregiver. The one thing that really impacted care seekers was the willingness of caregivers to give of self, in bringing comfort in communion with these people in need.

Chapter 2 will concern itself with a brief overview of the historical and political situation in Zimbabwe. The readers should be aware that this brief overview is not an attempt to give an comprehensive insight into all the problems in Zimbabwe, as this would fall outside the scope of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 2

For many people there is a perception that dissertations are researched to solve problems faced by people. In the author's mind, this is an incorrect perception because dissertations are not able to solve problems such as suffering and pain. The author believes that the legitimate question to ask in a dissertation prepared in Practical Theology is; "how can I be assisted to give help to the helpless people in need", and in the context of this dissertation, the people of Zimbabwe? It seems that this question is seldom asked by the South African church. So the therapist should be the one to ask this question on behalf of the people in need.

In the first chapter the author has explained his motivation for researching this dissertation and the methodology he used. In the later parts of the first chapter, the author has formulated the problem statement as he understands it, preparing the way for the second chapter which concerns itself to give a brief historical and political background of the problems in Zimbabwe, in order to gain a better understanding of the suffering and the context, of the Zimbabwean people.

### 2.1 **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ZIMBABWE?**

The main object of this heading is not to prove the existence of many problems in Zimbabwe, but to paint a picture of how these problems are causing Zimbabwean people to suffer. It is this suffering of the Zimbabwean people which has urged the author to do this dissertation, in order to find ways and means to provide pastoral care for these people.



However, for the reader to get a deeper understanding of the problems in Zimbabwe, the author needs to bring a brief historical background of probable causes of these problems. The situation in Zimbabwe is daily changing which causes difficulty in keeping the information used for this dissertation current. The internet has been very helpful, although much of the information gained from this source could not be used in this dissertation, simply because the author could not authenticate the specific source.

#### 2.1.1 **WHY AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND IN ZIMBABWE?**

The author is very aware of his limited knowledge of the history of Zimbabwe and therefore, this overview is not aimed to be a comprehensive historical account of the history of the problems in Zimbabwe. Hence, the focus and purpose of this overview is not to prove any political views right or wrong. Rather, with this overview, the author will attempt to help the reader to get a deeper understanding of the history of the current political situation in Zimbabwe. The author's hope is to help the reader, not only to understand the history of these problems, but also to understand how these problems have caused suffering to many people in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the author's hope is that this understanding of the political and historical background will also help him to motivate the pastoral care which he so desires to offer the Zimbabwean people.

## 2.2 A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE WHITE/BLACK LAND ISSUE IN ZIMBABWE

What is known today as the Great Zimbabwe ruins, were built between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries by indigenous Africans. The Shona tribes, who possessed about half the land that forms modern Zimbabwe, broke away from this ancient civilization, forming their own state called Rozwi. As history unfolded, Ndebele warriors invaded the Rozwi state and in 1834 took control of that area ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

Cecil Rhodes negotiated with the Ndebele people and in 1888, he gained the mineral rights of their land in exchange for guns, ammunition and money ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)). White settlers began to arrive in 1890 in what then was known as Mashonaland, hoping to find gold. This gold rush soon proved to be disappointing, and these settlers turned their focus upon the next valuable land of that region. In the 1890's scatter for land, Cecil Rhodes promised each white settler the equivalent of about 3 175 acres of land. This however did not satisfy the settlers' hunger for land, and Leander Starr Jameson, the region administrator, encouraged the settlers to take whatever land they wanted. As a result, Major Sir John Willoughby was granted 600 000 acres, and even bought more land from pioneers who went off in search for more gold, eventually accumulating 1.3 million acres of land. Even white missionaries got into the act, getting their hands on over 300 000 acres of land (Meredith 2002:112). In 1895, this region was formally named Rhodesia after Cecil Rhodes.

The Ndebele and Shona people soon rebelled against this white invasion and rule of their land. In the 1896 clashes that followed, about 10% of the white population was killed, leaving many more people wounded. The British intervened and negotiated a peace treaty with the Ndebele people, but continued hunting the Shona people, until all resistance was seized. Years later, the British would acknowledge the fact that no treaty was ever made with the Shona. The British acknowledge the native peoples' need for land, and by 1910, the land division between white and black people was taking form. In Mashonaland, a total of 17 million acres were given to the Shona people, whilst a total of 7.7 million acres were given to the Ndebele people. On this land which was allocated for black people, a population of 750 000 people settled there. On the other hand, 48 million acres of land was given to the white people with a population of a mere 2 500 people. The British government also left vast areas of land unallocated as national parks and forests (Meredith 2002:114). For many years to follow, conflict between black and white people continued. To the author it seems that this racial conflict, sparked by land issues, has been evident in Zimbabwe for many years.

White settlers were given a choice to become a separate entity within the British Empire or to be incorporated into the Union of South Africa. As a result, in 1923, Rhodesia became a colony under the British Empire. The first of the land appointment acts under the British government passed in 1934, was to remove the ownership of land from Blacks and giving it to whites ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)).

The end of the Second World War saw the improvement of farming conditions through modern and better machinery and crops. This brought about an influx of white immigrants, and quickly the number of white farmers grew from 4 700 before the war, to 8 600 in 1960. More land was needed for white farmers, and many black farmers were evicted from the so-called white farm areas (Meredith 2002:116).

Once again black people revolted against this injustice and the 1970's will be remembered for the guerrilla war where black people struggled for land and freedom from white rule. This war continued until the Lancaster House negotiations at the end of 1979. After independence in 1980, Rhodesia was renamed Zimbabwe.

### **2.3 THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE FOR THE MASSES FROM A WHITE MINORITY**

In 1957 the African National Congress (ANC) was launched in Rhodesia, but was banned by the Rhodesian Government in February 1959 because it was said that the ANC incited the black population to disregard law and order and disrespect the government. Within weeks a new organisation was formed called the National Democratic Party (NDP). Resistance was building against white rule as Leopold Takawira, a founding member of the NDP, said; "We are no longer asking Europeans to rule us well. We now want to rule ourselves" (Meredith 2002:26).

In an attempt to intervene in this tense situation the British government convened a conference in Salisbury which was held in 1961. They invited NDP officials to attend this conference. It was at this conference that Joshua Nkomo, president of the NDP, accepted a deal giving black people 15 out of the 65 parliamentary seats in the Rhodesian government. Many black people, including Mugabe, did not approve of this. As Mugabe later said:

Europeans must realise that unless the legitimate demands of African nationalists are recognised, then racial conflict is inevitable (Meredith 2002:29).

At a NDP rally held in December 1961, Mugabe asked the crowd to remove their socks and shoes. In this speech he spoke out in no-uncertain terms against the white minority ruling in Rhodesia:

Today you have removed your shoes. Tomorrow you may be called upon to destroy them altogether, or to perform other acts of self-denial ... If European-owned industries are used to buy guns, which are aimed against us, we must withdraw our labour and our custom, and destroy those industries (Meredith 2002:29).

The Rhodesian government banned the NDP six days after this rally. In response to this, and within days, the officials of the former NDP formed the Zimbabwean African People's Union (Zapu). Mugabe and some other

officials were arrested, and restricted to their home districts (www.bulawayo1872.com).

Amongst the white people a new right-wing party called the Rhodesian Front was formed, and it won the December 1962 elections. The success of this newly formed party came as a result of many white farmers' concern for their right to land. The Rhodesian Front, as the ruling party became very anxious for Rhodesia to become independent from Britain. During the course of 1963/4 many black leaders were arrested and in August 1964, the Rhodesian government banned Zapu. This new development urged Zapu officials to rethink their strategy. Every time a party was banned, they would lose all their assets such as vehicles and money. Another problem was that stricter legislation was introduced by the Rhodesian Front. The legislation, imposed by this white minority party became life threatening because a mandatory death sentence for sabotage was introduced. In an interview given in the early 80's Mugabe recalled:

The question was, should we continue as before with a political struggle, campaigning and demonstrations, or were we now going to embark on a programme that would lead to an armed struggle, the training of our people. And we agreed that we had to train people (Meredith 2002:30).

Members of the Rhodesian Front felt that Prime Minister Winston Field moved too slowly towards independence from Britain, and in 1964, Ian Smith took over the leadership of the Rhodesian Front. The Smith party had a resounding victory in the 1965 national elections, winning 50 seats in parliament ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

With most of the black leaders in prison, Smith made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain on November 11, 1965. As a result of this rebellion, the British government imposed sanctions against Rhodesia, but many of the western countries largely ignored it and so during this period Rhodesia experienced great economic growth ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)). However, for black people it seemed that Britain did very little for the liberation of the black masses, because at the end of the 1960's there was still no sign that these black leaders would be released from prison.

It was only after the UN Council imposed mandatory economic sanctions on December 16, 1966 that European countries began to force sanctions against Rhodesia ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)). Britain renewed efforts for a settlement with the Smith government and signed a new constitution in 1971. This constitution indicated that the earliest a majority of the people would rule the country would be in 2035. Many black leaders spoke out strongly against this atrocity, but the Smith government would hear nothing of it. 1972 saw an intensifying of the

Rhodesian guerrilla-war when troops infiltrated the northern border with Mozambique ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

#### 2.4 **ROBERT MUGABE, FROM CHILDHOOD TO POLITICIAN**

At the age of ten, Mugabe lost contact with his father because his father left the family to find employment in Bulawayo, but he never returned to the family. In later years, Mugabe had bountiful praises for his mother but never mentioned his father because it is believed that he never forgave his father for abandoning his family (Holland 2008:3).

Being a keen student, Mugabe soon become a teacher amongst his fellow students, and in 1945 Mugabe left his home village, Kutama, with a teaching diploma teaching at various schools (Holland 2008:11). He was awarded a scholarship for Fort Hare University, South Africa and took up his studies in 1949. At Fort Hare Mugabe was introduced to Marxist ideas, discussing and reading Marxist literature with South African communists, although his active involvement in politics would follow only years later. After completing a teachers' degree Mugabe returned to his home country. The situation in Rhodesia was not favourable as Mugabe later recalled: "I was completely hostile to the system, but of course I came back to teach within it" (Meredith 2002:23).

Mugabe's hunger for education was not satisfied and he did a second degree through correspondence at the University of South Africa. In 1955 he took up a position in a teachers training college in Northern Rhodesia



(now Zambia), completing a third degree through London University. Again Mugabe moved, and in 1958 he was appointed a lecturer at a teacher's education college in Ghana. It was here in Ghana that Mugabe met his first wife, Sally.

May 1960, Mugabe returned to Rhodesia for a holiday. He brought his future wife Sally with him, in order to introduce her to his mother. His intention was to return to Ghana after his holiday, to complete his four-year teaching contract. However, Leopold Takawira urged Mugabe to stay and help black Rhodesians with their political struggle for liberation. During Mugabe's holiday in Rhodesia, Leopold Takawira was arrested and charged under the Unlawful Organisations Act. Mugabe, joined by 7 000 people marched into Salisbury, intending to protest at the prime minister's office. This up-march was stopped at Stodart Hall in Harare Township. The next day this crowd grew to about 40 000 people, and Mugabe was asked to address the crowd. He was introduced to the crowd as a distinguished African scholar, who travelled in Africa. For the first time Mugabe actively became involved in the struggle against white oppression, speaking in public about his dreams for "Zimbabwe". This incident became known as the "March of the 7000" (Holland 2008:13).

As a result of this "March of the 7000", the Rhodesian government instituted strict legislation. Sir Robert Tredgold, who was the chief justice of Rhodesia, was so horrified by the new legislation that he resigned from this position saying:

This bill outrages every basic right. If passed into law, it will remove that last vestige of doubt about whether Rhodesia is a police state (Meredith 2002:27).

These developments in Rhodesia urged Mugabe to resign from his teaching post in Ghana and join the struggle for liberation. In October 1960, Mugabe was elected publicity, secretary of the NDP.

## 2.5 **ROBERT MUGABE, 11 YEARS IN PRISON**

In separate speeches, both Robert and Sally Mugabe got entangled with the Rhodesian justice system. Robert accused the government of gangsterism. He also accused them of planning to murder black people. Sally attacked Britain for abandoning black people, she said: "The Queen can go to Hell" (Meredith 2002:31). Robert was awaiting trial and Sally who had already been sentenced to two years imprisonment was out on bail pending an appeal. Against this background, Zapu officials persuaded the Mugabe family to attend a conference in Dar es Salaam and by doing this breaking bail.

Adding to the already difficult situation Sally became pregnant. She lost her first child the previous year, and this pregnancy proved also to be a difficult one. In August the Mugabes son was born, and they named him Nhamodzenyika, "Suffering Country" (Holland 2008:14). Robert urged Sally not to return to Rhodesia, but instead, to take their son to her parents in Ghana. On his return to Rhodesia in December 1963, Robert

Mugabe was arrested. He remained in custody until his trial. In March 1964 Mugabe was sentenced to 21 months imprisonment.

Mugabe did not expect an early release because he urged his fellow prisoners with these words, "these months, these years, however long it takes, must not be wasted" (Meredith 2002:34). Under Mugabe's encouragement prison becomes a place of learning with strict discipline and Mugabe himself lived up to this discipline. In the eight years he spent in Salisbury prison, Mugabe completed through correspondence, three more degrees in law and economics through London University (Holland 2008:16). Mugabe studied with such fervency, one of his London tutors recalls:

He knew exactly what he wanted to do, so much so that it became quite a struggle to impress on him that, for the purpose of this exercise, I – not he – was the boss. He reminded me of Nehru – the same single-mindedness. I got the very clear impression that he was equipping his intellect for the task that lay ahead (Meredith 2002:34).

However, prison also left its mark upon Mugabe. In December 1966 Mugabe got the news that his son had died at the home of his parents-in-law. Mugabe was deeply struck by this and petitioned the Rhodesian government to grant him temporarily release to grieve for his son and comfort his wife. This request was blankly denied. This incident embittered the Mugabes as Sally later recalls:

All in all, my husband saw the baby as a tiny tot in Dar es Salaam, and then only for a few days when he visited Ghana for a meeting. He never had the chance to get to know his child, let alone play with him. I was better-off. I knew our little boy for three and a quarter years. His death is something we can never forget (Meredith 2002:35).

Towards the end of 1974, Robert Mugabe was released from prison. Although he was sentenced for 21 months, it was only after 11 years that he was released, because Ian Smith's government regarded Mugabe to have been "an enemy of the state" (Meredith 2002:1).

## 2.6 **ROBERT MUGABE, FROM PRISONER TO PRESIDENT**

1974 saw Mugabe being released from prison, and by this time, the guerrilla war had gained much momentum since it was energised from two factions, the Zapu and Zanu movements. These factions had a common goal in liberating its people, yet much strife and quarrelling was apparent between these movements. Although African leaders urged these factions to unite and fight under the umbrella of the Zimbabwe People's Army (Zipa), Zipa crumbled after many quarrels between these two groups. Even though Zipa was disbanded, both Zanu and Zapu remained partners in the Patriotic Front, with Mugabe as leader of Zanu and Nkomo as leader of Zapu (Meredith 2002:37).

In August 1977, Mugabe gained control over the Zanu guerrilla forces. Supported by China, Mugabe based his army in Mozambique, fighting the war in the eastern part of Rhodesia. Nkomo based his army in Zambia, fighting the war in the western part of Rhodesia ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)).

The Smith government came under huge international pressure and they were forced into negotiations to allow majority rule. On March 3, 1978, an agreement was signed for elections to be held in April 1979, providing 75 seats were for blacks and 25 seats for whites in the government and that all residents over the age of 18 may vote. In the elections that followed, Bishop Muzorewa's UANC party won the majority of black seats, whereas Smith won all 25 white seats. Soon after, the country was then renamed Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. This settlement however did not end the guerrilla war that had already claimed more than 20 000 lives ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)).

The British Conservative Party were not satisfied and they urged for further negotiations, involving all political parties, including the Patriotic Front (Zanu and Zapu) to end this war. Margaret Thatcher's government hosted the Lancaster House conference, in late 1979, and on December 21, 1979, an agreement was signed ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/Zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/Zimbabwe)).

Notwithstanding their major differences, Mugabe and Nkomo were officially still partners within the Patriotic Front at the Lancaster House conference. Each had their separate headquarters and spokespersons. On the one hand, Nkomo was anxious for the negotiations of Lancaster House to succeed, whilst Mugabe would have wanted to continue the war until not only white rule was destroyed, but he also wanted to bring down the capitalist society with it (Meredith 2002:38).

In the elections that followed the Lancaster House conference, nine political parties campaigned for 120 seats in parliament. Mugabe's Zanu won 57 seats, Joshua Nkomo's Zapu won 27 (he won 20 of the seats from Matabeleland), Abel Muzorewa's UANC won 3 seats, whilst Smith's Rhodesian Front won all 20 seats reserved for white voters.

In Mugabe's newly formed government, he proved his dominance over Nkomo, by giving Nkomo the minor portfolio of home affairs. Nkomo felt the sting of Mugabe's wrath as early as the independence celebrations in Salisbury. Nkomo later recalled this day with bitterness:

Behind the saluting base were the benches for the junior ministers, the party officials and the supporting cast. At the back of those rows, in the dark by the radio commentator's box, where the television cameras could not see us and our supporters in the crowd could not single us out for their applause, places were reserved for me and myself. In the stadiums of Zimbabwe I

had so often stood up to address the crowds, and found the words to express what they wished to say but had not yet articulated. Now I was hidden away like something to be scared of. My wife could scarcely restrain her tears at this symbolic humiliation (Meredith 2002:40).

## 2.7 **ROBERT MUGABE, FROM PRESIDENT TO RULER OF TYRANNY**

Shortly after the elections and appointment of the new government, Mugabe met Ian Smith, in Smith's old office in Harare. In a memoir which Smith wrote about this meeting, saying:

He (Mugabe) said he appreciated the vital need to retain the confidence of the white people so that they would continue to play their part in building the future of our country (Meredith 2002:41).

Several times Smith found himself in Mugabe's office; "just to keep me in the picture" (Meredith 2002:42), Smith recalls. Other ex Rhodesian officials had similar experiences. Ken Flower, head of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization, recalled:

It was a strange experience working for an African leader whom whites had been taught to hate and whose assumption of power we had forecast to be catastrophic (Meredith 2002:44).

On May 15, 1980, at the opening of the first parliament, this newfound reconciliation was symbolized when Smith and Mugabe walked into the chambers, side by side. Even the white farmers shared this optimism as they referred to Mugabe as "Good old Bob" (Meredith 2002:45). In general in the first two years, white people profited largely because of the phenomenal economic growth of 24 percent experienced in Zimbabwe (Meredith 2002:46). This prosperity however did not stop the exodus of white people. In 1980, 17 000 white people had left the country. By the end of 1983, more than 100 000 white people left the country ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)).

Massive foreign aid boosted the Zimbabwean economy. In 1981 alone the United States of America gave the Zimbabwean government 225 million American Dollars, whilst Britain donated 900 million Sterling Pounds (Meredith 2002:47). Surprisingly, black people did not benefit from this monetary influx as much as they would have liked and became impatient with their new government. Mugabe however urged them to be calm:

We recognize that the economic structures of this country is based on capitalism, and that whatever ideas we have, we must build on that. Modifications can only take place in a gradual way (Meredith 2002:48).

As early as July 1980, little cracks had began to appear in the armoury of the newfound Zimbabwean democracy. Edgar Tekere, general secretary



of Mugabe's party, also appointed as a minister in the Zimbabwean government, verbally attacked white Anglican Church officials as instruments of oppression. This outrage was broadcasted on national television, causing much grievance amongst white people (Meredith 2002:49). Only weeks later, Tekere led an attack on a white farm near Salisbury, killing a little white boy. As a result of the court case that followed, Mugabe dropped Tekere from his parliament, but most white people felt that not enough was done about this incident. The reader can understand the tension that was developing between black and white people. One also needs to understand that at this stage, the land issue was not addressed yet.

During the month of July 1982, several senior officers of the air force were arrested and held because of confessions they made during torture by Zimbabwean security police. In a television interview Mugabe, who did not deny the use of torture, but was fuming against the media and the western world because of their response to this incident and accused them of racism: "It is because they are whites, because they are Mrs. Thatcher's kith and kin" (Meredith 2002:54). Mugabe was also disturbed because a black judge ordered these detainees to be released, because of lack of evidence. In response, Mugabe said:

The law of evidence and the criminal procedures we have inherited is a stupid ass. It's one of those principles born out of the stupidity of some of the procedures of colonial times (Meredith 2002:55).

One could see the danger signs emerging through this kind of talk and Zimbabwe's president's disregard for the law of his country.

In the meantime Joshua Nkomo's guerrilla army became despondent because they not only had lost their voice in government, they were without a leader and lost their sense of purpose. Small splinter groups of this army got involved in criminal activities in Matabeleland. There were more and more rumours that the South African Intelligence were using these splinter groups to challenge the Zimbabwean democracy, although very little could be proved ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

By the end of 1982, Mugabe was ready to respond to this challenge with his new weapon against any resistance. 5 Brigade was a specialized task force, trained by North Koreans. This unit was unique in most areas because it had its own uniforms and vehicles, and was made-up from virtually only Shona people. It was also answerable to no one except Mugabe himself. 5 Brigade was merciless and massacres occurred throughout Matabeleland. On February 6 1983, 52 people were shot; March 5, 25 people were shot; March 9, 26 people shot (Meredith 2002:67-68). These killings went on, seemingly endlessly, not to mention the scores of people beaten and harassed. In a matter of six weeks, 2000 people were killed in Matabeleland, and this was only the beginning. Between 1983 and 1984, it is believed that more than 20 000 civilians lost their lives in Matabeleland and many Zimbabweans believe this number should be much higher ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

These massacres caused the church in Zimbabwe to speak its condemnation of what was happening in Matabeleland. Mugabe responded furiously to the church's outcry when he said:

The church of Zimbabwe, whatever the denomination, must abandon forever the tendency or temptation to play marionette for foreign so-called parent churches whose interests and perspectives may, and often will be, at variance with the best interest of the people of our country (Meredith 2002:68).

Mugabe continued to say that these churches should "attune itself to the realities of the new Zimbabwe" (Meredith 2002:68).

Joshua Nkomo, forced by the slaughter of his people in Matabeleland, signed a unity accord with Mugabe. December 27, 1987, the joined forces of Zanu and Zapu became known as the Zanu-PF. Many politicians and leaders in Zimbabwe saw this as part of Mugabe's plan to create a one-party state. Edger Tekere, former outspoken friend of Mugabe during the time of the struggle against white rule (Tekere was kicked out of the government in 1981), became very outspoken against his former ally. In October 1988, Tekere said in a meeting held in Mutare, "I fear we are heading towards the creation of a dictatorship" (Meredith 2002:86). The reader can appreciate that Tekere was right in the way he saw these events.

In accordance with the Lancaster House accord, white people lost their separate voter's role and their 15 reserved seats in parliament at the end of 1987. Mugabe replaced these white seats with an executive of his choice. The 1990 elections resulted in another overwhelming victory for Mugabe, he won 117 of the 120 seats ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)).

By 1996, corruption became a tool of oppression in the Mugabe government because Mugabe protected his corrupt officials ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)). Just to mention one example of the Willow gate scandal. The Zimbabwean High court found numerous cabinet ministers guilty of corruption, although only one Fred Shava, was sentenced to 9 months in prison. After one night in prison, Shava got a presidential pardon for his actions and was allowed to go free. Corruption in Zimbabwe now reached the point where Mugabe not only protected corrupt officials, he openly allowed it to continue. Meredith wrote:

Mugabe admitted publicly that he knew that his ministers were corrupt. 'I know that they are buying you for tenders and that some of you are accepting huge bribes' he said in July 1999. But he let the corruption continue nevertheless. It was part of his system of patronage and control (Meredith 2002:99).

However, not all was well within the Mugabe camp. War veterans confronted Mugabe about their living conditions and called for a National

strike in December 1997, which paralyzed Zimbabwe. Mugabe was forced to agree to pay large compensations and pensions to these people. This placed another huge burden upon the already struggling Zimbabwean economy (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

In February 2000, the Mugabe Government lost a referendum. Through this referendum, Mugabe wanted to draft a new constitution allowing him another two terms in office. This new constitution would also grant government officials immunity from prosecution and gave the government a free hand in seizing white owned land. Shortly after Mugabe lost this referendum his government organized a group of so-called war veterans to forcefully intimidate white farmers. ([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)). In doing this the poor farm workers' suffering intensified because they had lost their only means of financial income. Many of them had to leave their homes on the farms which left them homeless and jobless.

The June 2000 Parliamentary elections were spoiled by wide-spread violence, claims of intimidation and electoral fraud. In the midst of these, Morgan Tsvangirai's newly formed Movement of Democratic Change (MDC), won 57 of the 120 seats in parliament. Since February 2000, international human rights monitors have reported an increase of human rights abuse. Mugabe had another victory in the March 2002 presidential elections, but yet again, many allegations were made of intimidation and violence against voters by the Mugabe regime.

([www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe](http://www.historyofnations.net/africa/zimbabwe)). By this time, Mugabe blatantly used war veterans to continue with the wide spread intimidation of people that dared to come against his rule. In fact, very few of the so-called “war veterans” actually fought the guerrilla war, simply because they were too young or not even born during this time.

The Zimbabwean government began operation Murambatsvina in May 2005. This was a bill passed by Mugabe’s government to rid the urban areas from illegal structures. The UN estimated that 700 000 people were left homeless when squatter camps were demolished. NGO’s were not allowed to put up temporary structures to assist these homeless people. This left many people homeless without shelter and without jobs (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). The struggle for survival began and people continued to face problems which became a concern for pastoral caregivers.

In 2007, the situation in Zimbabwe became desperate:

The economy has shrunk by 50% from 2000 to 2007, in September 2007 the inflation rate was put at almost 8000%, the world’s highest. There are frequent power and water outages. Harare’s drinking water became unreliable in 2006 and as a consequence dysentery and cholera swept the city in December 2006 and January 2007. Unemployment in formal jobs is running at a record 80%. There is widespread famine, which has been

cynically manipulated by the government so that opposition strongholds suffer the most. Most recently, supplies of bread have dried up, after poor wheat harvest, and the closure of all bakeries (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

At the time this research was concluded, the situation in Zimbabwe continues to worsen, and many people in Zimbabwe suffer greatly because of it. It is widely believed that Morgan Tsvangirai won the general election early 2008, yet Mugabe refused to hand him the rule of Zimbabwe by refusing to release the results of the election. In a re-election held weeks later, Morgan Tsvangirai's party did not participate, or rather did not fully participate. This resulted in a victory for Mugabe's Zanu-PF party. Many allegations were made that votes were rigged and voters were manipulated. Many political observers believe that this manipulation resulted in the power-share situation where Mugabe became the president of Zimbabwe, and Tsvangirai the prime minister.

In the midst of this political instability, the economy of Zimbabwe has suffered greatly. Many claims of an inflation rate that has topped 100 000% were made. However, the author could never truly pin this rate to an exact figure.

## 2.8 THE WHITE OWNED FARM ISSUES

Mugabe became very outspoken against white farmers as he called them "a greedy bunch of racist usurpers" (Meredith 2002:121). With the land reform court actions, Mugabe declared that he would not submit to any court of law. "I, Robert Mugabe, cannot be dragged to court by a settler" (Meredith 2002:123). Furthermore, in the 1992 parliament sitting, Mugabe introduced a bill that prevents any court from overruling a government decision to disown farmers on grounds of not being fair. Numerous times Mugabe outraged against any resistance to the land reform:

We will not brook any decision by any court from acquiring any land,' he said in July 1993. 'We will get land we want from anyone, be they black or white, and we will not be restricted to under-utilised land'. Addressing Zanu-PF's central committee in September 1993, he threatened to seize land without paying compensation. 'If white settlers just took the land from us, without paying for it, we can in similar way just take it from them, without paying for it, or entertaining any ideas of legality and constitutionality. Perhaps our weakness has been the fact that we have tried to act morally and legally, when they acted immorally and illegally (Meredith 2002:126).

Mugabe's land reform policy soon suffers because of the many corrupt officials in his government. In April 1994, a newspaper revealed that a 3



000 acre farm which was purchased against the white farmers will, and was earmarked for 33 landless peasants, was illegally leased to Witness Mangwende, the former minister of agriculture. From this it was discovered that many more farms that were intended for resettlement, went to the hands of government officials such as cabinet ministers, the 5 brigade commanders and even to police officers (Meredith 2002:127).

The Lancaster House Agreement stipulated that farmers would be fairly compensated for land needed for resettlement. Because of Zimbabwe's involvement in the Congo war, less money became available, and by 1998, farmers were only compensated for improvements on the land such as house and building structures. This motivated landowners to refuse to move from their farms and forced removals started ([www.bulawayo1872.com](http://www.bulawayo1872.com)). In September 2005, Mugabe signed an amendment to the constitution changing all ownerships of property in Zimbabwe into leases (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

## 2.9 **LIMITATIONS OF THIS HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE**

The author is very aware that this brief historic background on the political situation in Zimbabwe lacks much detail. He is also aware that often the sources he used were biased, because of their respective cultural background and political orientation. As a white South African male, he is also very aware of his own bias and cultural boundaries towards the Zimbabwean situation.

For this reason, the author used many different sources, even from the internet, in an attempt to find some balance and understanding for himself, of the problem in Zimbabwe. The author hopes that through this overview of the Zimbabwean history and political situation, the reader also has gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the problems facing the people and churches in Zimbabwe. The reader should be aware that by no means did this overview attempt to prove or disprove any guilt upon any party in Zimbabwe. It merely attempted to paint a picture in order to help the author and reader to understand the context of the difficulties in Zimbabwe.

## **2.10 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In chapter 1, the author made an effort to help the reader to understand the reason why the author did this dissertation in the department of Practical Theology. The author also made an effort to explain and give his understanding of the various methods used in this dissertation.

Chapter 2 brings a historical and political background to the problem in Zimbabwe, and has helped the author to become less biased in his approach to the problem of creating a pastoral care model in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 will concern itself largely with the meaning of the body of Christ. Responses to question 4 in the questionnaire to the South African church urged the author to explore what it means to be part of the body of Christ, because, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, all Christians are

part of this body of Christ. Could this then become the motivating factor for why the South African church should be offering pastoral care to the people in Zimbabwe? If all Christians belong to the same body, then all Christians share the same responsibility in being the “light” and “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13-14). To the author this also brings another notion of a shared life in times of pain and suffering. Furthermore, this shared life will bring a deepened vulnerability for the pain experienced by other parts of the body. Watson strengthens this thought when he said the “[t]he more deeply we commit ourselves to loving fellowship with others, the more we shall be hurt” (Watson 1981:54).

In the third chapter the author will not seek to do an in-depth theological study of the meaning of the “body of Christ”, but he will seek to bring a clear picture of his understanding of the terms; “church”, “body of Christ” and “community of saints”, especially its impact on pastoral care. This chapter will also grapple with the author’s understanding of Practical Theology and this understands’ impact upon this dissertation.

## CHAPTER 3

In chapter 1, the author explored the various methods he used in creating a methodology in researching this problem and in providing pastoral care for the people in Zimbabwe. Admittedly, the author became very aware of the limitations of the methodology used in the dissertation. In the midst of evaluating the effectiveness of the methodology, the author realized and appreciate, that the applied Narrative Therapy aided him in his attempt to offer pastoral care to Zimbabweans. It is at this place, the author became very aware that the single most effective element, which had the highest impact upon Zimbabweans was not the telling of their stories or wise answers from the caregiver. The one thing that really affected the care seekers was the willingness of caregivers to give of self, in bringing comfort of communion with them in need. This reminded the author of Job's friends, sitting with him in his time of pain (Job 2:12-13). The author also became very aware that when caregivers and care seekers journey together, in order to find liberation from suffering, together they create a place where pastoral care will happen.

In journeying with Zimbabweans, the author became very aware of the complexity of the situation. However, to the author's surprise, many people the author interviewed, freely offered simple and quick solutions to the problem. From the quotation below, the reader can see how many people underestimate the pain and suffering of Zimbabweans:

Zimbabwe's salvation is close at hand. It's just a matter of humbling themselves together as a nation, a

willingness to change direction (repentance) and a commitment to do things God's way (Joy Magazine; September 2009. Saving Zimbabwe; P68-71).

How could it be that for many non-Zimbabweans the complex situation in Zimbabwe is as simple as the above quotation? The author wishes to challenge this; how could it be that some people really believe this situation to be as simplistic as that? As the author spends more time with Zimbabweans, the opposite becomes apparent. The research recorded in chapter three of this dissertation, was motivated because of responses like the above quotation, and quickened by the questionnaires as discussed in chapter two. To be more specific, the author will wrestle with question two (2) and four (4) in the questionnaire to the South African church. In the author's mind, responses, quickened by these questions, urged this deeper theological debate in order to bring a better understanding, and a deeper conviction for the responsibilities in the praxis of this dissertation.

In the later part of this dissertation, the author motivate his conviction that research in Practical Theology will, and should often dwell upon areas that could be defined as Systematic Theology. Unless the researcher could theologially reason and motivate the praxis urged by Practical Theology, readers would hardly be swayed in their understanding of the need of the research. This perception of the author is strengthened by Burger when he says; many practical theologians plead for a greater

umbrella, where Practical Theology will co-exist with other departments, but will become the vehicle to bring its researcher to the praxis of this studied theology (Burger 1991:67). Earlier in this dissertation the author already motivated his conviction that Practical Theology needs to do theology, in order to gain the needed energy, to do theology in praxis in a sustained manner. The motivation for actually doing theology within the parameters of Practical Theology is based upon the author's understanding that a dissertation of this nature should respond to six basic questions: -What?: -Why?: -Who?: -Where?: -When?: How? Unless this dissertation could respond to the above questions, and within the author's understanding, this dissertation will fail in its purpose.

This dissertation grapples with the problem of a suffering people in Zimbabwe, and in the author's mind, the South African church's lack of pastoral care shown to these people. In Chapter one, the author dealt with "what" the problem in Zimbabwe is and "why" Zimbabweans need pastoral care. It also partly dealt with, "how" can one provide pastoral care. This last question needs more elaboration and the author will return to it in chapter four. The third chapter is dealing with, "why" and "who" will offer pastoral care to Zimbabweans. In the author's mind, chapter four will be the most critical section of this dissertation because, unless the author brings the reader to the praxis in the response to "who", "where" and "when" pastoral care should be offered to Zimbabweans, this dissertation will fail in its attempt to bring liberation to the Zimbabwean people.

The main focus of chapter 3 is to bring a deeper understanding of who the South African church is and why it should offer pastoral care to its neighbour in need. The reader should understand that, in this chapter, the author's focus is an attempt to determine who should be offering pastoral care to the Zimbabwean people, and not who should receive this care offered. There are people that claim God's favouritism towards the poor (see chapter one). The author strongly opposes this view as explained earlier. Because of his strong conviction that all people need God's grace, the author wishes to profess that all Zimbabweans are in need of pastoral care. This understanding includes even those who strongly deny their need for help. In the later part, this chapter will also wrestle in an attempt to find reasons why pastoral care does not take place. Unless the author firmly states his convictions in this chapter, this dissertation will not be able to find the required foundation in order to find answers for where, when, and how this needed care will come to Zimbabweans, as grappled with in chapter four.

In the earlier parts of chapter 3 the author grapples with his understanding of what Practical Theology is, and why did he choose to research this topic in this department.

### 3.1 **WHY DID THE AUTHOR CHOOSE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AS THE VEHICLE TO DO THIS DISSERTATION?**

Pieterse, amongst other practical theologians, believes Practical Theology is a study of Christian actions (Pieterse 2001:9). This has

helped the authors' understanding so that Practical Theology becomes the study field, where people are helped to get to know God better, in a practical way. William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, was reputed to have defined evangelism as "one beggar, telling another beggar, where to find bread" (unknown). From within the above definition, one could be forgiven for trying to seek an understanding of Practical Theology along these thoughts.

Campbell is helpful with his understanding suggesting that Practical Theology is concerned for the well being of people in communities (Campbell 1987:188). Hence, Practical Theology could not be a one-sided theology, where one party becomes the giver, and the other the receiver. Within the author's understanding of Practical Theology, both giver and receiver become companions on the road to get to know God better, and that could only be done, in a practical way.

### 3.1.1 **PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, MORE THAN JUST PRAXIS**

Many theologians would define a study or research in Practical Theology, primarily as procedural, as they consider this theological discipline to be only the practical outworking of one's theology, and more specific for this research, a Practical Theology of pastoral care towards the suffering people in Zimbabwe. As the author wrestled with the problem in Zimbabwe, and how he could bring pastoral care to the people who are suffering, he came face to face with many more questions that he could not answer within the above definition of Practical Theology, being only



procedural. Gerkin challenged the author to rethink his understanding of Practical Theology, because, the author's initial paradigm of Practical Theology, fell short of the authors need. The author quotes from Gerkin, he writes;

...pastors and pastoral care theorists must constantly have one ear open to the shifts that take place in the ways persons experience their needs and problems of living and the other open to the currents of change in ways of understanding and interpreting human needs (Gerkin 1986:12).

In the understanding of the author, Practical Theology should meet the praxis of pastoral care for the people it seeks to serve, as it "interprets human needs". This interpretation of human need implies a theological and hermeneutical analysis of a practical pastoral problem. Furthermore, this interpretation should also provide the caregiver with the motivational means to offer this pastoral care, from within its theology. The author came to the conviction that to say one should care for the church in Zimbabwe in a pastoral way, and not grapple with why at all one should care, would become rather presumptuous. One needs to care in a pastoral way, but first, one needs to respond to the question; what is the motivation for this conviction to care?

The author became deeply convicted that he needs to motivate his urge to care for the Zimbabwean church. The author agrees with Browning

(Don Browning is the Alexander Campbell Professor of Religion and Psychological studies at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.) when he wrote in an article that was published in *Theology Today* magazine;

... practical theology must be more than methodological; it must actually do theology and it should do it in such a way as to illuminate Christian practice in relation to life's concrete problems and issues (Browning, D S April 1985. *Practical Theology and Political Theology. Theology Today* 42:15).

When Practical Theology becomes so narrow that it only depends upon the praxis of theology, the author would find it very difficult to motivate the "who's", "where's" and "when's" of this dissertation. Hence, unless the praxis of a theology is motivated from within that theology, it would need to find its motivation for being practical from another source. From Gerkin, the author understood and agrees that "theology is central to all forms of ministry" (Gerkin 1986:18). According to the author's understanding, unless Practical Theology is building upon actual theology, it will become a fragmented theology, because it would not be able to theologically motivate that which it is asking us to do. That is why, in the author's own understanding, unless Practical Theology actually does theology, it would become an unbalanced field of study, where one would need to act in a conceited way. The author is convinced that the church in South Africa should care in a pastoral way towards the church in Zimbabwe, where the

praxis of this care is well covered in Practical Theology. Yet, the conviction that Christians should care in a practical and pastoral way for the church in Zimbabwe, is plainly not good enough. This pastoral care should find its motivation for care from within the caregiver's theological convictions to care in a pastoral way. The author believes that only once the caregiver is theologically convinced to care, then the caregiver will find the energy to sustain this care offered.

### **3.1.2 THE PRAXIS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY GOES BEYOND THE CHURCH**

Patton wrote that pastoral theology involves a "two-way movement between theory and practice" (Patton 1993:238). From within the context the above quote was taken, one learns that Patton, as well as Browning, sees Practical Theology mainly as a "Practical theology of care" (Browning, D S April 1985. Practical Theology and Political Theology. *Theology Today* 42:16). This theology should also find its praxis in the area of the public domain. Browning is taking this concept further than Patton, as he is saying that the practical theologian should communicate to the church, but also to those outside of the church as Browning continues:

What we call pastoral care should be reconceived as a practical theology of care and should address not only the pastoral care of those within the church but an attempt to both criticize and fulfill the care structures of the larger society. Similar statements could be advanced for the

other regions of practical theology-ethics, worship, and preaching. Both the inner-ecclesial and public foci of these activities would be part of the concerns of practical theology (Browning, D S April 1985. Practical Theology and Political Theology. Theology Today 42:16).

From Browning, the author began to appreciate the concept that Practical Theology is within the arena of theology, yet, it will bring theology in a practical way to those in the church as well as to those who are not within the structures of church. Browning's understanding of Practical Theology poses a major challenge to the author. How can one motivate people in the South African church, and outside the structures of this church in South Africa, in a theological way, to care, in a pastoral way, for the church in Zimbabwe, whilst this motivation will come, accompanied with a practical model on how to provide this care? Patton challenged the author even more when he said "it was not just the ordained pastor who was doing pastoral care – it was a caring community itself that was involved" (Patton 1993:242).

The above notion helped the author to understand that this dissertation should not only tell us to care, but also how to care pastorally, and in a practical way, whilst taking a caring community outside of the church with us, in our attempt to care for the church in Zimbabwe.

### 3.1.3 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, A MEANS OF PRACTICAL INTERPRETATION OF THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

Aden and Ellens urged the author to ponder whether one could separate being church and offering pastoral care. Could one claim to be part of the church and its faith traditions, yet turn ones back upon pastoral care towards people? By merely being part of the church and its faith tradition, the believer, to a more or lesser extent, interprets his or her theological convictions. The urging question in this situation is whether this interpretation brings the believer to a point of offering pastoral care? Aden and Ellens continue to say, the practice of the pastoral care we offer, is the formal expression of the gospel (Aden And Ellen 1988:36). In the context of the above, Aden and Ellens further said this:

So what is the status and role of pastoral care in the church? Is it an essential form of Christian ministry, or is it a secondary function that is important only if it fulfills the primary task of proclaiming the Word? We will answer that question only as we clarify pastoral care's relation to the gospel, that is only as we clarify what pastoral care is (Aden and Ellens 1988:34).

In the author's understanding, Aden and Ellens is saying that one can hardly separate theology and its praxis. Browning is defining this even further, as he is saying that Practical Theology is more than just a theology of the praxis of pastoral care. This theology should interpret

ethical, and moral issues, in order to theologically motivate the praxis of the pastoral care offered. In the same context Browning continues;

In this perspective, the interpretative interests of hermeneutics are not ends in themselves but processes of understanding and self-interpretation toward the goal of orienting individuals and communities toward action. Practical theology, to be practical, must attempt to describe and interpret both contemporary situations and classic Christian resources (Browning, D S April 1985. Practical Theology and Political Theology. *Theology Today* 42:16).

From the above, Browning has helped the author to understand that through a hermeneutical approach to Practical Theology, one could motivate the church and societies towards action. The goal of this approach is not to get a deeper understanding of the problem through hermeneutical analyses, but to use this deeper understanding of the problem of motivating people for action in the praxis of pastoral care towards the church in need. This approach towards Practical Theology encouraged the author to dialogue with the Bible, or what he interprets the Bible is saying and what is currently happening in Zimbabwe. In this dialogue, the author made an effort to motivate a pastoral care he could offer to the Zimbabwean church, from within his own biblical convictions. The above dialogue has also brought him in discussion with other authors

of books and articles upon this topic. This has helped the author to shape and sharpen his motive for the care offered to the church in Zimbabwe.

#### **3.1.4 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, AN INSTRUMENT TO CRITICALLY ANALYZE OUR FAITH TRADITIONS**

Oglesby further argues that “well equipped clergy” should enable the people of God to function more effectively in their care towards the people of God (Oglesby 1986:125), while James says that faith without action is dead (James 2:26). The latter is a well-known concept within Christian communities and the author can claim no originality in this. However, the author wants to ponder this a little. Could this mean that the flip-side of this concept implies that, action can not be motivated outside of faith? Hence, unless Christians come to a place where their faith motivates them into action, the praxis of pastoral care, towards the church in Zimbabwe, will not take place, or rather, will not happen on the level it should. It is people’s theological convictions that will motivate them into care for others in a pastoral way.

Browning encourages us to “critically and philosophically”, examine the practical living-out of our faith (Browning, D S April 1985. Practical Theology and Political Theology. *Theology Today* 42:17). The church’s theological conviction will explain and motivate its praxis of faith lived out from day to day.

Once Practical Theology becomes critical in its analyses of what is happening in our communities, in a theological way, can it assist us as Christians, towards a positive motivation to provide pastoral care for the church in Zimbabwe. In this the author is saying; through philosophical and critical analyses of what is happening in our communities, and for this dissertation, more specifically in Zimbabwe, Practical Theology will not only enable us to motivate faith communities to offer pastoral care, but will also assist us in creating a model or praxis towards this care so needed in Zimbabwe. And because the above praxis is motivated from within a well formulated theology, it will become sustained in its existence, because faith leads to action.

### **3.1.5 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PEOPLE IT SEEKS TO HELP**

De Gruchy helped the author to understand that Practical Theology will always be set within a specific context (De Gruchy 1986:8). Parrat takes this thought further, he stressed that this context is birthed from within the history of the theologian as help-giver, and in the history of the help-seeker (Parrat 2004:2). Hence, the value and manner of the praxis of the care offered will be different, according to the paradigm of both the caregiver and care-receiver. That action, which has great value for the caregiver, does not necessarily have great value, or any value for that matter, for the care-receiver, and also the opposite is true. This became apparent when the author once sacrificially, offered a care seeker some help. This help was frowned upon, and the author realized that this "help"



was not appreciated by the care seeker. Bonino pushes this even further, he stresses that people cannot become free of this context of self and the context of the people he or she would like to help (Bonino 2004:131). From this, one can understand that the context of theology in practice, offered and received, becomes a critical element in making this theology beneficial, for both the caregiver and care-receiver.

Lartey says;

...there are significant ways in which the concerns of liberation theologians and pastoral carers can be served by a greater degree of attention to who the readers are, how they read the texts and what they do with them (Lartey 1997:99).

From the above, the reader can understand that Lartey urges the caregiver to be mindful of the context of the person who needs care. Hence, unless the practical theologian explicitly takes care to be mindful of the context of the care needed, and the context of the help offered, this help runs the risk of becoming of very little value (De Gruchy 1986:36). Clinebell challenges this even more when he said, theology outside context becomes irrelevant (Clinebell 1984:14). Hence, although Practical Theology seeks to be practical in bringing theology to people, one should not lose sight that this help should be within the context of the people it seeks to liberate. In doing this, the theologian should also be aware that the care offered is not free from the context of self. Being practical will be of no value unless it is liberating within the paradigm of the people it

seeks to help. Msomi is critical of this point when he speaks out against Western based care without considering the context of local people in Africa (Msomi 1993:75). What people from the west see as loving care, often becomes offensive to the recipients of this care in Africa. The reader can understand then that this well-intended care becomes a point of conflict between the caregiver and care-receiver.

It is in the light of the above understanding that the author seeks to be sensitive towards the context, and the needs of the Zimbabwean people. Unless the author seeks to bring pastoral care to the church in Zimbabwe, within the context of the Zimbabwean people, the care offered with whatever good intention, will become irrelevant and may even cause offence to the very people it seeks to liberate.

### **3.1.6 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEORY AND METHODOLOGY**

David Tracy's attempt to define Practical Theology was a great help to the author, bringing an understanding that he should make a connection between the theory of pastoral care, and the praxis of the same:

...practical theology is the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian faith and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation (Tracy 1983:76).

Both theory and praxis are essential elements and together they form the real meaning of Practical Theology. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Practical Theology without theory, will make it very difficult to motivate why a praxis of care is so needed in Zimbabwe. In this dissertation and through Practical Theology, the author will strive to define the theological theory as to why the church in South Africa should care for the church in Zimbabwe. The author will also strive to create a practical methodology with which to offer this pastoral care. However, one should never lose sight that the true motive and focus for this dissertation is, and should be, to motivate a praxis of pastoral care towards the church in Zimbabwe whilst creating a model with which to offer pastoral care.

### 3.1.7 **PRACTICAL THEOLOGY WITHOUT PRAXIS, IS DEAD**

Because pastoral care practice is always in some way representative ministry, it must give particular attention to the meaning of pastoral acts as they can be understood by using the languages and meanings that flow from the Christian community and its tradition. Pastoral care is therefore always under the obligation to be grounded in theology. But pastoral theology is fundamentally practical. It finds its task and purpose in the practical reality of situations that call for pastoral responses. It is always a theology that emerges from reflection on a practical situation (Gerkin 1986:22).

Although the author believes that Practical Theology will find its energy to sustain itself from within the philosophy of theology, he is also very aware that one should strive to keep a balance between the theory of Practical Theology and the praxis of this same theology. One should not lose sight that the theory of Practical Theology is there to motivate the praxis of Practical Theology. This theory becomes the vehicle and the motivation which will take one into the praxis of Practical Theology. Browning emphasizes this strongly when he wrote:

For practical theology to be genuinely practical, it must have some description of the present situation, some critical theory about the ideal situation, and some understanding of the processes, spiritual forces, and technologies required to get from where we are to the future ideal, no matter how fragmentarily and incomplete that ideal can be realized (Browning, D S April 1985. Practical Theology and Political Theology. Theology Today 42:20).

From the above quote, the author understands that he first needs to familiarize himself with the current situation in Zimbabwe and what has led to this situation. He then needs to evaluate what is wrong with this situation, if wrong at all. The author hopes to answer some of these questions when he deals with the problem statement. He then needs to form a biblical theory about the pastoral care needed in Zimbabwe within the context of the Zimbabwean people.

### 3.1.8 PASTORAL CARE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Gerkin helped the author to define pastoral care within the framework of Practical Theology when he told a story where he was called to serve in a congregation. Shortly after his arrival in that specific congregation, a woman phoned him to ask whether he would do a certain task because the previous minister always used to do it. He refused, and asked whether they could not do it themselves. Gerkin writes:

I was not going to be the one who ran churchly errands or did things for them or their children that they could do for themselves (Gerkin 1997:118).

With this, Gerkin challenged the author to understand that true pastoral care cannot be the easy-way-out. Sometimes we need to act speedily; - occasionally we need act over time; - and sometimes we need to abstain from any action; -and in all instances, this should be seen as pastoral care. The latter will often prove to be the more difficult because true pastoral care originates in something much deeper than mere action, or non-action, without motivation. In providing pastoral care for people, one continuously needs to ask the question, how can I care for people in such a way that they will not only be able to care for themselves, but begin to care for others who are also in need.

Solomon understands that pastoral care for people in need will bring them to a place where they can enter into communion with God (Solomon 1992:137). Our Christian caring is based on Jesus Christ being the “I

AM". Jesus not only spoke the Word of God, He is the very Word of God, He is the Truth, He is the Way and He is the Life (Pieterse 1987:5). If this is then our true conviction then pastoral care is far more than mere theory motivating praxis. Again, Getz enriched this notion when he said that Christians should never permit themselves to pastorally care for others in difficulty for the wrong motive:

Paul made this point before he challenged these believers to follow Christ's example. Your 'encouragement,' he wrote, should come 'from being united with Christ.' When we were without hope in this world, Christ made it possible for us to have hope. And that hope came into our lives because of Christ's servant heart towards us. Therefore, our motivation to serve others should come because of God's marvelous grace toward us when we were undeserving sinners. When we are tempted to be selfish and proud, we need to think of what Christ did for us (Getz 1986:128).

From the above quotation, Getz challenged the author to ensure that his care for the church in Zimbabwe is not wrongly motivated. The only reason why Christians should care for people in need, originates from the hope that Christians have in Christ built upon God's grace for humankind. Because God cares for humankind, humans are able to care for other humans "because we are held in God's memory" (Patton 1993:15). Christian care offered from any other motivation other than mentioned

above, such as, political or financial reasons, will become less than what God intended it to be.

### **3.1.9 WHY THEN, DID THE AUTHOR CHOOSE TO RESEARCH THIS DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**

The author inserted this brief interpretation of his understanding of what Practical Theology is because during the course of this research, he was continuously challenged about his true motive for offering care towards the church in Zimbabwe. He is convinced that he can only motivate the pastoral care he desires to offer from within his own spiritual conviction. Hence, unless the author can motivate the care offered from within his Christian conviction, he would find it very difficult to dare to care for the people in Zimbabwe.

Yet, the motive to care without the practical out-working of this motive would leave this dissertation short of its intention. Practical Theology, according to the author's understanding, has given him the vehicle to both motivate pastoral care towards the church in Zimbabwe from within his own theological conviction, to work towards a praxis in offering this pastoral care, and to do this to the best of his ability, within the context of self and the Zimbabwean people.

### 3.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRES USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

The reader should be mindful of the vulnerable situation many people in Zimbabwe are subjected to. The e-mails to and from Zimbabwe are monitored by the Zimbabwean authorities, therefore most people could not reflect their real situation via this media. Even when the author visited Zimbabwe, it was necessary to protect the people he interviewed and therefore could not always keep a written record of the conversations he had with them.

Because of the sensitive nature of the circumstance in Zimbabwe, some informants completed the questionnaires while being personally interviewed by the author, whilst others could not risk filling out a questionnaire, but were willing to engage in a personal interview with the author. Because the questionnaires became a tool to structure the interviews, the author was able to converse with the informants, elaborating upon the questions asked and getting a deeper understanding of their circumstances. This also helped the author to test his own motive for asking the questions he chose. However, the process of personal interviewing people also has been a little problematic in the sense that it caused deeper emotional involvement for the author. Could this pain the author experienced influence the way he researched this problem in Zimbabwe?

The author hopes that the reader will understand that these questionnaires also helped provide pastoral care for people in need. For



this reason it was necessary for the author to continuously make some adjustments to the questionnaires, right up to the very last interview used in the dissertation.

Through the following discussion of these questionnaires, the author will attempt to journey with the reader, in order to come to a place where together, we can begin to appreciate the difficult situation the Zimbabwean church faces daily.

### 3.2.1 **QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE**

Under this heading the author will discuss each question separately, in an attempt to validate the legitimacy of the questions asked. He will also attempt to test these questions in their effort to offer pastoral care to the church in Zimbabwe.

- 1) *Will you share in your own words what the nature of the crisis in Zimbabwe is?*

It is important that people get the opportunity to tell their story, or stories, in their own words. This will enable the author to get some understanding of the care-seekers' perception of their life-story. Abels and Abels help us to understand that people need to tell their stories in their own words, they wrote:

In addition, it is an approach that comes closest to mediating the status differential between worker and client. This is particularly important when there are

cultural, ethnic, gender, and/or class differences between the client and the worker, and/or when history suggests that one had also treated the other as inferior (Abels and Abels 2001:167).

The author also realized that telling the story in their own words helped him to hear the untold stories. For example, a lady told the story of how her husband was killed. She remembered an amazing amount of detail that surrounded that incident, but she did not tell the story of her son and two daughters being killed. Could it be that the pain of her children's death was too great to share in words, or could it be that she denies the death of her children?

2) *How are you personally affected by the difficulties many people experience in Zimbabwe?*

The same incidents do not have the same affects and impact upon people and their lives, because people's perceptions of what happened are vastly different. Zimmerman and Dickerson helped the author to understand that;

...we take certain things for granted ... we respond unthinkingly in our lives, without examining how it fits (Zimmerman and Dickerson 1996:61).

This is true for the caregiver as well as the care seeker. And unless the author attempts to understand the personal need, and perception of need

and pain of the care seeker, he or she will not be able to bring comfort to people.

3) *Personally, what is your biggest need right now, and what suggestions do you have to address this need?*

This is a two-folded question, firstly learning what need the care seeker has, and secondly, what kind of help does the care seeker require. The author structured this question in this manner because he discovered that some people have a real need, but understand that very little can physically be done about this need. For example; the author interviewed a highly educated man who is considered an authority in his field of study. He holds a very high position in the institution where he is currently working. In spite of his high level of education and the senior position he holds, he still cannot afford to live a “*good standard*” of life. This married man, his wife and their three children, lives together with his parents in a “*small two-bedroom house*”. He simply cannot afford to live separate from his parents, and in this way, he is helping his parents to survive the very difficult economic circumstances. In the course of his interview, the author learned that this man understands and appreciates that very little can be done about this situation. He is also very appreciative of the fact that his family is still relatively cared for and he is still able to help his parents. The reader needs to understand that although this man appreciated and understood the conditions in Zimbabwe, it still does not take away the fact that he and his family are suffering.

4) *Is the Zimbabwean church capable of addressing your needs?*

The German philosopher Schopenhauer once said that people are like a pack of porcupines on a freezing winter night. The sub-zero temperature forces them together for warmth. But as soon as they come close together, they jab and hurt one another. So they separate, only to attempt, repeatedly, to huddle together again (Watson 1981:243).

With this question the author attempted to understand the care seekers' understanding of how the Zimbabwean church should respond to the problems in Zimbabwe. The author discovered care seekers from the same congregation were answering this question vastly differently. By answers given to this question, the care seeker was often able to test his or her understanding of how much, or little, the Zimbabwean church addresses their needs. From the answers that were given to this question, the author discovered that many Zimbabwean churchgoers who are actively involved in the need of other Zimbabweans, felt their own needs to be relatively addressed.

5) *In your opinion, what should the Zimbabwean church's role be in bringing relief to the suffering in Zimbabwe?*

In posing this question the author tested the care seekers' expectation of their own Zimbabwean church. Often people's expectations are not met because they have never been expressed. By simply making their need

known, a countryside church in Zimbabwe availed their facilities in order for a mobile medical clinic to serve the community once a week. The reader should understand that the response from this question was helpful because the church council most willingly opened their doors, in response, the moment they learned about this need.

- 6) *What can the South African church do in order to help you in this situation?*

By asking this question, the author also learned the expectation of the Zimbabwean church has of the South African church. The author understands that he has a role to play in the pastoral care that can be offered to the church in Zimbabwe, but he also understands that the South African church is required to play its part. Watson becomes very challenging when he wrote:

The church is, or should be, the word made flesh for today. Others should be able to look at our fellowship of love and say. 'That is what God is like' (Watson 1981:39).

Together, and through "our fellowship of love", we as the Zimbabwean and South African churches can help liberate the suffering in Zimbabwe. However, this pastoral care can only come about within the context and parameters set by the Zimbabwean people.

- 7) *Why do you think it necessary, or not necessary, for the South African church to help the church in Zimbabwe?*

This question urged the Zimbabwean church to understand that they are not to suffer alone.

No man (sic) is an island. Our lives are woven together, so that who we are and what we do always influences other people. The New Testament, therefore, knows nothing of the solitary Christian. Christ calls us into fellowship both with him and with all others who have become his disciples (Watson 1981:243).

The Zimbabwean church is part of the body of Christ in South Africa, and elsewhere, even in times when their emotions cause them to believe differently. In the course of all these questionnaires and interviews, the author did not come upon one person denying the idea that the South African church has a role to play in Zimbabwe. However, most people's perception of what this role should be is vastly different.

8) *How do you see the future of the church in Zimbabwe?*

This question allowed care seekers to dream again. Their future has been stolen by the suffering and the pain they experience, and the caregiver should help care seekers to find a future story with hope. Zimbabwe is their country, and it is their people who are suffering. For many, this is the only country they know, and they do not want to know another country.

Lester helps to emphasize the importance of this question:

When a person is broken or wounded, we can assume that their perception of the future has been invaded, altered, or threatened. Healing can occur only if a person

comes to grips with these personal threats to her or his future stories (Lester 1995:58).

By asking this question the author discovered that most care seekers dreamed of a church that, through its prophetic voice, will bring liberation to its own people.

### 3.2.2 **QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Again the author will discuss each question separately, in an attempt to evaluate the legitimacy of the question asked. It is pertinent to mention that this questionnaire for the South African church was much thornier to deal with than the previous questionnaire to the Zimbabwean people. It became apparent that many South African churches are not willing to face the issues and suffering in Zimbabwe. One of the interviewees strengthened this thought when he said that the problems in Zimbabwe are caused by the Zimbabweans themselves. The author was forcefully challenged, how could this be?

As the author journeys through these questions, he will attempt to bring the reader with him, in order for us to get a better understanding of the South African church's perception of the problem in Zimbabwe.

In defence of the South African church members he interviewed, the author desires to inform the reader that he placed a greater emphasis and spent more energy upon some of the South African churches that are

not involved in the Zimbabwean problem. (In chapter one the author mentioned that he discovered that some South African churches are giving help to Zimbabweans.) The author targeted some of the uninvolved churches in an attempt to bring a higher level of awareness and possible involvement from these congregations.

- 1) *What, in your understanding, are the issues that have caused the crisis in Zimbabwe?*

This question brought almost as many different answers as the number of people interviewed. It became clear to the author that many, or dare he say most people in South Africa, do not have any or have very little understanding of the problems in Zimbabwe. As the author pondered this, he began to suspect that the South African media plays a major role in this lack of understanding. Conflicting media reports have created a mix of truth, half truth, and incorrect interpretations of the situation in Zimbabwe. Maybe this notion could be a topic for another research, but falls outside the scope of this study, and falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

This question has opened a way for the author to enter into a discourse with South Africans, helping them to gain a deeper understanding of the problems in Zimbabwe. The author believes that this deeper understanding will accelerate empathy within the South African church, bringing them closer to a shared life with Zimbabweans in need.



2) *What are you doing in order to help the people in Zimbabwe?*

The answers that came from this question strengthened the author's perception that many South African churches care very little, or know very little, about the problem in Zimbabwe. The author was rather surprised to discover that many interviewees found this question to be threatening, or even personally offensive, and some South Africans even responded in an aggressive way towards the question. To the amazement of the author, an interviewee responded in what seemed an aggressive manner; *"why do the South Africans always put their noses into the business of the Zimbabweans"*. It appears that this question is confronting the church to evaluate its belief about who their neighbour is, and for some this was not an easy, or a pleasant question to answer.

Tillich confronted this problem of people not understanding themselves as being part of the church:

The phrase 'courage to be part' presents a difficulty. While it obviously demands courage to be as one-self, the will to be part seems to express the lack of courage, namely the desire to live under the protection of a larger whole (Tillich 2000:89).

From what Tillich says it seems that it requires more "courage to be part" of the bigger and sometimes suffering church, such as in this context, than to be an individual one-self. Could this be reason for the aggression this question caused within some interviewees? The responses from this question urged the author to explore this deeper in his search to find

some understanding for this phenomenon. In chapter 4 the author has wrestled to find an understanding for why some church members do not offer pastoral care.

3) *In your understanding, what are the biggest problems in Zimbabwe?*

Before people will listen to a solution, they must know there is a problem (Crabb 1975:23).

The author was amazed to discover how many South Africans who have any opinion on the problem in Zimbabwe, believe that this problem could easily be addressed, by just doing this, or just doing that. For many this problem is as simple as getting rid of a person, and for others this problem could be addressed by meeting violence with violence, or simply to 'throw money' at the problem.

It became apparent to the author that some of the interviewees did not even begin to understand the complexity of the situation in Zimbabwe. This question created the opportunity for the author to further discuss this issue with South African interviewees.

4) *In your opinion, who should help the Zimbabwean people, and why do you think they should be helping?*

Who should show God's love for the Zimbabweans? The author believes this expressed love for people in need will be costly for the caregiver. Watson strengthens this belief when he said "[t]he more deeply we

commit ourselves to loving fellowship with others, the more we shall be hurt" (Watson 1981:54). Not only will we hurt when others hurt us, but we will hurt when our fellow humans are hurting. Responses to this question confronted the author with his own perception about the who's and why's, of liberation for the Zimbabwean people, since he himself started this journey from a place, blaming the South African government for not doing their duty in caring for the Zimbabwean people. These responses have shaped the author's understanding of his own responsibility in this regard and largely contributed to some of the thinking in chapter 3.

5) *Do you think the South African church should help the Zimbabwean church, and if so, how and what should be done?*

Helping people with their problems is the responsibility of every Christian believer, no matter at what stage of spiritual development he or she may be. Baron Von Heugel, Roman Catholic layman, gave his penetrating definition of a Christian: 'A Christian is one who cares' (Hughes 1981:12).

At first glance this question is in close relation to the previous. However, this question comes with a much deeper level of urgency for the South African church. At this point in the interview, many interviewees shifted their perception, and some even admitted to a need for a higher level of responsibility towards the Zimbabwean church.

6) *How are South African churches affected by the problems in Zimbabwe?*

When the author started using the questionnaire, this was the third question on the list. As time progressed, he began to ask this question at a later stage in the interview because he soon discovered that most interviewees believed that the situation in Zimbabwe did not affect them, or at least, have very little affect on them. However, as the interview progressed and people were confronted with their own perceptions and views of the problem in Zimbabwe, they realized that they have a much bigger role to play. By asking this question later, the author helped some South African churchgoers to see their own vulnerability in this situation.

7) *How do you see the future of the church in South Africa?*

This question almost seems out of place in this research. Why is it important to ponder the future of the South African church in the context of this dissertation? The author learned that many interviewees became rather despondent as they were confronted with the situation in Zimbabwe, and often, their lack of response to this situation. Some interviewees expressed their concern that South Africa is on the same road as Zimbabwe, and in a few years from now, South Africa will face the same problems.

By asking this question, the author was attempting to create a platform for discourse that would lead to an understanding that the South African church has a bright future of its own. God has placed His church in South

Africa and it will not necessarily follow in the way and suffering of the Zimbabwean church.

### **3.3 RESPONSES FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES**

Again the author wish to remind the reader that this dissertation is aimed to create a model of pastoral care towards the people in Zimbabwe. For this reason the author became deeply concerned by some of the responses of the people in South Africa. In the following section the author will discuss some of these responses, as he will journey with the reader in seeking a deeper understanding for the responses he received upon the questionnaire to the church in South Africa. In understanding the motivation to these responses, the author hope to create a more inclusive model of care towards the Zimbabwean people.

#### **3.3.1 QUESTION 4, IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCH**

*In your opinion, who should help the Zimbabwean people, and why do you think they should be helping?*

On first glance, this seems to be a simple question: Who should show God's love for the Zimbabweans? However, responses from this question confronted the author with his own perception upon the who's and why's, of the liberation for the Zimbabwean people, since he started this journey from a place, blaming the South African government for not doing their duty in caring for the Zimbabwean people.

Surprisingly, many answered this question by unashamedly blaming the South African government, or for that matter, the English, the Americans or even the United Nations. Some even answered that Zimbabweans should help themselves, because they are largely to blame for their own problems. These responses surprised the author because he expected a very different answer from most of these people. Could it be that the author was naïve in his expectation that people would own-up to this situation by saying: “we should care for the Zimbabweans”. Why is it so difficult for churchgoing Christians to see that they are the body of Christ, this it is their responsibility to care for those in need? Again, the author was confronted in his own lack of response and his eagerness to blame others for their “gross neglect” in sharing God’s love for a people in need.

After all, are we not the “church”, the “body of Christ”, and so often believers confess that we are the “community of saints”? Surely these are not new concepts or a foreign language for churchgoing Christians? The author discovered that these concepts are often intermingled, and for many Christians, their meaning carries the same notion, or is very closely related. Even people outside of Christianity, or church milieu, will often use these words in their daily walk. In the author’s mind, these very familiar notions often proves to be problem in the sense that, people often live with these concepts very lightly, without giving its meaning much thought. This motivated the author’s introspection, grappling with his own understanding, and what he really means with these words. How can one determine who the above people really are? It becomes rather dangerous

to just label people, or give names to groups of people without considering the measure and the meaning of what we are doing. A few questions come to mind as the author considers these notions:

- What is meant with the notion of "church"?
- What is meant with the "body of Christ"?
- Could only believers belong to the body of Christ?
- Having faith in Christ; belonging to the body of Christ; -does it bring the same understanding?
- The body of Christ and the church, does it carry the same meaning?
- Do all the members of church belong to the community of saints?
- And for that matter, can only believers belong to the church?

These are only but a few questions that troubled the author, as he researched the problem of caring for the Zimbabwean people. How does one determine who should be offering pastoral care, and who should be considered a people worthy to receive this care? This then poses yet another issue that deeply troubles the author; - could it be that God is only concerned for believers in Christ, and for this dissertation, those believers who live within Zimbabwe, or does God also care about those unbelieving Zimbabweans, even those who cause others to suffer? Because the focus of this dissertation is upon the South African church's response to the Zimbabwean problem, the author will not argue about who should receive pastoral care, but about who should offer pastoral care.

The reader should understand that the author will not do another dissertation of these topics, yet believes that it is most important for him to have a clear understanding of what he means when he uses words like “church”, “body of Christ”, “community of saints” and how he fits into these concepts, in order to continue with this research. In the course of this chapter the author hopes to journey with the reader and together they will find some common ground understanding that all people belong to a community of some sort. Often these communities are labelled by certain names, depending upon who does the labelling, and different people will have different understandings, expectations, and perceptions of those who are part of a community. Notwithstanding the fact that different people might use different labels for certain communities, these communities will influence the people in and around them and in this way, largely influence many people’s behaviour in their lived circumstance.

The author also needs to remind the reader that this dissertation is researched within the discipline of Practical Theology, and if he does not practice caution and discipline himself in this chapter, he might find himself in another discipline of theology. However, the author is convinced that it is worth taking this risk, because a clear understanding of these concepts will help to qualify the reason and motive for this dissertation. Earlier in this dissertation, the author already expressed his conviction that, unless the researcher can theologically motivate the care he or she urges, the energy needed for sustained pastoral care will not be possible.



### 3.3.2 THE CHURCH

Under this heading, the author grapples with his understanding of who belongs to the church, hence, who are the people we call church? In answering this question, the author hopes to come closer to an answer of who should care for the Zimbabwean people, because many of the people interviewed answered this question by simply saying the church should care for the Zimbabwean people in need.

Alexander and Alexander attempts to answer this question by simply stating:

In the New Testament, the word for church refers both to a local group of Christians and to all Christians throughout the world (Alexander and Alexander 1990:219).

The author can appreciate the notion that the concept of being church should be seen wider than a local community of Christians, and it should encapsulate Christians "throughout the world". Hence, in a real sense, the author believes that the church in Zimbabwe, South Africa and anywhere else upon earth should simply be called, church. Yet, this is not such a simple notion, because these believers might be different in their theological conviction, denomination, race, complexion, culture and whatever makes them to be who and what they are.

Taking this notion even further, if one considers people being the church, and not buildings or institutions, then Van Staden is helpful when he

wrote that the notion of church has its existence from the beginning of the earth (Van Staden 1979:7). In studying the Scriptures, and from Van Staden, the author is convinced that God concerned himself with people from the very beginning of humankind. The author hopes that the reader can agree to this concept. However, if one considers only Christians to be church, then one could argue that the church has its origin from a time called "after Christ". (The origin of the church has been thoroughly researched by others, and falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Hence, the author will not debate this notion any further). From Van Staden's contribution, the author appreciates that God's concern with people started from the beginning of humankind. Van Staden continues to argue that God called many people to be the church upon earth, however, not all these people will necessarily share eternity with Him (Van Staden 1979:7). The author's understanding of Van Staden's contribution is, what we define as church, consists of both people who are committed to God, and those who are not. This could mean that membership of the church does not necessarily bring commitment to God. If this notion is true, then could one ask uncommitted church members to care for the people in Zimbabwe? Farmer, also asked questions along this notion, and he concluded that only the visibly obedient can claim membership. From the following quotation the reader can see that Farmer seems to think that this membership boils down to a choice:

Any individual who freely chooses to carry out God's will  
in his/her life is enabled to do that because of the gift of

God's very self. And the expression of this justifying act must of necessity take place in some manner of visibleness. And it is this visibleness that Rahner refers to as membership of the people of God (Farmer 1993:46).

If considered in its purest form, the above quotation becomes problematic. Because, in the author's understanding, this seems to imply that only the obedient belong as members of the church. In the context of this dissertation, does it then mean that those who do not obey God in caring for the people in Zimbabwe, are separated from church? From Scripture we know that this is not possible, because all people fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:9-18). Maybe one should ask yet a deeper question; what does it really mean to say that all people fall short of God's glory? This could prove to be an extremely difficult question to answer. Could the author act a little presumptuous and say that this means many things, but because the author wants to concern himself with only the context of this dissertation, he suggest that it means that people simply find it impossible to obey God in its full context. Maybe human beings are able to obey partly in their care for Zimbabwean people, and that can only be because God is granting His grace to His people and in this context, those who are offering to care for Zimbabweans. However, the author believes that complete obedience is not possible, because even the best deeds of people are contaminated through sin (Isaiah 64:6). Even the very best care the author can offer to Zimbabweans will still fall short of

what God intended. This notion confronts Farmer's understanding of membership. What then is this saying to church membership?

Farmer wants to help when he differentiates between "good members" and "bad members" of church. "Good members" are those who walk close to God, and under His grace, whereas bad members distance themselves from God. Farmer continues:

Sinners belong to the church. Yet, says Rahner, this is not a self-evident truth. What is self-evident is that "respectable people", "virtuous people", people who are "saints" belong to a socially recognized association known as the Catholic church. And so, to declare, with church tradition, that the sinner belongs to the church is to declare that an individual who is lacking the grace of God, who is walking far from God, is actually a member of the church, apart of the visibleness of God's grace to the world, a member of the Body of Christ (Farmer 1993:49).

In a real sense Farmer is helpful in his understanding that it is through grace that people belong to the church, and not their "good", or "bad", behaviour. For the author it seems that it might be wrong then to speak of good or bad members of church, rather one should simply call them members of the church, as Jesus asked, "who is good" (Mark 10:18).

However, if grace then becomes so important for membership to the church, Farmer the author then needs to ask:

- Who then can exist outside God's grace?
- Furthermore, if grace becomes the criteria for membership, and all people depend upon God's grace, could one then classify all people, believers or not, as members of the church?

The reader should understand that the author believes, God's grace is of utter importance in the context of church, but the question before us remains; who should care for the people in Zimbabwe? If this caring is the church's task, and grace the only criteria for membership to the church, we are still in difficulty finding answers.

The question remains; who then will qualify to be members of the church?

Küng also wants to help in the search to bring some understanding when he notes his understanding of the importance of baptism and membership of the church: A man (sic) does not baptize himself, he is baptized in the presence of the community and for the community (Küng 1967:209). According to Küng, and in the context this quotation was taken from, baptism seems to be the only way into this community we call church. Hence, baptism is performed in order for the member to belong to the community. The author needs to challenge this notion because if this is true:

- What then happens in denominations where people are only baptized as "believers"? Do they have many people in their

fellowship who are still outside of the church, and not members?

- Does this implicate that these churches only have believing members?
- Would that in turn then qualify these denominations to be more “holy” than the denominations that also have “non-believing”, but baptized members?
- The author also wonders whether Kūng considers all baptized people to be members of the church, even when they are wilfully separated from the community called church?

In the context of the question before us, the author wants to ask Kūng whether only the baptized are allowed, or tasked by God, to provide pastoral care for Zimbabweans. The reader should understand that the author does not agree with Kūng’s viewpoint. However, Kūng did help the author’s understanding of his own theology, and to formulate his understanding within these concepts. Kūng further challenged the author when he expressed his understanding of the relation between baptism and salvation. He seems to say that through baptism people become members of the church, and all baptised church members have found salvation. Kūng wrote that through baptism “man (sic) is taken up into the eschatological saving event, or rather he enters voluntarily into it” (Kūng 1967:207). Could this mean that the church, through the act of baptizing its members, brings salvation to them? If this is so, then one could, and should justify forceful baptism to all people, because this will bring salvation to all humans. In the Zimbabwean context, the South African

church then should send its “troops” to baptize all Zimbabweans. This might not bring liberation from the current suffering, but it will quicken hope within these people, through the understanding that God has granted them salvation.

As the author ponders this, he became very aware that this problem of bringing hope and liberation to people is far more complex than this simple resolution of baptizing all people. The author also is confronted with the biblical notion that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6 - NIV), whereas Kūng seems to believe that baptism is enough to please God and receive salvation from Christ. At this point Farmer becomes helpful to broaden the authors’ understanding of church:

On the one hand, there is the concept of church “as incarnate presence of Christ and his grace, together with Christ and his grace.” And on the other hand there is the concept of church “in as far as she must essentially be distinguished from this grace and inner divine union, without ceasing, however, to be even in this way a still valid Christian reality (Farmer 1993:42-43).

Here Farmer is challenging the concept that only baptized people could belong to the church. The author agrees with Farmer, because no person could dictate unto God who should be worthy of His grace and presence. In fact, the author wants to state this more forcefully as he understands

this to be bordering on blasphemy. Blasphemy in the sense that Christ no longer becomes the only way to the Father (John 14:6), but baptism into the church becomes the way to the Father. In the author's mind, church membership is largely, or could he say completely, dependent upon God's grace to people. Farmer put this beautifully when he states: "The church is the visibility of God's grace" (Farmer 1993:44). The author wants to add to this concept and say that this is grace received freely from God, but also grace is given to people by the church. The church can only give grace because she has received grace. Without this received and given grace, the church will find it very difficult to qualify itself as the "Church of God". Hence, Zimbabwean people will receive God's grace through the care offered to them by the South African church, because the South African church has received this needed grace herself.

However, this is not as simple as the above seems. Farmer wants to return to the notion that the church has a role to play in bringing salvation to people because, "[t]he church, coming forth from Jesus, the crucified and risen one, is the basic sacrament of the salvation of the world" (Farmer 1993:117). Does this mean that the author now is contradicting his understanding that Christ is the only way to the Father and salvation? No. In these words, Farmer reminds the author that the church came only "forth from Jesus, the crucified and risen one", and not from baptism, or any other source, and salvation can only be found in Christ. Hence, outside the "crucified and risen one", the church will find itself without any



foundation. This understanding has far-reaching consequences for the manner in which the author perceives pastoral care for Zimbabweans. In the author's mind, true pastoral care can only be realized through the hope that a risen Christ can bring. In chapter four, the author will return to this notion of hope in pastoral care.

McGrath reminded the author that Martin Luther also wrestled in bringing a deeper understanding of whom and what the church is. To the author it seems that Luther built his attempt of understanding the church largely upon the praxis of being church. McGrath wrote:

In a major treatise on the church, first published in early modern German in 1539, the Protestant theologian Martin Luther (1483-1546) lays down seven distinguishing marks of a true Christian church, including the preaching and hearing of the word of God; the true Christian sacraments of baptism and the sacrament of the altar; the office of the keys and ministry; proper public worship; and the bearing of the cross (McGrath 2008:128).

The author can appreciate this attempt of Luther and McGrath, because it is helpful in bringing a deeper understanding of the praxis in the life of being church. However, the author wants to place a higher emphasis on the seventh point. The church should be "bearing ... the cross", McGrath is saying. In the author's mind, this notion should be placed as the highest possible priority and not mentioned last, almost as an after

thought. The church could fail in many areas and in fact, in the author's mind, the church does fail in many areas. However, unless the church bears the cross of Christ, it will fail altogether to be the church.

In a later part of this chapter, the author will return to his understanding of church and the bearing of the cross, when we grapple with his personal convictions upon the topic of church, the body of Christ and the Communion of Saints.

### 3.3.3 **THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Douglas reminds us that the phrase, "body of Christ", has a threefold use in the New Testament. Firstly, this could mean the human body of Jesus Christ, as proof of his true humanity. Secondly, Jesus self used this notion when he spoke of the bread which he shared with his disciples at the Last Supper. Thirdly, the phrase the "body of Christ", is largely derived from the apostle Paul's analysis of the function of the church as described in 1 Corinthians 12 and also other places (Douglas 1982:146). In the context of this dissertation, the author will focus mainly upon the word-picture that the apostle Paul painted of the body of Christ. This focus is motivated from the authors' conviction that many people use Paul's picture in describing the church, the community of saints, or believers, without qualifying what they really mean with this concept.

From the forth question in the questionnaire to the South African church, many interviewees motivated their conviction that the church should care

for Zimbabweans from within their understanding that “we are the body of Christ”. However, very few interviewees, and in honesty, even the author, had a clear picture of what is meant with this well-known phrase. As the author grappled with this notion, many questions came to his mind:

- What does it mean to the Zimbabweans when we say we belong to the body of Christ?
- What qualifies people of South African and Zimbabwe to be called the body of Christ?

These are only but a few questions that confronted the author in his search for a deeper understanding of this notion. For the author it seems that many interviewees spoke lightly concerning this notion, without a personal conviction that this word-picture brings huge implications to its user, and dare the author say, to its hearer. From the Scriptures we learn that if “one part of the body suffers, every part suffers with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26 - NIV). Hence, because the members in Zimbabwe are suffering this should cause suffering to South African members if they are of the same Body. The question then is; why is this not evident in the life of South African members?

The reader will remember that Küng wrote extensively upon the concept of church, which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Again he became helpful when he brings the notion that through the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16f) and baptism (1 Corinthians 13:13f), the body of Christ finds its definition. Earlier the author discussed his convictions about these claims of Küng, and why he cannot fully agree with Küng. However,

in these words, Küng states his understanding that the church is the body of Christ. He continues to enrich this notion when he says that Paul used the text in 1 Corinthians 12, and Romans 12, as the "charismatic structures" (Küng 1967:227) within the church to explain the body of Christ. It is in the later part of this notion that the author attempts to understand the difference between church and the body of Christ. In the author's mind, the church is the spiritual institution where believers will bear the cross of Christ, and the praxis of this lived conviction above, is called the body of Christ. Hence, unless the church actually lives in the "charismatic structures" of being church to the Zimbabweans, will it find difficulty in calling itself the body of Christ? Later in the chapter, the author will return to this when he grapples with his understanding of church, the body of Christ and the community of saints.

Küng continues to remind the author that the letters in Ephesians and Colossians requires that we understand the body of Christ in a wider context:

In order to show that the whole cosmos is in the hand of Christ, it is not sufficient to think simply in terms of the local Churches. Hence the body of Christ in these two letters is the world-wide Church – admittedly in very idealized form, and the central perspective is not so much the relations of the individual members to each other, but the relationship between the body and its head. Christ is

now explicitly named as the “head” of the Church (Küng 1967:230-231).

Again the reader should note that people of different races, genders and nationalities are included in this notion. This quickens the author to understand that the body of Christ should be seen in a wider context than merely the local community and in the author’s mind, includes different denominations. This is not unique to the term ‘body of Christ’, because the author said that “church” also crosses these borders. However, Alexander and Alexander reminds us that through Paul’s writings we learn that “[e]ach has a different part to play in the church, working under the direction of Jesus” (Alexander and Alexander 1990:214). Again the author is reminded that the body of Christ brings to us the praxis of being church. Douglas wants to urge the reader to a deeper understanding when he wrote that this is “the body of Christ, not of Christians, and that it has visible, congregational and also eschatological significance” (Douglas 1982:146). In these words Douglas reminds us of the interdependence of the different members of this body. He reminds the author that through their unity, Christians lose their oneness and unite with one another, also with Christ. Not only will members share their pain and joy, but their very existence is also identified by this membership. Küng strengthens this notion when he wrote:

Paul is saying ...: Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body (1 Cor. 10:17). By their communion the sharers in the meal are made into one

body, because the bread is the body of Christ (Küng 1967:223).

With these words Küng also brings the picture of Holy Communion into this unity. The apostle Paul reminded the reader about Jesus' own picture of his broken body. This picture of a broken body forcefully challenges the author upon the concept and praxis in this body of Christ, if one considers that the broken bread becomes the very token of Christ's brokenness for the church (1 Corinthians 11:24). If the broken bread then becomes the picture, and the church then becomes the body of Christ, the church could never remain whole, or unbroken, in her service to the world. Hence, it is in her brokenness that the church can bring liberation to Zimbabweans. The author's understanding of being the body of Christ (the wounded body of Christ), became helpful to him for defining the South African church's role in Zimbabwe, particularly in the area of pastoral care. This care for Zimbabweans does not come in wisdom and eloquence, but in humbleness and brokenness, members of the same body, striving to serve Christ with other members in his body.

In the author's mind, our understanding of the body of Christ will urge the church not to be silent about the suffering of Zimbabweans, but to speak out against the anguish of the other parts of the body in a call for others and itself, to provide pastoral care. Later in this chapter, the author will return to this notion.

#### 3.3.4 **IN COMMUNITY**

In the earlier parts of this chapter, the author searched for a better understanding for the notions of “church” and the “body of Christ”. Through searching for a better understanding of the concept of community of saints, the author now hopes to journey with the reader to find a deeper understanding of the community between the South African and Zimbabwean church. Also in this dissertation, and in the context of the concepts “church” and the “body of Christ”, one needs to enquire into the origin of this notion of community of saints. Could this be something that was created in some human’s mind as a wild dream perhaps?

Picking-up this notion from very early chapters in the Bible, Bilezikian reminds us that God, from the very beginning of humankind, planned for people to live in community. Bilezikian writes:

...God actually created a being who was to reflect his own image. But, having done so, he astonishingly declared his creation to be “not good” because it was solitary: God was displeased with the fact that man was alone (Gen. 2:18). There was one solitary individual, but had no oneness because there was no one else with whom he could be together in oneness (2:20) (Bilezikian 1997:16).

Bilezikian is helping us to understand that God created a person called Adam, and then created another called Eve. God intended for them to live in oneness, or for the purpose of this dissertation, live life in community.

In the author's mind, this is a very important to understand that they were to live in community; because some theologians seem to believe that the second person was created with the intention of being a helper. From this last concept, could this then mean that the labour in the original garden was so burdensome that God pitied Adam, and created a second person to help carry the load? The author feels the urgency to challenge this concept. From the context of this passage, and in the author's mind, Eve was created and called a suitable helper, in order for Adam was not alone. In a real sense, Eve becomes more than just a helper for Adam, she came to his rescue in his loneliness. From this the author began to ponder the different roles people play in community. In the context of this dissertation, the author wants to state that the Zimbabwean and South African churches have "equal status" before God. God intends the Zimbabwean church and the South African church to be in community. Hence, both the Zimbabwean and South African churches are created to help each other to be free from being alone.

Bilezikian strengthens the author's understanding of God's motive to create community, when He brings the picture between man and woman:

The only reason given in the text for the creation of the woman was to help the man not to be alone. The woman was to be the necessary counterpart of the man for the making of community (Bilezikian 1997:20).



From the above picture, the author understands that this passage in Genesis speaks of the community between a husband and wife. However, the author believes that this marital picture helps to bring some understanding of God's intentions for people living in community. In the author's mind, one could be forgiven for concluding that God created community for human's sake. It seems that Bilezikian and the author are in agreement upon this. However, Bilezikian brings a much deeper understanding of community when he wrote:

While this is accurate, it is not the whole truth because oneness existed prior to the creation of humans. Indeed, community find its essence and definition deep within the being of God. Oneness is primarily a divine mode of being that pertains to God's own existence, independently from and prior to any of his works of creation. Whatever community exists as a result of God's creation, is only a reflection of an eternal reality that is intrinsic to the being of God. Because God is eternally one, when he created in his image, he created oneness (Bilezikian 1997:16).

Community has its origin with God self, says Bilezikian. If God himself lived in community, and created people to live in community, could community living reflect something of the image of God? From this understanding, the author is confronted with the notion that human beings have a choice, whether they will be in or out, from the community that

surrounds them. Doyle builds upon this in saying, "the only reason to exclude someone would ultimately be for their own lack of inclusivity" (Doyle 2000:21). From this the author is confronted with the understanding that God did not force community upon people. Hence, the South African church has the choice whether she will live in community with the Zimbabwean church, or not. This choice is also available to the Zimbabwean church.

According to Farmer, this choice to live in or out of community has far-reaching consequences. Farmer attempts to contribute to this debate when he wrote:

[F]or Rahner, as he himself notes, the term individuality "does not always mean the same thing." Its meaning can only be ascertained by locating the term on a continuum. At one extreme is the "individuated single being" which is completely closed in upon itself. At the other extreme is the "greatest mystery of our faith". The human being, says Rahner, is located between these two extremes: on the one hand, there is the "'death' of lifeless matter," and, on the other hand, the "infinite life of the Blessed Trinity (Farmer 1993:30).

In the above quotation Farmer is reminding us that all human beings are individuals, living life within parameters of a "single" self, or as one who is part of a mysterious faith. It seems that Farmer professes that only those

inside the "infinite life" of God are able to live in community. The author very much doubts this concept, however for the purpose of this dissertation the author will not argue this, and this could become a topic for another research. However, Farmer's concept of community is helpful for this dissertation, because the focus of this research is a Christian community (in South Africa), care for a people in need (in Zimbabwe).

### 3.3.5. THE CHRISTIAN IN THE COMMUNITY OF SAINTS

Many Christian believers (or dare the author say most Christian believers) hold to the Apostles' Creed as a true, or near true, expression of their understanding of the Christian faith. Through this creed, people claim to believe in God. Amongst other confessions, they also continue to express their conviction to; ... "BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS". The author discovered that this notion was freely expressed by many churchgoers from different denominations, race groups and language groups in South Africa, Zimbabwe and many other places in the world. This notion to "believe in the communion of saints" confronted the author in many ways:

- What is meant with the word "communion"?
- Who are the "saints"?

Furthermore, the author is also confronted with the question; does it mean that people really believe in this communion, or do they believe in Christ, or could it be both? McGrath comes to the rescue when he wrote:

For Luther, to "believe in the church" is not to trust in the institution of the church, but to affirm that the church is

ultimately called into being by God, with a mission and authorization which derives from God. Luther's idea proved very influential, and has become central to much Protestant thinking on the nature of the church. A central theme of Protestant understanding of the nature and mission of the church focuses on the presence of Christ resulting from the proclamation of the "word of God" in preaching and the sacraments. For Martin Luther, the church is therefore the community called into being by the preaching of God's word (McGrath 2008:128).

From McGrath, the author is challenged with some understanding that this "community", articulated through the notion of communion as expressed in the Apostle's Creed, includes God through His presence by preaching of His Word. This presence through preaching the Word becomes even more meaningful in the light of the first chapter in the gospel according to John. Duvenage also contributed and enriched this notion when he said that our expressed belief in the Communion of Saints can never be separated from God's grace towards a confessing community (Duvenage 1978:384). For the author it seems that expressed faith in community brings an understanding that faith is expressed in a gracious God that is with his people, through the concept of Emmanuel, God with us! In the context of this dissertation then, the author ponders the significance of the above insight for the Zimbabwean and South African church. Could this mean that God self becomes the unifying factor

in a community with His church in Zimbabwe and South Africa? To the author it seems that this community of saints, as expressed in the Apostles Creed, will have far reaching consequences for the ones who recite this. Could the author be a little presumptuous and say that this notion will not only impact those who recite this creed, but also those who are not even aware of this creed.

Barclay says that this notion of communion, as it is used in the Apostle's Creed, has its origin from the Greek word, "*Koinōnia*". He suggests that the word "*Koinōnia*", even in secular Greek had a spiritual zest:

Beyond a doubt "*Koinōnia*" came into the Christian vocabulary with a great background, for it is the word of togetherness in every sphere of life (Barclay 1967:293).

According to Barclay, this phrase of believing in the communion of saints was only added to this creed midway through the sixth century. Barclay continues to remind the reader that long before its Christian connection, this word was often used to express fellowship and relationship for "mutual benefit" (Barclay 1967:291). Hence, this "Communion of Saints" should urge people to seek fellowship through relationships that will bring "mutual benefit" to all parties. What does it mean when the South African church expresses belief in the "Communion of Saints"? Surely, this should include the Zimbabwean church.

Gorgias (507) said that "*Koinōnia*" in friendship will result in two people who share, and as a result will "have more by giving to each other"

(Barclay 1967:292). They become partners in their sharing, by both having and sharing a part in their relationship, says Douglas (Douglas 1982:223). From this notion the author is challenged by the concept that people are not poorer but will be spiritually richer by giving to others in need. This notion of giving to others was taken to a higher level by Aristotle, when he, in 1334, described the marriage relationship as "*Koinōnia*". He said that this union between a husband and a wife brings partnership through "fellowship, to share all life" (Barclay 1967:291). What then is the implication for the South African church when they express belief in the "Communion of Saints"? When this church ignores another church in need, does this imply a divorce from the Zimbabwean church, and thus, freedom from a sharing life? If this is true, this implication is that the South African church is the poorer for not sharing community with its Zimbabwean sister.

Yet there is more to it, because for Greek speaking people, "*Koinōnia*" also has a commercial nuance when "people pool their resources to work together for their common profit and common good" (Barclay 1967:291). Through "*Koinōnia*" the church pools its wealth for the common profit of its entire people. This becomes clear when one considers the early church (Acts 4:32-37). Sharing is not only a New Testament notion as the Psalmist reminds us that in this "*Koinōnia*", "the Lord bestows his blessing, even life for evermore" (Psalm 133:3 - NIV). If sharing recourses forms such an essential part of communion, could the South African church enjoy the privilege of "*Koinōnia*", where this church reaps

the benefit of being in communion, yet exclude the Zimbabwean church in need?

Furthermore, Aristotle also added to this notion because he understood the word "*Koinonia*" to have a political connotation, where the state in partnership ("*Koinōnia*") with its people, and through "certain laws and obligations" should create an environment where "its citizens will have a free and full life" (Barclay 1967:292). Plato contributed to this understanding of a "free and full life" when he spoke of "*Koinōnia*", where he envisioned a state where men and women would share equality in "education, ... privileges" and "responsibilities" (Barclay 1967:292). To add to this already rich understanding of "*Koinōnia*", Thucydides further added an international flavour, where there "is an alliance of people who have a common goal and a common mind, made for a common purpose" (Barclay 1967:292) across groups of people of different races and nationalities. Hence, this becomes a community that does not discriminate upon gender race or nationality. In expressing their belief in the "Communion of Saints", the South African church is challenged to live a life of freedom for all its members, where all its members are equal, even to the point of taking responsibility to care for a suffering church in Zimbabwe, where the task of caring will not become the problem of a minority, but the task of the whole church.

This brings us to another difficult question; who qualifies to be called "SAINT"? In the author's mind, it is important to know who these saints

are, because this is a community of saints. From the context of this creed, the reader will forgive the author in being presumptuous by saying that one should seek the meaning of the notion of “saints” within the members of this community. It seems that in this context, faith in Christ will not qualify, or for that matter, disqualify a person from being a member of this community. Barclay strengthens this suspicion when he notes that the “dragnet” of Matthew 13:47, brings “things of all kind” (Barclay 1967:297). Theoretically, in this dragnet we then find people who believe in Christ, and those who do not believe. If faith in Christ is not the criteria for being part of this community, how then does one gauge the notion of being “saint”?

Again the author is confronted with the question; who are these saints in community. Towards the end of this chapter, the author will return to this question as he will attempt to explain his understanding of this complex notion.

#### 3.3.5.1 **CREATING A COMMUNITY OF SAINTS**

In the Bible, the narratives of creation make a fundamental point of the fact that God created human beings for communal life (Aarflot 1988:69). This understanding urges the author to stress again the importance of creating a community of saints that will include both the South African and Zimbabwean church. However, the author is aware that others also are included in God’s community, but for the purpose of this dissertation



the author will focus upon the people of these two countries. Bilezikian is helpful when he highlights the importance of creating a community;

...the making of community may not be regarded as an optional decision for Christians. It is a compelling and irrevocable necessity, a binding divine mandate for all believers at all times. It is possible for humans to reject or alter God's commission for them to build a community and to be in community. But this may happen only at the cost of forsaking the Creator of community and of betraying his image in us; this cost is enormous, since his image in us is the essential attribute that defines our humanity (Bilezikian 1997:27).

The author agrees with Bilezikian in his understanding that Christians should intentionally seek to enter into community with fellow Christian believers. Community will strengthen the individual (Ecclesiastes 4:12), but Bilezikian takes this further when he states that the Christian will "forsake" God's image unless he or she enters into a community. From Bilezikian the author is challenged to understand that God's image goes beyond the individual person, it is also reflected in the oneness of God's people:

The brutal separation caused by sin may be illustrated by wrenching apart the clasped hands. This subversion of oneness was the result of the Fall, the work of Satan (Gen. 3:7). Unfortunately, the damage inflicted on

oneness was far greater than mere separation (Bilezikian 1997:45).

The author can appreciate Bilezikian's conviction that this oneness of God's people is destroyed by Satan in Genesis chapter three. This conviction however, has a far-reaching impact upon this dissertation, because unless the South African church lives in oneness with its neighbour, Bilezikian says, God's image will be distorted. If one considers this from another angle, one could say that when the South African church strives to live in oneness with its Zimbabwean neighbour, those outside the church will recognize something of God's image in His community.

#### 3.3.5.2 **OUR IDENTITY IN COMMUNITY**

Being and living in community is more than just living in peace with our neighbour, because peace could be achieved through various ways. One could reach a place called peace, by simply tolerating, or even worse, living in a place called indifference towards our neighbour. True Christian community has very little in common with mere tolerance or indifference towards its neighbour. In fact the opposite is true, because being in community will have profound consequences for those who share in a communal life. White shares the author's convictions when he wrote about his convictions about the narrative of the Good Samaritan:

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in

systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness (White 1940:497).

According to White, and from the above narrative, identity in Christian community is not found in religious systems, but in Christian living. This living happens in a dangerous world, outside of the safe place we call church. In the author's mind, we can only find our identity in community once we have answered the question; who is my neighbour? Again White reminds us that Jesus already answered this question:

Thus the question, "who is my neighbor?" is forever answered. Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God (White 1940:503).

Our neighbour is the one who is in need. Could the author then be presumptuous and say that our community and identity in this community includes our neighbour in need. Bonhoeffer strengthened the author's conviction, when he wrote about the suffering of Christians, and its impact upon the Christian community:

The Body of Christ has its own allotted portion of suffering. God grants one man (sic) the grace to bear

special suffering in place of another, and this suffering must at all cost be endured and overcome. Blessed is he whom God deems worthy to suffer for the Body of Christ. Such suffering is joy indeed (Col 1:24; Phil 2:17), enabling the believer to boast that he (sic) bears the dying of Jesus Christ and the marks of Christ in his body (2 Cor 4:10; Gal 6:17). The Christian may now serve so that 'Christ may be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death' (Phil 1:20). Such vicarious activity and passivity on the part of the members of the Body is the very life of Christ, who will to be formed in his members (Gal 4:19) (Bonhoeffer 2003: 183).

From the above quotation, the author is deeply challenged. Could it be that Bonhoeffer is saying that people's suffering might have redemptive consequences for fellow humans? The author will not discuss this notion in depth, because it falls outside of the scope of this dissertation, however this statement has deep consequences for this dissertation. If Bonhoeffer is correct, then the suffering of the Zimbabwean church could become redemptive for the church in South Africa. The reader should understand that the author is not attempting to justify, or soften the suffering of the Zimbabwean people. Their suffering is real, and the reader will remember that the author spoke about this pain, elaborating it in chapter one of this dissertation. In the author's mind, the redemptive value of suffering Zimbabweans can be found in the South African church's community with

its neighbour. In this community, Zimbabweans need to share their pain in order for the South African church to have a part of their suffering. The above notion is birthed in the author's conviction that community is more than just doing, it will become an essential part of the person's being. Hence, the Zimbabwean suffering becomes the South African redemption in the sense that it will become South Africa's identity with the pain of its neighbour.

Through this research, the author realized that the South African church lacks an understanding of its identity in this community with its Zimbabwean neighbour. This lack of identity has caused many church members to feel threatened, or guilty, when they are confronted with issues in Zimbabwe. This lack of identity has caused many interviewees to respond in an aggressive way when they were faced with the problems in Zimbabwe. Watson says that this loss of identity is a problem faced by many modern people:

'Know thyself' is an ancient wise maxim, but the pressures of today are such that many people face an identity crisis: they do not know who they really are. Partly this is due to the emphasis today on *doing* rather than *being*. In western society what seems to matter is what we do, how much we achieve, what we accomplish. As we concentrate on this, we may wonder who we really are; and until we have some knowledge and security

about this, we cannot possibly share ourselves with others (Watson 1981:48).

Watson reminds us that the Christian focus is not upon our deeds, but upon who we are in Christ Jesus. From Watson the reader can understand that many South Africans experience a lack of identity with Zimbabweans, because they did not do enough in their own understanding. This understanding corresponds with the author's conviction; Christian believers are called children of God, and "that is what we are" (1 John 3:1 NIV). Hence, the Christian's identity is secure in Christ, but this identity will manifest its self in a visible way through a life in community with those who suffer. In the context of this dissertation; the South African church's response to the problem in Zimbabwe will not give her a Christian identity, however, this aid lend to Zimbabweans, will make her identity in community with the Zimbabwean church, visible.

### 3.3.5.3 **COMMUNITY AND THE CROSS**

Christian communities can never be separated from the cross of Calvary, because it is this cross that lends Christian communities its unique ethos. The author wants to remind the reader that the cross and what it stands for, has the ability to offend people because it will bring pain and suffering through unfair and unjust trials. Even the disciples were taken aback by the shame and powerlessness of Golgotha. Only much later, through their relationship with the risen Lord, and the power of the Holy Spirit, did they too face their own shame and powerlessness (Freeman 1995: 89). Freeman continues and reminds us that most of Jesus' disciples,

including Paul and James, the brother of Jesus, died violently at the hands of their persecutors. This reminds the author that our Christian communities will not free its members from suffering. The reader should also remember that suffering in it self will not bring people into communities. It is Christ self, and only Christ, that brings Christians into Christian communities. This becomes obvious when Barclay reminds the author that believers are confronted with the notion of community, every time he or she will share in the Lord's Supper. He continues:

Sometimes we call the sacrament of the Lord's Supper quite simply The Communion. That sacrament was meant to be the "*Koinōnia*", the act of sharing and fellowship *par excellence*. It was meant to be an act and an occasion where above all places on earth men and women have fellowship ("*Koinōnia*") communion with one another and with God (Barclay 1067:294).

In the words of the above quotation, Barclay reminds the author that this sacrament celebrates "Koinōnia" amongst God's people and "Koinōnia" between people and God. The author will avoid entering into a theological debate upon the understanding and the theological value of this sacrament, however the author is challenged by his understanding of this sacrament in the context of the difficulties and suffering of the people in Zimbabwe. In the author's understanding, if he wants to remain true to his convictions, "Koinōnia" with God's people and with God will not be possible, unless it includes "Koinōnia" with Zimbabweans. In this context

the author based his convictions not so much upon the sacrament of communion as the “Koinônia” fellowship created by communion. Watson helps when he wrote that the kind of communion we are seeking cannot be separated from the cross of Christ:

The true basis for all fellowship is when two or more persons kneel at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ, trusting wholly in his mercy and love (Watson 1981:50).

As the author pondered this, he remembers that God created humans to function within community. Through the sacrament of communion, together we come in “Koinônia” and kneel at the “foot of the cross of Jesus Christ”. But our fellowship at the foot of the cross will remain incomplete unless it includes true fellowship with Zimbabweans. Hence, this kneeling at the cross is in fellowship or oneness with caregivers and care seekers.

The above notion quickened the author to speculate a little, and wonder why is this “Koinônia” we are seeking is so very difficult to achieve. Again Watson comes to our aid with these words: “I am afraid to tell you who I am because, if I tell you who I am, you might not like who I am, and that is all that I have” (Watson 1981:51). Could it be that the South African church avoids “Koinônia” with Zimbabweans, because this oneness might expose its own weaknesses?



#### 3.3.5.4 OUR PURPOSE IN COMMUNITY

Community is important to God. In Genesis 1:28, God purposed this community through a dual assignment, to increase in numbers and fill the earth, and to rule or govern the earth (Bilezikian 1997:26). The reader could understand that none of these God-given assignments could be done in individuality. God created Adam and Eve to be a community and fulfil humankind's God given purpose. In the author's mind, God's plan did not alter through the years because, according to the New Testament, God created the church to be the bride of Christ. Hence, this community is not only amongst people, and God and His people in the Old Testament, but it includes the New Testament concept of Christ as the groom of this people, and together they will become God's community.

From Scripture the reader can learn that it was unto Jesus that God gave all authority upon earth and in heaven (Matthew 28:18). The bride herself will have no authority, unless she is connected to her groom. It is the authority that comes from the groom that will enable the bride to fulfil her assignment to rule the earth. This sounds scripturally true, but one needs to ask why this is not happening in Zimbabwe. In fact, very often it is the church that suffers most in Zimbabwe. Abraham Lincoln also pondered about the suffering of people and said that suffering does not make us weak, it only teaches us how weak we are (Freeman 1995: 20). As the author wrestled with these extreme concepts, that all authority has been given by Christ on the one side and on the other side suffering, which is so evident in the church, it dawned upon him that even Christ suffered a

great deal. It seems the authority of Christ is an essential and integrated part of the suffering of Christian believers.

If Christ, through his authority and suffering then forms the essential centre of the community, one needs to ponder on its influence upon the notion that people should have an individual and personal relationship with Christ? The author believes that this personal relationship with Christ will become the most important element that will energize pastoral care for people in need. In chapter four the author will elaborate upon this notion when he speaks of the concept that people will care for people when they are convinced that they themselves are held in God's memory. However, in this chapter the author wishes to dwell upon the importance of the individual in the community of God. Hence, as faith communities, people should care for Zimbabweans in need, but what role does the individual have in this?

Farmer seems to share the same concern, seeking a deeper understanding of the individual's role within the bigger community. He wrote:

The charismatic element in the church is centred on the individual, because it is here that unmediated encounter with God takes place (Farmer 1993:35).

In this quotation, the author partly agrees with Farmer in the sense that God's gift of charisma enters the church through the individual's encounter with God self. However, the author is confronted with his

personal understanding that, this community called church, encapsulates its individual members in such manner, that no single person can minister in and through the charisma of God, unless he or she influences this community. Hence, encounters with God occurs with individuals, and very often through individuals, but could never be isolated and restricted to individuals. White expands upon this notion when he wrote:

In the call of Abraham the Lord said, "I will bless thee; ... and thou shalt be a blessing: ... and in thee all families of the earth be blessed". Gen. 12:2,3. the same teaching was repeated through the prophets. Even after Israel had been wasted by war and captivity, the promise was theirs, "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." Micah 5:7 (White 1940:27).

In the above quotation the author agrees that the personal experience of the individual will influence large communities. God's charisma through his gifts is meant to be a blessing for the community. In the context of this dissertation, the charisma that exists within the South African church should become a blessing to the Zimbabwean church. The above notion is not too difficult for most South African churchgoers to accept. However, the author discovered that the counter to this notion becomes less acceptable and very often becomes a stumbling block to the praxis and expression of community living. Hence, the God given charisma that

exists within the Zimbabwean church becomes less influential with the South African church. To the author it seems that a part of the South African church accepts its role to care for the Zimbabwean church, but will not allow the Zimbabwean church to care for the South African church. As the author ponders this, he realizes that unless the South African church influences the Zimbabwean church, and are influenced by the Zimbabwean church, these two churches will find it very difficult to become a community that will influence the world around it.

Could this be that the Zimbabwean church looks upon itself as a lesser partner of the community with the South African church? This became apparent when Zimbabweans responded to the questionnaires the author discussed earlier in chapter two. For many Zimbabweans, their pain has caused them to separate themselves from the community, thinking that the rest of the community has forgotten them. The author discovered that this notion holds some truth, because many believers have forgotten their Zimbabwean members of the community. How could this be? As the author searched for some answers, he discovered that many Zimbabweans do not understand, or maybe they do not believe themselves to be equal role-players in this community with the South African church. Many Zimbabweans do not understand themselves to be equal in this community, hence, equal in voice and responsibility within the community. It is the Zimbabwean church that should voice the pain and suffering of its people, but the South African church is equally

responsible to echo this cry-out of injustice of its equal member in community.

#### 3.3.5.5 **COMMITMENT IN COMMUNITY**

We sought to put an end to poverty in our congregation. If we could not bring social justice to our own congregation, with people who had bibles under their arms, we could never bring it to others. Social justice had to start within our own congregation – the household of faith. This meant it was unthinkable for one brother to have two TV sets while another brother didn't even have a bed to sleep in. It was unthinkable for one person to have three cars, while another had to walk twenty blocks to catch a bus. We knew that only when we became living examples could we go with authority to the world and tell them about social justice. First we had to clean our own house. This is what "community" is all about (Ortiz and Buckingham 1975:104).

From the above quotation about the purpose of community, the reader should keep in mind that the author of this dissertation understands and holds to his conviction that the Zimbabwean church has equal rights as members in this community with the South African church. For this reason, the author wants to challenge Ortiz and Buckingham that all the church also shares in equal responsibility for offering care to its people in

need. At first glance, this seems to be an unrealistic expectation upon the Zimbabwean church in need and pain. However, the author has discovered that nobody can voice the pain of the Zimbabweans like the Zimbabweans, and nobody can care for the Zimbabweans like the Zimbabweans. It is more unrealistic to expect the South African church to bring a one-sided care to its “less important”, or “less capable” partner in community. Not only is it unrealistic, it borders on arrogance. In the author’s mind, caregivers should be aware that pastoral care could only happen within the parameters set by care seekers. Unless care seekers participate in this process of pastoral care as an equal member of the community, pastoral care will not become liberating to care seekers. This “care” might bring relief from hunger, or clothe the naked, but care seekers will not be liberated to become full members in this community of saints.

From this the author realizes that he cannot care for Zimbabweans, unless they care for themselves. He cannot voice their pain, unless they voice this pain themselves. The author cannot speak for the voiceless masses, unless he creates a platform for the masses to speak for themselves. This led the author to understand that Zimbabweans are equal in membership of this community in all areas of its life. Not only are they equal in privilege, but they are equal in responsibility in this community. Furthermore, Zimbabweans are also equal in their commitment towards this community. It is in this context, that Barclay becomes even more challenging:

The Christians were like the members of a body. Each member had care for every other member. The need of one was the need of all and the suffering of one was the suffering of all (Barclay 1967:293).

Barclay borrowed this from the apostle Paul; however, this comes as a vigorous reminder that members in community cannot be separated from the larger community. Not only does this community share its pain and responsibility to care, but it is also fully committed to be one body. The pain of the Zimbabwean church becomes the pain of the South African church, and the responsibility of the South African church becomes the responsibility of the Zimbabwean church.

The author discovered that many Zimbabweans were not willing to share their experiences and pain with others, yet they are offended because of the lack of response to their pain and suffering. It has become a mammoth task to help Zimbabweans understand that their pain is also the pain of the community of saints in South Africa. Unless Zimbabweans take responsibility to make their pain known, it will be unrealistic to expect the South African church to take its responsibility in order to care for its neighbour in need. This asks for equal commitment for the task to bring liberation to Zimbabwean people. However, the author is very aware that this will expect many people to go beyond their comfort zone. It is in this situation that White is helpful when he wrote that sometimes Christians will suffer and offer themselves in sacrifice to bring liberation for the

community. This asks for an extreme level of commitment for this community. As White continues, he challenges that unless believers make that sacrifice; they cannot claim to be Christian:

Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the Church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians (White 1940:504).

From the above quotation, White challenges community members to live life beyond one's self and the author can agree with this. The author is also challenged by White's statement, that unless this happens members cannot call themselves Christian. This last part of the statement, seen in its purest form, becomes very problematic for the author, and the author cannot fully agree with the notion. However, the author will not debate this, because it falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

### **3.3.6 THE AUTHOR'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY OF SAINTS, THE CHURCH AND THE BODY OF CHRIST**

According to Küng, both the concepts of people being in community through the institution of church, and being in the body of Christ, "express the union of the Church with Christ". Küng continues to stress that this union is not "abstract" in its nature, because the people of God are physically "placed by Christ in history" (Küng 1967:225). The author can



appreciate this challenge that this oneness goes beyond the abstract and theoretical understanding of community. In the author's understanding, the essential definition of being church is to be a community of saints, called into oneness, and purposed to unite God's people, where it will express its praxis in the body of Christ. In the context of this dissertation, the South African and Zimbabwean church will become a community through their purpose in Christ, and together they will live out the praxis of this oneness through the charisma only God can offer.

The oneness in community becomes very challenging for the author, because the term, "union in Christ" describes the aspect of the One individual in relationship to the Many" (Farmer 1993:32). The author wishes to connect his thoughts with Farmer in his understanding that the purist form of "union in Christ" can only happen within a relationship with "Many". Hence, unless the individual person experiences and expresses their union with other believers and lives in the praxis thereof, this individual will find it difficult, if not impossible, to qualify their membership with the body of Christ. In the author's mind believers, being part of the body of Christ, implicates that separation from this body would mean to be "amputated" from this body, and thus no longer could share in the life and work of the body of Christ. Hence, unless the South African church actually lives in the charismatic structures of being church to the Zimbabweans, it will find it difficult to call itself the body of Christ, and so it is with the Zimbabwean church.

From McGrath the author learned that Martin Luther professed seven characteristics an institution requires to become known as church. The seventh McGrath said is, "the bearing of the cross" (McGrath 2008:128). As the author ponders this, he realizes that this is the most desired characteristic of being church. The author believes that, unless the church bears the cross of Christ, it will fail to be church. It could never become a community of saints, and thus will not be the body of Christ. From the above, the author was confronted with his understanding of the notion to bear the cross of Christ. In the author's search for an answer, Pope became helpful when he wrote that the, "transforming church is composed of people who live out the confession that Christ is Lord" (Pope 2006:22). Pope develops this notion from Matthew 16:24-25, when Jesus called upon his followers to lay down their lives and take up the cross to follow Christ. This calls for a denial of self in order to be restored in a lost relationship with God. Hence, Christ Jesus then becomes the perfect restorer of this lost communion with God, when he claimed to be "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6 – NIV). Not only does he become the very source of all the essential necessity to the Christian to be Christian, he becomes the absolute and only way to the Father (John 14:6). Unfortunately, many claim this understanding to be arrogant and exclusive to people of other religions, and that understanding is shared by many within the Christian community. That, in the author's mind, has become a great, if not the greatest obstacle in the church, when she strives to be the body of Christ. Hence, if Christ is not the only way to the Father, what can motivate membership to this community of saints?

The author wants to put it plainly to the reader: Christ is the only way to the Father. However, does this imply that God is only concerned with the caregiver from within this community, caring for people from their own community? As the author wrestled with this, he changed the topic of this research to read, who cares for the “people” of Zimbabwe, instead of who cares for the “church” in Zimbabwe. These changes came about because the author realized that God’s concern for people goes wider than what most people would determine as “church”. God’s concern also envelopes people who do not accept, or even worse, outright reject God. Even more difficult to accept; God’s concern for people can even reach those whom this community might feel unworthy of God’s grace and care. The author’s was surprised to discover that the inclusiveness of God’s care was offensive to many interviewees, Zimbabweans and South Africans alike. This caused many churchgoers to become selective in the care they offer. Pope challenges this selectiveness when he wrote: “The standards upon which Jesus decided to build His church have never had any room for selective obedience” (Pope 2006:22). From Pope the author understands that it is the church’s task to care for people in need without reservation. In the context of this conviction, the author now wishes to discuss the second question asked of the South African church.

#### 3.4 **QUESTION 2, IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCH**

*What are you doing in order to help the people in Zimbabwe?*

This question brought answers that amazed the author in many ways. Most interviewees found this a difficult question to answer, and the author pondered why this question became so problematic. Why he did not get some straight answers like; I do this..., or I do that..., or I do nothing for the Zimbabwean problem. Surprisingly many interviewees found this a confrontational question, and some even responded in an aggressive way. Could this simple question confront many people to verbally acknowledge Zimbabweans to be their neighbour in need?

Tillich confronted this problem of people not understanding themselves as being “part” of the church when he wrote:

The phrase ‘courage to be part’ presents a difficulty. While it obviously demands courage to be as one-self, the will to be part seems to express the lack of courage, namely the desire to live under the protection of a larger whole (Tillich 2000:89).

From Tillich it seems that it requires more “courage to be part” of the bigger and in this context, suffering church, than to be one individual self. Could this then be the reason for the aggression this question arose within some interviewees? It seems that this question confronted interviewees to actually take a point of view about whether one should personally get involved in the pain of the suffering people in Zimbabwe, or not. These responses urged the author to explore this in his search to find some understanding for this phenomenon. Bilezikian states that this is not

a unique problem, however many people begin to realize their responsibility as part of the bigger church, and he blames a lack of identity for this problem when he wrote:

An increasing number of Christians are waking up to the fact that, to a large extent, the church has become ineffective in fulfilling its mission because it has lost a sense of its own identity as community (Bilezikian 1997:48).

As the author ponders this, he began to wrestle whether this is a lack of identity with the community of saints, or could this be a lack of identity with the cross and the suffering it brings. This could be a topic for another research. For the purpose of this research, the author will concern himself only with the pain that this lack of identity brings.

Earlier in this chapter, the author states that being in community with the saints means to bear the cross of Christ. In bearing the cross, Jesus challenged his disciples to lay down their lives in order to take up a new life that is lived for the benefit of others (Matthew 16:24-27). This is not a popular message and many churchgoers are offended by this message. Dare the author say, most churchgoers find it very difficult to adhere too. Bonhoeffer wrote extensively upon this problem and he called this phenomenon "cheap grace". Through cheap grace, people will attempt to pardon their life style, finding many reasons why they cannot obey God. They will continue disobeying God, not wishing to bear the consequences of their disobedience. According to Bonhoeffer, costly grace will pardon

the human being because it will enable a person to change from a sinful lifestyle and live a life according to Scripture. Thus, cheap grace will pardon the behaviour whereas costly grace will pardon the person as Bonhoeffer continues:

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything, they say, and so everything can remain as it was before (Bonhoeffer 2003: 3).

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate (Bonhoeffer 2003: 4).

In the context of this dissertation, cheap grace implies a South African church who has abdicated its responsibility to care for its neighbour in need. It continues in its life-style as if it has no part of its community who suffers at the hand of fellow humans, whereas costly grace asks so much more of the church. Could this then be the reason why some interviewees became offended when they were confronted with their role in bringing liberation to Zimbabweans? Bonhoeffer continues:

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man (sic) will gladly go and sell all that he

has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man (sic) will pluck out the eye which causes him (sic) to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him (Bonhoeffer 2003: 4).

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man (sic) his life, and it is grace because it gives a man (sic) the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: 'ye were bought at a price', and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God (Bonhoeffer 2003: 5).

From Bonhoeffer the author understands that it will become costly for caregivers to liberate care seekers. He continues to stress his conviction that only because of God's sacrifice are people able to enter into costly grace. As the author pondered this, he realizes that Peter (Matthew chapter 14) had to suffer the risk of leaving the boat in the sea, in order for him to learn; not only his own weakness, but also the strength of his

Lord. In the same way, on this journey to liberation, both the South African and Zimbabwean church might find itself upon stormy waters. The church might be called out of the comfort and safety of the “boat”, risking the storm of political instability, just to discover its own dependency on God, as well as its own inability to care for its people. In fact, the author self often feels overwhelmed with the task of caring, but most often, he is reminded not only of his own weakness, but the strength of his Lord.

### **3.8 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 departed when the author motivated his convictions upon the statement that Practical Theology needs to do theology in order for it to come sustained in its praxis. He then discussed the various questions he asked in the two questionnaires used in this research.

Responses to question 4 and 2 in the questionnaire to the South African church urged the author to explore the meaning of church, the body of Christ and the community of saints. The author attempted to take these notions beyond the abstract, helping the reader to understand that being church is to be a community of saints, called into oneness and purposed to unite God’s people, where it will express its praxis in charisma, through the body of Christ. In the context of this dissertation, the South African and Zimbabwean church will become a community through their purpose in Christ, and together they will live out the praxis of this oneness through the charisma only God can offer.



In this chapter the author was confronted with the question that remains; why is it so difficult for believers in Christ, to live as a community of saints? Again, the author hears the words of Tillich which were very challenging, he wrote:

We work hard and play hard not because we are more industrious or more playful than our ancestors but because we dare not stop lest in the stillness we are overwhelmed by the sound of our own anxieties and fears (Tillich 2000:xvii).

Could this mean that the world is so guilty of the same kind of offences it blames on others; that people dare not speak out to the unjustness that we see in Zimbabwe, hence we are not caught out with our own words? The truth in Tillich's words become evident when one considers that recently, elections were held in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. Many leadership changes took place in both the governments of, South Africa and Zimbabwe, and yet this problem in Zimbabwe prevails. The author perceives that this problem of suffering in Zimbabwe goes further than just a "wicked" Mugabe or an "indifferent" Mbeki.

In chapter 4 the author will briefly glance over some spiritual reasons why the Zimbabwean people suffer. However, this chapter will mainly concern itself with exploring the pastoral care and therapy needed by care seekers in Zimbabwe. The author will also seek to create a practical model with which to offer pastoral care for the suffering people in Zimbabwe.

## CHAPTER 4

Responses from some of the questions in the questionnaire to the South African church largely motivated the research prepared in chapter 3. As the author wrestled with these questions, he realised that the South African and Zimbabwean churches should strive to become a community through their purpose in Christ, and together they will live out the praxis of oneness through the charisma that only God can offer.

Chapter 4 will depart from a place where the author will briefly explore some of the reasons, or could it be the perception for the reasons, why Zimbabwean people suffer. The author believes that this brief overview will set the landscape for the main purpose of this chapter, namely the pastoral care and therapy needed by care seekers in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the author will also seek to create and explore a model in praxis in order to offer this needed care towards the suffering people in Zimbabwe.

### 4.1 WHY DO THE ZIMBABWEAN PEOPLE SUFFER?

The reader should understand that the author would not attempt a theological debate about the reasons for human suffering. Neither will the author seek answers to the origin of suffering. Others could explore this topic and motivate such a debate, it falls outside the scope of this dissertation. The purpose of this brief overview is to help both the author and reader to appreciate that suffering is a reality in the lives of people from all walks of life and more specifically the people in Zimbabwe. This

brief précis will touch on various religions, attempting to bring some understanding of their spiritual convictions concerning suffering, and connect this to the author's Christian conviction of this topic.

Most world religions have a very real sense of the existence of human suffering. For worshippers in Islam, people suffer because “Allah Katib” – “God willed it” (De Klerk 1985:43). Many Christians will most often outrightly reject this viewpoint, because many modern Christian worshipers believe, God wants to do good and positive things in the lives of the believer and not harm his people. In the context of this chapter however, the author can partly appreciate this notion that God ordained suffering, it prompts his memory to the book of Job. From this book the author understands that Satan obtained God’s permission to bring suffering to Job (Job 1:12 & 2:6). Hence, unless God had permitted Satan to inflict suffering upon Job, this suffering never would have happened. Nonetheless, in its pure and naked form, this notion becomes confrontational for the author because this could suggest that God “wills”, or dare the author hint, “wants” Zimbabweans to suffer. This could become an extremely intricate notion, which will call for a deep theological debate, and such a debate falls outside the scope of this dissertation. For this reason, the author chose to act presumptuously when he states that one should seek another understanding for this suffering.

Hinduism and Buddhism suggest that suffering comes to people because of the sins in their previous lives (De Klerk 1985:41). People are who, where, and what they are, because the conduct in their previous lives has determined their current incarnated status. Could this religious conviction then suggest that Zimbabweans have sinned more than others in their previous lives and therefore, their current pain is their own doing? Again, the author finds this difficult to accept bluntly. All people have sinned, and are sinning continuously before God (Romans 3:9-19). Why then do some people suffer more than others? This question becomes very relevant in times of pain and suffering, and Christians are not free from the thought that God must be angry and brought about their pain.

Suffering and pain is a reality that no person can escape and Dau says that the problem of suffering is "insoluble if solving means the complete and total elimination of suffering and evil" (Dau 2002:15). However, the truthfulness of suffering becomes very difficult for most people, including Christians, to accept. If the reader would care to study the Bible, he or she shall discover that suffering is a well-versed topic. The Scriptures are not hiding the fact that people are suffering, nor does it attempt in any way to justify this suffering. Retief agrees with this notion when he wrote:

Not only is there evidence that people who honour God do suffer, there are also references to the additional fact that God Himself sometimes stands behind these sufferings and, for His own inscrutable purpose, does not

alleviate them even though He has the power to do so  
(Retief 1994:190).

If God orchestrates this suffering, why is it so difficult for Christians to understand when this suffering comes their way? Again, Retief attempts to answer:

Some Christian teaching has erred greatly by becoming too triumphalistic. People are taught that this world is to be the scene of one victory after another over the powers of darkness. The powers of darkness express their destructive purposes in sickness and ailments. Thus, sickness, trouble and affliction in its many forms is to be resisted and rebuked. Each problem is seen as a deliberate ploy of the devil to ensnare the believer into bondage of fear and misery (Retief 1994:66).

From Retief, the author ponders God's involvement in times of human suffering. If Satan is not to blame, should human beings then blame God for their suffering and pain? Many people, long before this research, have asked this very question, and the author supposes, many after him will continue to ask this question. De Klerk also wishes to help, and he suggests that suffering, according to the Christian view, chiefly exists for two reasons: firstly, it is a consequence of sin (De Klerk 1985:47) and secondly, it is a mystery (De Klerk 1985:50). When the author ponders the first, he understands that suffering came into our world when sin

entered the lives of humans in Genesis chapter 3. People are fallen beings, living in a fallen world. However, the reader may agree that it is not as simplistic as that, because one also needs to consider whose sin is the reason for the suffering. Could this be the sin of the individual self, or should we consider the sin of all humankind? From De Klerk, the author also pondered the mystery of suffering, and many questions came to his mind:

- Could it be that God allows suffering as a mechanism for achieving a greater goal?
  - How could God use the suffering of Jesus' cross, which seemed so wrong and aimless at that time, to be so very right for this time we are living in?
  - Could human suffering become redemptive for fellow humans?
- Hence, suffering becomes justified.

It seems to the author that these thoughts would suggest that suffering becomes the agent of change in the hands of God self. This notion might become confrontational to the reader, and it will not explain the existence and reality of suffering. However, the mystery of God's purpose in suffering brings comfort to the author in his understanding that God is, was, and always will be in control of our worlds and lives, and that includes people who are suffering in the world. Through various conversations with Zimbabweans, it seems to the author that many people find comfort in the notion that God is still in control of their lives, even as chaotic as their lives may seem during this time. Herhold becomes very challenging in this notion:

The most difficult characteristic of the Christian faith is that we need to accept God just the way he is. We must love God for the person he is and not because he can do things for us, or because we are afraid of what he can do to us. This will imply that our love for God will unite us with God, even through “Gethsemane” and “Golgotha”. Yet, many people will resist this total commitment towards God because they fear the real pain “Gethsemane” and “Golgotha” will bring (Herhold 1986:10).

The reader can also appreciate that suffering comes to people from many places. Sometimes suffering comes from people’s own deeds , wrong decisions, sometimes from the actions of people around them, or the ill will of people in acts of crime. In fact, very often, or dare the author, suggest most often, people do not even know where this suffering comes from. Wimberly contributed in the area of this notion when he suggests that suffering becomes very difficult when people feel they have lost control of their own lives. He continues to say that “[I]iving out stories that others have shaped for us ... demeans us and makes it difficult to live fruitfully and meaningfully” (Wimberly 2003:96). From this, the author understands that the manipulation and oppression imposed by their government, contributes largely to the suffering of the Zimbabwean people. Adding to an already difficult situation, this behaviour of the Zimbabwean government often causes feelings of frustration and anger

towards the politicians in the country, bringing about a real sense of suffering for the inhabitants of the country.

#### **4.2 PASTORAL CARE AND ITS CONTEXT TO THE CARE-SEEKER**

Until this point of this dissertation, the title for this research was "WHO CARES FOR THE SUFFERING PEOPLE IN ZIMBABWE". As he was exploring pastoral care and its context for the care seeker, the author began to realise that the researcher and the caregiver, need to see and understand suffering in the context of the care seeker. Although suffering is a reality in the lives of most Zimbabwean people, their emotional and spiritual experiences do not necessarily correspond with one another. Even their perceptions of the level of suffering are largely different from person to person. Hence, in the author's mind, it becomes very misleading and dangerous to Cart-Blanc throw a blanket of suffering over all Zimbabweans, bringing a perception to the reader that all Zimbabweans suffer in the same way, for the same reasons and to the same extent. The above conviction motivated the author to remove the word SUFFERING from the title. With this action, the author is not saying that the Zimbabwean people are not suffering. He is merely attempting to bring a clear understanding to the reader, that caregivers need to be aware and should be mindful that care seekers retain their right to determine for themselves, the level and intensity of the suffering they are experiencing.



Although the author purposefully attempted to communicate his intension to offer pastoral care for those suffering in Zimbabwe, he realises that the notions and intensions he conveys need to be interpreted by the reader as well as Zimbabweans. Capps becomes helpful when he brings the notion that, people will not necessarily understand the intensions of caregivers, in the context of their perspective situations, he helped the author to understand some of the reactions from Zimbabweans in his attempt to offer care. Capps writes;

...the fact that texts are partly the effect of an author's intentions but they are always more than this. They have meanings that the author did not intend or envision when the text was being written. When we translate this fact into the context of pastoral action, we can say that pastoral actions also have effects that the pastor did not intend, and meanings that were not envisioned when the action initiated (Capps 1984:43).

The truth of this quotation became very evident to the author, when a Zimbabwean woman got very upset with the author. In her mind, the author was offering her financial assistance, not the kind of help he had offered. In her understanding, this was a Zimbabwean problem and the Zimbabwean church is capable of helping her with her spiritual and emotional needs. The one thing she really needed, or wanted, was money and since the author could, or would not meet that specific need, this person became upset, and expressed a feeling of disappointment with the help offered to her. There was another person who wished the

author to intervene forcefully, to confront police action violently. (The topic of violent resistance will be explored later in the chapter). Again the author could not meet this expectation, and was criticized for not being truthful, about what he is professing for the Zimbabwean people. In both these stories the author's actions, message and intentions, were misinterpreted, causing some difficulty in the relationship and communication with some Zimbabweans.

#### 4.3 **PASTORAL CARE, A VEHICLE TO CARE FOR THE SUFFERING PEOPLE**

What is pastoral care? Unless the author motivates his convictions and understanding of this topic, the reader will find it difficult to grasp the theoretical as well as the pragmatic undertone of this chapter. Earlier in the dissertation, the author motivated his conviction that Practical Theology needs to be energized from within theology self, to become sustainable. Hence, in exploring this topic of pastoral care, the author will attempt to bring the praxis of pastoral care and also lean upon theology to motivate his convictions.

##### 4.3.1 **WHAT IS PASTORAL CARE?**

"Pastoral care is the care of the whole person in relationship, not the treatment of a specific dysfunction", Patton said. He continues; "Life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived" (Patton 1993: 56). It is in the actual living of this mystery that people will find God's true purpose

for their lives. This purpose however, can only become a reality in the lives of suffering people, once they experience God's care for them.

God created humans in his own image. This is not a novice teaching, and is widely accepted by most, or dare the author suggest all Christians. However, for many Christians this notion brings an understanding that God created people with power and dominion over the earth. (The author is very aware that this notion also has a much wider implication, but for the purpose of this dissertation, the author will not explore any of the other implications because this falls outside the scope of this research.) Patton, however, insists that this understanding is wrong. God never intended people to rule the earth. Instead, God's intention was that people care for the earth, Patton wrote:

And God said you are to exercise care over the earth and hold it in its proper place'. I think that this newer interpretation is not so much a more nearly correct translation as it is translation informed by newer theological interpretation (Patton 1993:16-17).

Patton argues that the term "imago Dei" does not point to a substance, an attribute, or a quality. He suggests that this term refers to a relation. Hence, human beings are not so much to rule over the earth, but to care for the earth and its inhabitants through relationship (Patton 1993:16-17). From this notion, Patton builds his understanding that pastoral care occupies itself in preserving the present, while it will try to ensure a good

future for the occupants of this earth. The author can largely agree with this. However, in the author's mind, this notion lacks in caring for the whole person, as it ignores the past. For this reason, the author wishes to add to Patton's understanding, saying that pastoral care will also consider the past of the care seeker, and not only the present and future. Later in this chapter, the author will return to the notion of different time dimensions of hope in pastoral care.

#### **4.3.2 PASTORAL CARE THROUGH RELATIONSHIP**

Through a word picture of a shepherd tending his flock, Patton sketched a scene where the shepherd is mindful of the whole flock and not just about the need of the individual. It is through tending to the whole flock, that the caregiver meets the individual's need. The reader needs to be mindful of the context of Patton's picture, because from Patton, the author realises that the shepherd never lost his compassion for the individual within the flock. Pastoral care will tend to the whole flock. However, unless this pastoral care also influences the life of the individual, the care will fail in its purpose. At this point, Patton becomes even more challenging when he quantifies all people and measures their humanity in their ability and their willingness to care for one another:

Care is what makes the human being human. If we do not care, we lose our humanity... Heidegger is helpful in reminding the pastoral carer that care is more than what we feel or think or do... It is what we in fact are – caring (Patton 1993: 17).

In our care for the whole person, we need to consider the whole life the person is living, past, present and future. This is the life we live ourselves in close relationship with those whom we seek to offer care. Pastoral ministry is a ministry of hope, built upon our positive way of relating to people, even those who persecute us.

How does this relationship between caregiver and care seeker happen? Patton believes that a child will learn its fundamental understanding for relationships with other people from its mother. When this relationship fails or is disturbed, it will result in the failure of all other relationships (Patton 1993:19). It left the author wondering whether relationships with fathers then become secondary. To the contrary, in his practical experience of ministry with homeless people, the author discovered that people who did not have a healthy relationship with their fathers, struggle to have a healthy relationship with God as their Father in heaven. This often results in poor relationships with people around them, especially those in authority over them. The author will never deny that relationships with our mothers are very important to develop relationship skills in early childhood, just as important as our relationship with our fathers. It is through these healthy relationships with our parents, that true and honest relationships within communities will build the platform for pastoral care. However, the author discovered that it is not as simplistic as this might sound. In all this, the author also learned that people, who grew up within the bounds of broken relationships with their parents, even those who never knew their parents, are able to restore their ability to healthy

relationships with other people through a meaningful relationship with God. Another fascinating discovery is that some people grew up in healthy relationships with their parents, yet failed in their relationships with their fellow humans. For this reason, the author is convinced that it seems more complex than merely a healthy parent-child relationship and the author ponders the role played, by the human mind, or human free will. It seems that there is a choice to be made; care for people, or not; relate to people in a healthy way, or not.

Not only do caregivers make a choice to care, or not to care. The author discovered that many people will abuse existing relationships, or lack of relationships, to manipulate others. It is most unfortunate that people do this in an attempt to achieve their own agenda. Manipulation may sometimes bring required results over a short period. However, over a longer period, manipulation often leads to serious breaks in relationships. In the author's country of residence many people, especially black and coloured people are selling fruit and other commodities on the streets. With sadness, the author discovered that some of these people manipulate people, especially white people. They will approach the white person, belittling him or her in order to try to sell off some of this merchandise. In the author's mind, this is misusing the misplaced superiority feelings that lives within some white people, and does not help an already tense situation between these race groups. In the same way, caregivers sometimes manipulate care seekers in order to sooth their guilty conscience for whatever reasons they may have. Most

unfortunately, the author also discovered care seekers, manipulating caregivers for their own profit. For the author it seems that both caregivers and care seekers should be mindful of the reasons for their actions. This notion challenged the author into a place where he carefully searched his motive of wishing to offer care for the people in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.3.3 OUR MOTIVE FOR OFFERING PASTORAL CARE**

The reader needs to understand the author's conviction that true and meaningful pastoral care for the people in Zimbabwe will only take place when the caregiver's motive is pure. From the Bible, the author pondered Jesus' motive for the care he offered people. Just before a Passover feast, Jesus got down on his knees and washed the feet of the disciples as an act of care for his disciples, he also washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed him. The author wonders how Jesus could wash Judas' feet, offering him the same care as the rest of the disciples, when he knew whom and what Judas was. The gospel according John also wrestled with this question, and he came to this conclusion:

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel round his waist (John 13:3-4 - NIV).

Jesus knew who he was in God, and that enabled him to serve even the un-servable Judas Iscariot without any hidden agenda. In the context of

this dissertation, the author became deeply challenged to offer the same pastoral care to all Zimbabwean people, whether they are Christian or not, whether the author agrees with their political convictions or not. This care however, will not happen in a vacuum, where no meaningful relationships exist. This calls for deep and life changing relationships, without a hidden agenda. Only then can the caregiver offer meaningful care to those in need in Zimbabwe.

From Campbell we learn that we not only serve people in these relationships, we become companions on the same journey. "This is the journey that we are making ourselves" (Campbell 1981: 82). As travelling companions, we will gain the authority to become friends and comrades on this shared journey. Wise contributes largely to this notion in his understanding that caregivers enter into the lives of the care seekers, he continues:

The meaning of pastoral care is that we must be able to enter into and suffer with those whom we seek to help. If our concern to help ends with those who require little cost on our part, then we will not help many (Wise 1989: 4).

From Wise the author understands that the care he offers Zimbabweans will not leave him unchanged or un-touched. Furthermore, the author discovered that this shared life goes beyond pastoral care, because for the believer, a consequence of the cross is to carry one another's burdens. In ecumenism, we see solidarity as we belong to one supportive



family, not recognizing human barriers of ideological debate, racial struggles or injustices in economical orders. As a caregiver, the author cannot choose whom he will care for. He will care for those held in God's memory.

Furthermore, pastoral care does not concern itself with helping people to handle their problems better. The author realised that people can experience care and are comforted, whilst their problems prevail in a very real way. Care should bring care seekers to a place where they can enter into communion with God (Solomon 1992: 137). The Christian basis this care upon Jesus Christ being "I AM". Not only did he speak the Word of God, he is the Word of God, he is the Truth, he is the Way and the Life (Pieterse 1987:5). Through communion with the "I AM", the caregiver cannot add or remove anything from the deity of God, and it is in this fullness of God that care seekers will be comforted.

It is the author's conviction that pastoral care will not be sustainable from within the caregiver self. For this very reason, the author professes that Christian caregivers should "speak" to God about their concern for care seekers, before they speak to care seekers about God's concern for them. Through the caregiver's prayers and worship of God, the biggest change he or she will experience will happen, not so much around them, or to care seekers, but within them. The author discovered this when he and his wife worked with prostitutes. They earnestly prayed that God would change these women, and help them to see that their ways are

wrong and will only lead to the destruction of themselves. To the author's surprise, very few women changed during this time of praying. However, the author discovered that he and his wife changed as they began to see the women not as sinful beings that need correction, but as people created in the image of the living God. After some time, a few women did change their life styles, but the biggest change happened within the author himself. In the same way, care offered to those in need, will challenge and change the caregiver, as he or she enters into the lives of care seekers.

It is in Christ and through Christ, that true pastoral care will take place. In this place, the care seeker will find pastoral care, as the caregiver gives of self only through the goodness of Christ. For this reason the author strongly disagrees with Patton when he quoted Tillich in these words; "Jesus is not good in himself, as the saints are not good in themselves" (Patton quote Tillich 1993: 72). Saints are not good in themselves, the author can understand and agree, but could it be that Patton, through Tillich, means that Jesus is also a fallen being? God created humankind in his own image and he said that they were very good (Genesis 1: 31). Yet people, including believers in Christ, are not good in themselves because they are fallen beings through Adam and Eve, but also through their own sins. According to the author's interpretation of the Bible, Jesus is good because he was begotten from the Father through the work of the Holy Spirit, and not through a "husband's will" (John 1:13 - NIV). He did not inherit the fallen nature of Adam, yet he was tempted in all ways, and

still committed no sin (1 Peter 2: 22). If the author and reader lose this concept that Jesus is God, who is altogether good, and who became a man to dwell among his own, we will lose our very soul. If Jesus is not good in himself, his sacrifice paid on the cross for our sins will not be acceptable before God the Father! It is this ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, which becomes the caregiver's motivation to care for those held in God's memory, and in the context of this dissertation, the people of Zimbabwe.

#### **4.3.4 WHO WILL CARE PASTORALLY FOR THOSE IN NEED?**

Pastoral care most often happens through the care seekers' community because "our individual well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of the larger whole" (De Beer 2002:32). It is a consequence of this belonging to a whole or larger community, that the individual care seeker will find meaning to life. Patton reminded the author that unless people belong to a larger community, they often experience separation and despair. This is neither an old nor a new notion as Patton continues: "The issue of forgotten is not just a concern of Israel. It is a genuine pastoral issue" (Patton 1993: 26). People have a deep rooted need to belong to something bigger than the individual self as Patton continues:

Human beings have been given the task of becoming a community... But community cannot be achieved without God, who is the creator of its conditions, as the centre of community (Patton 1993: 23-24).

Patton based his understanding of pastoral care on his theological conviction that humans are able to care in a pastoral way, "because we

are held in God's memory" (Patton 1993: 15). Scripture forcefully reinforces this notion when the prophet wrote:

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion for the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you (Isaiah 49:15 - NIV).

Because God has not forgotten His people, they are able to remember the people around them. As people live through negative experiences, they may think that God has forgotten them, but to the contrary. God lives the Christian's life experiences within in them. He is Immanuel, God with us. God never separates himself from those who believe in Christ, because God is within His people. God lives within the believers, however that for many become a great paradox, God is not separated from those who do not confess Christ. As caregivers seek to offer pastoral care, they need to be mindful that God is with His people, and within His people, but God is also with those considered not to be His people. Hence, God is with all Zimbabweans, whether they believe and accept God as their Father or not. Because God cares for all these people, the South African church should care for them too. To the author's amazement, he discovered that the little care offered to Zimbabweans currently, becomes very selective, the church will care for those within the church, but largely ignore those outside the church.

Jackson said that the source and motive for our pastoral care "is to be found in the pastor's own personal experiences of the gospel and in the

actual exercise of the pastor's own pastoral gifts" (Jackson 1985: 129). The author wishes to add to this his understanding, that pastoral care goes deeper than just our actions and pastoral gifts, he became very aware that pastoral care is not so much what he does, it becomes the very person he is. So very often, the author discovered Zimbabwean people in despair, and he had absolutely no idea how to help them. At such times the author became very aware of his shortcomings and lack of wisdom and skill. However, the presence and community created through a human presence, as he spent time with these people, created a place where pastoral care happened. The author pondered this. Could it be because God, who lives within the author, came to care for people? Would it be arrogant to say that the author's presence represented God's presence because God is the Emmanuel? In this, the author pondered the words of John: "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are" (1 John 3:1 - NIV). As children of God, we become people of authority. Moreover, it is from this position of God-given authority that we can now care for the un-cared, that we can love the un-loved, that we can bring hope to the hopeless, and in so doing, relate differently to people. In addition, this is so only because God lives within His people.

#### **4.3.5 WHY DO WE CARE PASTORALLY?**

Earlier in this chapter, the author briefly touched upon the choice caregivers need to make in order to offer pastoral care to people. Care comes from pure motives with the help God gives. However, caregivers

need to make the choice to care. The author was surprised to discovered that people in South Africa, based their pastoral care or lack of care, for the Zimbabwean people upon their personal feelings and emotions. In the questionnaire, a young man responded that he has no concerns about what happens in Zimbabwe, because he does not know anybody in Zimbabwe and as a result, has no feelings of compassion towards the people. In the context of such a response, Crabb is helpful and challenges his readers to understand, that Christian actions are based upon facts, and is not based upon feelings and emotions:

Christians must loudly assert that our faith is based upon facts, not feelings. The whole Christian system rests upon the historicity of Jesus Christ, His literal identity as God, His real death and bodily resurrection. Christianity begins with a personal God who provides objective meaning. Man is not a question mark. He is in fact made in the image of God (Crabb1975:43).

The fact that all people are created in the image of God, quickens the author's understanding that God cares about His image. God's care is based upon His own holiness (Ezekiel 36:22), and not upon human obedience or goodness. From this notion, pastoral care offered to Zimbabweans, is motivated from within the author's understanding that God cares for Zimbabweans. In his personal relationship with God as his Father, Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as his Counsellor, the author understands his ability to care for these people in need. From within this relationship with God, the author not only finds the ability and

means to care, he also finds the motivation to care, because he knows that God cares, for both him and Zimbabweans.

However the question remains: Why do we care pastorally? The answer to this is very simple, yet extremely complex, and remains largely a mystery. Christians care, because God cares, and that is giving them hope to bring hope to the hopeless and suffering.

#### **4.4 PASTORAL CARE BRINGS HOPE**

In this research, the author was very surprised to discover how little resource material is available on this very topic of hope. Thatcher faults the "kind of faith on which Christianity is built" (Thatcher 1974:224). Crabb says it is because true Christian hope, has become meagre in modern Christianity. "Yet, there is no escape from an aching soul, only denial of it" (Crabb 1988:14). People are suffering; a reality the author cannot escape. Yet in times of suffering, Christian hope and trust in a good God; a just God; a faithful God; a God that wants to uplift His people, even when life experiences urges the opposite. This is possible because Christian faith is an unwavering hope upon that what is not yet, but is sure to come (Hebrews 11). Paul wrote to the Romans:

For in this we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently (Romans 8:24-25 - NIV).

According to the above passage, hope is in the unseen; a real mystery to the believer. However, Crabb is saying, in modern Christianity, it has become very difficult to embrace the idea of hope and trust, whilst suffering is a mystery and beyond human comprehension:

There is something terribly attractive about knowing what to do to make things better. If we can explain why we feel so bad in terms of something specific and correctable, then we can do something about it. And we like that. Nothing is more terrifying than starting at a problem for which we have no solutions under our direct control. Trusting another is perhaps the most difficult requirement of the Christian life. We hate to be dependant because we have learned to trust no one, not fully. We know better. Everyone in whom we have place our confidence has in some way disappointed us. To trust fully, we conclude, is suicide (Crabb 1988:15).

The truth of this situation surprised the author, because it is the understanding that God cares about his creation, and that He is mindful of people (Psalm 8:4), that strengthens faith and quickens hope within the author. In the author's mind, if God truly cares about people and people consider this true, hope lives within the believer. This hope however, will not free the believer from suffering, even suffering at the hands of human beings. Because God really cares for people, this care that originates from God self, will find its praxis through human beings. In the context of



this dissertation, the author's hope in God, and God's care for him, quickens this urge to offer care to the Zimbabwean people and encouraging others to do like-wise.

From this notion, the reader can understand that this kind of hope is not possible, unless the one that hopes does so through faith in God. The author of the book of Hebrews unmistakably connects "belief" and "hope" in such a way that theologians agree that these are "inseparable" (Fitzgerald (ed) 1979:125), Gelwick says. Crabb urges his reader to understand that hope cannot exist unless it is founded upon faith in Christ, because "relief" may tarry, and the believer needs to stand in faith, or will not stand at all (Isaiah 7:9)(Crabb 1988:16). Moltmann also helpful for the author when he explains his understanding of this notion in these words:

Hope is nothing else than the expectation of those things which faith has believed to have been truly promised by God. Thus, faith believes God to be true, hope awaits the time when this truth shall be manifested; faith believes that he is our Father, hope anticipates that he will show himself to be a Father toward us; faith believes eternal life has been given us, hope anticipates it will some time be revealed; faith is the foundation upon which hope rests, hope nourishes and sustain faith (Moltmann 1965:6).

From Moltmann, the author appreciates the notion that, within Christianity, hope finds its energy from within faith in God. Hence, without

faith in God, hope in God becomes impossible, because the object of Christian hope is eternal life (Titus 1:2), salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8), righteousness (Galatians 5:5), the glory of God (Rom. 5:2), the appearing of Christ (Titus 2:13) and resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:6) (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary – Electronic media). The fountainhead of Christian hope is in death, burial and the resurrection of Christ Jesus (New Unger's Bible Dictionary – Electronic media - 1 Peter 1:3), because, "Christ in you" is "the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27 – NIV). It is this hope that springs from Christ living within the Christian, which will motivate the Christian to purify themselves, because they are pure already (1 John 3:3). The author realizes that no human being can claim purity because he or she is without sin, but purity comes through Christ's redemption upon the cross. The believer can claim purity only through faith and that will quicken hope within the believer.

The reader should be aware of the author's conviction that, as believers in Christ Jesus, the church becomes people of hope. They not only have hope in Christ, they bring hope to hopeless people in times of suffering and despair. In a biblical context, the word hope stands for both the act of hoping and that which Christians hope for. This hope does not arise from the individual's desires or wishes, but it comes from God. It is God Himself who becomes the believer's hope. Thatcher reinforces this notion for the author when he wrote:

The strong hope which the Christian gospel imparts is measured by the strength of the Church's hopeful

response, co-operating with the risen Christ to bring about the 'new creation' (Thatcher 1974:245).

God-given hope is not wish-filled thinking, because, "[n]o one has yet been satisfied by mere wishing" (Bloch 1986:1354). Hope is a firm assurance about things that are unseen and are still in the making, in the near future or even the far future (Romans 8:24-25). Hope in Christ distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian, who has no hope, because he or she is separated from Christ (Ephesians 2:12).

From the above, the author ponders whether Christian hope then has any value for those dwelling upon earth. How could this hope offer pastoral care to the people in Zimbabwe?

- Should the author understand hope as something valuable, yet hope remains a mystery and out of reach for those still alive?
- Could it be that hope can only be fulfilled for those who died having faith in Christ Jesus?
- If this is so, what benefit will hope have for those suffering in Zimbabwe?
- Should caregivers bring a message of consolation, because one day, somewhere out there after this life on earth, all believers will be comforted?

Through practical experience, the author has learned that hope in Christ has great value and comfort for those dying. However, the author's deep conviction is that true hope in Christ, will also bring great comfort to those

still alive. In times of difficulty, hope will become the motivation to continue with life, even for those suffering people in Zimbabwe. In this notion, Conradie is helpful he continues:

...Christian hope is not so much that that which is finite will be absorbed into the finite. The temptation is to think that the world will become eternal if it can find the space within God, if God is the dwelling place of the world. Instead, the Christian hope may be that God in God's infinite love will find a dwelling place amongst that which is finite (Conradie 2005:47).

In this quotation, Conradie helped the author to understand that hope in God will benefit the believer in life upon earth. Within the believer, hope quickens the understanding that life in Christ will never end. This union with Christ will continue in life on earth and even after life ends on earth. Furthermore, hope also quickens the believer that God is concerned for His people, right here, right now and forever more, because God is dwelling with His people.

The author wishes to bring to the reader a clear understanding of his conviction that Christian hope embraces both the object hoped for and the hope inspired by it. For this reason, Moltmann urges the reader to understand that through the hope Christians possess, "[e]schatology should not be its end, but its beginning" (Moltmann 1965:2). The apostle Paul strengthens this notion when he challenges the finality of death on

earth (1 Corinthians 15:54-55). Through Christ's resurrection, death has lost its victory over life, because the believer's hope will carry him or her into the eternal presence of God self. For this reason, the author echoes Thatcher when he said; "The time for dreaming about and envisioning God's future for the world is now" (Thatcher 1974:250).

#### 4.4.1 **HOPE IN CHRIST URGES ACTION IN TIMES OF SUFFERING**

Chang said that "[t]he problem of the future is the source of agony in human life" (Chang 1984:224). Surely, this in its pure form could only be true for those without hope for a better future. The author needs to remind the reader that this dissertation concerns itself with the lack of care for people in Zimbabwe. If pastoral care for Zimbabweans motivated this research, why then has the author spend so much energy upon the topic of hope? Stone says that;

...hope is key in all pastoral conversation, because hope is the Christian perspective on every aspect of life – its low points as well as its peaks (Stone 2001:259).

In these words, Stone reminded the author that the hope in Christ the Christian has will influence his or her perspective on life, and in the context of this dissertation, especially in times of suffering. The reader can appreciate that hope will influence both caregivers and care seekers, and this influence will often not be the same. For the care seeker, hope will bring comfort, because God cares for the person suffering. For the caregiver, hope in God aggravates protest against suffering on behalf of

people who are suffering, because God cares for people who are suffering. Moltmann discusses this notion in these words:

Hope finds in Christ not only a consolation in suffering, but also the protest against suffering. If Paul calls death the 'last enemy' (1 Cor. 15.26), then the opposite is also true: that the risen Christ, and with him the resurrection hope, must be declared to be the enemy of death and of a world that puts up with death. Faith takes up this contradiction and thus becomes itself a contradiction to the world of death. That is why faith, wherever it develops into hope, cause not rest, but unrest, not patience but impatience. It does not calm the unquiet heart, but is itself this unquiet heart in man (sic). Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world... (Moltmann 1965:7).

Why would hope when at peace with God, enter into conflict with an unjust world? In the author's understanding, this happens because hope in God suggests a close relationship with Christ, and Christ himself confronted the greatest injustice in human history. For this reason, when peace with God is in conflict with this world, and in this context, in Zimbabwe, the Christian cannot allow the injustices of politicians to continue unchallenged. (However, the author could never challenge these because he is free from guilt, no person can ever claim innocence before

God.) This notion of confrontation brings a great paradox to many; those in Christ as well as those who do not believe in Christ. This paradox is real, because many expect Christians to shy away from conflict in its totality. Others expect conflict on a political platform, standing toe to toe with politicians, meeting them eye to eye. In the author's mind, neither of these will bring a desirable result, because it is not as simplistic as violence or non-violence. De Gruchy strengthens this notion when he wrote:

The shapers of history may turn out to be not those who stride confidently through the corridors of power, but the powerless, the poor, and the oppressed, whose confidence is in the Lord of history alone and whose piety enables them to reach out and anticipates God's kingdom on earth (De Gruchy 1986:62-63).

Yet if De Gruchy is correct, how then can the caregiver speak to the injustices that we see in Zimbabwe? Moreover, if violence is not the answer, where should one seek the answer? In opposing the option for violence, Niebuhr holds that "Jesus taught total non-resistance" (Harries (ed) 1986:105). He continues to challenge the ethical division between violent and non-violent intervention and he motivates this notion from the influence intervention has upon the different parties. According to Niebuhr, suffering caused by non-violent intervention is as immoral and wrong, as suffering caused by violent intervention. "...Ghandi's boycott of English cotton resulted in the under nourishment of the children of

Manchester..." (Harries (ed) 1986:105) Niebuhr said. As the author ponders Niebuhr's conviction on Jesus' teachings, he doubts Niebuhr's understanding of this topic. Was it not Jesus who cleansed the temple "violently" (Luke 19:45-46)? Yet Jesus offered no resistance when tried unjustly (Matthew 26:53-54). Furthermore, Jesus offered very little assistance in his time of trial (Luke 23:9), pacifically opposing those who put him through his suffering. What is more, to the author it seems that God's very nature is to oppose all that is evil. Jesus drove demons out, healed the sick, raised the dead and with all this he brought light into darkness. With the life of Jesus, God came to set captives free (John 8:36), and He did it by resisting all that is evil. If Niebuhr is correct then, one should not stop drug smugglers because their children might go hungry.

God did not ignore evil. If ignoring the problem will not solve the problem in Zimbabwe, then one needs to ask, could fire become the instrument to fight fire? Could one confront violence with violence, in the context of the political situation we see in Zimbabwe? Desmond Tutu, a bishop (emeritus) in the Anglican Church in South Africa, also pondered this issue in the South African context in the time of Apartheid, and he wrote:

There are some remarkable people who believe that no one is ever justified in using violence, even against the most horrendous evil. Such absolute pacifists believe that the true Gospel of the Cross effectively rules out anyone taking up the sword, however just the cause. I admire



such persons deeply, but sadly I confess that I am made of less noble stuff (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:72).

Could it be that Tutu is suggesting that when the situation calls for it, violence should meet violence? In the context of what is currently happening in South Africa, the author doubts the wisdom of his counsel. Furthermore, Pannenberg warns that this kind of "political commitment may become a substitute for relevance to our sense of reality" and the person may be "found lacking in Christian faith" (Pannenberg 1975:123). Could it be that "Christian freedom fighters" placed a higher level of hope on violence rather than the hope they place on God, to resolve the problem? In the same context of Tutu's counsel, Frank Chikane, another Christian leader in South Africa, also participated in this debate, openly justifying his support for violent action in South Africa in these words:

My submission is that the debate about violence and non-violence reaches a point at which it simply must end. There is a point beyond which such a debate is no longer possible. There may be times when there is a space within which the debate can take place but there is a time when this space is so violated that it is no longer possible to engage in the debate. Circumstances or events at a particular stage in life can so 'squeeze' or construct this space that it ceases to exist (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:302).

The readers must understand that the author could never justify the violence of the Apartheid regime. The author could neither justify the violence in protest that met the violence of this abusive regime. However, many would justify their violent action in the struggle for freedom, because in 1994, South Africa elected a "democratic" government . (How democratic this current democracy is remains very debateable). The reader needs to know that this violently earned democracy did not come without sacrifice, idyllic and romantic as it may sound. South Africa has been a democratic country since 1994, but the violence of the era of Apartheid has never stopped. To the contrary, there are very few people living in South Africa who have not met violence face to face, and to the average person, it seems ever increasing in its nature and statistics confirm this perception. This urges the author then to ask whether "Violence for freedom" has become "violence in crime". Because the above question falls outside the scope of this dissertation, the author will not attempt to answer it. However, the irony in this is that crime becomes "colour-blind", and sees neither white nor black persons. In fact, black people very often become the victims of crime. This situation reminds the author of the words of Jesus; "...all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52 - NIV). For the author it seems that when violence meets with violence, it creates even more violence. Moreover, the paradox of all of this is that the poor and marginalised are suffering even more, because of the same violence that was supposed to bring freedom and democracy. Seven years before the end of Apartheid in South Africa, Duncan sounded this prophetic warning:

Violent and armed struggle in South Africa will, and indeed is, bringing about change but the end result is unlikely to be a just peace" (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:274).

Could this then be too presumptuous for the author to say that when the violence of the people of Zimbabwe, meets with the violence of an abusive regime, the very people the caregiver seeks to help, will become the victims of increased violence? The author then needs to ask himself, how can he offer pastoral care to these people. If apathy cannot bring liberation, and violence creates more violence, what then is the answer to the suffering situation in Zimbabwe? Duncan also ponders this, and was very challenging when she asked:

Can pacifism be regarded as an option for peace when injustice is the very fabric of a political system imposed and maintained by the use of violent force? What are pacifist to do when pacifism can no longer be held merely as a theoretical position, but is challenged by society in which war, militarism and violence are part of daily personal experience... (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:271).

In the author's mind, pacifism will not tolerate apathy; neither will it accept violence as a route to liberation. In fact, pacifism will ask the caregiver to become actively involved in the pain and suffering of the care seeker. With pacifism the South African church can influence the situation in

Zimbabwe. Again, Duncan speaks, and she challenges the author with her views when she wrote:

Christian pacifists cannot merely sit back wringing their hands and refuse to participate in violent action. Christian pacifism cannot mean inactivity and withdrawal. It has to mean committed and sacrificial action to build a just and righteous society, to prevent violence wherever possible, and to intervene in violent confrontations. It has to mean showing a better way of resolving conflicts (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:171).

The author wants to add to Duncan's view, his understanding, that the pacifist needs to measure his or her action within the hope he or she has in Christ. In this context, the author ponders whether "pacifism" is the correct terminology, because many could interpret this as an attitude of "non-war" or "non-conflict". This could never be, because the pacifist is called to struggle against evil (Ephesians 6:12). In as much as light and darkness can co-exist in one area, apathy becomes an option for the Christian pacifist. The Christian pacifist brings the light of Christ into the dark situation, and the darkness must flee, if only the light will persist. Christian light should never meet darkness on the terms set by darkness, because that will rob the light of its brilliance and authority and the light will lose its witness unto a lost world. As bearers of light, pacifists will determine the conditions of the conflict they enter into. Niebuhr called this Christian approach of acting within the opposite attitude and mentality,

the "impossible possibilities" (Harries (ed) 1986:61-62). Impossible because, not one person can stand against such violent forces, without answering with violence. Yet it is possible, because the Christian hope in Christ enables it, because it calls for love, when hatred and evil is so prevalent. Once more Duncan becomes helpful when she wrote:

Non-violent direct action is not merely protest. It is carefully targeted, carefully planned and carried out in order to bring about specific changes. It goes beyond response and resistance to creativity. It does not necessarily involve civil disobedience (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:274).

When the South African church feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, whilst the Zimbabwean government does its utmost to starve its opposition, violently forcing them into submission, pacifism becomes the means to combat an abusive regime. Letters of encouragement are smuggled into Zimbabwe and published in church bulletins, saying, the South African church has not forgotten its neighbour in need. When South African churches provide medical supplies to those ignored by their government which closed the biggest hospital in Zimbabwe, pacifism becomes the vehicle with which to offer pastoral care and hope to people in need. To the reader this might sound so very mundane, but the author has seen the impact a small token of love can have upon a people in need. However, this asks for commitment from the caregiver, because

sometimes these actions may take place at times of great risk to the caregiver. Again, Duncan challenges the author as she wrote:

Pacifism can be an option for peace but we are too reluctant to make the necessary commitment. There is no power on earth that can force us to do what we refuse to do. But over and over again we co-operate with our own destruction (Villa-Vicencio (ed) 1987:279).

In the author's mind, pacifism will ask for a greater commitment than violence, because its outcome will prove to be slow, and often caregivers will see very little progress over prolonged timeframes. When no change in the situation occurs, caregivers seem to abort this process, either fall into apathy, or call for more "radical" measures because, "[g]uilt remains guilt and suffering remains, even for the believer, a cry to which there is no ready-made answer" (Moltmann 1965:5). Further, pacifism will be most challenging because, "morally right action does not guarantee a happy outcome" (Harries (ed) 1986:112), Harries said; sometimes this attitude confronts violence to a place where violence will forcefully suppress any resistance.

#### 4.4.2 TIME DIMENSIONS OF HOPE

An Asian proverb captures the concept of human life to be a journey.

Freely translated, the proverb says:

It matters very little where you come from, it matters more where you are right now, but it is most important where

are you going to from here” (an Asian folk saying, freely translated).

Could life's journey be as simplistic as that? Not quite, yet much truth and simplicity makes this notion very challenging to the author. People's past makes them who they are, but their perception of the future determines their current behaviour. People do the things they do, motivated by their perception of what the future will hold, in the context of who or what they are. Whether this perception is true or false remains debatable. Moltmann also pondered this notion with these words:

Is it not always in the present alone that man (sic) is truly existent, real, contemporary with himself, acquiescent and certain? Memory binds him to the past that no-longer is. Hope cast him upon the future that is not yet. He remembers having lived, but he does not live. ... He hopes to live, but he does not live (Moltmann 1965:11).

The author has learned that both the memory of the past and hope for the future, have the potential to rob people of the reality of the "now" lived in the present. For many, the "now" only becomes a time to mourn a terrible past, or in contrast to that, dreaming about the goodness of the days past. Yet for others, "now" is merely the time to arrange a better and brighter future. Sadly, those who find life's energy living in the past or in the future, will lose their opportunities to learn more about the God of the "now". They will miss what God is saying to them now, because He is

EMANUEL, the ever present One, the always "now" God. Crabb added to this notion in saying that "real stability in the present is appreciation for the past and hope for the future" (Crabb 1988:18).

In Zimbabwe, the author met people living in the past, dreaming of the "good old days when Zimbabwe was still Zimbabwe". Others are angry and bitter because of injustices that happened to them in the past. In reality, both those living in the past are justified, because their experiences are valid. Nonetheless, they remain trapped in their past, missing the reality of "now", where God is ever present. There are also people in Zimbabwe, who are very traumatised by their current situation, they believe that only the future can bring relief from this pain. If only the day would hasten to put this negative situation in the past. They too are missing the truthfulness of the present. God is in the future, God is in the past, but it is in the present that Emanuel will become very real to His people. Thatcher believes that people avoid the present, lacking in Christian hope for the present, because it is;

... the Christian gift of hope which alone will transform the mood of the Christian Churches from their obsessional entrenchment in the past, their defensiveness in the present, and their fear and lack of imagination in the face of the future (Thatcher 1974:243).

For the Christian, hope in Christ will enable the believer to appreciate the past, good or bad as it was as God ordained; boldly living in the present,



because God is with His people; longing to live a bright future, meeting a waiting God in an open-ended future. Unless the Christian embraces these time dimensions of hope in Christ, he or she will find it very difficult to live in the fullness of life with Christ, in times of suffering, as God intended it to be. Lester also appreciates that the fullness of life comes in these time dimensions, he wrote:

The past and present are foundational, of course, and we have learned many helpful concepts about the contributions of these two time dimensions to the human predicament. I will argue, however, that equal time for the future dimension is necessary for a more holistic psychological and theological understanding of what Anton Boisen called 'the living human document'. The phrase 'human document' is Boisen's way of reminding us that any human being is a unique text that must be read (heard) and interpreted (the hermeneutical task)(Lester 1995: 4).

The reader needs to consider that the present is trapped between the boundaries of the lived past and a future yet to be. Because the Christian's hope is placed upon a God, that was, that is, and that is to come, then Christian hope cannot be separated from this open-ended God; open-ended to the past; open-ended to the future; open-ended in the now. Being an open-ended God, the author means that God is open-ended in his love and ability to do, to give, to be, free from the constraints

of time dimensions, because He is everywhere at all times, and His people have endless opportunities and potential in the reality of God.

This notion becomes problematic for many people because, the reality of life confronts the Christian where life's experience contradicts this hope in a loving and caring God. This problem is not new, as the Apostle Paul warns his reader in Romans 8:24-25. Moltmann, like Paul, also wrestled with this notion and he wrote:

We are promised abundance of all good things – yet we are rich only in hunger and thirst. What would become of us if we did not take our stand on hope, and if our heart did not hasten beyond this world through the midst of the darkness upon path illuminated by the word and Spirit of God (Moltmann 1965:4).

When the believer sees God's promise of deliverance from the evil in the past, through the eyes of hope, only then will he or she be able to receive deliverance in the present, reaching out to a rich future in Christ. Zimbabweans are suffering and that is real and true, but only through their hope in Christ can the Christian stand, and not become weary by the unjust abuse of their government.

#### 4.4.2.1 **CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE PAST TENSE**

Our perception of self and of our future will not come into existence in a vacuum. These perceptions are rooted in our past. It is our past stories

held in our memories that determine who we are. Our past, or rather our perception of our past, will also influence how we experience the present as well as how we foresee the future, in which we will participate. Lester became helpful on this notion when he writes:

This emphasis on personal history is necessary, given the fact that past stories are so foundational for our sense of self. The self comes into existence only to the extent that it can be recollected out of the past...A self perception does not spring out of nowhere, but has roots in a persons history (Lester 1995: 33).

In Zimbabwe, the author discovered people that find it difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the future in a positive manner. This negative perception of what the future holds is embedded in the negative experiences of the past. Politicians lied to them before, not honouring their promises; why will it be different in the future? A farmer told the author that "war veterans" ignored a court interdict, invading his farm and made it impossible for him and his family to continue with their farming activities. Why should he rely on the Zimbabwean law to protect him in the future? Yet another person challenged the author, asking why God did not intervene when police broke down her door, molesting her, taking everything of value. "I begged God, but he did nothing to help me", she said. Unless hope can speak into the history of these people, they will fail to bring a brighter future, and remain in despair which is unavoidable for the present. Schaeffler pondered this notion, saying that memory which is

build from earlier experiences, creates expectation within people. This expectation will influence the hope and confidence people have in God. (Schaeffler 1994:30). Keith Ward also contributed to this understanding, and he holds that Jesus is able to restore hope, even the hope that belongs to history, built from people's memory. Ward is saying;

...Christian faith enshrines as a central part of its teaching a positive hope for the material world and a positive purpose for the historical process. The world of history is not simply to be escaped from. It is somehow to be transfigured, renewed, redeemed, to express fully the purpose of a loving God (Harries (ed) 1986:61-62).

Unless Christian hope restores history, putting meaning into the negative as well as the positive experiences, caregivers will merely help people to cope with their past, not understanding that God had purposed it. The author's conviction is that God is able to use even the most negative experience from the past to bring positive results. An elderly woman said; "they killed my husband ... it was terrible". Yet, only a few moments later, she thanked God, because "God protected my dear husband from witnessing what has happened of our farm". Whether the author, or reader, agrees with her theology is irrelevant, because her hope in Christ placed purpose on the murder of her husband. Most surprisingly, the author also discovered that historical events, perceived as positive at that time, could bring negative results in the present. A woman who was gang-raped by war veterans recalls how her life was spared; "I was so

glad to be alive, ... but now I wish they rather killed me". At that moment, she thought it positive to be alive, yet currently she wrestles with horrible memories of that day, and adding to the already painful memory the incident left her HIV positive. "What will come of me" she asked, "because my family now also abandoned me". In this situation, Moltmann becomes helpful with his understanding that unless Christ purposed the past, the future can and most likely will, become meaningless:

Christian eschatology does not speak of the future as such. It sets out from a definite reality in history and announces the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future. Christian eschatology speaks of Jesus Christ and his future (Moltmann 1965:3).

In the author's mind and Moltmann agrees, unless people find purpose in their history, their present tense becomes meaningless.

#### 4.4.2.2 **CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE PRESENT TENSE**

We might say that the open future, like a land of unlimited possibilities, as it were, entices and fascinates human beings and makes them beings open to the world and ready for future. But from the viewpoint of the histories of civilization and religion this is not true. ...the driving power of hope not only [is grounded] in the fascination of the open future, but also mystically in the darkness of the lived moment (Bauckham (ed) 1999:79-80).

From the above quote, the author realizes that the future cannot come into existence, unless the now is and that is because only the now exists; the past has been. Once Christ's intervention in the person's history becomes a reality for the care seeker, the present becomes purposed in God. This purpose in God will play itself out in the future, and that will bring Christian hope. In this notion, the author pondered the meaning of Christ's intervention being a reality for the care seeker. Pannenberg becomes helpful in his definition of reality, saying that "'reality' has therefore come to mean almost the same as 'the whole of being'" (Pannenberg 1975:8). Hence, once God becomes a reality for the care seeker ("the whole being" of the believer), Christ comes alive in the care seeker's past, calling him or her into an open-ended future with God, manifesting His presence with the care seeker in the present, and with that gives purpose to the lived present. Pannenberg continues;

...the biblical experience of the present, which is new at every stage in history, throws a light back unto the past, thus making man (sic) again and again mindful of the past and obliged to remember it in the new light of his present experience and make it his own (Pannenberg 1975:12).

In this quotation, Pannenberg brings an understanding that God's present intervention brings light to God's intervention of the past. The author believes that this is so, because God never changes. The same God who created everything, is the same God who resides with his people, and is

the same God who calls the believer into an open-ended future with Him (Hebrews 13:8). For this reason, ancient biblical narratives are able to influence the life of a modern human being, bringing insight into that person's past, present and future. However, the reader needs to be mindful of the author's conviction that God deals with every person as an individual. "The individual needs to hear the good news of mercy and adoption" (Lohfink 1982:2), Lohfink says. Hence, every person has a unique life with unique experiences, and perceptions of experiences. Nonetheless, not only does God intervene in the life of the individual in a unique way, God also uniquely intervenes in the life of a community, or communities. This becomes evident when communities, like Zimbabwe, go through a national crisis as they currently are. During the period of this crisis, every individual experiences his or her personal pain, and together, the whole of the community experience pain of the same nature and source.

Although God is ultimately in control, individuals need to know that this present tense of hope can only be lived in the now moments of life. Because God's presence is in the now, this becomes the place which brings great rewards for those seeking healing from God. Irvin Yalom thinks that the present tense is most important, bringing purpose to life when he wrote:

"The past ... is important insofar as it is part of one's current existence and has contributed to one's current mode of facing one's ultimate concerns; but it is ... not

the most rewarding area for therapeutic exploration. The future-becoming-present is the primary tense of existential therapy” (Lester (quote Irvin Yalom) 1995:18).

From Lester's quotation of Yalom, the author ponders this notion. How could the "future-becoming-present" for the care seeker? In the author's mind, this becomes possible when the present is lived in the light and hope that a bright and better future brings. For many Zimbabweans the possibilities of a political solution in the future, helps them to bear the difficulties they are facing today. The author is aware that this notion could become problematic in the sense that care seekers might live so much in the future; their responsibilities in the present are neglected. This became evident when a power-sharing deal in Zimbabwe had been negotiated between the two major political parties. So many people were very optimistic, dare the author say over-optimistic upon this agreement. Excitement rose in some people's hearts, saying this is now the end of our difficulties, just to be disappointed yet again, when this deal failed to deliver upon its promises. The author realizes that this exercise was not altogether negative, because an improvement of the quality of life became evident after this agreement. Nonetheless, many people are bitterly disappointed after this failure, and look upon their political leaders with distrust and anger, making it very difficult for caregivers to speak of a better future. Lester wrote that a hope filled future story prompts us to ask the question; "What happens next" (Lester 1995:35). However true this might be, we are all on this journey towards tomorrow, but we cannot get



there unless we journey through today. If only the care seeker could discover how his or her relationship with the past affects present realities, they will be on a journey to correct the past in order to shed light on the present, striving for a bright future.

#### 4.4.2.3 **CHRISTIAN HOPE IN THE FUTURE TENSE**

Lester believes that the past and present plays important roles, helping hope to become a reality in people's lives:

We are not only a self, we are becoming a self, and we give shape to the not-yet-conscious self through the future stories we create (Lester 1995: 36).

In this process, future plays the most important role as Lester continues: "We will find that hope, although rooted in the past and acted out in the present, receives its energy from the future" (Lester 1995:15). In studying people diagnosed with cancer, Lester found that these people were not worried about their past or even greatly concerned about their present suffering. Their greatest anxiety however, was what their future holds (Lester 1995:1). What will happen to their families after they have passed away?

In the Zimbabwean context, the author discovered many people contemplating the future in a very negative way. This is very true for most young people, and this phenomenon becomes evident when many young people flee their country. In one of the biggest congregations in Harare, the author discovered that most young white people have left the country,

seeking a better future in other places. Even amongst black people, this is true. Many older people have remained behind, simply because they think themselves to be too old to make a new beginning somewhere else. This adds to a difficult situation where families are spread out over several countries. When the author spoke to one such family, the father expressed his lack of hope for a better future. All three of his children with their families have left the country, one living in Australia, one in Canada, and the third in Great Britain. "What has become of my family" he said, "what is the sense of the future without our children"? As the author considers this story, he realizes that this family's past became so negative that their present was stripped of its purpose, and their future story so bleak that they have lost hope. Stone warns that this situation becomes very uncomfortable because the future;

is the primary dimension of time consciousness in which the struggle between hope and despair plays itself out. The attitude we take toward the future can be placed on a continuum between despair and hope (Stone 2001:260).

Unless the future is a place where a better life can be perceived, hope will change into despair, whether this happens over a prolonged period or not. A life-journey without a better future and a definite destiny, could very easily become an endless journey, with very low energy. This situation, is often reflected in the lives of Zimbabweans, and the way they conduct their lives reflects this truth. Bauckham is saying, that this hope or lack of hope is reflected in the way we communicate to others;

...our human capacity for hope and for an imagination of the future is deeply woven into our grammar of our language in the future tenses of our verbs (Bauckham 1999:79).

#### 4.4.3 **WHERE CAN WE FIND HOPE?**

From Bloch, the reader will appreciate that the future is not an empty space where the thinker, in the realm of hope, will venture into the fanatical, exploring the void. In the author's mind, real hope in the future is not separating the thinker from the reality of the true self as it is played out in the present. It will become an "abstract visualisation" (Roberts 1990:31) of a reality still to come, because it already is, and has been in the past. The reader needs to understand that this hope for the "better" or "new" is already in motion, because it already existed in the past a reality to be grasped. In this context, Moltmann then challenges the notion that we serve the God of an open-ended future, as this would separate God from our present and past. He continues:

Christian faith then means turning in to nearness of God in which Jesus lived and worked, for living amid the simple, everyday things of today is of course living in the fullness of time and living in the nearness of God (Moltmann 1965:15).

Unless the care seeker grasps the truth that yesterdays' future is today's present and it will be tomorrow's past, the hope of the "nearness of God"

becomes out of reach. God is in the future, as much as God is in the past, just as much as God is in the present. Christians sometimes claim to be bearers of hope, living life in the future tense; and in Christ Jesus that is what they ought to be. This Christian hope comes alive in an open-ended future in the presence God, and it will manifest with joy within Christians right now (Nehemiah 8:10). However, this is only possible because there has never been a time when God was not with His people. With this in mind, Callahan becomes helpful with the principle that even in times of uttermost pain and difficulty, hope will overcome despair:

Hope is stronger than memory. Salvation is stronger than sin. Forgiveness is stronger than bitterness. Reconciliation is stronger than hatred. Resurrection is stronger than crucifixion. Light is stronger than darkness... Hope is stronger than memory (Callahan 1983:XX).

Hope in the knowledge that God is with His people and He is stronger than the memory of the pain experienced in the past and present. It is the prospect of their future that determines people's behaviour in the now. When hope is absent, people lose their purpose for life, which in turn will numb their zeal for life: Poser supports this notion when he wrote:

Lack of hope is the most paralysing factor which prevents the full participation of people in popular organisations or in the search for new dreams or national liberation (Poser 1987:25).

People without hope are people without dreams, going through the motions of life without really living life to its full potential and often experiencing the feelings of failure. It is the hope for a better tomorrow that will enable people to live life today.

#### 4.4.4. **HOPE IS NOT FOUND WITH PEOPLE IN DESPAIR**

Fundamental hope and despair involve opposing concepts of time. In despair a person believes that existence will not change or improve; that this is the way they will be for ever. Such despair involves an anticipation that the future will be a meaningless repetition of the present (Fitzgerald 1979:245).

For those in despair tomorrow will not bring better prospects than the painful now, because the situation is impossible to improve. In this context, Lester brings an understanding of despair as an "ultimate or boundary situation" (Lester 1995:72). This marks out the limit to which extent people are willing to live life. The line is drawn, and the person in despair is not willing to cross this boundary, often set by themselves. These people in despair cannot go beyond this imaginary point in their lives because they are trapped in hopelessness. "[H]opelessness is like an infection that invades a person's being and causes a sickness of the spirit" (Lester 1995:72), Lester said. When people are hopeless and in despair, they become separated from hope in God, trapped in a "sickness of spirit", and this separation disrupts their very being and nature, finding

it almost impossible to communicate with God. Hiltner explained it this way:

Man (sic) does not have spirit. He is spirit. His spiritual nature is his whole nature, and it carries two equally important corollaries; first that spirit means man in his true unity and integrity; and second, that his wholeness and integrity are derived from God as Spirit (Dortzbach (quote Hiltner) 2002:44).

Because despairing people's human spirit is separated from God's Spirit and they sometimes respond to their hopelessness by choosing an idol as a substitute for God, searching for hope and purpose in their lives. This idol will become the object through which all their relationships are filtered the very centre of their attention, consuming their time, giving some fulfilment in their lives. Lester says that this idolatry not only substitutes God's hope and purpose in their lives, it will eventually substitute God as person (Lester 1995:81). Lester listed eight major reasons why people fall into this kind of despair:

1. "Loss of future story" (Lester 1995:74). A major change in a person's circumstance often alters his or her future story. This change could be the death of a loved one, the loss of job, or anything that added to the value of that person's life. Their future changed because of the loss they have suffered. Finally, they relate differently to other people, sometimes even unaware of the

negative impact they have on others. The author spoke to various Zimbabwean farmers who lost their farms. A large number of these former farmers' spouses were complaining that their husbands are consuming too much alcohol since they lost their farms. The author pondered this, wondering whether this could be boredom, or is Lester's theory correct. Did their hope change into despair, making alcohol an idol to be worshiped?

2. "Reaching the end of a future story" (Lester 1995:75). People who have reached the end of an era in their lives often feel the loss because there is nothing in the future that will make this life better. In South Africa, many black people became despondent when the era of apartheid ended. The struggle was over and many felt left in mid-air. Apartheid gave them a purpose to fight for a better future. After apartheid, they had to face the problem of an unknown future.
3. "Not willing to be a Self" (Lester 1995:76). Lester explains that this notion of "not willing to be one's self" appears in "despair of possibility", and, "despair of necessity" (Lester 1995:76). The despair of possibility becomes apparent when the care seeker is not able, or willing to acknowledge the real situation of their lives. Through fantasies and unrealistic dreams, they bring forth a future story far removed from reality. An elderly woman told the author that her children are coming back to Zimbabwe to take her with

them. When the author spoke to the people around her, he learned that this woman's children left the country ten years earlier, and since leaving she has heard nothing from them. The author realized that this woman is dreaming about something that most likely will never happen. When the despair of necessity becomes the reason for not willing to be self, the care seeker becomes limited in his or her ability, to see the open-endedness of the future with God. The despairing person has "lost the willingness and freedom to imagine other alternatives" (Lester 1995: 77). Many Zimbabweans left their country because they believe it impossible that Zimbabwe will once again, be a country where they will be able to look at a bright future.

4. "Failure to Claim Past and Future" (Lester 1995:77). Lester asserts that hope is built upon three time dimensions, past, present and future. On the past, self-identity is built, which then projects into the present, and in turn leads to the future. Failure to claim, or take responsibility for any of these time dimensions, will result in an unbalance picture of the self. Reality might prove a person's past to be rather dark, the present even soaked in suffering, and the immediate future without the prospect of improvement. However, unless people take ownership for the whole of their lives, they cannot become whole in God.



5. "Being Present Bound" (Lester 1995:78). For those people who are present bound, the immediate future does not promise a better life. Why should they wait in anticipation for tomorrow, if it will only bring the same pain and suffering as today? Often struck by boredom, these people fail to believe that this life could bring forth something new and exciting. As a result, they relate with others from their negative past.
  
6. "Enmeshment in a Finite Future Story" (Lester 1995:79). People's hope can only become transfinite once they connect their ultimate hope in the character of God into an open-ended future with God. Anything short from that will leave people short from finding real open-ended hope. Lester continues to say that finite hopes "are not enough. When separated from transfinite hope, they leave us short of the fullness of our humanity" (Lester 1995: 79). If people place their hope in anything less significant, than God self, they will become victims of despair. Not only will they fall into despair, these people run the danger of becoming idolaters, disowning God as their Father who art in heaven.
  
7. "Facing the Void" (Lester 1995:80). All people are confronted with tough questions, about loneliness, meaninglessness and death. Lester calls this absence of meaning, "facing the void" (Lester 1995: 80). For many, this void is filled with nothingness and it

becomes meaningless, as they fail to believe that a loving God could be present in the midst of this void.

8. "Negative God-images" (Lester 1995:82). A person's view and beliefs concerning God's character, will determine whether faith in God, will cultivate hope or despair. A God-image that keeps count of all wrongs, can hardly cultivate hope for an open-ended future with that God of wrath. A loving God, who will in the near future take away all pains and struggles, will make the current suffering so much easier to cope with.

#### 4.5 **WHY IS HOPE IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER?**

From the above, the author understands that little hope exists outside of a commitment to God, who has called his people into a brighter future. Could this hope in a bright future with God, be the reason why Paul and Silas praised God in prison (Acts 16:25)? Surely, their current circumstances did not inspire praise? Many theologians profess that it was because of their praises to God, that their chains loosened. This praise however, was motivated from their future hope in God. The reader needs to realize that hope does not free the Christian from the reality of pain and suffering in this life.

Hope in God however, has a higher purpose than merely keeping the believer from despair. Paul wrote to the church in Colossia:

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints--the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth (Colossians 1:3-6 - NIV).

It seems to the author that Paul suggests that the love they had for their fellow believers, was born through faith and hope in God. This hope is cultivated through that which they "heard about in the Word of truth". Could Paul then suggest that the love these people had for each other, was the fruit of the hope they had in God? God is love. Could it be wrong then to believe that God is hope? With this hope in mind we can share our experience with those in despair.

God cares for humans and holds them in His memory. Humans therefore, are now able to care for each other. Patton wrote that the term "pastoral" implies a "relationship both in the sense of responsibility and of attitude" (Patton 1993: 27). Not only do Christians have the responsibility to care, they should care with the right attitude. Lester says that it is the carer's

responsibility and privilege to "nurture hope and confront despair" (Lester 1995: 1).

God called caregivers to love and they are capable of loving, because God loved them first (1 John 4:19). Through the caregiver's love for others, he or she will bring hope to the hopeless. However, this love and hope can never be sourced, from within the self. God has blessed His people with hope, and that is through the cross of Christ. Caregivers need to share this hope through love. However, this sharing, as Poser puts it, will come through "empty hands" (Poser 1987:22). Everything the Christian is, and all he or she has or ever does was put on the altar of Jesus Christ. Christian caregivers received from God those gifts they require for the furtherance of God's Kingdom. Hence, caregivers cannot care, unless God cares for them; they cannot give love, unless they have received love from God; they cannot bring hope, unless God has given them hope.

#### 4.6 **ST PAUL'S MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI**

"Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!" (Philippians 3:1 - NIV). St Paul repeats this message in chapter 4:4; "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (NIV). Prison chains bound the Apostle as he wrote these words to the church in Philippi. Despite his suffering and opposition, which he experienced through his fellow workers, this letter radiates joy and hope; Christ was proclaimed, there was joy in the fellowship with the church in Philippi. There was joy in Christ Jesus

himself. How could Paul rejoice in the midst of carrying this “cross”? Paul could rejoice, because he focused on positive relationships centred on Christ. Through these relationships, he was caring for those who were broken and hurt by life’s awful experiences.

Could it be that Paul denied the reality of his suffering? Did he live in a dream world where he wished away all these difficulties in his life? It is only once we draw the parallel between St Paul’s epistle and Lester’s theory of hope that we realize how much the apostle was in touch with the reality of the suffering he experienced. From this letter, we learn that Paul was in touch with his past, as he understood his own identity. Paul was fully aware of his current suffering, but that did not stop him from striving towards a better future with Christ.

#### 4.6.1 **THE APOSTLE ACKNOWLEDGED HIS PAST**

The apostle was secure in his identity built on his past, he wrote:

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless (Philippians 3:4-6 – NIV).

It was the past that formed Paul into the person he was and nobody could take away the fact that he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews". The apostle did

not allow his suffering to alienate him from being Paul the apostle, the person God had called for this specific task.

#### 4.6.2 **THE APOSTLE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRESENT**

Although Paul realised that he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews", the reality of suffering did not elude him. He felt the pain and suffered the loss, yet he wrote:

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ... (Philippians 3:8 – NIV).

Although the apostle had lost everything he owned, he counted these things as rubbish in comparison to what he had found in Christ. This loss has caused him to feel pain. Nonetheless, Paul not only acknowledged his loss, he weighed it in the light of knowing Christ Jesus, and it could not begin to compare.

#### 4.6.3 **THE APOSTLE'S DREAM FOR A BETTER FUTURE**

Paul knew the past formed him to be the very person he was. The present suffering and pain he acknowledged, because he felt the reality thereof. Yet, he did allow this pain and suffering to fade his vision of a brighter future in Christ:

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for

which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12-14 – NIV).

Paul acknowledges his failure but he also recognizes within himself room for improvement; "I am not perfect yet", but, "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me". Paul is on a journey to accomplish God's purpose in his life. Yes, the past has shaped him to be the person he is. The present pain is real. Yet, these are not able to slow him down. Paul is on a journey to a brighter future in Christ Jesus, his Lord.

#### 4.6.4 **HOPE IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING**

Human beings live in three dimensions of time; we have the past tense, a present tense, and a future tense. Existence includes accepting the givens imposed by the past, living with the freedoms provided in the present, and shaping the possibilities of the future (Stone 2001:261).

From Stone, the reader can understand that once care seekers embrace the past and present as reality in their lives, the future will have many possibilities. Whether these possibilities will be positive or negative,

depends largely upon the attitude of the care seeker. For the author, it seems Paul is of the impression that there is one very important condition caregivers and care seekers must adhere to, before they could strive towards that which God has called them; a positive future. He wrote: "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead" (Philippians 3:13 – NIV). Could it be that Paul said that our history is bad; that only negative things live in our past? From the context of this passage, the reader will appreciate that this is not the message Paul is bringing. There are many good things in the past, just as there are many bad things. Paul's message urges his reader not to allow the past to hold them back from a bright future. The author discovered a paradox in this notion, that the good of the past and present has the potential to keep people from reaching towards a bright future. In the Zimbabwean context however, it is the negative stories which keep many of these people from striving towards a bright future, because in the midst of difficult times people feel separated from God. However, being separated from God becomes a real problem. Yancey challenged this misconception when he wrote: "When God seems absent, he may be closest of all. When God seems dead, he may be coming back to life" (Yancey 1988:252). From Jesus' experience upon the cross, God understands people's loneliness in their suffering. At Gethsemane and Calvary, God Himself was confronted with the separation from God; "...God striving for God" (Yancey quote Martin Luther 1988:282). On that difficult day, God had to learn for Himself, what it means to feel God-forsaken. Many people would argue that God does not hide from people. The author saw a religious



bumper sticker on a motor vehicle that reads, “If you feel far from God, guess who moved?” Yet, the Book of Job teaches that God has moved away. Even though Job had done nothing wrong and he cried for help, God still chose to hide from him (Yancey 1988:281).

An astonishing notion is that, in their battle to find answers for suffering, people can make an idol of their suffering. Foster explains this when he wrote:

The person who does not seek the kingdom of God first, does not seek it at all. Worthy as all our other concerns may be, the moment they become the focus of our efforts they become idolatry (Foster 1989:107).

When pain and suffering does not bring the care seeker closer to God, it will take him or her further away, leaving them at a place far from God. In this far away place, these people will not be able to hear God’s voice because so many other voices of suffering will drain the still voice people so long to hear. Leanne Payne wrote:

Self-pity, envy, covetousness, pride are all voices of temptation in a fallen world. When we begin to listen to them, we don’t listen to God. We obey the other voices (Payne 1989: 72).

When pain and suffering does not open the care seeker’s spiritual ears to hear God’s Word, they will obey these other voices, leaving them at a place called despair.

#### 4.7 HOPE AND THE FUTURE STORY

There are also those people who will deny these painful circumstances in their lives, because they find it so hard to believe; how could this happen in the full knowledge of God? In their opinion, it must be Satan's doing. Who else can be blamed? Some believe that if they persevere long enough, the "enemy" will tire and move on. In the author's experience, their denial of what God is doing in their lives separates them from God and His purpose in their lives. In Zimbabwe, the author discovered that those people who refuse to acknowledge God in the midst of their suffering, come to a place in their lives where their heart-ache and pain seems endless and aimless. Payne wrote that this separation from God and evil, are closely related:

Evil, theologically speaking, is separation from God – and in that condition, separation from our fellows, the good earth, and all creation as well. Evil, psychologically speaking, is separation within ourselves. In truth, the fallen self cannot know itself (Payne 1989:58).

The author wants to say in addition to Payne, the fallen self, being separated from God, cannot know God nor can it know God's intervention. Those separated from self, lose the reality of life itself and they lose their self-identity.

However, there is also another option. The care seeker could enter into their own suffering and wrestle with God. Jacob's wrestling with God lasted throughout the night, but the sun rose again the next morning and

ended his struggle. Wrestling with God left him limping, but Jacob also overcame (Genesis 31:28). To the author this overcoming of Jacob becomes very difficult to understand, because who can overcome God. According to Ross, in biblical culture there is a strong link between hearing and overcoming (Ross 2000:15). People cannot claim to have heard, unless they are willing to overcome. Without wrestling with God in the midst of suffering, people cannot overcome the pain. How then could people claim to have heard what God was saying through their suffering if they could not overcome their pain? Jacob wrestled with God and walked away limping for life. Most often, people's wrestling with God will leave them scarred for life. Yancey wrote extensively upon this topic, saying that God is deeply interested in bringing new life into people, where they will know and serve God on a higher level than currently, even when He asks people to suffer in order for them to know God better. This is an extremely painful process because;

...in many ways the act of Re-creation is 'harder' than creation, for it relies on flawed human beings. Surely, it has cost God more: the death of his Son. Still, God insists on healing the world from the bottom up, rather than from the top down (Yancey 1988:198).

God wants to heal the world, Yancey is saying. This healing however, will not come without cost. People's re-creation in God will leave them limping, but it has cost God more. It has cost God His Son, because it is through the scars on God's Son, that humans are saved. In addition, in the progression of injustice and pain, Jesus never became self-focused.

In this time of suffering, Jesus intervened improving the quality of life for people around him. Dortzbach believes he did it "to secure the increase of life and privilege of another" (Dortzbach 2002:25). From this, we see that Jesus' suffering became a redemptive suffering, because he never isolated himself from his people. His suffering actually became the means he used to bind people's wounds in a deeply human manner. His wounds became a source of healing rather than an increase in misery (Dortzbach 2002:109). How could Jesus do this? In the author's mind, this was only possible because Jesus never lost focus that his Father is near, even when he cried that dreaded creed, "my God, my God, why..." (Matthew 27:46). Yet, moments later he committed his spirit into the hands of the Father, who was close enough to receive this from His Son.

#### **4.8 CREATING FUTURE STORIES FILLED WITH HOPE**

Lester contributed largely to the author's understanding of our future story with God. Under this heading, the author will seek to explore how he has used Lester's Theory of hope, in order to compliment the Narrative Theory in creating a future story in his strive to find a way of bringing hope to the hopeless in Zimbabwe, while their circumstances become more difficult as time progresses. Wimberly is helpful in his understanding that future stories need to be positive, in order for care seekers to find God, waiting with a bright future:

Human striving for meaning is never fully satisfied with negative conversations. Negative stories always impoverish the person; positive stories enhance and

enrich. Negative stories lead us away from God and ultimately to sin and death; positive stories lead us toward a relationship with God (Wimberly 2003:27).

The author came to realise that it does not matter how many positive dreams and visions of the future are not fulfilled in this lifetime. How sad it would be if Christians never dream positive thoughts, because of the fear that these dreams, will not become reality because of a hurtful past and present experiences. It is neither human failures nor successes or even sacrifices, which count before God; it is the hope that people have in Christ Jesus. It is this hope Christians have that will enable them to continue when physical and spiritual strength has reached its limit. If Christians do not dream positive dreams in the midst of persecution, suffering and pain, they will always remain in a state of mourning, because persecution, suffering and pain is a reality of life, and Christians cannot escape it.

Lester challenges caregivers, to bring good news; God is creating an open-ended future where he is waiting for those who put their trust in him:

The living God does not beckon from behind us somewhere in history, but is pulling us toward the horizons of promise and fulfilment. Those hurting people with whom we sit are crying out for a new horizon of hope. They need future stories that provide security, excitement, and joy in the present moment. Pastoral

caregivers enable despairing persons to gain the courage to lean into their future, to revision and reconstruct future stories that are connected to hope rather than despair (Lester 1995:130).

With these words, Lester urges the reconstructing of the "mind-sets, structures of reality, belief systems, or cognitive maps" (Lester 1995:131), in order to create new "frames of reference" (Lester 1995:131) for the care seeker. This becomes essential, because perception of the pain, or the cause of pain, is built from the understanding, or "frame of reference", that God is involved in the midst of pain and suffering. In this therapeutic process, the caregiver will help the care seeker to rearrange his or her thoughts on the past, helping them to see God is working in their lives, even when they do not realize it. Because God has been involved in the past, He has also influenced the present, and His presence is a reality that will become apparent through faith. Through God's presence being a reality in the present, the caregiver can help the care seeker to create a positive future story.

Because the care seeker has discovered God in their past and present, he or she is now ready to create a future story with God. The author discovered that for some people in Zimbabwe, their future story has a lot of detail, involving the lives of many people. Yet for others, their future story remains rather vague, however because God was faithful in the past and present, He will be there in the future, waiting. Lester however,

insists that the future story should have much detail, and caregivers should help care seekers to fill in all the missing links, even fantasizing future stories (Lester 1995:145). The author disagrees with Lester in this regard. In the context of the Zimbabwean crisis, many people are not willing to create a detailed future story, because their current situation is so unstable. For them, the mere fact that God has not forgotten them in the past, that He is here with them right now, brings great comfort that God will also be with His people in the future. Insisting for more detail created more anxiety in people, because this might bring them to a place of deep disappointment. Tillich is becomes helpful for people when they experience that the self, has lost expertise upon their future life stories. He said: "The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt" (Tillich 2000: 190). Hence, when doubt in the future cause anxiety in a person, the believer will find courage to be through faith in God.

For others however, Lester is correct in saying that they are willing to fill in more detail in their future story. The author agrees with Morgan when she says that, care seekers become the experts in their future story (Morgan 2000:2), not when creating a story separated from God, but in such a way that they will decide what the future will hold for them within the presence of God. Hence, God has the ultimate expertise upon human future, however allowing people to choose what their future will look like.

#### 4.8.1 LIVING FUTURE STORIES OF HOPE

This hope will come to care seekers in the form of a self denying church, reflecting the love it has experienced in Christ. Real hope cannot be sourced from within self, but it will come from God who lives within. Emmanuel, God within us. In preparation for writing his book, Yancey spent three weeks in the mountains of Colorado. During this time he read the entire Bible, and discovered many truths therein he wrote:

In my study of the Bible, I was struck by the radical shift in its authors' attitudes about suffering, a shift that traces directly back to the Cross. When New Testament writers speak of hard times, they express none of the indignation that characterizes Job, the prophets, and many of the psalmists. They offer no real explanation for suffering, but keep pointing to two events – the death and resurrection of Jesus – as they form some kind of pictographic answer (Yancey 1988:252).

Why does God allow suffering? This question remains unanswered in this dissertation. Jesus spoke of his death and said a seed needs to die before it can bear fruit (John 12:24). For followers of Jesus, it seems that the fruit of death to self in human suffering will bring glory to God, if only people would allow it.

If suffering remains such a mystery, how can people continue to live with hope in the midst of pain? In the author's mind, the only door to life after suffering and even in suffering, is through forgiveness: Forgiveness for



self, forgiveness for God and forgiveness for those who cause pain. People need to forgive self because during their time of pain they made many wrong choices. They also need to forgive God, because He allowed pain in their lives and left them to suffer alone. Suffering people also need to forgive those responsible for the pain. Yet, true forgiveness will not come easily. To forgive is often a self-denying choice people need to make, because human emotions will fight it vigorously, Dorzbach wrote:

The decision to forgive someone is made in the area of our thinking and our will, not in the area of our feelings. If left to our feelings, we would never forgive others (Dortzbach (quote Retief) 2002:113).

Forgiveness will not come to people as a result of human feelings, but most often, it will come in spite of human emotions. If forgiveness is so difficult, why then is it so important to forgive? Care seekers can only expect from others the same as they would expect from themselves. Hence, they should ask of themselves what they ask of others. It seems to the author that Masango understands this notion when he quotes King with these words:

... strangely enough, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be (Masango (quote King) 1993:74).

Could this quote then ask suffering people, in the midst of their pain and suffering, to forgive their persecutors, in order for them to become whole

in their own humanity? Why did Jesus utter this very popular prayer; Father forgive, as I forgive others (Matthew 6:12)? From the context of this prayer, the care seeker's wholeness is dependant upon their forgiveness towards their persecutors. This becomes more confrontational in the life of Jesus. According to the gospel, Jesus himself uttered a cry of forgiveness for those who crucified him and that in the midst of his crucifixion (Luke 23:34). Could it be that in this sense, the suffering person (crucified person) will be restored (resurrected) into whole living again? Edwards also pondered this, and he wrote:

Resurrection comes only because there is first a crucifixion. The cross must always predicate resurrection.

The second is impossible without the first (Edwards 1994:93).

#### **4.9. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

In chapter 3, the author has explored the meaning of church, the body of Christ and community of saints. He has attempted to take these notions beyond the theoretical, helping the reader to understand that being church is to be a community of saints, called into oneness, and purposed to unite God's people, where it will express its praxis in the body of Christ.

Chapter 4 started with the author briefly glancing over some spiritual reasons why Zimbabwean people suffer. However, this chapter mainly concerns itself with exploring the pastoral care and therapy needed by care seekers in Zimbabwe. In the author's mind, hope is essential for

creating a future story in the presence of God. This hope will not exist in the care seekers future, unless he or she will be able to find hope in their past and in the present.

In the concluding chapter, the author will evaluate the research completed in this dissertation. How much has this research contributed to the author's understanding of the problem in Zimbabwe? Did he find any answers to the persisting problems? During this research, many areas of possible future research became apparent, and the author will briefly point to some of these.

## CHAPTER 5

In this final chapter, the author will change the style in which he writes this dissertation for reasons he will explain shortly. Throughout this dissertation, the author has written in the third person, referring to himself as "the author". He did this in an attempt to keep focused upon the problem at hand and to avoid getting himself emotionally attached to the problems in Zimbabwe, and by doing this he hoped to remain objective in his judgment. Whether this had the intended effect, remains debatable. However, for the remainder of this dissertation the author will now switch, and write in the first person, because this will help him to focus upon the outcome of this research, and the effect it has had upon him as a person. The author is convinced that unless this dissertation has impacted his life on a personal level, it was not worth the effort. For this reason, the author will attempt to be as critical as possible on the outcomes of the dissertation, firstly, on the success of achieving the goals of this dissertation; secondly, on the impact this research has had on the author.

### 5.1 POINT OF DEPARTURE IN THIS DISSERTATION

At this point, I wish to take the reader back to the goal of this dissertation. The reader will have noticed that I have asked many questions throughout this dissertation, and many of these questions were not answered, and dare I say, not even attempted to be answered. However, I believe that these questions were helpful, in order to create awareness, and stimulate debate on the issues this dissertations seeks to address. In this dissertation, I have searched for some answers on how to offer pastoral

care and liberate the people in Zimbabwe, and in doing that, create an awareness for South African churches, in order for them to get involved in providing pastoral care to the people of Zimbabwe.

When the aspirant student ventures upon a mammoth task, researching and writing a dissertation like this, one wonders what could be the student's hope of the outcome. Could it be that the researcher hoped to create such a clear and watertight plan that the reader would stand in amazement, knowing exactly how to solve the problem the dissertation is addressing? In honesty, this was the point of departure for me, because when I started with this research, I had in mind to create a clear point for point plan, explaining exactly how to help the people in Zimbabwe. Now at the end of the dissertation, one needs to ask whether this perfect plan ever emerged. I will return to this notion a little later in this chapter, and evaluate the praxis for pastoral care in this dissertation.

For me, this research started when I assumed that I "knew exactly what the problem in Zimbabwe was". However, in chapter 1, when researching the problem statement, it became very clear in my mind that I did not understand the real problem in Zimbabwe. Like many other South Africans, I had an opinion about this problem, yet did not understand the context of difficulties in Zimbabwe. The historical overview opened my mind, gaining some understanding that the problem is not something that happened in a vacuum, because, it is deeply rooted in Zimbabwean history. At this point, I am challenged to reevaluate my understanding of

this problem, and with much less boldness I can say, I have some, or should I say, a slight understanding of the problem in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, this lack of understanding does not disqualify me, or other caregivers from offering pastoral care to people in need. The realization that I did not understand the problem in Zimbabwe, or at least in a way that makes me an expert, helped me to be less judgmental of the people of Zimbabwe, and more sympathetic towards the problems they are facing. That in my mind brings a paradox in the sense that this awareness of not being an expert, prepares the way for a deeper level of pastoral care. I will return to this notion under the next heading.

Chapter 1 also wrestled with the idea that practical theology should motivate its convictions from within its own theology, in order to find the needed energy to become sustainable. This conviction came in the midst of wrestling to motivate a sustained ministry of pastoral care for the suffering people.

## **5.2 EVALUATING THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS DISSERTATION**

For clarification, I have divided the methodology in two departments; firstly, the methodology in order to research this problem; secondly, the methodology offering pastoral care for the people in Zimbabwe.

In the first department, I have created two questionnaires (see appendix A and B), and they have become helpful tools for researching the

problem. Even after the conclusion of this research, I will still find these helpful in offering pastoral care to Zimbabweans. For the South African church, the questionnaire becomes a reminder that our neighbour is in need, also challenging congregations to be involved in liberating these people. The second questionnaire for the Zimbabwean people serves as a reminder that they are not alone in their suffering. This questionnaire also helps to structure conversations with Zimbabweans, helping them to create a positive future story. Hence, in the course of this research, I used these questionnaires to gather information, and it now has become an instrument, helping to provide pastoral care for the people in Zimbabwe. However, I realize that this methodology had limited success in the South African churches' context, for many still struggle to gain a deeper understanding of the difficulties in Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, the Zimbabwean questionnaire did help, and is still helping, to bring a deeper understanding of their pain and suffering.

In the second department of methodology in this research, I have explored Narrative Therapy, in an attempt to help some Zimbabweans to find meaning in their pain and suffering. Because I realized that most people do not have a positive future story, I have borrowed ideas from many authors, in order to create a narrative understanding with a hope-filled future story. In praxis, this applied Narrative Therapy, in conjunction with the questionnaire to the Zimbabwean people, aided me in this attempt to provide pastoral care. However at the end of all this, I must confess that the one single element that had the utmost impact upon

Zimbabweans was not the telling of their stories, nor was it the wise answers of the caregiver. The one thing that really impacted care seekers was the willingness of caregivers to give of self, in bringing comfort in communion with them in their need.

### 5.3 **THE PRAXIS OF PASTORAL CARE IN THIS DISSERTATION**

In this dissertation, I have attempted to bring an understanding of pastoral care that goes beyond the abstract, helping the reader to understand that being church is to be a community of saints, called into oneness, and purposed to unite God's people, where it will express its praxis in charisma, through the body of Christ. Hence, in this context, the South African, and Zimbabwean church, will become a community through their purpose in Christ, and together they will live out the praxis of this oneness through the charisma only God can offer.

Because "[p]astoral care is the care of the whole person in relationship, not the treatment of a specific dysfunction" (Patton 1993: 56), it becomes the actual living of this life, lived in togetherness between caregivers and care seekers. Only in Christ and through Christ, will true pastoral care take place, where the care seeker will find pastoral care, as the caregiver gives of self, and that is only possible through the goodness of Christ.

Pastoral care happens when people remember their neighbour in need, and Christians are able to remember these people, because God has not forgotten His people. However, as people live through negative



experiences, they may think that God has forgotten them, but God lives the Christian's life experiences within them, positive or negative. He is Immanuel, God with us. This understanding becomes the source of hope in the midst of suffering. Because Christians find this hope in God, they are able to bring this hope to the hopeless people in times of suffering and despair.

This hope in God that lives in the caregiver brings him or her in conflict with an unjust world, because hope in God suggests a close relationship with Christ, and Christ himself confronts evil. When hope in God enters into conflict with evil, it may never do so through violence, because violence calls for more violence. Saint Paul reminds us that the seed we sow will become the fruit we reap (Galatians 6:8). For this reason, I do not believe that violence can produce God's hope in people. Violence is not the answer; neither can apathy speak to the problem in Zimbabwe. This understanding urged me to explore the notion of pacifism, because pacifism will not tolerate apathy, neither will it accept violence as a route to liberation. Pacifism urges the caregiver to become actively involved in the life of care seekers, where the Christian pacifist will determine the conditions of the conflict they enter into. Niebuhr called this Christian approach the "impossible possibilities" (Harries (ed) 1986:61-62); impossible, because not one person can stand against such violent forces without answering with violence. Yet it is possible, because the Christian hope in Christ enables it, because it calls for love when hatred and evil is so prevalent. Christian pacifism however, will ask for immense

commitment, because its progress might prove to be slow. Caregivers might be tempted to become apathetic towards the problem, or sometimes might turn to violent options when results seem to tarry.

I believe however, that the greatest responsibility of caregivers is to bring care seekers to a place of hope in God. This hope in Christ will enable the believer to appreciate the past, good or bad as it was, as God ordained; boldly living in the present, because God is with His people; longing to live a bright future, meeting a waiting God in all His goodness. The Christian's hope is placed on God, who was, is and still to come. It is this hope in God that will enable care seekers to enter into their suffering and wrestle with God, as Jacob did.

#### 5.4 **POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR RESEARCH BY OTHERS**

In the process of this research, I discovered many unanswered questions. Some of the questions came as rhetoric, urging us to ponder this topic on a deeper level. Other questions however, urge further research, because it was outside of the scope of this research. Under this heading, I will make a brief mention of some of these topics I think requires the most urgent attention. I hasten in saying that this is by no means an absolute and final list of possible questions and topics of research for the Zimbabwean problem. Researchers might find a more comprehensive list for researching this problem themselves. The reader also needs to take note that this list is compiled in a random order, and not in order of urgency or importance:

1. Could it be that Christian suffering becomes redemptive for other people, and in the context of this dissertation, the suffering of the people in Zimbabwe being redemptive for the people in South Africa?
2. Bush challenges the authenticity of Christian research. The question Bush asks, challenges the researchers motives and conclusions, in research such as this one. This could develop into an important research topic in order to prove, or disprove the validity of the claims made in Christian research.
3. What role does the South African media play in the problems in Zimbabwe? Could it be that the media wilfully misleads the South African public, causing them to withhold pastoral care for Zimbabweans?
4. Zimbabweans go through continued cycles of bereavement, and I suspect that this continued suffering over a prolonged period, causes many Zimbabweans to experience depression in various forms. More research on the bereavement cycles of Zimbabweans might be helpful in creating a model to help those in despair.

## 5.5 **IN CONCLUSION**

In an earlier chapter of this dissertation, I said that I would like to journey with the reader of this dissertation, in the hope of finding a place where

pastoral care will be provided for the Zimbabwean people. Now at the end of this dissertation, one needs to ask whether this goal is accomplished. In my mind, this must be the most difficult question to answer in this entire dissertation, because I am divided into two minds about this question. Partly because I have experienced a deep challenge and a change that has taken place within me. In addition I need to say, that I still cannot state with absolute clarity that I have a clear plan and model on how to provide pastoral care to Zimbabweans. However, the reader should not think that I am saying that this dissertation has not brought any good for the Zimbabwean people.

In the midst of this pain and suffering, I have journeyed with care seekers, and together we have discovered Jesus' life philosophy when he laid down his will, in order for the Father's will to be done (Luke 22: 42). We have discovered that most people's biggest desire in life is to be happy. Even when people carry out God's will, they often perform it with a hidden agenda, in order to pursue "the joy of the Lord", because they believe it is our strength (Nehemiah 8: 10), and this joy is most treasured. The problem is that so often joy and happiness is believed to be synonymous. Yet, God's joy is not equal to happiness. Happiness is closely related to circumstances because it receives its energy from external sources, whereas joy, is sourced from God. God's gift of joy is far deeper than the absence of pain and suffering. Strangely enough once people begin to pursue God's joy in the midst of pain, happiness will manifest as the fruit of their effort.

In my journey with care seekers, we have realised that our pain and struggles will build and change our character, if only we will begin to embrace our pain. The problem is that this change in our character is always embroiled in pain and suffering. Yet once we begin to embrace God's purpose in pain, we will find meaning in our suffering. We can never enjoy our pain, but the struggle that accompanies this pain is the agent used by God to bring about change in us. Our biggest challenge is to trust that God has a purpose with our lives and our pain. We need to trust God that the pain we experience, will take us on a journey to a better destination (Herhold 1986: 14). Yet, "We may at times question God's wisdom and lose patience with his timetable" (Yancey 1988: 201).

Our pain often causes many questions to be raised within us. Like Job, we very seldom find the answer to the question of why we suffered. God never gave Job any explanation, nor asked his pardon, God said. "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me" (Job 38:3 - NIV). Instead of answers, Job was burdened with more questions. However, through these questions God revealed himself, and Job was able to respond, "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know ... and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:3 & 6 - NIV). The purpose of our suffering is not so much to find the answers to our battles, but it is to find faith in God.

As caregivers and care seekers, we are in community, expressed as the body of Christ, and together we will bring hope to the people held in God's memory.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE**

- 1) Will you share in your own words what the nature of the crisis in Zimbabwe is?
- 2) How are you personally affected by the difficulties many people experience in Zimbabwe?
- 3) Personally, what is your biggest need right now, and what suggestions do you have to address this need?
- 4) Is the Zimbabwean church capable of addressing your needs?
- 5) In your opinion, what should the Zimbabwean church's role be in bringing relief for the suffering in Zimbabwe?
- 6) What can the South African church do in order to help you in this situation?
- 7) Why do you think it is necessary, or not necessary, for the South African church to help the church in Zimbabwe?
- 8) How do you see the future of the church in Zimbabwe?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA**

- 1) What are the issues that have caused the crisis in Zimbabwe?
  
- 2) What are you doing in order to help the people in Zimbabwe?
  
- 3) In your understanding, what are the biggest problems in Zimbabwe?
  
- 4) In your opinion, who should help the Zimbabwean people, and why do you think they should be helping?
  
- 5) Do you think the South African church should help the Zimbabwean church, and if so, how and what should be done?
  
- 6) How are South African churches affected by the problems in Zimbabwe?
  
- 7) How do you see the future of the church in South Africa?



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