THE IMPACT OF THE DEATH OF A MALE CLERGY ON THE SPOUSE

A PASTORAL CHALLENGE

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DECLARATION

I Peter Mhlabane hereby declare that this research submitted to the University of Pretoria, is my original work, and has not been previously submitted to any University. Sources used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature (Student) _____ Date_____ 2017

Signature Supervisor) _____ Date _____ 2017

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Ndazi Maria Mhlabane, my late sister Ntombikayise Carol Mhlabane and my grandmother Siphenge Martha Skosane. May the Lord grant them eternal rest and His light perpetually shine on them.

This thesis is further dedicated to all *wounded clergy* families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SUMMARY

Clergy widows face unique challenges because of being in the manse and their changed position in the congregation. Though they are human, like everyone, the expectations from the church and community are usually different. As the mother to the church, she is expected to be strong for the sake of the church members. There is a common assertion that a clergy spouse should conceal her grief due to her position in public. Many clergy spouses struggle to find their ministry rhythm after losing their husband. One of the contributory factors is the manner in which the local church leadership handles the clergy family after the death of the male clergy.

This research was undertaken as a response to the plight of the clergy widows under the local church leadership. A qualitative methodological design was followed to tap out new experiences. Five clergy widows and one pastor were interviewed and an in-depth qualitative analysis was undertaken to explore the role of the church on caring for the clergy family. The results of the study are presented in a descriptive and interpretive approach. The available literature was coherently linked to participants' narratives in developing new knowledge. Hence, the research is intended to contribute by bringing new perspective on how the church cares for the clergy family after the death of the male clergy.

This study was initially scheduled to be done within the Sekhukhune district in the Limpopo province. However, due to the withdrawal of some potential participants, the author ended up overlapping to part of the Mpumalanga province. It was discovered that most churches provided the necessary support towards the burial of the clergy but to dismally disappear immediately after the funeral. This trend coupled with the removal of the clergy family from the manse immediately after the funeral has caused unfathomable trauma in the clergy family

As this study's aim was to contribute to the field of practical theology and pastoral care, the interpretive model postulated by Osmer was employed. The findings are hoped to contribute to the body of knowledge within an African perspective. It is intended to contribute to pastoral an approach, which is applicable to the African perspective and Biblical ethos.

KEY WORDS

Death

Grief

Male Clergy

Widow

Qualitative research

Grounded theory

Pastoral care

Shepherd

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Ministry – activity done in service to God.

Pentecostal – relates to the manifestation and operation of the Holy Spirit.

Widow – Woman who has lost her husband by death and not married again.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The research begins with the background which led to the study of the impact of the death of a male clergy upon the spouse as it then raises the problem and how it can be addressed in order to create a pastoral method of caring. The research problem, which gave rise to the objective of the study, is outlined and subsequently the significance of the study is given.

1.2. STUDY BACKGROUND

The author is an ordained pastor of the Pentecostal Movement in Mpumalanga Highveld region. In my pastoral work in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo I came across the traumatic experiences of families struggling after the death of a husband or a father (Pastor). The family was traumatized by the loss of the father, and then faced financial problems after the breadwinners' death. They were then asked to leave the manse by the church governing board thus; they became homeless over- night. The following story shows some of the above problems faced by these kinds of families.

The death of a close relative or intimate friend is always painful and disturbing. The experience during 2010 where the author lost one of his colleagues in the ministry propelled him to research a pastoral model of caring for the surviving spouse within the clergy family. After the passing on of the clergy, immediately the church replaced him with another one and did not give the other family a grieving space.

The question to ask is, how can the church that is supposed to care for people become so heartless?

After pastor J.J. Smith (not his real name) passed on in 2010, the spouse had to

vacate the manse so that the congregation could accommodate the new pastor in the manse.

Some of the furniture had to be removed and was accommodated by the neighbors because there was no shelter to house them.

The spouse was compelled to secure an alternative accommodation within two weeks' time, as an announcement was made on the day of the funeral that the new clergy would assume duty after two weeks from the date of the funeral. The deceased clergy was the only person who was earning a salary.

The situation also meant that the income of the family was cut off. Their only child was also left in another family in order to complete his schooling because it was towards final examinations at the end of the year. The intensity of grief was written all over their faces and as I was the only clergy left in that part of the region to care for them. A lot, therefore, was expected of me in terms of providing pastoral support to the bereaved family. Just a few days after the burial when the author visited the family, he was told that the spouse could not even sleep at night subsequent to funeral. She would wake up in the middle of the night, cry, and sob bitterly. This incident exposed my deficiency in relation to my pastoral healing methodology to those who are grieving.

This situation raised several questions as to, how many clergy's spouses were facing such conditions and ultimately die without their stories being told. And why some of the spouses were treated badly by congregants after the death of a clergy.

In his masters' thesis, David Malouf says that, "the unanticipated deaths of the pastors brought drastic changes to one of the pastor's wives" (2014:1). H. Norman Wright confirms his assertion when he says, "The loss of a spouse causes dramatic and immediate changes in every part of your life, affecting, usually threatening, the very fabric of your existence" (Wright, 2013:36).

These changes are explored and investigated in order to seek to bring an appropriate pastoral methodology of healing and caring to the family.

R.O. Hansson, H. Shut, M.S. Strobe and W. Strobe indicate, "The loss of a

marital partner deprives the bereaved person of support for rhythms of life; for social participation; and for examination and modification of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. When we lose a life-partner, the person with whom we shared the intimacy of the day and night, we face temporary desolation". (R.O. Hansson, H. Shut, M.S. Strobe and W. Strobe, 1991:153).

This melancholy triggers the feeling of grief and sometimes despair to some of the victims.
Carol. H. OTT (2016), in the article on the impact of complicated grief on the mental and physical health at various points in the bereavement process, confirms Strobe's argument that the death of a spouse is considered to be one of life's most intense stressors and one that exposes the bereaved person to a higher risk for physical and mental health problems (Carol. H. OTT *et al. 2016:249).*

It is the authors' view that if the stress is not interposed, it may develop into complicated grief, which will be discussed in chapter three.

For the spouse and the entire family to resume social participation, she needs the support from all members of the faith community and apparently the broader society. An environment, which will enable the widows to narrate disillusionments and grief, should be created by the church. The reader understands how this issue needs attention, especially within the black church. In the black community, talking about death is generally a taboo. Elizabeth Kubler Ross ingeniously indicated the finality of coming face to face with death, "Death is a subject that is evaded, ignored and denied by our youth worshipping, progress-orientated society. It is also as if we have taken on death as just another disease to be conquered. Nevertheless, the fact is that death is inevitable. We will all die; it is only a matter of time. Death is as much a part of human existence, of human growth as development and being born. It is one of the enemy to be conquered or a prison to be escaped. An integral part of our lives gives meaning to human existence. It sets a limit on our time in life, urging us on to do something productive with that time as long as it is ours to use. This then, is the meaning of death: the final stage of growth" (Elizabeth Kubler Ross, 1975: X).

Kubler Ross' statement is thought intriguing as she says that all humans should find meaning in life before they face death. It is challenging to accept death as the final stage of growth. This concept of Kubler Ross, stimulated several questions in the author such as:

How does the death of our loved one breed meaning in our own lives?

However, navigating through the pain of loss until one finds actual meaning, is hard. Pain caused by death of the loved one may even impair our judgment and subsequently barricade our way of finding meaning in death. At this stage, a person is more vulnerable.

The author experienced the family members agonizingly crying on the eve of the funeral, when the corpse was brought home on the eve on the burial and on the funeral day, when the coffin was lowered. This testifies to the vulnerability of a person in spite of words of comfort sent to the family.

The researcher believes that the final stage of growth in this regard is when the bereaved alters the paradigm to enable them to accept the unchangeable. The problem under investigation is what causes the tendency of the church to expose the clergy family to more traumatizing experience after losing their loved one.

As such deleting all comforting words spoken at the funeral service and making the clergy widow more vulnerable. This is practiced by ousting the clergy family out of the manse immediately after the funeral, without allowing them time to mourn, as our African culture requires.

1.3. **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This study is preoccupied with the way the local church leadership deals with the clergy family after the death of the male clergy. It examines the impact of the pain aggravated by the local church leadership on the bereaved clergy's spouse.

The above story raised several questions that guided the research:

- Why is the church that is supposed to be loving and caring turn to be cruel

after the death of a clergy?
● In what way can pastors care for such families without being emotionally involved?
● Why is the local church leadership not able to provide care and support to the clergy's spouse?
● How can a male clergy provide for his family while working in the church?

1.4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The author believes that this research will contribute and add new knowledge in the field of practical theology. According to Buffel, pastoral care cannot afford to remain chained to Western ideology of individualism and clericalism, as it does not accommodate the African worldview. This underlined the need for pastoral healing models that are sensitive to the worldviews and cultures of co-researchers (Buffel, 2004:37).

This study is intended to investigate the role of the church in caring and supporting the clergy family after the death of a spouse. The above background also provides the question as to how can the spouse of the clergy be protected, cared for and treated with dignity by the local church leadership. The lack of an appropriate caring and healing methodology was also evident within the church leadership.

What causes some of the Pentecostal movement to expel the clergy family out of the personage immediately after the burial of the male clergy without considering the socio-economic factors that affect the respective families?

My assumption is that the death of the male clergy disorientates the clergy children and spouse respectively. What is inherent within the family structures is the role played by an individual member. Therefore, the loss of any member means reassignment of such roles. The research intends to utilize the pastoral care approach that will enable the church leadership and clergy family to journey together until the latter finds closure of losing their loved one. "A lack of support, either objectively or perceived, brings the theme of loneliness. Loneliness is described by clinical observers as a silent aspect of bereavement".

(David W. Kissane & Sidney Bloch, 2002:21)

Lack of support as Kissane and Bloch have reckoned, leads to social isolation. God created human beings to relate to one another. Tapiwa Mucherera puts it like this:

"The hopes of African people lie in God and humanity – that is, in their religion, in re-villaging and in re authoring of their life stories from subjugation to hope". He further argues that, "Africans believe that humans were created to be in relationship not only with God but also with each other as well. Thereby hope is encountered from two fronts: primarily from God, who created humanity to be in relationship with Him and likewise from one another's relationship" (Mucherera, Tapiwa, N; 2009:76-77).

It becomes vivid that the distinctive identity of an African is in forging relationships. Nurturing these relationships brings connectivity within the society. Upon the death of one member of the society, this connectivity is consolidated by the community coming together to mourn the loss. However, aggravating others grief as perceived in the Mrs. Smith case breaks relationships and creates animosity. This aspect shall be further explored as the research develops.

The development of an appropriate model of healing and caring is fundamental in bridging the loneliness gap in the bereaved lives.

Albeit the study is meant for the Pentecostal movement, it will also be beneficiary to the other faith communities.

1.5. AIM/OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The framework that informs this study lies in the principle that after the death of the clergy, the surviving clergy family should desert the manse. The implementation of this principle causes more harm in the clergy family.

It becomes more traumatic as the clergy family is trying to cope with the loss and now they are to face immediate removal from the manse. Though everyone understands that at some point, after the clergy has passed on, the immanency part of it escalates the grief in the family. The decision to remove has also cultural implications in relation to the mourning period. However, the

author will explore this aspect further.

The following aims of this study are extremely imperative:

- The study is aimed at creating a model of caring for troubled souls.
- To capacitate the church leaders in order to assume a better way of dealing with a clergy family after the death of the male clergy.
- To propose a pastoral care method that will therapeutically care for the clergy family.

1.6 RESEARCH GAP

Several scholars also dealt with grief and death from a European perspective. Most of our cultural dynamics were mostly not factored into that research.

Dr. Mpiyakhe John Kubeka in his doctoral dissertation dealt with the topic of assessing the care of the surviving clergy widows within the Pentecostal church and David Malouf in his Master's Thesis also dealt with the topic of pastoral care of the families of the deceased. However, none zoomed into the role to be played by the local church leadership in providing care and support and healing to the clergy family.

The cultural diversity of communities under which this was conducted implies that one needs to take cognizance of their customs and traditions.

The study is to assist local church leadership on how to journey with the clergy's family after the pastor is deceased and to further help the clergy family to pursue their own healing.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Practical theology has an interdisciplinary approach in its method of research. This means engaging in academic discussion with social sciences like sociology, psychology and communication studies.

This chapter will provide a survey of literature and research on the related above topic.

The literature dealing with this topic and other related concepts from various disciplines shall be intensively engaged in order to extrapolate similarities and

differences in approach.

The literature on death and dying from European and African perspectives shall be reviewed; this will include the literature on death, grief, trauma and healing.

The detailed analysis of the available literature shall be done in chapter three

1.8. REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will assume a hermeneutical approach. Hence, it will be reinforced by postmodernism. This approach will assist with interpreting the widow's plight from her own perspective and experiences. As a result, this research will employ qualitative investigation.

"There are several ways of classifying research studies. Quantitative research relies on measurement to compare and analyze different variables. In contrast to qualitative research which uses qualifying words or descriptions to record aspects of the world" (Claire Bless; Craig Higson-Smith 2000:37).

This study utilizes a qualitative method, as it is best suited to dealing with descriptions and analyzing the behavior of the core researchers.

The empirical study was conducted with widows in the Pentecostal denominations as co-researchers and interviewees.

Johann Mouton describes an empirical study as the study that is usually qualitative in nature, which aims to provide an in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the actors and their practices. (Johann Mouton, 2011:148)

Thus, the co-researchers shall communicate their pain as part of the process of healing. In such communication, the perspective of the co-researchers shall be actively acknowledged.

"We must engage in the subject matter of a conversation openly and reciprocally if the process of reaching an understanding is able to exercise its horizon-expanding power" (Kogler R.R. (1996:114).

The author shall dialogue with the core researchers in order to allow them to

narrate their stories. The grief stories of the core researchers shall be explored through listening to the narrators' accounts of their loss.

This will enable the researcher to understand the world and the impact of death on the core researchers. Exploring the participant's narratives will involve both passive and active listening.

The grief stories shall be explored through listening to the narratives account of loss provided by the core researchers. Five core researchers shall be interviewed by questionnaires (see appendix A for questions). Four core researchers shall be from Pentecostal denomination while the other two shall be from the mainline denominations. This approach will enable the researcher to do a comparative analysis of the results without being biased to the Pentecostal denomination.

Data shall be collected mainly by using primary sources and using a systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction as it takes place is key.

The interview shall be structured and questions shall be unstructured. This will enable the researcher to enter into the worldview of the core researchers and shepherd then towards their own healing.

The researcher embraces Gerkin's model of pastoral leadership, namely that the pastor as an interpretive guide. "The interpretive guide cultivates a dialogical relationship between biblical stories and the stories of people's lives today. Here the caring pastor functions as coach and facilitator." [1997:123].

This Gerkin's approach will enable the researcher to enter into people's space with an intention of facilitating a dialogue and through their stories, guide the core-researchers to find solutions. In his agreement with Gerkin, Richard Osmer (2008) offers four tasks of practical theology as a model that interpretive guides can use to interpret episodes, situations, and contexts theologically.

These tasks are:

● Descriptive - What is going on?
● Interpretive- Why is it going on?

- Normative- What ought to be going on?
- Strategy- How might we respond?

<div align="center">(Richard Osmer; 2008:100)</div>

One of the descriptive empirical task of practical theology is to interpret the episodes, situation, or context of the community. According to Gerkin, Jesus Christ emerges as a chief shepherd of the flock. The shepherd cares for the sheep by leading them to greener pastures. He further describes the role of a Pastor as priest, Prophet, Wise Guide and shepherd.

The pastor, in the priestly role, shall be mediatory in his approach but shall also be the voice of the voiceless. In the priestly function, the pastor shall also give moral guidance. In his Prophetic role, the pastor shall be the leader and the voice of God to the widows.
Pastors as prophets reinforce Christian ethics and rebuke evil.

The caring model shall be based on the Priestly function, where liturgy plays an essential part in caring for troubled souls. Then following the prophetic ministry, where the caregiver being a voice for the voiceless, then wisely guides and shepherds those who need care.
This process will lead the researcher to explore a narrative therapy that explores the life of the troubled souls. However, Gerkin does not provide sufficient guidelines in terms of helping the troubled souls gain their self-worth. This is where I will explore the narrative method shared by Wimberly in order to further develop a caring method of healing.

Wimberly (1999) provides a theory of moving from Shame to Self-Worth, which will enable the widows to regain their self- worth and God given dignity. (Wimberly, 1999:11).

The Narrative model of Wimberly shall enable the researcher to tease the stories from the clergy spouses. My upbringing taught me that story telling is part of the African life. This concept shall be further explored in chapter three of this research.

Ethical code as prescribed by the University shall be adhered to. This includes the rights of the core researchers.

The methodology shall be explored further in chapter three.

Herein enclosed appendix A for questions and appendix B for consent letter.

1.9 CLASSIFICATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter: 1

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This chapter explored the overall aim and objectives of the study, background of the study, problem statement, research gap, significance of the study, preliminary literature overview and sampled methodology and preliminary conclusion.

Chapter: 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the design and methodology followed during the study. This chapter looked into the qualitative methodology that was employed in the study. The Gerkin's shepherding care model was being solicited in order to journey with the co-researchers. Explore Wimberly narrative method was also.

It discussed the methods of data collection and the instruments used in measuring the validity of the collected data.

Full detail of data collection process, technique of data collection and sampling shall be explained in chapter two. Finally, the data analysis procedures are elucidated in the same chapter two.

Chapter: 3

THE CONCEPTS OF DEATH, GRIEF, TRAUMA AND LOSS

The literature on the topic, using Western as well as African scholars was reviewed.

This chapter contains a theoretical framework that has informed the study. It further indicates the literatures that has been covered and discloses the key

concepts that underpin the study. The literature of the Western and African writers on the issue of death, trauma, grief and care of the spouse shall be reviewed. The conclusion from the literature shall inform the empirical study that still needs to be done.

Chapter: 4

INTERVIEWS

The concept of death, grief, and trauma was explored and care of the spouse by church leaders was dealt with.

Chapter: 5

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS AND (RECOMMENDATIONS)

The stories of the affected clergy spouse were told and church leaders were explored. Analysis of the abuse was explored.

Chapter: 6

HEALING METHODOLOGY

The main results are summarized and tabulated. Trends are established on the data and interpreted. The interpretation shall be done against the aim of the result.

The main findings were discussed and integrated with previous chapters. The results were related to the literature already done. If there were anomalies, they were also discussed and reflected on the relevance of the study. At this point, the value of the study was indicated and gaps that may warrant further research were also indicated.

The pertinent pastoral care model that may be utilized by church leaders and pastoral care practitioners was drawn.

Chapter 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

This chapter provided the summative view of whether the objective of the study was achieved.

1.10. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The research proposal has reflected on the aim and objectives of the study and significance of the research, and the background of the study.

The next chapter provides the method and methodology that was followed in doing the investigation.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the research design employed to explore the impact of the death of a male clergy on the spouse as a pastoral challenge. There are two main authors that are going to be used in order to enter into the lives of spouses that are being abused by the church, namely Gerkin and Wimberley.

The chapter lays a foundation for the process of data collection, data analysis and sampling. Different components such as research design and important theoretical methods shall be reviewed. At the end, the ethical consideration for the study shall be outlined. The problem that has also troubled the author is the negligence of the clergy family by the local church leadership after the death of the male clergy. The church that is supposed to be loving, compassionate and caring, why is it so cruel after the death of the male clergy.

Several studies have shown that clergy family suffer unique stressors and challenges such as a lack of social support and peer support. In the process, that local church offers no assistance to the clergy family. The clergy spouses and their children are mostly left unaddressed on the trauma they experienced after the death of the male clergy.

As the study is done under the perspective of pastoral care, one of its objectives is to suggest to the local church leadership how to better care for

the clergy widows. It will help the priest and church leadership in therapeutically journeying with the clergy family, even after the funeral, and help them to heal. To minimize inaccuracy, the structure and the strategy of the empirical study is outlined under research design. In the light of the above, the study attempts to propose a method of caring that will help the bereaved clergy families. Therefore, this chapter provides a foundation that underpins the process of data collection and analysis.

"Methodology is the philosophy underlying the procedure and principles in a particular field of inquiry" (Crotty.2003)

D. Bailey expanding Crotty's view says, "Methodology is the philosophy of the research process which includes the assumptions and values that serve as a rationale for research and standard criteria the researcher uses for interpreting data and reaching conclusion", (D. Bailey, 1987:32)

"Methodology depends on ontological and epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality and the best ways of gaining access to that reality. There are differences based on methodological characteristics, procedures and techniques. These differences affect the way each procedure treats data and the data collection procedure" (*Cohen et al* 2007).

The study assumes a qualitative approach as it shall be unfolded in this chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the research design aimed at exploring the impact of the death of a male clergy on the spouse as a pastoral challenge. There are two main authors that are going to be used in this research, in order to enter into the lives of spouses that are being abused by the church, namely Gerkin and Wimberly. The different components such as research design, important theoretical methods shall be reviewed. At the end, the ethical consideration for the study shall be outlined.

Several studies have shown that clergy families suffer unique stressors and challenges such as lack of social support and peer support due to their position in the church. In the process the local church offers no assistance to the clergy family. There is a general perception that the clergy and their spouses' are closer to God, as a result their humanness is being ignored. That leaves them more vulnerable, particularly when death comes. Due to public perception and expectation, clergy widows try to be strong to satisfy the public domain.

Hence, the clergy spouses and their children are mostly left unaddressed on the trauma they experienced after the death of the male clergy.

As the study is done under the perspective of pastoral care, one of its objectives is to suggest to the local church leadership how to care for the bereaved clergy widows. It will help the priest and church leadership in therapeutically journeying with the clergy family even after the funeral. To minimize inaccuracy, the structure and the strategy of the empirical study is outlined under research design.

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This chapter lays a foundation for the process of data collection, data analysis and sampling. Different components such as research design and important theoretical methods shall be reviewed. This strategy of integrating the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way is called research design. At the end, the ethical consideration for the study shall be outlined. The problem that has also troubled the author is the negligence of the clergy family after the death of the male clergy. The church that is supposed to be loving, compassionate and caring, why is it so cruel after the death of the male clergy.

Several studies have shown that clergy families suffer unique stressors and challenges such lack of social support and peer support. In the process, the local church offers no assistance to the clergy family.

In view of this, this chapter is comprised of two major parts namely:

a. Review of literature, which relates to the essential theories on pastoral care with particular reference to Charles V. Gerkin and Edward Wimberly.

b. Empirical research from adopting a qualitative approach. The researcher shall employ different theoretical approaches.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In this section, the researcher outlines how he will strategically integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way. According to Welman *et al* (2009:46), research design is described as the overall plan according to which the respondents of the proposed study are selected, as well as the means of data collection or generation, while Babbie and Mouton (2008:74) describe research design as a plan or blue print for conducting the research. "The main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions are likely to be, and to maximize the validity of the eventual results." (Mouton, 1996:107)

This scholarly description of the research design enabled the author to venture into pertinent and logical planning on how to conduct the study project. The data was collected in the context of the co-researchers, while at the same time reviewing the manner in which the church local leadership cares for clergy widows.

Claire Bless, Craig Higson-Smith, and Sello Levy Sithole say, "Research design is directly related to the answering of a research question. The purpose of the research design is to ensure high internal validity of the research project" (130-131). Palmer (2014) confirmed this assertion but further suggested that research design should respond to four questions such as:

What questions to study?

What data are relevant?

What data to collect?

Therefore, responding to these questions research design will be like glue that holds the whole research project together. As a design, it is used to give structure to the research. It provides means as to how to address the research questions and the methods to be utilized. All the parts of research need to work harmoniously to address the major research question. Well-crafted research design enables the researcher to gather the evidence that will help him to efficiently address the research question problem unambiguously.

The researcher found Mark Balnaves and Peter Caputi's research table as

suggested by Palmer helpful in his quest for knowledge as suggested. The process and guiding questions are helpful as the researcher embarks on a journey to seek new knowledge. The questions are essential in guiding the researcher's journey to acquire new knowledge. The researcher endeavors to explore some of the questions from the table below to guide his research:

Balnaves and Caputi
Table 2.3 Organizing a quantitative research study
PROBLEM STATEMENT: What is the goal of the research? What is the problem, issue, or critical focus to be researched? What are important items? What do they mean? What is the significance of the problem? Do want to test the theory? Do you want to extend the theory? Do you want to test competing theories? Do you want to test the method? Do you want to replicate a previous study? Do you want to correct previous research that was conducted in an inadequate manner? Do you want to resolve inconsistent results from the earlier studies? Do you want to solve a practical problem? Do you want to add to the body of knowledge in another manner?
LITERATURE REVIEW: What does previous research reveal about the problem? What is the theoretical framework for the investigation? Are there complementary or competing theoretical frameworks? What are hypothesis and research questions that have emerged from the literature review?

SAMPLING:

Who (what) will provide (constitute) the data for the research?
What is the population being studied?
Who will be participants for the research?
What sampling technique will be used?
What material and information are necessary to conduct the research?
How will they be obtained?
What special problems can be anticipated in acquiring needed materials and information?
What are the limitations in the availability and reporting of materials and information?

METHOD:

What method or techniques will be used to collect the data? (This holds for applied and non-applied research)
What procedures will be used to apply the methods or the techniques?
What are the limitations of the study's internal and external validity?
Will any ethical principle be jeopardized?

DATA ANALYSIS:

How the data will be analyzed?
What statistics will be used?
What criteria will be used to determine whether hypothesis are supported?
What was discovered (about the goal, data, method, data analysis) because of preliminary work (if conducted)?

CONCLUDING INFORMATION:

How will the final research report be organized? (outline)
What sources have you examined thus far that pertain to your study? (Reference

list)

What additional information does the reader need?

What time frame (deadlines) have you established for collecting, analyzing and presenting data? Timetable)

The author believes that the questions raised in this table of Mark Balnaves and Peter Caputi as alluded by Palmer are pertinent in this study. The questions in this table will further assist in unpacking the topic as the research progresses. Prior to exploring the above questions, the author would like to reflect on the different types of research designs.

2.2.1. Types of research Design

- Pre-experimental (exploratory and descriptive)
  They satisfy the aim of the researcher to describe and understand a phenomenon. Three pre-experimental designs are presented below:

  Pre-test/post - test design

  Intact group comparison design
- Quasi-experimental designs
  They do not meet the exacting criteria of experimental designs, but which manage to approximate experimental conditions. Four quasi-experimental designs: Contrasted groups design

  Post-test cohort design

  Pre-test/post-test cohort design

  Time-series design
- Experimental designs
  They provide explanatory relationships between variables.
  Three experimental designs: pre-test/post-test control group

  Post-test-only control group design

  Factorial design

  (Claire Bless Craig Higson-Smith, Sello Levy; 2013:137)

The author shall sway more towards the explanatory approach as it addresses the core research question as to why the church that is supposed to be loving and caring turns to being cruel after the death of the clergy.

The explanatory approach shall not be employed in isolation from other

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qualitative research design approaches. As the researcher journeys with the co-researchers in attempting to establish links between the variables under research, the aspects that warrants a descriptive look shall not be ignored.

They will guide the researcher in establishing as to how the male clergy can provide for his family while working in the church.

This chapter is intended to present the methods the researcher has employed to acquire the knowledge on the topic and the epistemological approaches. In this empirical study, the author has followed the qualitative approach. Qualitative research is pertinent to the study of social sciences due to the pluralization of life.

The relevance of the pluralization is because of diversification of social contexts and perspectives of the co-researchers. Different subjective perspectives and social background of the co-researchers' form part of the critical features of this study as viewed from a qualitative approach. This study will require reflexivity from the researcher as the research field is dynamic.

Yardley, (2000) has suggested that a good qualitative research should demonstrate the following:

- Sensitivity to context in terms of related theory, epistemological commitment of the researcher and socio-cultural context of data collection;
- Commitment, rigor, transparency and coherence in terms of researcher engagement with the study, completion of the data collection and analysis, careful description of the research process and the intellectual coherence of the argument presented through the analysis; and
- Impact and importance in terms of the substance and worth of the work with relation to earlier theory and specific issues being explored."

<div align="right">(Cathrine Cassel & Gillian Symon et al. 2004:5)</div>

Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives. Hence the researcher should be sensitive to the context of the field under investigation. These are so new for them that their traditional deductive methodologies deriving research questions and hypotheses from

theoretical models and testing them against empirical evidence-are failing due to the differentiation of objects. Thus, research is increasingly forced to make use of inductive strategies.

Instead of starting from theories and testing them, sensitizing concepts are required for approaching the social contexts to be studied. However, contrary to widespread misunderstanding, these concepts are themselves influenced by precious theoretical knowledge. However, here, theories are developed from empirical studies. Knowledge and practice are studied as local knowledge and practices" (Geertz 1983). The author subscribes to the input by Geertz that social context should inform the strategy to be employed.

A Qualitative approach will enable the author to identify with the co-researcher's situation in order to understand how they perceived their own world. This approach will further help the author to empirically investigate, and to interpret the practices of the church towards the clergy spouses after the death of the male clergy.

Through a qualitative approach, the author should be able to investigate the relationship between the clergy widows and church leadership. The subjectivity of the researcher and of the co-researcher shall be part of the research process. Qualitative research will also be vital as the researcher's interaction with the field and its members are an explicit part of the knowledge. Qualitative researchers explore the world as narrated and experienced by the participants. This approach will help the researcher to understand the world of the participants. Qualitative research is also of essence in the study of social relations because it is of the pluralization nature of the society. One of the essence of this method is that it takes the author's communication with the research field and the participants as integral parts of the knowledge.

The impressions, feelings and actions of the co-researchers together with researcher's observations and reflections are part of the interpretive data. Another importance of qualitative research is that it enabled the author to analyze concrete actions from people's expressions. Qualitative research therefore focuses on the meaning of real life events.

The author shares the same views as George Palmer (2014) when he says, "The data from the grass roots level forms an important and vital cornerstone where people become the living documents."

It is explicit then that the data will lead to the emergence of new concepts. An inductive approach will then drive the emerging concepts. Generally social scientists agree that a scientific approach is the most reliable and proper method of acquiring new knowledge. Claire Bless, Craig Higson-Smith and Sello Levy Sithole say, "social science research can either use quantitative or qualitative research or a combination of both approaches.

The quantitative research approach relies extensively on numbers and statistics in the analysis and interpretation of the findings that are generalized from the sample to the population. On the other hand, the qualitative approach is often used when the problem has not been investigated before.

Generally, this method uses smaller samples, from which findings a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated is produced. The researcher investigates a problem from the respondents' point of view." (Claire Bless, Craig Higson & Sello Levy Sithole, 2013:16).

The aim of using the qualitative method is to conceptualize the responses from the co-researchers' view and indicate how individuals were affected by the situation. The qualitative approach should help the researcher to obtain information that is more detailed. Several researchers say that qualitative methods are suited to understanding the *why* and *how* questions. The research question shall be investigated and interpreted from co-researchers' frames of reference. The co-researchers shall be the primary source of information.

Kobus Maree contends, "Qualitative research is based on a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context (or real-world setting) and, in general, the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. Research is carried out in real-life situations and not in an experimental (test-retest) situation", (Maree, 2007:78-79).

John McLeod says, "The primary aim of qualitative research is to develop an

understanding of how the social world is constructed." (John McLeod, 2011:3]

It is in this kind world that one as a researcher will endeavor to understand from the co-researcher's point of reference. However, one of the challenges with qualitative research is that the data collected is raw and mostly not pre-organized.

Creswell suggests, "It is imperative to explore a problem rather than use predetermined information from literature or rely on results of other research studies", (Creswell, John, W; 1998:40). Space?

This implies that the author needs to fully comprehend the participant's world in order to interpret it correctly. Flick, Uwe; (2007) in his affirmation of Creswell's view says that qualitative research has developed an identity of its own and is intended to approach the world out there and not simply specialized research in a laboratory (Palmer, *et al.* 2014)

It is the author's opinion that the primary information is essential to the quality of research. This will help in understanding the behavior, attitude, perception and culture of the participants. The objective of the qualitative researcher, therefore, is to attain information from an insider's view within the group that is being studied. The information attained in this way will be more embracing of the socio-cultural milieu of the participants.

In qualitative research, the researcher is much closer to the participants and that enables him or her to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the research field, which will be vital in the analysis, and interpretation of the data.

Qualitative interviews will enable the researcher to understand the situation from the co-researchers' experiences and analyze it accordingly. Jennifer Mason confirms what Kobus Maree has alluded to this concept, when he said, "qualitative research is characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data-driven and context sensitive", and (Kobus Maree, 1996:24).

It implies that the acquiring of knowledge is not rigid hence; the researcher

shall remove all stereotypic attitudes in his approach. The experiences of the co-researchers were captured through interviews and by questionnaires.

The analyzed results of the interviews will fundamentally contribute to the body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and is based on the life experiences of co-researchers. The narrative approach employed assisted the author to journey with the clergy family and help them to establish meaning and positively deconstruct their world.

Hence, the context and the point of reference of each co-researcher was vital in the analysis of the data. The researcher endeavored to enter the world of the co-researcher with dignity and respect. In entering the co-researcher's space, the author listened to the stories as told by the clergy's spouse.

The author further holds the view that the traditional African worldview of oral tradition as a method of inquiry is imperative in understanding the participant's narratives. The Indigenous story telling plays a pivotal role in knowledge production and preservation.

The stories and knowledge gained from the stories of the clergy spouse will help the next generation of leaders in better caring for the clergy family. Lee has this to say pertaining to storytelling, "Reclaiming story-telling, and retelling our traditional stories is to engage in one form of decolonization." (Lee, 2005:2)

Reclaiming, the story telling will catalyze the qualitative approach as envisaged by the author. In the introduction, the researcher indicated that he would be engaged in the empirical study, which is qualitative in nature.

The researcher would like to expatiate on empirical research

2.2.2. Empirical Research:

The empirical study requires empirical evidence. Empiricism holds dear the experience of direct observation of evidence rather than theoretical argument. In the scientific environment, all evidence should be based on experiment. When the hypothesis is tested and experimental evidence is produced, those results will be empirical. Therefore, empirical research synergizes practical and research theory. Robergs (2010) argued that empirical method yields the following benefits:

- Embarking on empirical method will provide more respect to the contextual differences.

- Enable the researcher to understand and respond more appropriately to dynamics of situations.

- Helps in building upon what is already known.

- Provide opportunity to meet standards of professional research.
  The empirical research is motivated in nature as it opens to receive contextual differences and attempt to bring.

Daniel Moody defines empirical research methods as, "a class of research methods in which empirical observations or data are collected in order to answer particular research questions. While primarily used in academic research, they can also be useful in answering practical questions," (Daniel Moody, 2002:1).

Bruce Berg moved further to suggest the empirical that needs to be responded to by an empirical researcher: "Why", "Whom", "How", and "When".

"Why": establishes the need for the study, and generates a series of expected results, or hypothesis.

"Who": What population, and whether the population or a sample,

"How": Selection of variables are going to be observe, and how to statistically analyze them.

"When": Establishes the need for the study.

It is the belief of the author that these questions are vital in guiding this research study as they will be responding to the significance of the study, the population under research and the design of the research.

"The intent of these guiding questions is not to create categories or themes but rather to better understand the data in the context of the setting or situation. The purpose is not for participants to make quality judgments about these elements; rather, it is to assess the data and clarify information that has been gathered", (Bruce L. Berg 2002:200)

Renata Tesch confirmed Bruce's arguments when she quoted from the work of Collazo, who argued that a distinction should be made between researchers who use their own experience and those who use descriptive protocols from many subjects (empirical form of phenomenology).

She argues, "An empirical phenomenological psychologist is a researcher who is open to all perceivable dimensions and profiles of the phenomenon that is being researched. Hence the experience of the subject as well as those of the researcher is acknowledged as informative" (Tesch, R; 1990:40).

This can be achieved through one on one interviews where the author will be able to do holistic study. Observation of emotional reactions, regrets, and pains will help the researcher to make valuable interpretations of the entire field under research.

2.2.3. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is "a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about the phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:24).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded Theory. It is the theory that is generated from the data collected. Grounded theory methodology, refers to a style of conducting qualitative data analysis.

"The aim is to discover what kind of concepts and hypotheses are relevant to the area one wishes to understand. Grounded theory, therefore, provides new insights into the understanding of social process emerging from the context in which they occur, without forcing and adjusting the data to previous theoretical frameworks" (Glaser, 1995, 1998).

Grounded theory assumes that the natural happenings of social behaviors in the real world context is better analyzed from bottom-up grounded categories and concepts. This implies that grassroots information is indispensable in qualitative research. As the grounded theory implies that the collected data should be analyzed without interferences of other notions.

Palmer further says that the data collected through interviews and

participant's observation, should be placed into categories, to compare similarities and differences. It is the author's view that categorizing conceptual properties, will help in generalizing relationships between these categories and their properties.

Grounded theory develops through constant comparative analysis. With respect to data sources grounded theory often applies triangulation, namely combines different types of data collected by interviews, participative observation and analysis of documents.

The data is gathered through theoretical sampling, which means that selection of samples is guided by the development of concepts. "Once no additional data are to be found whereby one could further develop properties of a particular conceptual category, 'theoretical saturation' is achieved and the theory is ready" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Neuman defined social theory as "a system of interconnected ideas" (Neuman. 2014:57).

This concept and definition will add more impetus in the acquiring of new knowledge through the collection and analysis of raw data. The author believes that the interpretation of the social milieu relies on the theoretical framework of the observer.

The interconnectedness formed in this regard is key in the formulation of new theories, from which new knowledge will be built. This new knowledge shall be based on evidence. Therefore, this knowledge will be valuable in approaching chapter five of this study-the chapter in which collected data will be analyzed and interpreted. To ascertain whether the hypothesis the author held on the subject in the beginning is justifiable or not, verification of the scientific data is paramount. The process of grounded theory in my view will be perfected after the data obtained from the 'grounded theory' have been compared with the prior data of the researcher. In the process, the researcher will be opened to be influenced by the new scientific knowledge. This statement provides the researcher an opportunity to outline his own paradigm within which this study is conducted.

2.2.4. Epistemology

Lawrence W. Neuman argues that epistemology is the issue of how we know the world around us or what makes a claim about it true. The author believes that once understanding of the world is defined by his/her ontological assumption, which helps in relating its various domains and interpretation thereof. The appropriate interpretation these domains will yield the development of new knowledge.

Neuman further says that, "epistemology is an area of philosophy concerned with the creation of knowledge, focuses on how we know what we know or what are the most valid ways to reach the truth" (Neuman, 2914:95).

The researcher acknowledges that the truth remains relative and dynamic. The experience of the researcher influences his/her observation and what is regarded as the truth. This truth will form the basis for the generation of new knowledge.

The researcher is conducting the research from a post-modernist perspective. It is the author's opinion that the paradigm sets down the intent, motivation and anticipation of the researcher. In general, a scientific paradigm is a holistic system of thinking.

According to Bryman and Bell (2003:453), Creswell (2009:6) and Niewenhuis (2007:47), "a research paradigm or a philosophical worldview is a basic set of beliefs, assumptions or dictates about fundamental aspects of reality that guide action",

(Weibelzahl and Weber, *et al.* 152)

This valuable view from Bryman and Bell will enable the author to tap from his worldview, to interpret the data as extracted from co-researchers' stories.

According to Corrine Glesne, postmodernism argues that, "there are no universal truths to be discovered because all human investors are grounded in human society and can only produce partial, locally and historically specific insights", (Delamont 2002:157; & Corrine 2011:12).

Corrine continues to say that, "postmodernism is marked by globalization, the spread of information technology and the fragmentation of nations – states,

whilst modernity is marked by a belief in science and technology as a means to solve problems. Under postmodernism, the grand theories that have been relied upon as explaining how societies work and how people develop and interact are subject to critique and distrust" (Glesne Corrine, 2011:12).

McKenzie and Knipe further indicate that theoretical framework of a research study, as different from a theory, is sometimes referred to as the paradigm and influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted.

"The theoretical framework plays a pivotal part in categorizing the concepts of the collected data and subsequently its interpretation" (McKenzie & Knipe. 2006:164)

"A paradigm is a network of similar ideas about the nature of the world and of the purpose of researchers which adhered to by a group of researchers, regulates the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions." (Burton & Bartlett, 2009:18)

These statements imply that the paradigm choice of the researcher will influence his/her decision making process and his or her intent. In relation to postmodernism, the researcher believes that there is no neutrality in enquiry. The author understands that it is vital for the researcher to explore various paradigms.

a. Pragmatism:
"Pragmatism is the worldview that stems from initiatives, situations and problems rather than from antecedent conditions as in positivism".

<div align="right">(Creswell, 2009:10)</div>

Pragmatist is not committed to any system of philosophy and reality. As McMillan and Schumacher indicate, "the pragmatic paradigm offers the academic foundation for carrying out mixed-method research". (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:6)

The author does not aim at conducting a mixed-method study; hence, he opted against the pragmatic worldview to underpin his study.

b. Constructivism

In constructivism, "the research participant becomes active and involved in all the phases of the process. Participants seek understanding of the world in which they live and work." (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:20).

Glackens applauds the idea of involving participants in choosing and formulating the research problem and in helping to formulate the measuring instrument and the strategy to be followed in the project, (Glackens, 2003:30).

It is the author's view that he did not aim to involve the participants in the formulation of the research problem or the measuring instrument as alluded. Hence, the study does not assume a constructivism paradigm.

c. Critical Theory

"Critical theory admits to bias being present in every action of human beings and hopes that the findings of the research will support the bias". (Glackens, 2003:23)

Patton adds critical theory as one of the most influential orientation frameworks, which focuses on how injustice and subjugation shape people's experiences and understanding of the world (Patton, 2002:130-133)

For Bobbie and Mouton, "the critical approach emphasizes that becoming part of the everyday life worlds of the people to be studied, whoever they may be, with the aim of becoming educative and ultimately transformative. The focus of critical paradigm is thus transforming human beings and their environment by being personally involved in actions that would change their circumstances" (Bobbie & Mouton, 2001:36).

The human biasness is acknowledged, as the researcher is part of the field that he is investigating. However, critical approach will help in shaping the focus and paradigm of the researcher and allow him to be a transformed transformer.

d. Interpretive Approach

"Interpretive paradigm is also called the phenomenological approach, a way that aims at understanding people. This paradigm maintains that all human beings are involved in the process of making meaning of their worlds and

continuously interpreting, creating, giving meaning, defining, proving and rationalizing their daily actions" (Bobbie & Mouton, 2001:28).

According to Neuman, "interpretive paradigm conducts a reading to discover meaning embedded within text. In this paradigm, the researcher often utilizes participants' observations and filed research, which are strategies where many hours and days are spent in direct contact with the participants" (Neuman, 2003:7).

Interpretive paradigm does not adequately address the objective of the study nor assist in responding to the main research question.

The author is not planning to intensively read transcripts to discover meaning that is entailed in the text.

e. Postmodernism

"Different scholars contend that postmodernism is understood and used to suggest a reaction or response to modernism in the late twentieth century".
(Literary Article: 2013). [www.;iterary-article, 2013/08]

Patton defines postmodernism as follows: a belief in science as generating truth was one of the cornerstones of modernism inherited from the enlightenment era. In postmodernism, no absolute truth exists. Postmodernism does not claim to be valid for all people, cultures, and races. Truth is relative to each person. Reality is interpreted according to what the world means to each person. Concrete evidence plays a vital role in post modernism.

"Postmodernism is said to be "post" because it denies the existence of any ultimate principle, and it lacks the optimism of there being a scientific, philosophical, or religious truth which will explain everything for everybody" (Patton, 2002:100-101).

From Patton's definition, the author deduced that every participant has his/her truth about the subject. Each participant has her own reality, which means that

his or her respective contextual factors are not similar. The co-researchers might have experienced the loss of their respective spouse, but due to differences in culture and worldview they should be approached different.

The researcher, therefore, entered the world of the co-researchers with respect and acknowledgement of their own truth.

2.3. DIFFERENT QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

"Qualitative research has developed an identity of its own and is intended to approach the world out there and not simply research in laboratories"

  (Flick, Uwe; 2007: xii).

The researcher believes that Flick's argument propels the importance of grass root information. Flick further reckons there are three characteristics in the qualitative method:

● Analyzing experiences of individuals or groups, which relates to day-to-day accounts and stories.
● Analyzing interactions and communications in the making, which relate to observing or recording the interaction or practices of people.
● Analyzing documents or similar traces of experiences or interactions.
These characteristics will assist the advancement of the research objective. The practical experiences of the participants will guide the caring methodology of this study. Several approaches are going to be discussed in order to help this research to obtain its objective. Various theoretical approaches and methods characterize this study.

Jennifer Mason's four qualitative approaches:

2.3.1 *Ethnographic approach:*

"Ethnography is the study of culture and social organization through participant's observation and interviewing, an approach called 'fieldwork.' Ethnographers carry their research by becoming participants, to varying degrees, in the social settings they wish to study.

 Ethnography assumes that all human behavior is intentional and observable and research should therefore be oriented towards understanding the reasoning behind people's actions." (Kobus Maree 2007:76)

Ethnographic approach helped the author to take the culture and social orientation of the participants into consideration when engaging them in the study. This was imperative in understanding participant's behavioral patterns.

2.3.2. *Interpretivism approach:*

Kobus Maree says that "the ultimate aim of Interpretivism research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyze the situation under study to provide insight into the way in which a particular group of people make sense of their situation or phenomenon they encounter" (Kobus Maree, 2007:60).

It is this kind of approach that sees people, and their interpretations, perceptions, meaning and understanding, as the primary data, sources.

This approach also seeks the participation of the co-researchers. John McLeod confirms what Kobus Maree said by saying, "The principal method of ethnographic research is participatory observation." (John McLeod, 2011:105)

2.3.3. *Conversation and discourse analysis:*

This approach emphasizes talk and text as data source. The conversation analysis is grounded within an ethno methodological perspective, and aims to study people's methods for producing orderly, social interaction, especially through natural occurring talk.

2.3.4. *Psychoanalytic approach:*

It seeks to use loosely structured interviews to tap into the 'psycho-social subject,' which is not a fully conscious entity but instead, a kind of inner, although socio-relational, subject. In this approach, there is a whole person-a Gestalt-but it is not the active argentic person, which we see, in the biographical and humanist approach. The interviews have to provide access to the inner or unconscious subject. (1996:55-58)

The researcher holds a view that to understand and interpret social reality of the participants is vital. Therefore, the ethnographic approach will enable the researcher to do observation in the participants own environment and consider their cultural viewpoints during interviews. However, the ethnographic approach has a deficiency in the interpreting of the observed

data.

The Interpretive approach helps the researcher to interpret the participant's milieu and take their perceptions as the primary source of data. The above qualitative approaches will help in amassing the perspective of co-researchers on the impact of the death of their spouse and reaction of the church. The researcher shall use qualitative interviews to enter into the life of the troubled souls and investigate their practical experience of death of their spouse and how it affected them.

This experience of the clergy spouse shall be collected through interviews and questionnaires. The researcher's approach was further grounded on observation.

This implies that qualitative research is orientated towards analyzing situational information it its temporal and local uniqueness and beginning from people's expressions and daily activities in their localized context.

As the data collection is done from a qualitative perspective, Renata argues that there is no qualitative research. However, the data collection is done qualitatively. "Qualitative data is any information the researcher gathers that is not expressed in number" (Renata, 1990:55).

In author's view is that the definition implies that qualitative research can cover a wide range of scope. The data can be accumulated from any sphere of life indiscriminately. The main issue to be discussed at this point is, the purpose of data gathering, and how is it to be utilized. The researcher will briefly outline the characteristics of qualitative approach:

- Events can be understood adequately only if they are seen in context. Therefore, a qualitative researcher immerses him/herself in the setting.
- The context of inquiry is not contrived; they are natural. Nothing is predefined or taken for granted.
- Qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions. Therefore, qualitative research is an interactive process in which the persons studied teach the researcher about their lives.

- Qualitative researchers attend to the experience as a whole, not as separate variables. The aim of qualitative research is to understand experience as unified.
- Qualitative methods are appropriate to the above statements. There is no general method.
- For many qualitative researchers, the process entails appraisal about what was studied. (Christina Hughes, *article*)

It is the researcher's opinion that these above named characteristics of qualitative approach will enhance this study. They give the researcher a broader understanding of the approach and enable him to employ it from an informed position.

Understanding not only the characteristics but also the strengths and limitations of the approach is vital so that he can optimally explore the approach. Now the strengths and limitations of the approach are highlighted.

Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Approaches

Limitations:

- The problem of adequate validity or reliability is the major criticism. Because of the subjective data nature of qualitative data and its origin in single context, it is difficult to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity.
- Context, situations, events, conditions and interactions cannot be replicated to any extent nor can generalizations be made to a wider context than the one studied with any confidence.
- The time required for data collection, analysis and interpretation is lengthy.
- Researcher's presence has a profound effect on the subjects of study.
- Issues of anonymity and confidentiality present problems when selecting findings.
- The viewpoints of both researcher and participants have to be identified and elucidated because of issues of bias.
Strengths:
- Because of close researcher involvement, the researcher gains an insider's

view of the field. This allows the researcher to find issues that are often missed.

● Qualitative descriptions can play the important role of suggesting possible relationships, causes, effects and dynamic processes.

● Because statistics are not used, but rather qualitative research uses a more descriptive, narrative style, this research might be of particular benefit to the practitioners as he/she could turn to qualitative reports in order to examine forms of knowledge that might otherwise be unavailable, thereby gaining new insight.

● Qualitative research adds flesh and blood to social analysis. (Hughes *article*)

The researcher aims to tap from the strengths of qualitative approach in navigating through this investigation. It is the researcher's belief that understanding the co-researcher's field will help him in his quest for new knowledge. From the insider's field raw experience will be derived and utilized in the formation of new knowledge.

2.4. GERKIN'S MODEL OF PASTORAL CARE

The researcher has utilized Charles Gerkin's model of pastoral care as he entered into the space of the bereft families. However, Gerkin does not sufficiently address all the aspect the author endeavors to cover in his quest for new knowledge.

These resources shall be utilized complementary to buttress each other and enhance the researchers' search for knowledge. "The primary function of the Christian Community is that of creating and maintaining a climate of relationship within which all of the community are cared for" (Gerkin, 1997:126).

Gerkin further worked his conclusion from Luther's pastoral care and protection of the victims of an uncaring society. This theory enabled the author to approach all the participants with a caring attitude and huge sensitivity. Charles Gerkin embarks on a shepherding model of caring ministry, which assumes and gathers momentum, with the coming of Jesus, who according to John's Gospel identifies himself as the good shepherd (Gerkin, 1997:27).

 In his model of caring, Gerkin is able to balance faith, culture, community and

individual well-being.

2.4.1. The Pastoral Roles in Shepherding:

"The New Testament depiction of Jesus as the good shepherd who knows his sheep and is known by his sheep (John 10:14) has painted a meaningful, normative portrait of the pastor of God's people" (1997:80).

Jesus as his sheep know a good shepherd because he relates to them at all levels of their social life. This kind of relationship enables the shepherd to know the shepherd better and develop a better caring method that is suited to the needs of the sheep.

Throughout the gospels, Jesus felt end empathized with the people. His heart was sold out for his sheep.

The author would like to submit this methodology as entailed in the following offices Priest, Prophet, Wise Guide, Protector and Reconciler.

2.4.2. The Shepherd as a Priest:

"People have found the care of God and God's people communicated to them in the richness of ritual practices as well as in the wise guidance" (Gerkin 1997:24).

Gerkin further contends, "The Priests were ritualistic leaders in the church and had an educational role to the people of Israel" (1997:80).

The shepherd model becomes relevant to the study, as a shepherd needs to care for the sheep as he journeys with them. In his caring role, re-educating the church leadership about the better ways of caring is vital. This type of education is what Nick Pollard calls positive deconstruction. The education shall form a paradigm shift in church leadership.

The Priest shall in the process of educating need to be mindful of the rituals that have become the guiding principles of the church and respective family. Gerkin argues that liturgical traditions can be preserved only by careful administration by pastoral leaders who carefully tend the connections between liturgical practices and life experience. This connectivity of liturgy and life experience gives meaning to the people who are cared for and it becomes a well from which they draw their strength.

2.4.3 The Shepherd as a Prophet

The Shepherds as God's prophets played a very pivotal role as painted by Gerkin. The prophets speak on behalf of God in relation to moral issues, sometimes rebuking the community.

"The prophets, among them Amos, Jeremiah, and authors of the book of Isaiah, were in their times dominant voices in giving guidance to the community" (Gerkin 1997:23-24).

In this regard, the prophet becomes the voice of God to the clergy family. That depicts the prophetic role of the pastor as the voice of the voiceless. The pastor shall teach the pinnacle of God's word as he speaks for the disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

Caring for God's people requires facing the issues that confront them and prophesy justice. Speaking for God also draws from knowledge of how God historically cared for His people. The prophetic word timeously spoken has a potential of awakening the community towards the value of loving your neighbor.

As the shepherd assumes his /her priestly and prophetic functions, he/she begins to pour God's wisdom into the clergy family and guide them towards finding their healing in God. In his prophetic role, the priest shall be the voice of the voiceless.

2.4.4. The Shepherd as a Protector

Death leaves the clergy spouse vulnerable and emotionally paralyzed. The shepherd shall care and protect the vulnerable clergy family.

David in the book of Psalms 23 gives us a vivid view of a good shepherd. The priest as a Shepherd is the provider to the sheep, but he shall mainly lead the widow to the great shepherd, which is God Himself. Then the widow shall rest in the providence of God. The shepherd's role is to protect the sheep.

The priest in journeying with the widows shall provide knowledge that will capacitate them and protect them against being abused. Gerkin views a pastor as an interpretive guide who cultivates a dialogue

relationship between biblical stories and stories of people's lives today. Here the caring pastor functions as a coach and facilitator (1997:123).

2.4.5 The Shepherd as a Mediator and Reconciler

"We will want to keep before us the ancient function of the pastor as a mediator and reconciler between individual believers and the community of Christians. Gerkin contend that Pauline letters contain "conversations that sought to reconcile people to one another" (1997:81).

In the mediatory role, the priest shall forge reconciliation between the widow and the church leader. The method of reconciliation as presented by Gerkin is that it must follow the manner of listening, invitation to consider, and clarification of commitment.

The priest shall enter the world of the clergy family in a reconciliatory attitude. After the tragedy of the family losing their loved one, the priest shall journey with the clergy spouse with an intention of helping them to find spiritual and emotional reconciliation. Not only that they should find internal reconciliation but also relational reconciliation.

"The church in its role as 'shepherd' of God's flock must address herself to this situation by alleviating suffering and enabling the realization of God's Kingdom. She must administer healing that will resolve harmony in the lives of individuals, community and environment…The pastoral work of the church is thus to be seen in terms of healing, guiding, sustaining and reconciling the people of God" (Waruta & Knoti, 2005:85-86).

Waruta and Knoti's approach enhances Gerkin's shepherding model. It thus speaks to the fundamental approach of the church towards the troubled souls.

The author finds these Gerkin inputs very valuable in journeying with the flock of God. For a healing to take place, there should be emotional reconciliation with the reality, reconciliation between clergy spouse and the church and reconciliation between widows and God.

According to Gerkin, Jesus emerges as a shepherd of the flock. The priest as the shepherd of Christ's flock should use their shepherding authority to

empower the people and offer care for those who were being neglected by power of the communities. (1997:81). The shepherd cares for the sheep and leads them to greener pastures.

Death creates bruises and leaves victims disillusioned, rejected and traumatized. The shepherd cares for the brokenhearted and strengthens, and affirms the worth of the flock.

Paul in the Book of 2 Corinthians 5: 19 says that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

As the pastor enters the space of the grieving souls, he does so in love and a reconciliatory attitude. The mediation shall not only be confined to between humans but also between the humans and the unfriendly milieu that the grieving family finds themselves in. That can be attained through cooperation efficaciously with the law of God's grace.

As the priests pursue their mediatory function, they need to care for the life of the community as entrusted to them by God. Sound and sure guidance in morals remains fundamental in the daily function of priesthood. In guiding the community, the priest shall bring light to the community and correct it when it errs. Guiding the clergy family and the local church leadership remains the one moral responsibility of the priest.

This process will enable the researcher to explores the narratives of the core-researchers and propose a therapeutic method of caring. However, Gerkin does not provide adequate guide in terms of helping the troubled souls gaining the self-worth. In that case, the researcher shall buttress Gerkin's theory and Wimberly's theory of moving from shame to self-worth.

Edward P. Wimberly says that shame includes the entire self, whereas guilt includes only behavior. Shame is experienced as a negative self-evaluation resulting from pained interpersonal relationship, and guilt is more related to moral transgressions, which require moral and behavioral treatment.

"Shame involves the self and its worth and value, and is associated with not being loved and the hurt that results from feeling rejected and unloved," (Edward P. Wimberly, 2011:23).

Wimberly uses experiences in the ministry of Jesus and seeks to illustrate how Jesus engaged the world in a bid to transform what was not God's intention for our lives, into that was ordained of God. As the pastor journeys with the troubled souls, he shall also endeavor to affirm their self-worth as God ordained them.

Mpiyakhe John Kubeka in his thesis says that the perfect picture of the care of the widows finds its completion in the driving force, which necessitates the care for such people. This driving and necessary force is by virtue of its definition: Love. (2011:94). Love becomes equally, the pivotal point of departure in addressing the methodology of the care for widows.

The author aligns himself with Kubeka's view on the essence of love in caring methodology. Love is not only the pivotal departure point in addressing the methodology of care but also it is an ethical principle in pastoral care and counselling. Love is the primary witness of the church and the motivating factor for offering pastoral care and counselling to the widows and those who are distraught.

One of the profound themes in the New Testament is 'Love.' In the book of 1 John 4:20, the Bible says that for the person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he has not seen. It implies that our pastoral care approach should be propelled by the love of God and of our neighbors.

The author realizes the need to journey with clergy spouses as they share their stories. "Language is not a delimited realm of speak able, over against which other realms that are unspeakable might stand. Rather language is all encompassing. In other words, there is nothing that is fundamentally excluded from being said, to the extent that our act of meaning intends it. Language is not a vanishing or transitory medium for thought, nor merely the covering of thought. The nature of language is by no means limited simply to revealing thought. It is much rather the case that thought achieves its own determinate existence by being comprehended in word", (Hans Herbert Kogler, 1992:63).

Wimberley complements Kogler's view by highlighting that, "pastoral counseling has always been thought as attending to relational and personal needs of the people through dialogue in one-to-one and interpersonal relationships". (Wimberley, 1999:7)

It is this encompassing language that the researcher interpreted to extrapolate the actual meaning of the co-researchers. In the process of their narratives, the researcher took their experiences, emotions and the implications into consideration. The co-researched are at the same time urged to participate in extracting positives from their painful experiences. In their participation, co-researchers need to develop strategies to avoid being victimized by the same situation. Story telling provides the silent agonizing voices and opportunity to share their world of pain and in turn reconstruct the new world of hope. The dialogue also realigns relational issues of victims and perpetrators, which finally leads to reconciliation and harmony.

2.5. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Different scholars view data differently hence, even data management is never the same. Data is the foundation of the research study, irrespective of study approach. The organized information that is collected from the experiences of the participants can thus be called a data. Empirical study requires appropriate data collection procedure.

The author will position himself as a participant – observer during the process of data collection.

Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon outline four types of data collection activities:

● Interviewing;
● Observing;
● Collecting and examining; and
● Feeling.
Some of these activities shall be further interrogated later in this chapter. Purposeful data collections require sampling because it not all data that will fit into the topic under study. From here, it is vital to reflect on the sampling procedure.

2.5.1 Sampling:

In sampling, Mason Jennifer correctly indicates that "the key question to ask is whether your sample provides access to enough data and with the right focus, to enable you to address your research questions", (Mason, J. 2002:134).

In the same breath, Flick correctly points out that the qualitative approach is focused on groups in order to observe behavior, gauge experience, and the like. He cites an example of interviewing people who have experience in living with chronic illness.

He reckons that the qualitative research will have "to go look for people who have made it in different intensity, for a longer or shorter time or with different types of chronic illnesses", (Flick U. 2000:27).

Collecting text for discourse analysis via interviews and relatively small respondents will be involved in this study. This is because the focus is in the text, not the individual and because the aim is to provide an in-depth analysis that is focused on the explanation, rather than generalization. The author embarked on purposive sampling based on the anticipated results of the study and the broad range of information that was required to make final recommendations. The sampling was done with an understanding that the participants are masters in their own field.

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory. (1967: 45) Palmer (2014) articulation on the grounded theory approach the sampling concentration in this study was focused on the clergy widow.

Sampling Decisions in the Research Process

Stage in Sampling	Sampling methods
While collecting data	Case sampling Sampling groups of cases
While interpreting data	Material sampling Sampling within the material
While presenting the findings	Presentational sampling

The Livross (130) sampling decision informed the sampling journey that the

researcher had to undergo. The decision in the research process is continuous and spread throughout the sampling stages. During the data collection process, the data was collected from amidst the clergy widows from Pentecostal churches in Limpopo Province.

While interpreting the data, the researcher sampled the material that is more pertinent to the study. The persons the researcher interviewed informed the interviews. The part of the data that should be interpreted is very vital as it determines the findings and subsequently the healing methodology. The part that best demonstrates the findings was established. Homogeneous sampling best suited the research as it collected the data from clergy widows.

"Social scientists use different techniques to collect research data, which are observation, experimental, self-reporting and interviews and questionnaires. Data provides unrefined truth to work with and interpret"

(Claire Bless, Craig Higson-Smith and Sello Levy Sithole, 2013:188-194).

In observation, there is limited participation from the co-researcher. This empirical study employed two qualitative methodologies, i.e. interviews and questionnaires. "An interview involves direct personal contact with the participation who is asked to answer questions relating to the research problem." (1997:104-105)

Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison confirm Claire Bless assertion when he says: "That interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard" (Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, 2008:348).

The interviews and questionnaires enabled the researcher not only to listen but to also observe the responses during the interviews. The interviews enabled the researcher to journey with the co-researchers to elicit new knowledge through their narratives. However, reflexivity on the researcher was very essential to create an atmosphere conducive for dialogue.

The researcher endeavored to develop a linkage between the theoretical core concepts and the data collected. The author's observation and reflections on the actions of co-researchers and feelings have become part of the data and

subsequently part of interpretation in this study.

Some of the limitations of observation as a data collection method is that it is not easy to observe attitudes, belief systems, career path. Hence, the researcher employed observation in conjunction with questionnaires and interviews.

The handling of the collected data guided the analysis and discussions thereof. Palmer in his PhD dissertation alluded to the style of articulating the collected data. He talks of three methods of reasoning, interpreting and explaining data. Reason is generally a way of making judgments from facts.

2.5.2 Styles of Reasoning:

a. Deductive:
   Make deductions from your data and come to conclusions. It means reasoning in which conclusions come after propositions. Deductive reasoning is related to logic and rational.
b. Inductive:
    Starts with a hypothesis, which is used as a perspective from which data is derived. Experience is used to make conclusions.
c. Adductive:
     It is an ongoing interaction between the investigator and the data. The research results can lead the researchers to revisit and change their hypothesis. In this reasoning, the most likely explanation is opted. The research results affect the researcher opinion. The author's view is that he will be biased to adductive reasoning. The author has earlier on highlighted that the deductive approach is best suited for this intended study.
     After sampling the participants, the data collection activities are filtered in through interviews.

2.5.3. Interviews

"A key feature of the qualitative research interview method is the nature of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee".

(Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon, 2004:33)

Kvale defines the qualitative research interview as "an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with

respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena"

(Kvale, 1983:74)

Kvale, Cassell and Symon's contributions imply that in qualitative interviews, relationships are built and strengthened. In the process of interview, participants will describe their worldview to the interpretation of the interviewer.

This will assist the researcher to better understand the participants' world.

This will further help the researcher to see the topic from the perspective of the perspective of the participant. It is the responsibility of the interviewer to gather as accurate information as possible from the interviewee. The author will now interrogate advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research interview methods from the perspective of Catherine and Symon.

2.5.3.1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Interview

Advantage:

- They are flexible as a result; they can be utilized to tackle different research questions.
- It can address quite focused questions of life
- Qualitative research interviews can be used to examine much broader issues, in areas such as gender, organizational culture and effects of unemployment.
- Many research participants mostly accept it.

Disadvantage:

- Developing interview guide, carrying out interviews and analyzing their transcripts can be time consuming.
- They are tiring to carry out, as they involve considerable concentration from the interviewer.
- Interviews are also time consuming to the interviewees.

(Catherine Cassell & Gillian Symon, 2004:41-42)

The author believes that in spite of the disadvantages of the qualitative research methods, it is still best suited to this study. It will allow the author to navigate through the participants' world in a more flexible way.

Marshall and Rossman indicate that, "flexibility gives greater control of the interview situation". (Marchall, C. Rossman, G. 1989:45)

Interviews can take any form. Fontana and Frey ((1998) highlighted the broad range of interviewing styles carried out in practice, and note that even 'unstructured' qualitative interview vary widely. Interviews are an interaction between interviewers and the interviewees.

However, for this study, the author will focus on structured interviews and qualitative interviews.

2.5.3.2. Types of Interviews

Robert K. Yin (2011) elucidates structured and qualitative interviews as follows:

Structured Interviews

In structured interviews, first the interviewer will use the formal questionnaire that lists every question to be asked. The researcher will adopt the role of an interviewer, trying to elicit responses from an interviewee. The researcher as an interviewer will try to adopt the consistent behavior and demeanor when interviewing every participant. If the study only uses structured interviews, the study is most likely to be a survey or poll, not a qualitative study.

Qualitative Interviews

In qualitative interview, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is not strictly scripted. There is no question containing the complete list of the questions to be posed to a participant. Again, the qualitative researcher does not try to adopt any uniform behavior or demeanor for every interview. Yin (2011) say rather, "the qualitative interview follows a conversational mode and the interview itself will lead to a social relationship of sorts, with the quality of the relationship individualized to every participant" (Robert K. Yin, 2011:133-135). The researcher views relational concepts as articulated by Yin as essential. Interviews are smoothened and oiled by the good relationship the interviewee and interviewer have.

Structured interviews follow directly the word usage, phrases, and hence meaning of the researchers, whereas qualitative interviews aim at understanding participants "on their own terms and how they make meaning of their own lives, experiences, and cognitive process", (Brenner, 2006:357).

Structured interviews also are limited in their ability to appreciate trends and contextual conditions across a participant's lifetime, whereas qualitative interviews may dwell on these trends and conditions. The author will integrate both structured and qualitative interviews.

Structured interviews will assist the author to be consistent in behavior during questioning and utilize scripted questions to ask. In the same breath, the qualitative interview will help the author to understand the participants in their own context.

The author acknowledges that the participants may face the same situation but their contexts differ hence structured and qualitative interview will suit this empirical investigation. In the qualitative approach, knowledge is believed to emanate from the participants' context. Hence, the fieldwork, which speaks to the participant's environment, is imperative and should be respected as such. The challenge that the researcher is to contend with is to bring the participants context into focus. Manson's argument aligns with the author's assertion, "Meaning and understanding are created in an interaction, which is effectively a co-production involving researcher and interviewees", (Mason Jennifer, 2009:63)

The researcher will then look into different forms of interviews to guide this study.

2.5.3.3. Interviews and Questionnaires:

Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic.

The author shall utilize narrative interviews to gain practical experiences from the co-researcher's viewpoint. The narrative interviews helped the author to approach the interviews experientially.

Kvale defines the qualitative research interview as "an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena".

(Kvale, 1983:174)

Daniel W. Tuner, III in his qualitative report Volume 15 number 3 May 2010 reports on categories of qualitative interviews as summarized by Gall, and Borg (2003):

a. Informal conversation interview
   "Informal conversation interview relies on spontaneous generation of questions in a natural interaction, typically one that occurs as part of ongoing participant observation fieldwork" (2003:239).

   With the informal conversational approach, the researcher relies on the interaction with the participants to guide the interview process.

b. General Interview Guide approach
   The general interview guide approach is more structured than the informal conversation interview although there is still quite a bit of flexibility in its composition. In the approach there is no consistency in the research questions hence there is no consistent answer from the participants.

c. Standardized Open-Ended Interview
   The standardized open-ended interview is extremely structured in terms of the wording of the questions. Participants are always asked the identical questions, but the questions are worded so that the responses are open-ended.
   This open-enededness allows the participants to contribute as much detailed information as they desire and it allows the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of follow-up.
   Welman, Kruger and Mitchell further expand on Daniel W. Tuner's categories of interview when he writes about three types of interviews that are structured interview, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews.

Without disputing the imperatives from other categories of qualitative interview, this research shall sway more on standardized open-ended interviews. Open-ended questions have allowed the participants to be free to express their responses as detailed as possible.

No restrictions were given to participants in how to answer the question. The standardized open-ended interview assisted better as the questions were structured while the responses were open ended. The co-researchers had the same set of questions. However, the interviews were conducted in a semi structured way.

The researcher had to guard against the co-researchers responding widely but without fervently responding to the actual problem statement. The Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants more liberty and flexibility.

In the case of any unclear response, follow-up questions were asked. The semi-structured interviewing allowed the interaction between the researcher and the respondents. Although there were formal structured guiding questions, there was no formal instrument. The semi-structured interviews assisted in exploring the topic broadly.

The co-researchers were interviewed individually so that they could be free to deeply share their stories, knowledge and experiences. The explanation supplied by the co-researcher was explored and new information was discovered. The data collection included the description of researchers' observation.

Observation

Observation is part of the authors' primary data. In observation, the researcher is passively involved in the research.

The research observed inter-alia gestures and any non-verbal activity. The surrounding, including visual played an important part of the observed objects. The observation was imperative when the author proposed a healing methodology. The collected data through interviews and observation was recorded for examination purposes.

2.5.4. Collecting and Examining Data

Collection of data and examining it is part of the data collection process. The collected data was sieved so that the author was left only with information most relevant to the study. As the author examined the data collection, the feelings of the researcher were inclusive of the data.

Feelings

Feelings represent data about the core-researchers. The feelings were clearly described including the researcher's feelings if any. These gave the researcher a much clearer picture as he progressed with interviews.

In the process of data collection being a good listener and inquisitive was essential. The author shall take into cognizance time limitations during interviews, as interviewees may not have the luxury of time. The collected data shall be recorded appropriately.

2.5.5 Data Recording

The initial notes taken during interviews were taken and neatly refined. Recording was beyond just writing notes because the author needed to go through the notes including the recorded feelings. To the author this section was fundamental because mistakes done in this section will tamper with the validity of the results. Taking notes while at the same time you are an observer and participant is a challenging experience.

2.5.6. Reliability and Validity

Reliability means dependability or consistency.in short, it suggests that the same thing is repeated or recurs under the identical conditions.

"Validity suggest truthfulness. It refers to how well an idea 'fits' with actual reality" (Neuman, 2014: 212).

Generally, all researchers require valid and reliable results. Validity and reliability mostly complement each other.

Maxwell highlights the issue of validity by referring to "the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other

sort of account" (Maxwell, 1996:87).

The author found Maxwell's seven ways of addressing validity challenges as a major contribution in this study.

Seven strategies for combating threats to validity in qualitative research:

Intensive long-term (field) involvement	To produce a complete and in-depth understanding of the field situations
"Rich" data	To cover fully the field observations and interviews with detailed and varied data
Respondent validation	To obtain feedback from the people studied, to lesson misinterpretation of their self-reported behaviors and views
Search for discrepant evidence and negative cases	To test rival or competing explanations
Triangulation	To collect converging evidence from different sources
Quasi-statistics	To use actual numbers instead of adjectives, such as when claiming something is "typical", "rare", or "prevalent"
Comparison	To compare explicitly the results across different settings, groups, or events

(Joseph Maxwell, 2009:244-245)

During the data collection, the author also observed confirmation from other sources (participants).

Though it was time consuming, reading the captured responses to the participant, it was vital to ascertain the correctness of the report from the interviewee. Reliability has something to do with the quality of measurement or trustworthiness. When the results are to be reliable, they ought to be consistent when the measurement is repeated.

The researcher had at least six co-researchers to interview, i.e. six clergy spouses. This assisted in ensuring that the results were not biased towards the clergy family. If possible, the researcher intended to utilize the tape recorder.

After the data had been collected and verified, the researcher analyzed and compared the responses and made recommendations.

Data analysis

Qualitative data describes details about people, actions, and events of social life of the participants. The collected data is in the form of observational notes and open-ended interview scripts.

The analysis the researcher did while collecting data remains tentative until the whole processes of data collection is complete and the entire collected data is examined.

The process of analyzing data involved systematic arranging and integrating as well as examining the collected data. Neuman rightfully say, "To analyze, we connect particular data to concepts, advance generalizations, and identify broad trends or themes. Analysis allows us to improve understanding, expand theory, and advance knowledge" (Lawrence Neuman, 2011:482).

Robert K. Yin proposes five phases of qualitative data analysis:

● *Compiling data* into a formal database – this requires careful and methodic organizing of the original data.
  At this stage, the field notes are being sorted and arranged accordingly. This is essential to researcher as an initial stage after the collection is completed.
  In this process, the researcher refines the notes from the scripts. As such, the notes are now put in order, ready to be utilized.

● *Disassembling the data* in the database – it can involve formal coding procedures though it does not need to.
  The essence of this stage is the disintegrating of the data into fragments. The researcher will then be able to notice similar fragments in the process. It will make it easier to interpret.

- *Reassembling* - is a less mechanical process and benefits from a researcher's insightfulness in seeing emerging patterns.
  After the disintegration of data, it shall be reassembled. Similar patterns be put together and they may form themes.

- I*nterpreting* the reassembled data
  Now the data is being analyzed accordingly.

- *Concluding*
  The researcher at this stage draws a conclusion form the entire study. The conclusion shall be related to the interpretation made and link to all other phases of data collection (Robert K. Yin, 2011:176-17).

2.6. DELIMITATION

The research was conducted in Sekhukhune district of Limpopo Province. However, due to the withdrawal of two other targeted participants, the researcher had expanded his interview circumference as far as Mpumalanga Highveld Region.

2.7. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was done within the context of practical theology. One of the aims of the study was to propose to the church leadership, how to better care for the clergy family after the death of the male clergy.

It therefore suggested to the church leadership how to therapeutically journey with the troubled souls and grieving clergy family after the funeral and help them to find healing. Steyn and Masango 2011 study cited in Frederick J. Streets 2014 volume thirty-five number two:

This understanding and interpretation of human needs points to a theological and hermeneutical analysis of a practical-pastoral problem. In this context, we mean that pastoral problems cannot be separated from their urge to caregivers to find solutions in the praxis of the same.

Furthermore, this understanding and interpretation should also provide the caregiver with the motivational means to offer this pastoral care from within his or her theological convictions. To say one should care for people in need in

a pastoral way and yet not grapple with the question of why one should care at all would be somewhat presumptuous. Practical theology should, therefore, both prompt and sustain the following question: what is the motivation for this conviction to care? The contribution of this study in the practical theological domain is towards the connection between theory and praxis.

The above view should open a curtain to the role of pastoral care in addressing human needs and emotions.

The neuroscientific research of Cacioppo, "Social neuroscience of love is a growing field of research, which only recently has become the topic of intensive and rigorous scientific empirical investigations.

 "By identifying the specific cortico-subcortical neural network as well as the central and peripheral electrophysiological indices of love, we hope to provide an interdisciplinary approach to better understand the complexity of love and its disorders." (Frederick J. *et al* 2012).

"Although combining knowledge from neuroimaging (FMRI and EEG) studies with the standard approach in relationship science still doesn't solve the hard problem of love regarding its nature and origin, an integrative approach combining neuroimaging techniques with other disciplines such as social psychology, animal studies, and genetics has the potential to answer age-old questions as to the function of love, which can have useful applications in mental health and couple therapies" (2014:12). Psychology and sociology in general have a long tradition of using qualitative methods.

The author acknowledges the voluminous contribution of neuropsychology and other disciplines in relation to the concept of love and care for the loved one. However, he holds the position that true love is poured in us by God. Love is the heart of the Bible. In the book of I John 4:8 the bible says, "God is Love". Pastoral caregiving should be the ministry of love.

Pastoral care should reflect the love of God and the love shall mitigate the social ills of the society. The study will focus on the clergy spouses who lost their husbands. It is aimed at proposing a healing methodology for clergy spouses while capacitating the church leadership to assume a more caring

approach in dealing with clergy family.

The intention is to restore lost confidence in the church leadership and hope for the troubled souls. The intention of the study is also to restore hope for the better future. This chapter will be the foundation for the data collection process and the analysis thereafter.

2.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIION

Codes of ethics have been developed by the university. These ethics are designed to regulate the relationship between the researcher, the participants and the research field. The researcher subscribes to Creswell's principle of good practice. Creswell states:

- The principal of informed consent shall be adhered to. No person shall be involved in a research as a participant without knowing about it and giving permission to participate, and without being given a chance to decline.
- When the participant agrees, she/he will fill the consent letter (see appendix B). Other details pertaining the form are contained in the consent letter,
- Under no circumstances shall false information to be given to participants.
- Avoid deception of any.
- Show respect for people. (Creswell, 2007:69)

However, Murphy and Dingwall speak of ethical theory in this context: "Researchers should avoid harming participants. Co-researcher's values and decisions shall be respected and all people should be treated equally". (Murphy and Ding wall, 2001:339).

Ethik-Kodex's views align with Murphy's perception. "Persons, who are observed, questioned or who are involved in some other way in investigations, for example in connection with the analysis of personal documents, shall not be subject to any disadvantages or dangers as a result of the research. All risks that exceed what is normal in everyday life must be explained to the parties concerned. The anonymity of interviewees must be protected" (Ethik – Kodex, 1993:15).

The general rule for participation in sociological investigation is that it is voluntary and that it takes place based on the fullest possible information about the goals and methods of this study. Hence, the author endeavors to

adhere to the code of ethics as provided for by the university. The names used in this research are pseudo names to protect the identity of the co-researchers.

2.9 PRELIMARY CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed at outlining the road map to be followed in the data collection process and the analysis thereof. The research was done to investigate the plight of the clergy spouse after the death of the clergy. The impact caused by the death of the male clergy on the spouse. To extract the experiences of the widows the researcher has prepared questions to guide the process.

A research design was formulated that highlighted the steps the author intended to pursue in doing the research. As the researcher employed qualitative methodology, the steps indicated above were used as guidelines and not the rigid rout. The grounded theory and the overview of the research done. The researcher took a postmodernism position. Different forms of qualitative interview methods were outlined. Gerken and Wimberly's pastoral care theories were explained as to how they would enhance this empirical investigation.

Journeying with the clergy family as Christ Jesus journeyed with his disciples is vital. Jesus identified with the troubled souls and brought peace in their hearts. Loving your neighbor as you love yourself is of essence. Love fuels self-worth and lays the foundation for self-love. For the clergy spouses to thrive after the ordeal of losing their husbands they need to receive love from the church.

The next chapter looks into the concepts of death, grief, trauma and loss from a Western and African perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analyzed the methodology behind caring for the widows. To expatiate the methodology of caring for the widows, the author employed Gerkin's Shepherding Model buttressing it with Wimberly Moving from Shame to Self-Worth. Several facets of a Shepherd were investigated such as:

- Priest
- Prophet
- Protector
- Reconciler and Mediator

This current chapter will dialogue the concept of death, grief, trauma and loss from both Western and African perspectives. Even though death has the same outcome in all human beings, our cultures differs in how we conceptualize it and the process of dying thereof.

James T. Gire asserts, "That in some cultures, death is conceived to involve different conditions, including sleep, illness, and reaching a certain age. In other cultures, death is said to occur only when there is a total cessation of life. In a similar manner, certain cultural traditions view death as a transition to other forms of existence; others propose a continuous interaction between the dead and the living; some cultures conceive a culture pattern of multiple deaths and rebirths; and yet others view death as a final end, with nothing occurring after death",(JamesT.Gire,2002unit14;chapter2.).

These cultural differences will have an impact on the grieving process. Therefore, this empirical study is done with an objective of examining the overall impact of death on the surviving spouse. Death causes abrupt change in one's life. The words uttered during solemnization of marriages that say, "Until death do us part" now become a living reality. However, in many instances these words, 'until death do us part' are said as a matter of course as part of tradition but not actualized.

To some, the words mean that they live and face the future together. After the priest has solemnized the marriage, he/she declares that the two shall be 'one flesh.' In this way, the couple become part of each other in a unique way. Hence, many widows describe that losing a spouse is like losing part of himself or herself. That is what makes losing a spouse to become a peculiar and painful loss to the surviving spouse. The death of the family member is like a dense fog making the surviving persons not to see the future clearly without their departed loved one. Information on grief and grief process shall provide valuable insight to that effect.

The death of a spouse is generally assumed one of the most stressful and devastating experiences that people face in their lives. Norman H. Wright asserted that, "the loss of a spouse causes dramatic and immediate changes in every part of one's life, affecting, usually threatening, and the very fabric of your existence" (Norman H. Wright, 2007:36).

This also implies that when two are wedded in holy matrimony, it should also be clear that life expectancy is much shorter than it has ever been in the past. Death is an inevitable phenomenon. As people progress in the life cycle, they are confronted with the reality of deaths of relatives and close friends. The response to these traumatic episodes of life, depends on various facets, inter alia culture, religion, and intimacy with the deceased. Fred Bratman assert "death makes you aware of your own limits. All living things die" (Fred Bratman, 1992:10).

David Malouf articulates that, "death related losses involve the ending of relationships, and they impact or alter lives in many ways" (David Malouf, 2014:37).

David W. Kissane and Sydney Bloch say: "the loss of a member whose role was emotionally or financially crucial would be more devastating followed by greater family disruption than the loss of a comparatively neutral member" (David W. Kissane, 2002:21).

In nutshell, the social researchers agree that death affects us differently and as such, our reaction to death is not uniform. Lack of a visible support system from either the general community or church may bring salient bereavement. Ecclesiastes 9:5 says, "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; ..."

This scripture confirms the inescapability of death. Every funeral reminds the mourners of the reality of our own death. Bame rightfully says, "Death is everywhere" (Bame, 1994:9)

Though one knows that one-day death will without invitation come but the impact of these social and relational shifts cannot be imagined.

3.2. WESTERN PERSPECTIVE OF DEATH

Death:

Dr. Julian Melgosa says, "Death is the universal reality. From early in life everyone witnesses the death of others and learns that someday they will face their own death" (Julian Melgosa, 2007:248).

Death is generally viewed as the end of life. Dorland's illustrated Medical Dictionary defines death as the cessation of life; permanent cessation of all bodily functions. (Dorland's illustrated Medical Dictionary) (2007, 31st edition)

When the life ceases, body and soul separate permanently. Hence Robert Kastenbaun, in the first edition of Encyclopedia Britannica defines death as the, "separation of the soul and body; in which sense it stands opposed to life, which consists in union thereof" (Hence Robert Kastenbaun, 1968, v.2:309)

R. David Sam Filippo, in his article says that, "in Western societies, death is often ignored or feared. Changes in lifestyles and improved medical science have depersonalized death and made it an encroachment on life instead of part of life. This has left many people ill-equipped to deal with death when it touches the lives" (R. David Sam Filippo, 2006:2).

Death is usually not a subject of discussion in our families as a result, when it eventuality arrives it leaves many families in emotional disarray.

"The death of a spouse invalidates assumptions that penetrate many aspects of life, from the moment of aspects of life, from the moment of rising to going to sleeping in an empty bed. Habits of action (setting the table for two) and thought (I must ask my husband about that) must be revised if the survivor is to live as a widow." (Dickenson, M. Johnson and J.S. Katz. 2000:327)

The reality of death of a spouse begins to open up after the mourners are gone. Glennys Howarth, one of the sociologists says "death raises the problem of meaning for human beings. For sociologists the response must be found on a social rather than a personal mechanism" (Glennys Howarth, 2007:15).

In this assertion, Glennys Howarth has overlooked the spiritual dimension of a human being. Death, grief and trauma are unwelcome intruders in our lives but mostly we do not have control over them.

Oliver Leaman articulates, "Fewer families have fewer ties of affection and respect, coupled with longer life expectancy, the average person will suffer fewer losses from death than his counterpart several generations ago. Death will generally be unfamiliar and there will perhaps be a tendency to feel unsure about how to act in the face of it. Nowadays death takes place in hospital and the corpse taken by the undertakers and retained by them until burial or cremation. The body will be disposed of in a relatively swift manner, with little ceremony, and the bereaved friends and relatives will be expected to get back to normal life quickly" (Oliver Leaman, 1995:2)

In the Western world, death is viewed as mostly an individual or family affair. It is unlike an African perspective where the society mourns the death of their own member of the society. Hence the death of any member of society affects us all, according to the African view. African society is more interwoven in comparison with the Western, which is more classified.

Religion and spirituality like culture play a primordial part in understanding and when confronted by your own death or/and that of loved one. Hence, W.F. Meyer, C. Moore and H.G. Viljoen say, "Death, therefore, is not a threat to mature people. For the mature people, it is the meaningful conclusion of their lives which were offered to them as a precious opportunity and which they have used to the best of their abilities." (Hence W.F. Meyer, C. Moore & H.G. Viljoen, 2008:453)

J.S. Kruger, G.T.A. Lubbe and H.C. Steyn define religion as "search for a comprehensive integration. That search would include integrating even death into a meaningful pattern", (J.S. Kruger, G.T.A. Lubbe & H.C. Steyn, 1996:15).

Therefore, religion is one of the fundamental ingredients in creating a person's worldview of death and subsequently the healing process.

From a Euro-American perspective, life is seen to be consisting of discrete stages, starting with conception and ending with death. Death, therefore, marks the end of a stage of life. On dying, the dead person literally ceases to exist. On the contrary, an African worldview understands death as an

integrated and continuous development of life process, which is inseparable from the interwoven connectedness between the visible and the invisible ontologies.

People do not cease to exist once they die. These contrasting worldviews on death may deepen the grief or speed up the healing process. The knowledge that you will not see nor interact with the deceased escalates the grief. On the other hand, if one holds the conviction that the dead continue to live brings healing to some people.

This is because in an African context, communication with the dead is rife as we shall explore further.

3.3 AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE OF DEATH

Death needs no invitation in an African worldview. Death may be dreadful, but it is perceived as the beginning of the relationship with all creation. In rural settlement, after someone has passed on, the community stands up to support the family. Some supply water for all the chores in preparation for burial, some open their homes so that they can be used for baking. On the day of the funeral, many open their yards for parking purposes by the mourners. Usually "amadoda nezinsizwa" (men and young men) go and dig the grave on the eve of the funeral while women peel the vegetables. Hence, death in an African context is a societal affair. Death in an African context unites the society. In a religious family, the members of church will visit the family to pray with them. Some denominations even conduct night vigils. During the mourning payer meeting, collecting offering for augmenting support for bereaved is a general norm.

According to Baloyi, death has a uniting function for African people. "In the African context, death of the loved one is a societal issue. Death affects almost every community member" (Baloyi, 2004:1).

Generally, African usually say "umuntu akalahlwa" which simply means that irrespective of your social status, when a person dies the society will congregate to burry that person with dignity as an image of God.

"Death is a natural transition from the visible or spiritual ontology where the

spirit, the essence of the person, is not destroyed but moves to live in the spirit ancestors' realm". L. Baloyi (2008:235). A persons' view of death and the level of attachment affects ones' intensity to grief. If one holds a view that death is a transition from visible to invisible, there is therefore a hope that people will again meet. However, if one's view of death is that of complete extermination of life then the gravity of grief is more.

Not only has ones' view of death but also cultural and religious practices impacted on the grieving and mourning process. In some African religious contexts, life does not end at death but when a person dies, he/she enters into another realm. Some believe that death does not change or end the life of an individual but it only changes their state. Africans express that in the concept of ancestors. It is generally believed that dead people live on amidst us and they watch over the living beings. Hence, many African traditionalists believe that the aim of life is to be an ancestor after death. The dead are believed to be nearer to God than the living beings.

Turaki's view is, "African world view is the embodiment of culture, region, customs, values and tradition" (Turaki, 1997:40).

That view has been confirmed by David W. Kissane and Sydney Block when they say that, "culture and family life cycle influences family grief"

(David W. Kissane, 2002:22).

Mbiti says that in African culture, there are beliefs, which show how people think about the universe, and this determines their attitude towards life. Thabethe affirms Mbiti's view by defining culture as follows:

"Culture is the custom, habits, arts, values, ideology, and religious behavior of a group of people. Culture embodies the customs, believes and behavior", (Thabethe, 2015:29).

These cultural and traditional practices and religious norms influence the impact of death and bereavement in the family. This after life is also confirmed by the Xhosa ritual called "Umkhapho" (accompaniment), where it is believed that it facilitates the movement of the deceased to the realm of the ancestors. An animal is slaughtered to accomplish this ritual.

The death of a husband is rarely accepted as natural. According to the research conducted by Manyeni (2001:137) on African widows, communities still blame widows for killing their husbands (2001:137). These perceptions and practices are a challenge to widowhood in an African context. Hence, Thoredi Elizabeth in her thesis asks the question, "Why is the man not blamed for the death of their wives?" (Thoredi Elizabeth, 2016:26)

She further views that blaming the wives for the death of the husband shifts her focus from personal grieving and results into complicated grieving. (2016:54) this exacerbates the pain caused the by loss while some of the rituals prolongs the mourning process.

Some of the beliefs and cultural practices have a potential of prolonging the grief process. Hence (Samson O. Gunga 2009) in the journal on the politics of widowhood and remarriage among the Luo of Kenya argues that widowhood practices are closely tied to culture and traditional beliefs about death, ghost, inheritance, feminine roles, family structure and any relationships. Several authors

3.3.1 Mourning and Mourning Rituals

Mourning the dead is a universal practice which is mediated by religious and cultural practices in different societies.

Mbiti suggests that mourning involves the core beliefs and customs, spiritual practices, and certain expected behaviors that will be symbolic of mourning the death of a loved one (Mbiti et al 1969). Mourning is the process of expressing one's grief. Mourning is influenced by social and cultural factors that the griever is exposed to.

In the process of mourning the griever attempts to reorganize his or her life following the loss of the loved one. Palmer in his PhD thesis argues that mourning is affected by the following:

● The age of the deceased
● Manner in which he/she has died
● Nature of the attachment the mourners enjoyed with the deceased.
● Fear and uncertainty of the future without the deceased
● Realization of shuttered dreams and unfulfilled expectations which too many it

results in shuttered dreams and unfulfilled expectations.

As part of cultural mourning procedure, the widow is expected to sit on the floor and she is not allowed to leave except going to the rest room. Anything she requires she must ask someone to bring. During the process of mourning, the widow is not allowed to intermingle with people even to go to the weddings.

The woman will wear black as a symbol of her mourning. In many communities, wall pictures are over turned and reflective materials like mirrors are covered. This may isolate the woman from the progressive support structures of other women.

Participating in the family rituals and being in a mourning environment that is cohesive and supportive catalysis the healing processes. The problem I have is that how can a church perpetuate a system that alienates other members of the body of Christ and cause more pain in the broader family.

3.3.2. On the Eve of Funeral

The day before the funeral, the body of the deceased is brought back into the house in the afternoon and a short prayer is made.

Culturally the body of the person who has died in an accident is not brought into the house rather is passed by the street and is told that this has been your home but now we are taking you to your resting place.

Where the coffin will be placed, candles are lit the whole night in assisting the brightening of the path the deceased is travelling on.

On the eve of the funeral, those in religious and Christian faiths mostly conduct *umlindelo* (night vigil). At the night vigil, several people have an opportunity to pay tribute to the deceased through musical renditions or preaching.

However, in urban areas, the culture of night vigil is fading away and people prefer to conduct evening prayer and adjourn until the funeral day.

3.3.3. On the Funeral Day

Before the coffin could be taken out of the house, the family has an opportunity to view the body and pay their last respects. In several cultures, it is believed that this helps in bringing closure to the surviving persons. However, that assertion may not be true to every person.

Some people before they pass on they become very sick and that may compromise their facial outlook. When such a corpse is viewed, some are now left with an unbearable picture of their loved one. This may exacerbate the grief instead of relieving it. Hence, it has the potential of causing what Debra Holland calls a double whammy of trauma and grief.

In other cultures, the first-born child lies across on the door while the coffin is passed over him. Culturally it is believed that this will prevent the death from coming back into the family anytime soon.

The body is carried, and the feet has to face the west as a sign of respect, and a message to the deceased that today he/she is taken out of his/her home, as well as the Church, with his/her feet first. This also means that he/she will not return and haunt surviving persons, at home. This is done with an African believe that the dead person can still hear and see. The dead persons live at higher dimension than us hence; they are closer to God than we are. Traditionally an aunt preferably recites the poem as the body is carried into the hearse.

The widow is covered and allowed only a small opening to see where she is going. This ritual may isolate the widow even further from the environment and closing the last chapter with her husband. After the woman has lost her primary attachment, she is now then isolated from the society through a morning ritual. The woman may even lose interest in social activities and thus expand the grief.

From the cemetery, the mourners wash their hands at the gate and some religious groups even sprinkle people with holy water. It is assumed that this ritual removes the bad luck and cleanses the persons. The water used by mourners to wash hands is used to clean the shovels.

After the funeral, the woman wears black clothes for mourning. Elderly women give her on her new journey in life, especially on how to conduct herself while in the mourning process. Women are mostly expected to wear black for at

least 12 months. The black clothes are regarded as a symbol of respect for her late husband. Men and children cut the hair and put the black or blue cloth on the right hand arm of the clothes he/she wears. Looking at this as a morning ritual, the question that comes is that why is the mourning period of women not equivalent to that of men?

3.4 THE IMPACT OF DEATH

The reactions to trauma and grief cannot be isolated from the impact of death. Death causes grief and it is traumatic to the family hence the manifestations of the trauma and grief reactions is eminent. Death does not only disrupt personal emotions, physical and psychological status but also the social environment. A family is an interdependent social system where members intimately interact with one another. The surviving spouse tries to comfort her children and meet their daily demands while she is confronted by her own grief and needs. According to Oladayo, "Death is a universal human experience", (Afolabi Oladayo, 2014). We all experience death in the same way but the impact differs because of different social, relational, cultural and religious orientation. Therefore, though death is a universal experience the impact is not universal but unique to each individual.

Murray, Toth & Clinkinbeard (2005) share the same view with Oladayo as they say," death is a crisis that all families encounter, and it is recognized as the most stressful life event faced by families," (Murray, Toth & Clinkinbeard, 2005).

When death strikes, people enter into a different psychological and emotional mode. These modes may take various forms according to families and according to how the deceased has departed.

Death is one of the life stressors on its own and as Murray, Toth and Clinkinbeard have said. Death may yield other crisis episodes in the family. The crisis may be compounded if the deceased was a breadwinner as it means there will be an economic crisis in the family. The economic crisis together with relational crises may cause a lot of stress and grief in the family.

"The occurrence of death though inevitable can be significantly disruptive and upsetting to the family system and the network of relationship of the dead person" (Gelcher, 1986).

These disruptions deprive the family physical close relations with the person they love. Subsequently the untimely socio-relational disruptions as a result of death cause unfathomable bereavement in the surviving persons. There is a huge change in the life of a bereaved person. Death also changes the family structure and the relational patterns. The surviving persons are left agonizingly astounded trying to restore the family equilibrium both individually and relationally.

Kremer's perspective on death is "How we perceive death affects the way we live, how we live affects the way we die and how we die gives new meaning to the way others can live" (Kramer K. 1988; 12).

In my view of Kramer's narrative on death, is that everyone is an architect of his own destiny. Everyone is responsible in giving meaning to his/her own life. Kramer further suggests that death be viewed through focus areas that is:

- Physical (the irreversible loss of brain waves, central nervous system, heart and breath functions).
- Psychological (the life of quasi-consciousness, living as if already dead), and
- Spiritual (the death or transformation of old patterns, habits, roles, identities and the birth of a new person), (Kramer, K. 1988:12).
These three focus areas enable us to understand the idea that death affects the total being i.e. spiritual, psychological and body.

In the first stage of physical death, all the body functions cease to operate. In the second stage of psychological death, the soul departs from the body. The third stage, which is spiritual death, is when the spirit returns to the maker who gave it.

This tells us that the choices a person makes have an impact on his/her meaning of life after death. In some families, death causes not only grief but also engenders unfathomable upheavals. The social change caused by the death of the loved one is irrevocable and the grief that follows is real.

3.4.1 Grief:

Grief is often a general reaction to death or sometimes loss. Apparently, one of the most difficult realities we are faced with in life is loss. Loss brings pain and subsequently pain brings grief. This reaction happens particularly if a person has lost something or someone within which there are strong bonds. Grief and loss should be understood as part of the journey of life.

The grieving person passes through the grieving process quicker if there is more support. Accepting the grief speeds up the healing process.

Bowlby describes grief as "the sequence of subjective states that follow loss and accompany mourning." (Bowlby, 1960:11)

Therefore, grief is the process that follows a loss. Grief is an interpersonal process and is mostly unique to an individual. Bowlby's definition of grief, encapsulate the aspect of personal experience. After a loss and individual experiences grief, the feeling is individualized. Marrone says: "For human beings, grieving reactions are actually only the beginning of the much longer and larger process of mourning. Grief reactions, such as shock, protest, sadness, yearning and depression, help to recognize the loss and prepare us for the work of mourning," (Marrone R. 1997:108).

Marrone's definition inculcates the immediate reaction to loss and prolonged grief. Grief affects any one at least once in a lifetime. "In the Unites States, grief theory has relied largely on the experience of the dominant white culture to explain how Americans grieve in general.

The paper clarifies that Grief experiences might differ because involve the experience of an ongoing spiritual connection with the deceased. (2008:174) Grief differs in respective ethnic groups. Grief mostly disrupts one's thinking ability and causes emotional confusion. At the time of grief, the emotions are like a roller coaster because they are unstable.

Several psychologists suggest that a grieving person should go through the grieving process before a person can begin working on mourning. On many occasions, grief is fueled by a person's denial of the loss or reality of the situation. Different psychological scholars claim that this reaction is a natural response to loss. Debra Holland in her introduction (to what?) says grief is a

complex emotion that is not often understood, especially if you have not experienced it before. Sometimes a person doesn't know that he/she is grieving. However, unresolved grief is often an unfinished issue in people's lives. It can underlie anger, acting out, and depression, and it can cause problems in other areas, such as physical health, emotional well-being, job performance, or a romantic relationship.

Debra Holland further defines grief as, "a profound feeling of sadness and pain caused by an important loss, change, crises, or failure, either actual or perceived" (Debra Holland, 2011:3).

T.H.S. Setsiba in her article attests to Debra Holland's definition by saying that "grief is the tense emotional response. Associated with the loss of the significant person, often precipitated by death of the loved one," (Rosenblatt *et.al.* 1976).

Donna Dickensen, Malcon Johnson and Jeanne Samson Katz share Debra Holland's view when they say, "Grief is essentially an emotion that draws us toward something or someone that is missing." (Donna Dickinson, Malcon Johnson and Jeanne Samson Katz, 2000:325).

All the above articulations points to one aspect, that grief is an emotional instability caused by the loss one experiences. Grief following bereavement by death is aggravated if the person lost is the person to whom one would turn in times of trouble. "Faced with the biggest trouble she has ever had; the widow repeatedly finds herself turning toward a person who is not there" (2000:327).

Grief because of death is exacerbated if the person who has died is the person to whom a person would go to in times of trouble. Generally, several people experiencing those negative emotions find it hard to get words that describe their feelings and relief (Is this the right word?) from responsibility. The quality of attachment determines the intensity of grief.

Inherent within family structures is that every individual has a role to play. Losing one player means huge adjustment.

Carol Staudacher says ´even if you could anticipate the death of your husband, or friend. Alternatively, child, you could not have anticipated all the feelings

the loss brought´ (Carol Staudacher, 1987:4).

As death comes uninvited and mostly untimely so does grief. That makes it hard to prepare for it. One does not fully know how he/she will feel until it happens.

According to Carol Staudacher, grief represent humanness just as love does and grief has no predecessor. The grief resulting from loss divides life into two segments i.e. life before the spouse passes on and life after your loved one has died. When the spouse was still alive, people identified the woman with her spouse. They called her Mrs. Smith etc. Now death has robbed her of her identity and subtracted part of her. There are grieving stages that resonate from Kubler Ross's study.

3.4.1.1. Kubler Ross grieving stages/phases of grief

Elizabeth Kubler Ross's stages are responses to every day loss that people experience.

- Denial: At this stage, a person does not accept the death approaches. In this stage, the world becomes meaningless and life is senseless. The person at this stage becomes numb. The person uses this stage to protect himself or herself from experiencing the gravity of the loss. Bowlby and Parkes say at this stage it is difficult to accept that your loved one is gone. Denial is one of the ways in which some fight the gravity of the pain of grief and it is in essence used as anesthesia.

  Kubler Ross says that at this stage you begin to heal, denial also begins to fade, and feelings you were denying begin to surface. However, if a person does not move from this stage, he/she will remain stuck in shock and denial. This is generally a reactionary move when a person receives unexpected news particularly sad news.

- Anger: When the loved one passes on, the surviving persons feel abandoned, and as a result, they get angry. At this stage, a person becomes angry towards the possible separation. Anger has no limits. That means it can extend to other people like doctors, your family members and sometimes your parents who

died. Others get angry also with God. The frustration because of the loss breeds anger. Some even ask questions like, where was God when my spouse died. The feeling of abandonment may lead to severe pain, feelings of abandonment, and betrayed.

The anger indicates the intensity of your love for the deceased. This stage correlates with the phase Bowlby and Parkes call yearning and searching. The bereaved is searching for answers while he/she is aware that the planned future together is no longer possible.

When death lingers, you start to plead with God. A person at this stage is angry with himself as though he/she could have done more to save the loved one. Some may even feel guilty about the situation.

- Bargaining: Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says that bargaining may take a temporary truce. A person makes secret covenants with himself or with God to prolong the life of the loved one. We want life to return to what it was. Some people may even bargain with the pain. Eventually when a person dies, we lose everything and move to the stage of depression. If the stage of grief is not dealt with and resolved, the person may have intense feelings of guilt or anger that can interfere with the process of healing.

- Depression: After bargaining, our attention moves squarely into the present. This depression looks like it will last forever. Depression after a loss is often seen as unnatural. The loss of the loved one is depressing.

A person experiences sorrow as death approaches and worse when it strikes. David Malouf in his master's thesis says that the person mourns the past and the future. (David Malouf, 2014:35)

Parkes and Bowlby indicate that the person at this stage is in despair while also is emotionally disorganized. The bereaved gets depressed because he/she realizes that the wheel of life cannot be turned back. Parkes and Bowlby suggest that if we do not progress from this stage, we will be consumed by

anger and depression and our attitude towards life will remain negative and hopeless. Mostly people who are depressed have a problem with sleeping. They have a poor appetite and just feel tired and have no energy do anything.

Acceptance: This is a desirable step as the end is near. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that the new reality is the permanent reality however we accept it.

We learn to live with it. We learn in the processes that we cannot replace what we have lost, but we can make new connections, new meaningfulness, new inter dependencies.

According to Parkes and Bowlby the person at this stage starts to emotionally reorganize and recover from the loss. Acceptance is vital if one is to move towards recovery.

At this stage, then we listen to our needs. As the pastor's family undergoes these stages it learns to heal and finally find closure.

Not only will the bereaved find closure it also assists the caregiver to journey with the bereaved family without pushing them to accept reality with internal anger or while it is still denying the reality of loss.

These phases may not follow each other in all the people. However, death affects all of us but each person is unique and our level of attachment to the deceased differs.

Integrating death into general life experiences is essential for the healing process. Kubler Ross's stages fit in every person's grieving situation and again it confines feelings into the five stages.

Grieving may take different forms in different people and does not have a specific order. Painful experience breeds negative emotions, which come like a wave and take different directions in different people. Grieving people do not react the same way to grief. The grief stages as outlined by Kubler Ross have also omitted cultural and religious variance.

The five cries of grief as articulated by Merton P. Strommen and A. Irene Strommen (1986) are no variance to Kubler Ross's stages of grief. H. Norman Wright (2014) amplified these cries as follows:

"I hurt…" – This cry can bring you to your knees. It comes and goes for many years. People use several ways to deny the pain of grief. Denial diminishes the capacity of the soul to grow bigger in response to pain. As grief moves through several stages of denial, each stage brings home the reality of the loss a bit deeper.

The amount of energy required in order keeping denial operating, and it drains us and ultimately it damages us emotionally. Denial blocks out the unthinkable and brings with it fear of the unknown.

"I want …: - There is also a cry of longing. This comes from the sense of emptiness and loneliness that exists because of the loss of a loved one.

"I need …" -This cry is for supportive love. One of the worse experiences is to feel that you are alone, isolated in a world full of people.

Those in grief have a specific need for love and support.

"I don't understand" – The hardest lesson of all is to accept what one cannot understand and still say, 'God, though art love. I build my faith on that love.'

This is a cry to accept what has happened, but often the desire to comprehend is overwhelmed.

"What does it all mean?" – A final cry is the cry for significance, the desire to see something good eventually come out of this loss. It's a process of transforming grief into growth" (H. Norman Wright, 2014:13-14).

It is the author's view that grief experience raises emotional questions most of which can't be answered. This is the result of the disruption of the mind and confusion caused by the severity of the pain. Hence, these unanswered questions evoke tears and the grieving person wrestles to get meaning from the loss and the pain.

However, Debra Holland provides grief reactions, which further elucidate Kubler Ross's grief stages. Worden (2002) and some clinicians disputed Kubler-Ross's theory citing that grief should be perceived as a series of tasks rather than stages.

The tasks include accepting the reality of the loss, working through the pain of grief; adjusting to an environment in which the deceased is missing; and emotionally relocating the deceased and moving on with life. The researcher takes note that every grief theory has its own challenges. This is because the views that loss involves stages, tasks or 'letting go' of affectionate ties is facing intensive criticism by those who view connection with the deceased as an ongoing process.

Klass and Walter, (2001) assert that, "for a significant portion of the bereavement, these bonds take the form of sensing the presence of the deceased, 'talking' with the dead and updating them about current events and continuing to 'consult' the deceased on important life decisions"

(Klass and Walter, 2001, 57-67)

It is the author's view that though grief may not necessarily follow any rigid pattern as alluded to by Kubler-Ross but their contribution remains vital in understanding the griever and interpreting the grieving process. Grieving persons react differently as Debra Holland indicates.

3.4.1.2. Grief Reactions

Debra Holland provides some of the expressions of grief:

Physical effects - These physical effects include inter alia

- Sobbing, sighing
- Trembling, chills, sweating
- Digestive disorders
- Change in sleep, nightmares
- Change in sex drive, increase or decrease
- Feeling faint, weak, dizzy, or lightheaded
- Change in weight, gain or loss because of tightness/emptiness in stomach and feeling hungry, or overeating to fill the emptiness
- Shortness of breath, tightness in chest
- Tightness or soreness in the throat
- Easily startled or jittery

- Restlessness, agitation, clumsiness
- Weakened immune system

Emotional Effects – Some other emotional grief may include the following

- Sensitivity
- Regret, guilt
- Sadness, hopelessness, apathy
- Anxiety, panic or panic attacks, fear or phobias
- Agony, anguish
- Longing, loneliness
- Shame
- Depression, not wanting to live anymore, mood swings
- Minimizing (trying to not feel or make your feeling unimportant)
- Relief
- Abandonment, bitterness, blame
- Emptiness. Lower self-esteem
- Powerlessness, helplessness, sense of being out of control

Mental Effects – Mental effects can persist for weeks and even months after loss. Some reactions may include:

- Short attention span, difficulty focusing, concentrating, and comprehending
- Forgetfulness
- Surreal sense
- Vivid dreams/nightmares
- Difficulty making decisions
- Feeling overly critical

Behavioral Effects – Some behavioral effects of grief include:

- Avoidance, shutting down
- Needing to be with others, excessive partying
- Erratic, irrational behavior
- Being frantically busy or overactive in certain areas, like work
- Needing to talk about the deceased
- Dependency on other people

- Difficulty with communication
- Identification, where you wear something from the deceased or that reminds you of them
- Apathy or disinterest in things you used to find pleasurable.
  Spiritual Effects:

Loss can cause some spiritual painful effects in our lives, as we struggle to find meaning from the experience and process our grief. People may feel deserted by God and ask why God did not do something about the situation. Sometimes people feel guilty about their anger with God, as if their emotions are sacrilegious. If a person is a believer, it helps to express feeling to God. Faith in God becomes the pillar of strength in these difficult times. Other people after the loss become angry at the religious institution or the clergy, others lose faith in God while others feel much closer to God than ever before.

There is an increasing desire to change for the better and create meaning in life. (2011:27-36) the phases/stages of grief encapsulate a person's feelings through which a person communicates. These feelings communicate what the survivor is missing and offer an opportunity to cope in a way that will result in the healing facilitation. Healing emanates from grieving expressions.

These reactions come to people in different ways and they should not be viewed as rigid and systematic reactions. Most grieving people experience trauma.

3.4.2 Trauma

Froma Walsh says, "The word trauma comes the Latin word for wound. With traumatic experiences, the body, mind, spirit and relationship with others can be wounded", (Froma Walsh, 2007:2).

Walsh's definition of trauma implies that trauma affects the body, spirit and the person's relationship with other people. The person who is wounded in the way described by Walsh cannot rationalize things in a normal way.

This wound in the mind and spirit may cause grief as the victim grapples with its effects. Death causes emotional, spiritual and psychological wounds.

According to Debra, "trauma involves an event outside our normal experience

that frightens us and makes us feel helpless. The traumatic incident overwhelms our normal ways of coping, pushing us into an emergency state." (Debra Holland, 2011:37)

Helplessness emotionally and spiritually drains its victims. The African approach, which provides consistent support to the bereaved, is vital. Debra Holland asserts the following reactions to trauma:

- Delayed Reactions – This is when the reaction takes weeks or even months to surface after the traumatic event.
- Physical Reactions – Shakiness, weakness, or dizziness, Heart palpitating, being jittery, nausea, headaches, sore muscles, difficulty sleeping, and on the verge of tears when thinking about the event, appetite changes, not wanting to eat or eating too much.
- Mental reactions – This includes intrusive thoughts, hyper-alertness, avoidance behavior that is trying not to think of the incident, feeling vulnerable, numbness, confusion, wanting to isolate, or not wanting to be alone, difficulty with focus and concentration and replaying the event over and over again.
- Emotional Reactions - The feeling of guilt, anger, helplessness, anxiety, irrationality, depression, shock or numbness, and fear (2011:44-46)

These trauma reactions are not far removed from Kubler Ross's grief stages. Bereaved peoples' behavior is not always consistent with their normal or day-to-day behavior. The behavior is as a result of the intensity of the trauma that has been inflicted by the loss. Some experience grief mixed with trauma which Debra calls a double whammy. David Matlou's citation of Cook and Oltejenbruns work on multifaceted responses to grief confirms Debra's assertion. He says that the reactions are comprised of physiological reactions, thoughts, emotions and behavior, (2014:42-44).

Brenda Mallon argues that when the loss has been traumatic the rebuilding of the bereave d's world may be more difficult because trauma impedes grief (2008:6).

Most traumatic events are sudden and as a result, they give a person no chance to prepare. So devastating is death that in several funerals you will hear mourners saying *"ukufa akujwayeleki"* which means no one is

accustomed to death. If a young man has passed on, the elder men will cry and say "I am not supposed to bury my child. He was supposed to bury me when he has grown up." These are some of the sentiments of pain raised during funerals.

Many scholars find that the suffering and struggle to recover from the aftermath of the traumatic experiences often yields remarkable transformative and positive growth. Studies of posttraumatic growth have found that individuals change in five areas:

- Emergence of new opportunity and possibilities.

- Deeper relationships and great compassion for others.

- Feeling strengthened to meet future life challenges.

- Re-order priorities and fuller appreciation of life, and

- Deepening spirituality

I believe that these five areas shine a light onto the reason why we say most people who have undergone trauma, are able to help others when they rise up. This also says to us, there are those people who learn to love because they themselves experienced rejection.

Others learn to be compassionate because they were not cared for. According to the author, it is vital that people learn positive values in the negative environment. How to remain strong after losing the loved one?

The concept of loss is now explored.

3.4.3. Loss

It is not just the loss of a loved one that is so painful. Loss is only a loss if what is lost is something significant and cherished by an individual. That may refer to

an object or a person. Loss can plunge someone into a maelstrom of emotional commotion and despair. Hence, grief researchers say that grief is a normal reaction to loss.

In other words, It is also the other losses that occur, because of the one who has died: the ways he or she lived, loved, slept, ate, worked and worshiped-all are gone from your experience of your earthly life.

Often the death of the loved one brings up not just grief for what has been lost, but also grief for what he or she never had and never will have. When the life partner passes on, different losses pile up on the surviving spouse. The loss of marital status, life companion, sexual partner, and loss of hopes and dreams you had together. All these losses may result in serious health and mental problems. Generally, health practitioners indicate that multiple loss has a negative impact on the health of the person.

The author believes that if the trauma and grief resulting from the loss is not treated through counselling and or medically attended to it may yield undesired consequences and complicated grief. Loss tampers with the normal day-to-day living conditions. That implies the disturbance of life's equilibrium including the behavioral system of a person.

Studies have exposed that grief following bereavement can lead to an increased mortality from ischemic heart disease and many other complicated diseases.

Wright says that, "There is a loss of the present as well as a loss of the future. This especially impact on relationships." (H. Norman Wright, 2014:27).

When the death of a spouse opens up too many losses, it says that the grieving process will also be severe pending the intensity of the loss.

"Working through the loss entails a dialectical interplay between an attempt to preserve the past and the demand to accommodate to the new reality of life without the deceased" (Attig, 2001; Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

The author believes that if the grieving person does not work on the past loss, he/she may carry that grief into the next loss that may occur. Hence, it is very

vital that a person grieve over the loss and get over it. The surviving spouse mourns not only the death of her spouse but also dreads the future alone as her world has changed.

The losses we face in everyday life causes us to sorrow and to grieve and it deeply affects our emotions. The severe mental anguish caused by loss translates into grief.

Debra Holland (2011) indicates that there are losses that disappoint us; make us angry, sad, ashamed, or resentful; and those where we simply shrug our shoulders and move on. Some losses motivate us to increase our efforts to overcome our problems.

"Then there are those losses, the most painful of all, which we grieve over", (2011:15). The health and wellness practitioners generally indicate that the grief response resulting from the loss can affect a person's mental and behavioral wellness. The death of a spouse has been shown to negatively influence the health of the surviving bereaved spouse, including increasing the risk of death. The author believes that one of the challenging situations brought on by losing a spouse is failure of the widow to give up. The bereaved needs to reach a point where she releases the deceased in her spirit and let's go. However, that is a process and a journey the widows have to go through.

What differentiates grief from other reactions is the love and meaning we've given to the person, place, or thing we've lost. The more we love or need someone or something, the more he, she, or it means to us, the more likely we are to grieve, and the longer and more intense our grieving experience. The grief is compounded by the gravity of the emotional detachment, which subsequently yields loneliness.

"The withering of social relations leaves the widow lonely after the death of her spouse. The absence of the attachment figure means that the surviving spouse has no reliable attachment to turn to in times of need. To some this may yield identity impairment", this is according to Weiss, (1973).

Social research stressed that social support in times of loss may serve as a

buffer against the adverse effects of partner loss, yet results remain inconclusive (Strobe *et al.*1996). The author believes that in addition to social support, self-esteem goes a long a way in reducing the gravity of pain due to the loss of a partner. On the other hand, the challenge with the feeling of loss as articulated in several literatures is that the surviving spouse will have to strive to put her life together again. The author acknowledges that the social support should not be intended to substitute or compensate the loss of a partner to re-instill self-worth.

3.5 **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION**

Grief is not a permanent status of a person. It implies that no matter how sever it might be it shall surely pass. With time, every widow should find a way to smile again. This chapter revealed that love is curved (Wrong word) from loss.

This chapter began introducing the concept of death from Western and African perspectives. This included some ritualistic activities as practiced in mostly African societies It is important to note how these activities are deemed to assist the healing process. The views and attitudes of people and some scholars on death were articulated. The concept of grief and trauma because of death was explored from the psychological viewpoint. The literature has revealed that after the loss of a husband, the widow has to adjust to an entirely different life style, which may be a mammoth task to many.

This discovery was vital to me as a pastoral care-giver, whose task is to find a pastoral care model of healing the wounded soul.

The next chapter will look into the stories of the clergy's families, and the impact of death in their respective families.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. INTERVIEW OF CLERGY'S SPOUSES

In the previous chapter, the following concepts were dealt with:

- Death
- Grief
- Trauma
- Loss

The literature from Western and African scholars was analyzed.

This chapter deals with interviews that were conducted with the widows who experienced the death of their husbands. The interviews were conducted in Sekhukhune district in the Limpopo province. Due to unwillingness of some of the targeted core searchers to participate in the interviews, the researcher had to secure other core-researchers from outside Sekhukhune district, i.e. in Mpumalanga Province.

The study is intended to assess the care provided by the church to the clergy spouse after the funeral. An informed analysis will be provided in the next chapter. The first participant was Mrs. Sithethi not her real name. We went through the consent form together to ascertain that there was no ambiguity and no uncertainty on the expectations. A questionnaire was used for the interview. She was not comfortable with the tape recorder and then the author opted to verify the capturing of responses by reading them at the end of the interview. For the purposes of consistency, I opted not to use the tape recorder even in the other interviews.

Mrs. Sithethi

When did your husband die?

He died on the 2nd December 2012

Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

He got sick for only a week. At that time, he was busy with the arrangements of his sister's funeral.

The sickness started as though it is just tonsils, and we thought he would get better. Suddenly he got worse and was taken to hospital. At the hospital, they said it was not tonsils as we suspected.

However, the hospital could not confirm the exact sickness to us. They made some tests to diagnose the sickness and the cause; unfortunately, he died before I could get the full account his sickness.

On Saturday 1 December, I talked to him and there seemed to be no problem. I hoped then that he should be home soon. The next day on Sunday the 2nd December he developed some complications. In the afternoon of the same Sunday when I came from hospital around 16h00, I got a call from hospital delivering the bad news that my husband is no more. I was overwhelmed by disbelieve and excessive shock and I could not believe it. I did not accept that he had passed on. I had to soon rush to the hospital to find answers and confirm the news of his death.

I am so sorry about your experience. Now, would you share with us as to who accompanied you as you rushed to hospital?

"Benginabosikoni ababili" (I was with my two sister's in-law). They journeyed with me at that time. Their support helped me a lot at the time of my weakest moment. (She posed)

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

When the call from hospital came, one relative in the house received it. I immediately suspected that it should carry the sad news, then immediately I burst into tears and blamed the hospital for not telling me the truth about my husband illness and hiding something from me. The uncle had go to hospital first to confirm the news and then I went there too with the in-laws.

What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

The members of the family telephonically called one another in order to inform one another about the tragic death. I immediately called one church elder who soon after being informed shared the news with my son who was left in the manse at that time.

The elder apparently sat down my son after the evening prayer meeting to inform him of the sad news of passing on of his father.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

I was in Gauteng when the whole tragedy took place as my husband was admitted in one hospital in that area. The church requested that he be buried in the village where he was pastoring in order to accommodate many church members who wish to pay the last respect to their pastor.

Fortunately, before my husband passed on, he had told his siblings that he does not want to be buried in Gauteng (his hometown) because the people who know him better were in that village. He had told them that since he left Gauteng in the past 30years back due pastoral ministry and he is more attached to people in village. Therefore, the people in Gauteng do not know him anymore. That made the request from the church to be much easier to deal with.

Could you share your feelings at the time of the news and what was your reaction?

I got sick and I nearly died. The situation changed dramatically. I was not myself. I could not accept it as the news sounded more unreal. I was shocked because when he was admitted at the hospital, it never looked like it's something so serious. I felt like the world is shrinking and it dawn in me that life is short. It was honestly painful and I had many unanswered questions, i.e. why God allowed him to go?

What was role of the church during the preparation and after the burial?

During the preparation:

The church asked me not to do anything and they said that they would take care of everything pertaining the funeral. They bought the coffin, arrange the catering and helped in drafting the program for the funeral. The prayers were conducted during the week leading up to the weekend of the funeral.

I felt very comforted in knowing that my husband was working with people who cared for him.

After the Funeral:

The church did nothing and was almost non-existent.

What did you expect the church to do? (Follow up question)

I expected the church to come closer to me now that my husband has passed on. I thought the women would visit me for prayers and moral support at least the week after the funeral.

I also expected the church leadership to come, discuss the plans of the church, and give me time to mourn for my husband.

I knew that I had to leave the manse as per the church arrangements but I never expected them to do what they did. Our modern African tradition spells it very clearly that I must mourn for my husband for at least six months and I need to spend some time not going to church. Even though we are Christians, but we ought to respect some of our African traditions. I was amazed when the leadership announced in the church service that I need to leave the manse as they were preparing to call another pastor.

I was very hurt, because they never engaged me to discuss the issue, though I knew the policy. Again, their timing was awkward because my husband had just passed on in a weeks' time and I was still mourning. My grief was increased when they told me that my husband is gone and now my son and I must see ourselves through. To compound the grief was the thought that we didn't have a house as my husband salary was minimal. In my heart, all the good work they did heading to the funeral was cancelled by their treatment. I was really aggrieved of their action.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

● I had huge financial challenges as my husband was the only one working and the child was still at school at the time.
● Taking the child to school was a big problem because we relied on the income from my husband and now nothing was coming in.
● I felt if I had government grant to subsidize me that would have been better to ease my financial burden and more to help my son towards schooling.

- The shelter was another huge challenge because we were to vacate the manse so that a new pastor may occupy the house. It was a hustle because we never had money to buy a house or rent a place.
  That increased and brought the reality of death in my heart.
- The pain of losing my husband started all over again.
  The church governing board said to me that they have buried their pastor, therefore myself and my son must see ourselves through. They told me that they have nothing to do with us anymore. That was the more painful experience.
- The church regional executive came to plead with the local church leadership to be patient with us while we were still looking for the place to stay. What compounded the problem was that we never had money to buy or rent the house.
   By the grace of God, my husband had a policy, which paid up in few weeks afterwards, and God brought a certain man who was selling a house at a bargain price. I used that money to purchase that property. It was a massive relief from me as the gossips were already running around with us being in the manse.

Is there any other thing you wish to share?

Later we were able to apply for government old age grant.

Now I am better because I am getting the old age grant, which helps me to pay for child's tertiary education and keep us alive at least. However, it is tough but is better off.

Through your experience, how can you advise others who will go through similar Experiences?

- I surely would not like others to experience this.
- It is important that clergy families have their own houses while they are working.
- Pastors spouse need to work so that when tragedies like this strike, they may be able to at least cope with financial demands.

- Clergy families must not be fooled; the churches will love them while the clergy is still alive and when clergy dies the family gets exposed to deep pain of isolation and rejection.

How are you coping emotionally?

This is a long and lonely journey. It really takes faith in God and resilience to stand this ordeal. I feel that I am getting better. His clothes are still hanging in the wardrobe exactly as they were before he dies. The region visited me for support and comfort and I appreciated it. This is how the first interview was conducted. The author will share all other interviews and then analyze the issues faced by the widows and their children later.

Mrs. Gloria

The second one involved was Mrs. Gloria (not her real name).

When did your husband die?

My husband died on the 2 August 2016

Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

He was diagnosed with diabetes since 2001. He just complicated while we were at home and we called an ambulance. He was taken to hospital that is where he died. The doctor in charge confirmed that his sugar level was very high. We took him to hospital on the 31 July (on Sunday) and on the 2 August (Tuesday) afternoon, he passed on due to high blood problems.

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

I was absolutely shocked and numb. I had hoped because the hospital had told me that he is stable and recuperating well. I had hope that he will get better and rejoin us at home. His death crushed our hopes and left a void in our hearts.

Where were you at the time of your husband's death?

I was here at home and he passed on at the hospital, alone. This issue traumatized me as if we abandoned him.

What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

I got a call from the hospital. When the call from hospital came, I was seated with the children and they heard the telephonic conversation.

We were shocked and in utter disbelieve because we had thought he is recovering. The news of his death destroyed all who were in the house.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

- When I first got this tragic news, I ask myself, how am I going to tell his family members, and my family and even the church? The main question was how are the families and the church going to receive the news?

- I called back the hospital to inform them that I will be coming the following day as it was already late and I had no transport to go there.

- While we were preparing for the burial, my husband's family made things much harder for the kids and me. For I and my kids wanted him to be buried in the village where he worked but his family refused.
  I told them that my husband has been in this community for twelve years and has established himself as a member of the community. Unfortunately, they never wanted to hear anything from me. Ultimately, I succumb to their demand, under durance though.

What was the role of the church during the preparation and after the burial?

Before the funeral:

The church helped me a lot with manual work and our bishop called to give me words of support and comforted us in prayer.

After funeral:

The church continued their support even after the burial.

In what way did the church support you after funeral? (Follow up question)

The church provides financial support though it may not be equivalent to what my husband was getting. However, I appreciate their support as a single and unemployed widow. They visited us and prayed for us.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

- I think maybe because my situation is still new, then I have not observed any negative attitude from the church.
- I have two children, one in grade eleven and the other in grade four. My biggest challenge is what will happen to them in the following year? Will they attend school, as I am unemployed?
- Finally, I must go back to my home, and what is it that the future holds for me from next year.
- My in-laws since they buried their son, none of them called me to check us nor come over to see how we were coping. Another problem is that I don't know what they are thinking because when we parted we were both not in good mood and terms.
- Constitutionally I can stay in the manse for the maximum of nine months after the death of the clergy.

- The church district asked the leadership to give us a bit of time? However, after nine months the church is expected to call a new pastor, therefore we must leave the manse.

How did the church accept the plea from the district?

They accepted it though we know that people do not accept things the same way. People gossip and pass negative remarks about our prolonged stay in the manse and stipend the church gives us.

Currently what is your relationship with the church?

Because my situation is still fresh, I have not experience anything negative yet in the church. I have not been in the church since the death of my husband. I am not sure how would be the reaction when I go to church.

Through your experience, how can you advice others who will go through

similar experiences?

My own family has been supportive throughout except my husband's family.

- The clergy's spouse need to have coping skills.
- The spouse should know that she is now of her own.
- She needs to have ways of supporting herself financially
- Having your house remains important for clergy family.
- Preparation for helping the clergy family is important.
- The church needs to play a leading role in helping clergy family

Mrs. Kwayikwayi

The other person involved was Mrs. Kwayikwayi not her real name.

When did your husband passed on?

My husband passed on, on the 13 April 2016.

Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

He was diagnosed with sugar diabetes since January 2016. In March, he started losing more weight, got weaker, and was admitted at hospital on the 12 April 2016.
At the hospital, they showed that he had blood cancer.
The journey of sickness started at that time. The previous Saturday we had taken him to hospital but they gave us the date of the 24 June 2016 for operation. While still waiting for the date of the 24 June he got complicated and was rushed to hospital on the 12 April.

In the morning of 13 April at 5am I got a phone call from the hospital bringing me the sad news that my husband is no more. They told me that had died at 4h30.

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

It was difficult to accept and I could not sleep on Tuesday night. I called the hospital afterwards in a painful heart because of the manner in which he died.

I asked them why they gave us the date of June after having observed that his health condition required emergency attention.

I blamed the hospital for his death because they should have done more in transferring him Steve Biko hospital that has better facilities.

The protocol that you cannot just take a person to Steve Biko hospital prior the approval from the regional hospital contributed in my tragedy. At the regional hospital, they told us there is a list of patients awaiting to be taken to the hospital per se, therefore my husband cannot overtake the names already listed for operation ahead of him.

I blamed also myself because if my medical aid was valid I would have given my husband a better care and maybe he would still be alive.

I felt that Batho Pele principle (People First principle) is not working in our hospitals.

I complained about many more things at the hospital. However, at the end I apologized for taking my anger to them. I thought more of my grandchildren and how are they going to receive the news because they were too close to him.

The Batho Pele principle requires the public service providers to be polite, open and deliver the good service to the public. The civil servants are expected to be transparent and open their delivery of government services.

One of the principle says that as citizens, we should be consulted wherever possible and the service should give me options about the services that are offered. In my case that was not done. Hence, I felt very sad and angry that my constitutional rights were violated.

What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

In the morning one of my daughters called to ask me how I slept. I told her that her father has passed on. I could hear her shock and feel her pain even over the telephonic discussions. She then told her siblings.

I send that one of my daughters be fetched. I then informed the chairperson of

the church governing board. In the broader family, I only informed one person to tell the rest of the members.

I had to allow my grandchildren to go school because I never wanted them to be disturbed at school. When the brethren visited us for prayer in the evening, it is then that I they told them.

When they came from school they kept asking, why are there so many people in the house?" But I avoided telling them the truth because I never knew how to say it. This was also a way of trying to protect them from emotional trauma.

How old are the grandchildren?

They are fourteen years and seven years old respectively.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

I could not stop thinking of my status in the church. What will happen to me after the funeral? The main issue was with the church.

In the process of that, it dawned on me that I need to accept the reality that I am going to be nothing.

My role in the church is finished and my ministry (gift) is now useless. It is amazing that your role can change overnight particularly as the clergy spouse.

What was the role of the church during the preparation for the burial?

After getting the news, the church took over and worked almost everything. They supported us until the end. We had a brief meeting with church leadership on how we are going to work on the funeral day.

They agreed to cover the grocery as the other part pertaining undertakers I had already covered. The church conducted prayer services throughout the week. The prayers boosted me spiritually and encourage me as the family were preparing for the burial.

After the funeral:

The church still supported me thus far. This process is helping us to mourn his death.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

- I feel very lonely most of the time.
- My first day at church after the funeral was a nightmare. *Mangingena ngezwa kwangathi kunomuntu ongithela ngebhakede losizi* (When I came in it was as if someone is pouring me with the buckets of grief). When I looked at the place he used to seat, I felt a strong pain piecing my heart. I could not contain myself but started sobbing bitterly.
- Suddenly certain women in the church came to seat next to me and try to comfort me.
  The church never knew how to handle me as I was used to comforting them. It was really a painful experience.
- I realized that my passed pain of losing my son exacerbated my pain. My second born son passed on in 2014 October, and I relived that experience. All along, I thought that I am healed but when this tragedy came, I realized that I am not. I asked myself, why I am experiencing such an agonizing pain in short space of time.   I had a deep sense of guilt that I might have done something wrong to deserve double tragedy.
- I found myself blessed by my family support, which some women in my situation may not enjoy.

Through your experience, how can you, advice others who will go through similar experience?

If the male clergy dies, you as a clergy widow your issue in the church is finished. If the new pastor arrives, it becomes worse. Therefore, is better for a clergy family to leave the congregation in which they were serving and get to worship at another place.

Currently what is your relationship with the church?

Women must understand that people and churches are not the same. As clergy spouse we don't experience the same circumstance. Others are neglected while others are cared for.

One clergy widow once told me her story.

She said that at the funeral of her spouse (male clergy) she was told to look for her own place to stay immediately. Unfortunately, that was announced at the funeral by the regional chairperson. The woman was given two months to vacate the manse. As the clergy spouse after the death of your husband you are just nothing but an outcast. You need to see yourself to finish even if you can serve the congregation for more than thirty years it means nothing to them at this time.

When the new pastor came into the church, he kept saying to the woman, "I am not like you, I am unique." Stressing remarks. The church since then never featured her on the program any more.

From her experience, I learnt how lucky am I to be having my own place. As a clergy widow if the church forsakes you and the children, if you are in a mission house (manse) even children gets hurt. They find that they no longer belong to that congregation.

Mrs. Mathare

The other one to be involved was Mrs. Mathare, not her real name.

When did your husband pass on?

My husband passed on in June 2013.

Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

He was diabetic. His sugar level was extremely low and did not improve for quite some time. Ultimately, he was admitted in hospital, where he died.

Who took him to hospital? (Follow up question)

I called an ambulance to fetch him. The diabetes started in 1987 and has been fighting it since then until it overcame him in 2013.

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

It was difficult to believe that he is honestly gone. I kept on thinking that he would come back because when he left to hospital he told me that he will come back. He had already started a church under a new region and that gave me the needed hope that God won't allow him just to go like that.

What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

It was on Sunday and I was at church. One church member visited hospital. When that member was about to leave the hospital, my husband asked for a piece of paper and said,
"I want to say my goodbyes." unfortunately, the member had no paper and went to the car to look for it. When he came back from the car, the time to visit patients was already over as a result I could not continue visiting with him. The member who had been to hospital tried to call me about the incident but could not get me because I was at church. He then tried to call my grandson but still could not get him because we were all at church together.
After church I went to hospital with my grandson. When he was still registering the car at the gate I went in. When I came in, I found them asleep and we were amazed for we stood there for sometimes with no sign in of waking up. We called the nurses. When the nurses came, they took us out and closed the door. After few minutes, they came to certify him dead. We disbelieved he is dead.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

It was like a dream. I kept telling myself that he is asleep therefore, he will wake up. I felt as though he has just fainted. I believed that God would raise him up.
It was really painful when I saw him being brought in a coffin at home. In my

mind, I kept having the story of Lazarus. As Lazarus was raised so will he. Ultimately, I realize that it was his time to depart on earth.

What was the role of the church during and after burial?

Before the funeral:

The church offered to organize the funeral. They helped by conducting prayer services and the funeral program.

After the funeral:

After the funeral, we continued with life. Although the church is small, there is a very limited progress.
Few weeks after the burial the bishop came to ordain me to take over the church as a pastor. When he came, I had no energy to lead the church. I ultimately found another pastor to help me in the church.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

I trusted him to help me through life.
One day there was a huge storm and the roof was about to be blown off. I said to myself, "If he was still alive he would help me. There was no child to send to climb on the roof and put bricks. I just stood there with my bricks in my hands because I could not climb on top of the roof. I realized that it is hard journey without him. I had to pray God to help me through.
In the middle of that, my grandson came by and ask me, what I am doing outside in the bad weather.
 I narrated the story and he climb on the roof put bricks and tires. Until today, the roof never gave me a problem.
I also did not learn to drive the car while my husband was still alive. When I am supposed to go to church I had to use taxis and leave the car in the garage. Going to church is a struggle on Sundays. It reminds me on how we journeyed together to church services.

What is the situation now?

I still can't drive. The vehicle is still kept in a garage without a driver. On rainy seasons going to church is hard because I must go the taxi rank on foot.
It is really an unbearable situation and it makes me to miss my husband a lot.

Currently what your relationship with the church?

The relationship is fine though the church is very small.
It is unstable as of now because my husband was an evangelist and the new pastor is a teacher of the word. The brethren are complaining about him because they are used to an evangelist. Other members have since deflected to other churches and others said,
"We cannot leave the place where our father left us."

Through your experience, how can you advice others who will go through similar experiences?

- The clergy spouse should remain in the Lord
- They need to cast all their burdens to God.
- The situation may be hard but you need to say, "God you are the husband to the widows, therefore you will care for us."
- At the time of the storm, I tried to put bricks on the roof but I could not. My grandson came to help. He was a provision from God at time. Therefore, I learnt to trust God with my life.

Mrs. Mphela

Another participant was Mrs. Mphela not her real name.

When did your husband passed on?

My husband passed on in February 2007. I do not remember the exact date.

Can you please share with us the circumstances under which your husband

died?

He was sick. He was discovered to have cancer, but it was already late because it had already spread to other parts of the body. Since the discovery of cancer, he was in and out of hospital. When he was very ill, I had to take care of him while on the other hand I had to go to school. His mother came to stay with us so that she can assist in taking care of him. We had hope that he will get better.

I saw him getting worse in front of me and that is the picture that I still have to date, (she said sobbingly).

Where did he pass on?

He passed on at hospital in Pretoria.

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

I just cried in disbelieve. It was really painful and a sad moment for us. I felt bitter and I just wanted to be alone.

What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

He had a brother in Pretoria and because he is the one who registered him at hospital, so the hospital called him when death strike. In the morning while I was preparing to go to work, his brother called me and said that there is a decision that we need to take urgently. I had to phone my principal and report that I will be late. In the process I asked myself, why is he not telling me over a phone but, I just ignored that uneasy feeling. When he arrived, he had already invited some of the family members. There was no need even to explain because I just immediately learnt that the worst has happened. Even his mother could see that her son is no more. Informing us was just a formality.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

Preparations were not stressful because I had policies that eased out financial burden. My main worry was: "Am I going to cope? I was overwhelmed with fear of the unknown. Although the family was supportive but I asked myself, "How will people accept me at school and in the broader community?"

The reality of growing the children alone was one of the fear factors. My son will need his father as he grows, so I thought.

What was the role of the church during the preparations?

They conducted prayer services, as is a norm in the church. Mothers came also on Thursday for prayer. They asked me if there is anywhere where they could help.

I told them that they could help with the funeral chores like washing dishes, making tea for the mourners. As I am employed, almost everything was covered by insurance.

After burial:

The structure of the church is in such a way that immediately after a clergy dies they bring another clergy. There is no time for grieving and healing. The clergy spouse must immediately after the burial see to finish. Weather she has an alternative shelter or not that is immaterial at that time.

Pertaining the role in the church, it depends on the incoming clergy if he gives you a role in the church or not. With me, there are individuals who voluntarily support me financially.

Remember, there is now a new clergy spouse and I must give her space and adjusting to the new arrangements is a problem. You are now an ordinary member of the church and the respect they used to give you as clergy's spouse diminishes. It is not easy to journey through that situation.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

Facing the reality of my singleness is a painful experience. I learnt that I have to stand on my own. The person I used to plan my life and family with was no more. There was no one to evaluate my decisions anymore.

You will realize after the decision has knocked you on the ground that it was a poor decision. If my husband was still, there he would have seen this coming and advised me.

To raise children alone is a very painful exercise. My son is twenty-two years old now. He needs his father the most. The general welfare of children is stressful, if you can't meet of their expectations. All things are facing me alone in the house as a parent. Even now, I sometimes feel very lonely particularly at night when it is quite and I am on bed. Nevertheless, God has helped me to developed coping mechanism and accepting that the situation will never be the same again.

Positive: On a positive note as a woman, you stop to be 'cry baby'. You learned to be independent and more resilient. The family will mostly be with you.

I also learnt to do things by myself. I also taught myself to work by my hands and do things like installing electric globe in the house. I just told myself that I must do things by myself as no one will do it for me. I have really matured in the process of being a single parent.

Currently what is the relationship with church?

It is not bad, because the pastor uses me as he deems fit. Some brethren still address me as clergy spouse. I also told them that I am available for any task that they may deem necessary.

Through your experience, how can you advice others who will go through similar experience?

- Clergy spouse need to be content of their new status.
- They need to be committed to something. You see myself I am very busy in such a way that I don't have time to think and nurse the negative feelings. As such, the devil does not get chance.
- Loneliness come as a human being but ideal with it by being busy.
- If there are kids, those kids need love. They must know that even if their father is no more, their mother is there for them. However, sometimes they take advantage of you. You need to be firm.
- Praying helps a lot. If there are things and feeling you don't understand about yourself go back to God. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.
- You need to be opened to your children.
- I have passed the healing stage. I am now happy about myself.
- I now find pleasure in helping us to cope too.

Ms. D.F. Mabhena

When did your husband passed on?

My husband passed on, on the 3 August 2005.

Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

I was at work when he died, as I am an educator. In the morning, he took me to work and he had no problem. At 13h 30, the nannie called me to assist her as she said that my husband is awkwardly asleep. I then talked to the principal and the principal transported me home. When we arrived home, we tried to wake him up but he could not be resuscitated then we rushed him to Dr. Nkambule surgery for medical attention.

The Dr. rushed to pump him with oxygen. He then requested my colleague to take me home to fetch medical aid card. At that moment, I had a feeling that something is not right.

Amazingly, when we went home for medical aid card we via a certain old woman (my distant relative) to take her along with us. The old woman just burst into tears, which also rubbed on me, and I started crying. Arriving in the house the old woman officially told me that my husband has passed on. I realized that when the doctor sent me home for medical aid card my husband had already died and they were afraid to tell me hence they opted for the old woman to tell me.

How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

I never believed my husband has just died because he was not sick. I was with him in the morning and he drove me to work with any hustles nor signal of ailment.

However, when we took him to the doctor I had strong believed that the doctor will resuscitate him. At that time, I believed that he has fainted.

I cried uncontrollably and I was given two injections trying to reduce the shock effect. But that would keep me cool for sometimes and when I woke up the reality will have caught up with me. When I woke up at night, I saw many people in the house and again I started crying.

When other relatives wanted to give me injection again but others said no, allow her to face the reality of her lose. It was painful indeed and hard to accept.

What method was used in sharing about the death to children/family members?

They telephonically informed the other family members. My sister in-law went to fetch my daughter from school and she kept her for a day.

When she was brought back home the following day, the elderly members of the family officially informed her that her father has passed on. She was heart-broken with disbelieve.

How old was your daughter?

My daughter was eight years old by then.

What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

I asked myself, 'how am I going to live now without my husband?' I found myself being zero. At the time of my husband's death, we had just laid the foundation of this house. Another question was, 'what is going to happen to the incomplete house that we have?

I was also meditating on why did God take my husband at this time? I just had a mixture of feelings. I came to realize that I would see my husband no more. *Ngazibuza ukuthi sengizoba yini manje* (what will become of me from now). My mind was revolving around my status, my daughter and me.

What was the role of the church during the preparation and after the burial?

My husband founded the church, so many in the church viewed him as the father.

Preparation before the burial:

The church members quickly met and mostly cried unbearably. The preparations were done at his home village at Gakwana (not the real name). Some brethren went there with me for moral support and gave their hands where they were needed. Some assisted with sound system and drafting of the program.

After the Burial:

After the burial there was no serious deflection of members as the shepherd was no more. They also tried comfort me, though to me it was hard.

On my first day at church it was horrible. Immediately I entered through the gate, the memories of my husband came back strongly. In the first service I attended, the whole service was also disrupted because I could not contain myself. When I looked at where he used to seat, I got very emotional and I even cried loud. In that moment, other brethren also cried. I could not contain myself. Some mothers came to comfort me.

Whiles they were comforting me certain old women reprimanded me for disrupting the service. They told me to lead by example. As I consecutively went to services, I would be mindful of their reprimand.

That helped me to heal quicker because I had to deal with my emotions and face the reality. I started loving those senior mothers in the church though at first I did not see it that way.

What challenges did you have after the funeral?

- One of the challenges came to me saying that my husband told them to take over the church after he has passed on. One of them even said that God told him. Eventually I realized that some men who came to me wanted to be close to me so that they can take over the church leadership.

- I could not continue preaching because I was so weak for a long time. I called the church leadership into my house and I asked them to continue to preach. There was not any further assistance they could give the family, because it was still a small church that my husband had just established.

- After the funeral, my in-laws asked me not to put on black due to my faith. They told me to be free. However, my family instructed me not to violate the traditions and they said that I must mourn for my husband.
They said that I ought to respect my culture at least by hair covering and also covering my shoulders.

- Some of my brothers' in-law came to borrow the vehicle. They took advantage that when my husband was still there he spoiled me to the extent that he drove me wherever we went to. As a result, I never learnt driving.
When I refused then they started reported all negative things about each other. Even going to church was hard because I had to use a taxi with a child while the car is parked in a garage.

- Since my husband died, my in-laws never came into my house to date. I tried to visit them but still that was not good enough to them as they did not visit me back nor call me. I realized that they only came my place for their blood. I have stopped even calling them unless there are issues like death or weddings that I have to attend.

How has been your family relationship with the church ever since then?

The relationship with the church is just good. The group that was fighting for position after the death of my husband left the church.

I then asked the national office that we affiliated to, to help me with give us a pastor. This came because it was challenge for to conduct sacraments.

Did the national office give a Pastor?

Yes, they provided us with the Pastor. Before that I had ran the church by myself for three years.

Through your experience, how can you, advice others who will go through similar experience?

- I don't know what to say.
- She must try to accept the situation that she is alone.
- Try to play dual roles, i.e. that of being a father and mother and father. Try to cover other responsibilities.
- The mother shall be a role model to the kids.
- Your life shall be a light to the in-laws.

- It is essential that after the death of your husband, you should not move away from your in-laws. If there are functions, it is essential that as a family member you attend as usual.

- As a woman sometimes you are forced to accept the blasphemy of labeled that, you killed your husband.
- After the death of your husband, never expect to be loved by your in-laws, but you should continue to love them.
- If you still young and the time is ripe, you can still get married.

Pastor F.P. Nkwana

For how long have been a clergy?

I have been a clergy for thirty-three years. I count only after ordination.

How many assemblies (churches) have you pastored?

This is my fourth assembly since after my pastoral ordination.

What can you say are the struggles of clergy spouse after the death of the male clergy?

- The struggle with finances particularly those whom the clergy was the only source of income.

- Power struggle is also a challenge in some. The woman was leading the church with her husband but now is no longer recognized as a leader. At the same time, the woman does not know her position in the church anymore.

- The clergy spouse after the ordeal of losing their husband they mostly get lonely. Their loneliness is compounded by losing friends and acquaintance as they attach to the new clergy spouse. Now they are left all alone.

- One of the most challenging thing relates to accommodation especially those who resides in a manse. After the death of the male clergy, they are given the maximum of three months to vacate the manse.
- We have generally seen them struggling because they never had a house. Unfortunately, the money that most clergy get is minimal and clergy can't afford to purchase a house or build one.

What is the role of the other pastors on the surviving clergy?

The role of the other pastors is very poor. Even the clergy spouse distance themselves from other clergy spouse immediately after the death of the male clergy. In most cases ties and relations with other structures are cut

What is the responsibility of the church on clergy's family before and after the funeral?

Before the funeral:

The church is supposed to take care of the clergy spouse especially with finances. They need to have a way of assisting the clergy spouse even though they not give the salary as it was given to the clergy. The church should not completely cut the source of income particularly when there is no one working in the family.

The church should ensure that the family does not struggle in arranging the funeral.

After the funeral:

The church should refer the clergy family for counselling.

The clergy family should be allowed to participate in church activities, as this will help them not to feel so lonely.

They should be a supporting structure to the family by being visible to the family and giving them comfort.

In your own experience as a clergy, what can be the advice to the clergy's family and local church leadership?

● There should be strong working relationship between clergy family and local church leadership. Good working relations closes all the negative doors and suspicions.

● The clergy family and the local church leadership should work towards building trust among one another.

- Some of the clergy spouse have a feeling that the church owes them due the clergy's service. Any assistance the church gives to the clergy is not obligatory.

- The local church leadership needs to value the contribution of the clergy in the assembly. The local leadership need to try to encourage the clergy family to be involved in the church.

4.2. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the stories of the co-researchers as told during the interviews. The author learnt the importance of allowing the people to narrate their own life stories as a form of emotional breather. The analysis of these narratives shall be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF STORIES OF CLERGY SPOUSE WHO LOST THEIR HUSBANDS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher gave an account of the interviews done.

The interviews revealed several aspects, which can be further researched in relation to how the death of the male clergy affects the relationship between the clergy spouse and the in-laws? The author is of a view that exploring this further will benefit both clergy widows and families. Some widows indicated that since the burial of their husbands their in-laws stopped visiting them despite their attempts in advancing towards them.

The interviews also highlighted that the care provided for by the church is mainly concentrated during the traditional week of mourning until burial. After the burial, there seemed to be no vehicle or instrument of care. Pastor F.P. Nana echoed these sentiments during the interviews. The author sensed that most widows seemed not to be willing to elaborate on the reality of the pain experienced in the hands of the church.

Oliver Leaman in his article released by British Library cataloguing in1995 contends that the changes to the social fabric and their implications for politics, crime and health have been well documented and much discussed, but they also affect our perceptions of death. With smaller family ties, there will be fewer losses from death than his counterpart generations ago. Death will generally be unfamiliar and there will perhaps be a tendency to feel unsure about how to act in the face of it. Nowadays death usually takes place in hospitals and the undertakers retain corpses until burial or cremation.

The body will be disposed of in a relatively swift manner, with little ceremony and the bereaved friends and relatives are expected to get back to normal life quickly.

This is very different from the practices of the past, when many people died at home in the company of their family, the body being then prepared by the family or undertaker to lie in the home before the funeral, so that mourners could view the body until the ceremony itself.

Very elaborate clothes and rituals would often be involved, and the bereaved would be expected to display quite dramatic grief behavior at the funeral itself, and keep up a vestige of that behavior for some considerable period afterwards.

Carol Staudarcher articulates that "even if you could have anticipated the death of your husband, or friend, or child, you could not have anticipated all the feelings the loss brought", (Carol Staudarcher, 1987:4).

Hence, many widows were stunned by the death of their loved ones because though everybody knows about death the gravity of the pain it causes cannot be fathomed.

The interviews brought to light the deficiency of the principal pastoral care methodology. As one of the widows agonizingly indicated that, the pastor used to pass remarks on the pulpit saying that he is better than his predecessor is. Such unfortunate remarks from the man who is supposed to love and caring, are like a hot knife slicing butter in the heart of a recovering widow.

The manner in which a person dies, the place i.e. home or hospital, the burial

process all taken together have a bearing on grief. However, seeing the body of the deceased is a catalyst for closing the chapter of our loved one.

In this chapter, we shall analyze the stories as told by clergy spouses. The researcher anticipated to have at least five clergy widows and two male clergies who might have had an encounter with clergy widows in the assemblies they have pastored. However, only one pastor could be secured as a result one clergy spouse was added. Therefore, six clergy spouse were interviewed and one clergy.

Almost all the clergy spouse interviewed said something positive about the church immediately after death had struck the family.

The circumstances under which the clergy died, the reaction of the spouse, the support they had, relations, and their resilience are analyzed. The real names of the co-researchers were altered to maintain confidentiality.

5.2 THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE CLERGY DIES

Six different widows were interviewed. The seventh interviewee was the pastor. This was done to get an alternative view from the points raised as the pastor is a spiritual leader. According to the author's observation the pain, grief, sadness, shock and trauma caused by the death of their loved one was consistent.

 Kubler Ross state: "Death strikes indiscriminately – it cares not at all for the status or position of the ones it chooses; everyone must die, whether rich or poor, famous or unknown. Even good deeds will not excuse their doors from the sentence of death; the good die as often as the bad die".   (Kubler Ross, E: 1975:5).

The researcher noticed emptiness and helplessness after the loss of the loved ones and how death has irreversibly damaged and altered the lives of grieving mourners. Pain caused by unresolved death was reflected all over them and their struggle was prevalent. The death experience was unfortunate to the families and the experience of trauma was unfathomable in the entire family.

From the stories of the participants it is clear that no one is ready enough to

face, the death of his/her loved one. Death can never be fully understood and the pain thereof is unbearable. Death always brings new experience in the lives of the survivors. When one loses a spouse and sometimes to come he/she loses a child, these agonizing experiences are never the same. Every experience and pain is unique. Hence the author believes that on one can be equipped enough to face the death of his/her loved ones. In an African context, it takes the community to journey with the bereaved persons. After losing their loved one the surviving spouse struggles to make meaning out of life. Gertie says "that our meaning of death is influenced by the meaning of death to the important people in our life"

(Gertie A. 1991:34)

As they narrated their stories, I noticed how death had brought emptiness and helplessness in their lives. The emotional and social fabric of their lives was torn apart. Death caused irreversible damaged as it altered their lives. Most of them were still struggling to come to terms with the pain of unresolved death.

It was noticed in most of them that the church was invisible after the burial, where she is needed the most. The feeling of abandonment and betrayal by the local church leadership is of critical concern.

It is worth noting that the majority of the clergy died due to health related sickness. That raised a question of the wellness of the clergy.

Three of the co-researcher's husbands where diabetic that is Mrs. Gloria, Kwayikwayi and Mathare. In the clergies that passed on due to diabetes, Mrs. Gloria's husband had been diabetic for more than ten years.

Mrs. Gloria husband thought he had diabetes but he did not show visible signs. Even the family could sometimes forget that he was sick. When he suddenly got ill, then it dawned that he had diabetes. That made the spouse and the kids not to be emotionally, psychologically ready for the ordeal, as they were not prepared for the situation. Upon their arrival at the hospital, it was found that even the sugar level was unthinkably low. The researcher was challenged to rethink of the clergy's health and wellness.

In Mrs. Kwayikwayi's situation, her circumstances were compounded by the

delay by the hospital to do an operation. This was captured when she said, "The hospital postponed his operation from March to June, and my husband passed on in April". All along, they never knew that her husband was diabetic until it was discovered at the hospital. Unfortunately, it was already at an advanced stage but they promised to operate on him in June. The big question she had was why the hospital delayed the operation to June. His condition was bad and it was at an advanced stage but still they deferred the operation.

While they still waited for the June consultation, his health worsened and when rushed to hospital it was too late. Mrs. Kwakwayi never stopped blaming the hospital for what she termed negligence on their side. Prior to her husband's sickness, she had just cancelled the medical aid. That raised the spirit of self -guilt as she felt that she could have done better.

The death of her husband evoked her deep-seated grief when she initially thought she has over it. At this point, she started crying. We had to pause while allowing her emotions to stabilize. The author was not aware that her reliving the event of her son's death caused her tears. The trauma and grief for her departed son overwhelmed her when her husband died. It was at that point that she realized that she had not fully recovered from her son's death.

Mrs. Sithethi:

Mrs. Sithethi's husband never showed any ailment until the sudden attack that took her by surprise. At the week of his death, he was busy organizing for his sister's funeral. When he suddenly got ill, it was hoped that it was a minor thing from which he would recover.

The hospital could not provide answers as they had indicated that it was just tonsillitis. That gave the family hope that he would be rejoining them. Her husband's death could not prepare her in advance, as he never showed signs of being seriously ill before then.

His death was devastating to the wife and the family was in a state of shock. Albeit the assistance the church gave towards funeral, it was disappointing to learn that the church leadership expected them to move out of the manse immediately after the funeral and she was told that her time was up. It was completely unthinkable. The author observed hurt and pain written all over her eyes. She further expressed loss of trust in the church structures.

It is more than five years since her husband passed on, but she still shows signs of emotional helplessness. She has a problem of holding on, onto something that is no more there. She still keeps her husband's clothes intact in a wardrobe. She needs to have way of releasing him in her spirit so that she can move on with life. Though her husband is no more, it is clear that he is alive in her. Though the participant claimed to have accepted and recovered from the tragedy, it was evident to the researcher that she was still in denial. A testimony to that is the clothes in the wardrobe that she does not want to dispose of. The author believes that this action of the co-researcher will keep her trapped and enslaved in a false recovery process.

Mrs. Mphelane:

Her husband got suddenly ill and was rushed to hospital. Upon diagnosis at hospital, he was discovered to have advanced cancer. The doctor who attended to him admitted that the disease had reached an advanced stage and it had spread to other organs. At the time of his critical illness, she had to take care of him while still attending to her other responsibility of being an educator. When his mother came over it was a huge relief as she could now also focus on her education obligation.

The most painful thing was that she could see her husband being emaciated before her, but she could not help him. That was extracted from her statement when said, 'I saw him getting worse in front of me and that is the last picture of him that I have.'

However, he was sick but she hoped that he would get better. It implies that the death of her husband left unpardonable and unthinkable grief in her heart. The most disturbing thing to me was to experience the pain these women went through without being able to help them. My helplessness was born from my inability to console them.

Mrs. D.F. Mabhena:

In the morning her husband never showed any sign of sickness, and even accompanied her to school. After some hours at work, she was called by her

nannie to assist as her husband had awkwardly, sleep. When he was rushed to the doctor, he almost already gone. However, the doctor hesitated in telling her about her husband's death but he referred her home under the pretext of fetching the medical aid card. The doctor had already arranged via her principal, a certain old woman who is her relative, to inform her of the tragedy.

It was imperative for the author to purposefully interact with the responses of the interviewee.

5.3 **THE REACTION OF THE SPOUSE**

Dealing with the death of a person closest to you is stressful and devastating. All the participants reacted different to their spouse's death.

That was evidenced by several factors like the type of relationship, cultural background, and social conditions at the time of his death, and the cause of death.

All the co-researchers went through stage one of Elizabeth Kubler Ross's grief stages. Kubler Ross contends that after the loss a person experiences the denial stage. This denial stage includes numbness and all other things around become meaningless. At this stage, it is hard to accept the reality of the loss.

According to Bowlby (1980) as cited by George A. Bonanno, *et al* (2004) "bereavement theorists have typically viewed the absence of prolonged distress or depression following the death of an important friend or relative, often termed absent grief, as a rare and pathological response that results from denial or avoidance of the emotional realities of the loss" (Bonanno, 2004)

The researcher's hypothesis was confirmed during the interviews. The interviewees expressed their most excruciating and paralyzing emotional pain that they went through. They were trapped in the terrible reality from which

they could not escape but had to bear. Adjusting to change in their daily lives was one of the prominent expositions. Some lamented that they no longer had the spouse with whom to socialize.

Other participants feared as to how to face the church after the death of their spouse. It meant their identity was intertwined with the position of their spouse. After death, they need to reformulate their identity.

The co-researchers mostly were confronted with a challenge of redefining themselves. As the previous relationship is now broken, they have to reconstruct their relationships, which will militate against the withdrawal syndrome. Adjusting ones' belief is essential to realign fears and pain with the word of God. The interviews further confirmed that to thrive, the co-researchers should have to find inside themselves a way to ascribe meaning to the tragic death experience.

Mrs. Sithethi even blamed the hospital for not being opened to her on her husband's sickness. This aggravated her level of grief and trauma. In her account she said that she got sick and nearly died after the news of her husband's death. During the preparations for the funeral, she was very confused and frustrated as she said that she was not herself. The literature review revealed that this feeling is one of the symptoms of grief. According to the participant, she felt betrayed by the church as her husband almost all her life served God in the church.

Mrs. Mphela not only cried in disbelieve but also felt bitter about the situation. Thinking of her son growing up without a father, it was unfathomable to her. The fear of not being accepted increased her grief and trauma.

Mrs. Gloria responded with shock and numbness. Her hope of seeing her husband getting better were squashed at receiving the tragic news of his death. Kubler Ross, as alluded to in the literature review, says that when our loved one is still alive we bargain with God but when he/she dies, we lose everything and move to the stage of grief and depression.

Mrs. Kwayikwayi:

According to Mrs. Kwayikwayi she found it hard to accept the reality of her husband's death. In her denial process, she developed insomnia. This caused

her to be very tired in the morning, as she never had night rest. The hospital was also blamed for delaying the process of operating on him while considering they had also discovered blood cancer.

Debra Holland affirms her reaction in her articulation of emotional effects of grief. "Blame, abandonment and bitterness are some of the emotional effects of grief" (2011:36). The 'Batho Pele' (people first) principle was overlooked in terms of Mrs. Kwayikwayi's version. This was evident in terms of the protocol the hospital employed. They had to wait for other patients who were on the waiting list for transfer to Steve Biko hospital.

Her feeling was that her husband's situation should have been prioritized or at least she could have been told earlier that they had a problem so that she could have considered alternative means at her disposal.

Mrs. Mathare:

For Mrs. Mathare it was also hard to accept the news. She thought her husband would come back. With the unfinished building project, and new church that he had started, his departure was even more painful. Her faith was on God that as He rose Lazarus, He would be able to rise her husband from sickness. Seeing him lying in a coffin was too much to bear for Mrs. Mathare. This confirmed her own mortality and that she would one day face death of her own too.

Mrs. Mabhena:

Mrs. Mabhena's husband passing on was more traumatic to her because it was sudden. Her account clearly stated that her husband was not sick for a long time and as such his death was more of a shock to her. It made it painful and hard to accept.

5.4. **THE SUPPORT**

Taken from the interviews, the death of the spouse can be one of the most stressful experiences in one's life. Social support can be widely beneficial in moderating the effects of both chronic and acute stress.

Centre for Human Studies On Human Stress defines Acute stress as the stress resulting from specific events or situations that involve novelty, unpredictability, a threat to the ego, and leave us with a poor sense of control.

Chronic stress is said to result from repeated exposure to situations that lead to the release of stress hormones. This type of stress may cause wear and tear on your mind and body.

As numerous research studies have demonstrated, spousal bereavement is a major source of life stress that often leaves people vulnerable to later problems, including depression, chronic stress, and reduced life expectancy. While the grief process usually takes weeks or months to subside, a small minority of bereaved persons' experience symptoms for much longer. In many cases, these symptoms can resemble other psychiatric conditions such as Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) to the point that it is almost impossible for mental health professionals to tell them apart.

It is the researcher's view that a partner's death affects the other emotionally then relationally. The support that the church and family friends give to the bereaved person may be the emotional breather the person needs at the time. A vulnerable person needs more moral and spiritual support. The acquired support has the potential of minimizing the stress level and depression.

In this section, the support from the church and family in journeying with the clergy spouse is discussed. The social support may not be as conclusive as other scholars have indicated but I believe that it is one of the most important coping resources.

Mrs. Sithethi

Immediately after the breaking of the news of my husband's death, the church was there to give support. The church was with the family and asked them not to do anything as they would take responsibility for all expenses. They also helped in running the program. As a norm in most African culture, the local church members came to conduct prayer meetings for that week.

After the funeral, unfortunately the church was nowhere to be seen. Mrs. Sithethi said that it was as if she never existed. The local church leadership told her that they have buried their pastor and therefore she and the son must see

themselves through.

"That was the more painful experience". The regional leadership helped them by pleading with the local church to give the clergy a bit of time until they found their own accommodation.

Their situation was aggravated by lack of financial income to help in purchasing or building a shelter. The husband was the only one providing for them, his departure meant that the source of financial provision in the family had dried up.

The family also never had accommodation and they had to prepare to evacuate the manse. While they had a pain of losing the husband now it was a pain of not having accommodation.

The socio-economic conditions brought into light the reality of losing her husband. The mourning process was converted into a hurting process.

The participant's disappointment on the church's' actions further inflicted pain in her. It was shocking for the church to utter such a statement to a fellow member. According to the author, this is a travesty of justice.

As she was narrating her story, shock and trauma was reflected on her face, though she was trying hard to conceal it.

It was clear that the participant had lost the companion of her lifetime, with whom they shared several activities. Unfortunately, in the process of mourning, she lost the relationship with the church she had served for many years with her husband. The church and the people that have been part of their life for such along now treated them in this unloving manner.

When the church told her to look for her place, the grace of God lifted up her biological family to stand with them in these trying times. Only the family was there to give support to the spouse and children.

Mrs. Gloria

The church has been of huge help to Mrs. Gloria's situation. Their bishop also called to give words of condolence. Weekly prayers were pursued, as is the

norm of the church.

Even after the burial, the church continued their support even financially. The church still provides stipend to the clergy spouse and they are accommodated in the manse. The support about the clergy spouse is the best. However, the same could not be said about the other congregations. In terms of their national church, the clergy spouse could stay in a manse for at least nine months after the death of the clergy.

The bishop gave the words of condolence to the family. Although the overwhelming church support, and that from her in-laws last came on the day of the funeral.

Since then, they never called nor visited her and she does not know what is in their mind. The efforts of trying to come close to them never materialized.

Mrs. Kwayikwayi

In Mrs. Kwayikwayi's case, the church was there to give support. They did all the work that needed to be done. The church bought the groceries needed for the funeral. The participant and her husband are founding members of the denomination. When they look at her, they saw their mother and they knew no other spiritual parents except them. This made the entire support and interrelation issues to be much easier.

After the funeral, the support from the church was still visible. They cared for her and continue to regard her as their mother. To compensate the situation is that she was elevated into the position of the pastorate as indicated during the presentation.

Mrs. Mathare

The church offered to organize the funeral for their pastor.

After the church there is nothing tangible as the church is small. The Bishop came back after the funeral to ordain Mrs. Mathare as a new leader of the church.

Due to insufficient physical energy, she solicited the assistance of another pastor. She found it too difficult to accept as that was contrary to her hope of seeing her husband recuperating. The pain was increased by the new work (church) that they had just started which needed both of them to pioneer.

The participant could not fault the church on their support based on the size and the fact that it was a new church.

Mrs. Mphela

The church community came to conduct prayer meetings as part of the spiritual support to Mrs. Mphela. The women division of the church also visited the family on Thursday for prayers.

Their denomination structure is in such a way that immediately after the death of one clergy a new clergy is brought in. In Mrs. Mphela situation, the structure of the church does not allow the clergy spouse to heal.

Mrs. D.F. Mabhena

In Mrs. D.F. Mabhena's case, her husband founded the church. The church community viewed him as the father of the church.

Before the burial the church, though small, gave all their weight in support of the clergy spouse. The clergy had to be buried at Gankwana. It meant all the preparations had to be done there. Some women volunteered to accompany the clergy spouse to her in-laws, as they were to prepare for the funeral.

After the burial

After the funeral there was no serious contribution from the church, the church was new, and my husband was the founder. Some members supported her as she was sobbing mostly when she went to church. Mrs. D.F. Mabhena could not stand looking at the place where her husband used to sit in the church. It took some elderly women in the church to reprimand her about the unceasing sobbing every time she came to church. Her cry would every time disrupt the liturgical processes. What helped her was that she took the reprimand as part of the support the elderly women gave her at the time.

The participant narrated that her in-laws never came into her house since their son died. The author believes that the widow does not only need the church support but also that of the whole family unit.

Widowhood is a new journey to the woman. Several socio-economic adjustments are required. In this emotional condition and social dilemma, she needs the church, family and society that will stand by her to give support.

Pastor F.P. Mkwana

The church does not have a well-structured system of support or caring for the clergy spouse. Even the other clergy spouses mostly do not do anything.

The church should ascertain that the clergy spouse does not struggle after the passing on of the clergy.

The participant articulated that the church is deficient of a solid system to support clergy spouses after the death of a male clergy. He indicated that, that is one of the grey areas in the church and no one dares to address it. Every local church leadership is utilizing its own discretion on the matter.

The only thing that is explicit is that the clergy spouse should leave the manse. That also depends on the local church leadership as to when do they want to call another pastor. The author believes that the system places the clergy spouse at the mercy of the local church leadership. Hence, those who are not in the favor of the clergy, immediately after the funeral, want the clergy spouse to leave the manse and thus make her more vulnerable.

Support or lack of it, thereof, has the potential of building or breaking relationships.

5.5 THE RELATIONSHIPS

Generally, the bereaved struggled with many intense and frightening emotions. Most often they felt lonely and isolated in their grief. Hence, the importance of having someone to lean on is vital. The ministry of present is imperative though a person may not have answers. As a person avails herself to the grieving spouse it is imperative to comprehend that grief is like a rollercoaster, it is unpredictable. Compassionate listening can be helpful.

Mrs. Sithethi

Mrs. Sithethi's relationship with the church is at the lowest. The relationship was soured by the statement released by the church leadership saying that they have nothing to do with them anymore. According to Mrs. Sithethi that was the most painful experience of her life. She was even crying as she uttered that statement. The statement from the local leadership was embarrassing to say the least.

Staying in the manse did not help their relationship with the church either. This was because rumors and gossip started circulating in the church about her being in the manse while her husband had passed on. Those gossips instead fueled the strain in their relationship with the church. From the events and statements from church members, she was pressured to take her son and move out without being fully prepared.

Her opinions and feelings meant nothing at this stage. To escalate the situation, even her son was terminated from leading the worship team.

The question that the author asked himself was where is the love of Christ in the whole saga? Is our relationship with one another representative of the Christ we profess to serve?

If we can't take care of our own, how can we take care of those outside the church?

Her relationship with the church was only for the time while the clergy was still alive. The clergy only knitted the ties between the clergy's family and church after him they broke down. The relationship with the church did not help her grieving process to heal but aggravated the pain.

Mrs. Gloria

In contrast to Mrs. Sithethi's situation, Mrs. Gloria's church leadership was supportive through and through. Mrs. Gloria alluded to the fact that her husband had just passed on three months back and everyone was still sympathetic to her situation. The church was even providing financial support. As a result, the relationship with the church was intact.

The relationship with the in-laws has been soured during preparation for the

burial. Her husband's family, against her wishes, buried her husband in the village not in the area where he worked for the last twelve years.

After the funeral, her in-laws never called nor visited them in spite of her effort to come closer to them. The statement which says, 'Since they buried their son they never came back to check us or see how we are coping', resonates from the painful heart.

Mrs. Kwayikwayi

The effect of the legacy of unresolved loss can be devastating as seen in the narrative of Mrs. Kwayikwayi. The first loss of her son launched her on an inescapable course through grief.

The second loss, which was the loss of her husband, revived the past loss. Mrs. Kwayikwayi's previous grief was precipitated by the loss of her husband and left her more vulnerable and in a state of guilt.

The relationship enhanced the support she required the most now. She also had a good relationship with the church. Though her support and relationship with the church was solid, it could not be said that it was so with every clergy spouse.

However, Mrs. Kwayikwayi narrated a story of another clergy spouse who was immediately instructed to leave the manse and look for her own place. According to Mrs. Kwayikwayi that instruction was made at the funeral by the regional chairperson of the church. At that moment, that clergy spouse realized that as a clergy spouse immediately after the death of your husband you become an outcast. That is, irrespective of your husband's contribution to the work of God in the church when he dies you are just a zero.

When the new clergy came into that church, he kept on making hurtful remarks while on the pulpit towards her. He constantly said that he did things better and differently than the previous clergy. She was also never featured in the church program any more. Her relationship with the church gradually developed cracks.

The narrative from Mrs. Kwayikwayi gives us an inference that as clergy spouse

your relations with the church are linked to your husband. As soon as he dies some of the relationships also die.

Mrs. Mathare

The relationship with the church is fine. Although she was qualified to lead the church but she felt that she did not have the energy to do so. Hence, she opted to invite another pastor to come and help her. Her church was small and never had any other clergy except the founder.

As it was still new they never experienced the challenges that long standing churches had.

Mrs. Mphela

In the case of Mrs. Mphela, her relationship with the church was fine though there was a lack of support. There was no system in place to journey with clergy spouses. After the death of the husband, it is well known that the church was finished with the clergy spouse.

The relationship with the church was enhanced by the fact that the new clergy used her gifts where he deemed it necessary. That made her to be opened for use in the church.

However, there were individuals who voluntarily made her financial contribution. These contributions signified the relationship between the clergy spouse and those individuals.

Her family relations remained solid even after the death of the husband

Mrs. D.F. Mabhena

The relationship with the church remains intact even though there were other men who deflected because she did not give them leadership responsibility as they envisaged (Doesn't make sense.). The remaining church leaders continued to assist her with preaching while she was still in the mourning process. This speaks to a harmonious relationship between the clergy spouse and the church leadership.

Their national office also provided them with the pastor to help with sacraments. That gesture strengthened their relationship with the church community.

As the relationship with the church was strengthened, the family relationship was weakened. Mrs. D.F. Mabhena alluded to the fact that since after the burial her in-laws never came into her house. She tried to visit and called them but all never changed their stance of not coming into their house.

This propelled to her also not to visit them anymore. Their only contact is when there is a function like death or a wedding. Fueling the strain in relationship was her denial to lend them her husband's cars. The relationship between Mrs. D.F. Mabhena and her in laws was apparently bonded by marriage.

The death of her husband has broken the formal bond between them as families. When walking through a loss, the journey may seem long and rocky and winding particularly if there is no support structure. But when one starts to gain control of her destiny, she develops a resilience which is equivalent to inner strength.

5.6 **CLERGY SPOUSE RESILIENCE**

 Losing the beloved life partner is never easy at any rate, irrespective of the circumstances. Strong marital intimacy contributes to greater loneliness for the surviving spouse. Resilience refers to the quick recovery of the widows from the tough and traumatic encounter with the death of their respective spouse.

The loss can be sudden and very unexpected or the loss can be long in coming from the protracted sickness that gives the surviving spouse time to prepare for and adjust to its eventual inevitability.

The resilience of these clergy spouses is never uniform across all dimensions. Some seem rejuvenated but deep down they are harboring intense pain, regret and bitterness, which result into depression.

This depression limits their social connectivity and decreases their physical and emotional well- being.

Generally, numerous research has demonstrated that spousal bereavement is

a major source of life stress that often leave people vulnerable to opportunistic problems. These problems include inter alia depression, chronic stress and reduced life expectancy.

However, clergy spouses have internal strength to deal with loneliness caused by loss of the spouse. One of the co-researchers indicated that she had passed the grieving stage. The author understands the statement from the participant to mean that she had accepted the loss and had developed the coping mechanism.

However, as a relational being, she has found strength in prayer, meditation on God word, and loving her children more. This is a story of resilience. The strength of the relationship between the deceased and the surviving spouse makes a huge different in building resilience.

Several studies suggest that widows who are highly dependent on their spouses are more likely to develop problems with anxiety afterwards. While strong marital intimacy may lead to greater loneliness for the surviving spouses.

Loneliness also represents perhaps the greatest challenge for some of the widows and makes it hard for some to move forward with their lives. Research studies have shown that loneliness, after losing a spouse, can lead to a reduced life expectancy and increased risk of dementia.

Most of the co-researchers indicated that their first response was more traumatic. One of them said that when she approached the church gate, it was as if someone was pouring her with a basket of grief.

Almost all of them indicated that their first experience at church after the death of their husbands was being overwhelmed with grief and sadness. Believing in the benevolence of God was very instrumental in their resilience. When faith seems to be offering little comfort to some but maintaining high spiritual discipline helped them cope. According to Wortmann and Park, (2008) say, "Christian belief provides comfort for the bereaved," Crystal Park & R.J. Halifax, *et al* (2011)

Crystal Park and R.J. Halifax contend that religious and spiritual traditions offer panoply of coping resources for dealing with death. Grieving for our loved ones

is appropriate and expected even in Christian circles. Christ Jesus wept at the gravesite of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35).

Faith in Jesus Christ provides comfort to Christians and a belief that our loved one has gone to be with the Lord soothes every pain. All the co-researchers confirmed that the prayers conducted during the week of mourning helped them to cope with grief. A believe in after death is an anchor of the soul for Christians. It gives hope that though death is universal but if our relationship with God is intact, we shall meet our loved ones on the other side.

"Both religion and spirituality play a central role in the human experience," (Crystal L. Park and Roshi Joan Halifax, 2013). Though there are positive results from those who are spiritually inclined, different studies have concluded that there are no consistent results to that effect.

Therefore, researchers say there is no conclusive evidence of the role of religion and spirituality in bereavement.

We can extract from clergy's spouses that their spiritual connection with God was the major force in their resilience. One even said that meditating on God's word helped her to clear the mind of negative thoughts. Some of them cited prayer as a vital component in dealing with grief and bereavement. Their evidence signifies the essence of spirituality and religion in producing positive thoughts and subsequently resilience. Grieving continues long after the funeral is over that is why support is still important when all other mourners are gone. The resilience of the clergy spouse is not synonymous to their recovery even though resilience catalyzes the recovery process.

Generally, several scholars indicate that recovery connotes a trajectory in which normal functioning temporarily gives away to threshold or sub-threshold psychopathology, usually for a period of at least several months, and then gradually returns to pre-event levels. Full recovery may be relatively rapid or may take as long as one or two years.

By contrast, reliance reflects the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium. In the development literature, resilience is typically discussed in terms of protective factors that foster the development of positive outcomes and healthy personality characteristic among children exposed to unfavorable or aversive life circumstances. Therefore, George A. Bonanno (2004) argues that there are

different pathways of resilience to loss and trauma:

5.6.1. Hardness

A growing body of evidence suggests that the personality trait of hardness helps buffer exposure to extreme stress (Kobasa, Maddi and Kahn, 1982). Hardness consists of three dimensions: being committed to building meaningful purpose in life, the belief that one can influence one's surroundings and the outcome of events, and the belief that one can learn and grow from both positive and negative life experiences.

"Hardy individuals are also confident and better able to use active coping and social support, thus helping them deal with the distress they do experience". (Florian, Mikulncer, and Taubman, 1995)

5.6.2. Self-Enhancement

Another dimension linked to resilience is self-enhancement. Self-enhancement is associated with high self-esteem, but also with costs. In some people, death of the husband may result in low self-esteem and affect any future relationship. One participant said that she blamed herself for allowing her medical aid to lapse. Such feelings combined with a sense of powerlessness and an inability to change the situation may be devastating. The longer one grieves the more one loses self-esteem.

This is because the grieving person may feel as though she is not winning the battle over grief. Low self-esteem makes the grieving person more vulnerable.

The author submits the self-esteem after the loss alters the perception of oneself. The widow who has self-esteem can realize that she still worth contributing to the society.

Hence Paulhus says, "Self-enhancers score high on measures of narcissism and tend to evoke negative impressions in others" (Paulhus, 1998).

5.6.3. Repressive Coping

"A considerable body of literature documents that individuals identified by either questionnaires or behavioral measures as repressors tend to avoid unpleasant thoughts, emotions, and memories" (Weinberger, 1990).

"In contrast to hardness, and self-enhancement, which appear to operate primarily on the level of cognitive process, repressive coping appears to operate primarily through emotional focused mechanisms, such as emotional dissociation", (George A. Bonanno; 2004, 25-26)

The pathways enable the researcher to understand and interpret the resilience of the co-researchers. Mrs. Mphela in her account during the interviews said that though she felt lonely, she had accepted her situation as a coping mechanism. It has also emerged from her responses that she was thriving in spite of the sad experience of her loss.

The following emotions were perceived throughout the responses:

- The feeling of rejection and loneliness
- General sense of emptiness and powerlessness.
- Missing the intimacy of the other partner
- Feeling that the social circle is constrained and acquaintances too limited.
- Fear was a factor in some of the participants.
- A certain insecurity was prevalent in most of them.

5.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the stories of clergy spouses were analyzed under the following themes, circumstances under which their husbands died, the reaction to the death, the support, relationships with either the church or family and resilience. The survivors though overwhelmed by the sense of irrevocability, the memories of the deceased live on and become the beacon of hope.

The interviews showed that the kind of relationship the surviving spouse had with the deceased could make a huge difference. Those that were highly dependent on their spouses were more anxious afterwards. This was evident in the cases of those who could not drive their cars to church and Mrs. Sithethi who depended on her husband to pay the bills. The next chapter will attempt to expand on the findings and provide a caring model.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CARING MODEL AND CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the analysis of the interviews. This chapter is intended to focus on the summary of the findings to support all previous chapters. In this section, the data collected shall be interpreted and the caring model proposed and finally close with recommendations. Based on the

summary, the author shall state the findings and conclusions in relation to the problem statement.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

6.2.1 Chapter One

Research topic

Chapter one initially dealt with the research topic, the impact of death of a male clergy on the spouse. It was indicated that the study would focus on the Pentecostal denomination where female clergy is still at its embryonic stage. Hence, the death of male clergy affects mainly female spouse who are left alone in the manse. The clergy spouse faces severe humiliation and trauma after the death of their spouse, as they are expected to leave the manse immediately after the burial. The policy does not give the exact period for the clergy spouse to leave the manse after the funeral. Hence, it is subject to abuse by some local church leaders. The expectation is that the local leadership shall manage the process rationally. Generally, a Pentecostal movement believes in baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. The encounter with God is enabled by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit should be guiding the leadership towards managing the process of the clergy spouse's relocation. Mention was made of how the implementation of this practice inflicted pain on the bereaved families because it left most of them being vagabonds.

The aims of the research were:

i. To create a pastoral model of caring for the troubled souls.

ii. To capacitate the church leaders in order to assume a better way of dealing with clergy family after the death of the male clergy.

iii. To explore ways of therapeutically caring for the clergy family.

To the best of my knowledge, the objective of this research has been met. A model of how to deal with clergy family has been suggested. The key suggestions, is to treat people as an image of God and to be human enough during mourning process.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study was make the church leadership aware that the practice of removing the clergy family from the manse immediately after the funeral is causing more damage to the bereaved families. This practice leaves many clergy spouses traumatized and frustrated instead of journeying with them towards healing. The clergy spouse should be treated with dignity and respect even after the death of the male clergy. It is the author's view that this research shall have reached its objectives when the church leadership starts to engage clergy spouses on the issue of relocation instead of just removing her family soon after the funeral.

The significance of this shall be observed through a pastoral care methodology as proposed in the practical theological field. The local church leadership will be equipped and sensitized on how to better care for the troubled souls. However, the caring methodology should empower the traumatized clergy family to become the champions of their own destiny. That is, to work towards their own healing and self-worth.

6.2.2 Chapter Two

a. Hypothesis

The researcher initially had a view that the practice of removing the clergy family from the manse immediately after the funeral dehumanizes the clergy spouse and is unethical. The death of a male clergy disorientates the clergy and leaves the clergy more vulnerable.

There is a pressure of church and public expectation against the reality of the agonizing experience.

This research assumed a qualitative approach, grounded theory and interviews as academic methods of soliciting experiences of clergy spouses. In the interviews, it was discovered that some clergy spouses never experienced marginalization only from the church leadership but also from the in laws. These widows have an uncontrolled anger with the church, which booted them out of the manse without giving them time to mourn their husband. Bitterness, regret, despair, loneliness are common allies to the clergy spouse at this stage.

After the funeral when mourners are gone and the reality of losing a spouse

dons, is the time where church is being closer to the members. The observation as an academic method within the qualitative approach was very helpful physical expressions of the core searchers. It was then that the actual pain, disappointment about being removed from the manse immediately after the funeral surfaced.

As the co-researchers narrated and related their painful stories, their negative ordeal with the church leadership was evident. Certain questions drove some participants to agitation and tears to the point of pausing the interview for a moment. The author observed that most participants were careful not to expose some of the excruciating pain inflicted on them by the church after the death of their husband. They were only content to say that the church governing board told them that they have buried their pastor and therefore they must see themselves through. Verbalizing the painful experience was a mammoth task for most participants. This comprehensive observation enabled the author to employ the grounded theory. This research acknowledges the different denominations' policies and opinions on what should happen to clergy spouses after the death of the male.

Sampling

Co-researchers from a Pentecostal background were selected because of the authors' orientation. Those widows who experienced the death of their spouses while they were still in the office of priesthood were core participants. The pastors from Pentecostal churches were vital to provide a different dimension pertaining to their experience of encountering clergy widows.

The data was extracted solely from the participants' experiences. The questions were uniform to all participants excluding the pastors who had their own set of questions. This brought to light the plight of the clergy widows.

As one could not secure interviews with the other pastor, the author had to rely on the narrative of one pastor. His experience also was consistent to what the clergy widows had to say. The pastor lamented the lack of caring system from the church and further articulated that even the pastors themselves do not care for one another. It was very clear that like the local church leaders, after they have buried their own colleague they forget the surviving widow. This study suggests a model that can be pursued in managing the situation of

the clergy family after the demise of the clergy.

The interviews revealed that the employed widows moved on quicker with their lives in spite of the painful experience of being removed from the manse immediately after burial of the male clergy. Contrary to that, those who were solely dependent on the stipend from the clergy (husband) experienced more agony. Hence, the latter group was more bitter and angry at the church and some with God for subjecting them to such a humiliating experience. The model of journeying with the bereaved clergy spouse might assist while some might require professional counselling. The pastoral care process will be vital to deaden the agony that was experienced.

6.2.3 Chapter Three

Though there is massive literature on death from social sciences and psychology the unique experiences of clergy spouses in a Pentecostal orientation were not covered. To navigate the way forward the author had to surge through the literature on death, grief, loss and trauma from different academic disciplines. The researcher had to do the scientific study of death and the practices associated with it from literature in order to gain pertinent knowledge on death, grief, mourning, trauma, and loss. The acquired knowledge enabled them to interact with Kubler Ross's stages of grief as alluded to in the chapter three.

The grief victims had to be allowed to share their experiences. Julian Muller enabled the researcher to comprehend the essence of the experience in tackling current issues.

Muller argues that for a person to construct his or her present reality, the telling of past life stories is essential. He articulates that, "we give meaning to our lives with the stories well, because the stories in our memories from the framework of, or attempts to discover meaning in life", (Muller J. 1999:1).

Muller's arguments threw a better insight on the author's understanding of the importance of previous experiences of the co-researchers as the attempt to deal with everyday life issues. The views of George Palmer that, "the continuous search for meaning in suffering and death, and not just in life, can assist practical theologians in creating a model of care for the bereaved families" (Palmer, 2014:284), was critical for the author in journeying with the

bereaved families.

6.2.4 Chapter Four

The clergy widows described their respective experiences as very painful. The co-researcher narrated how their loved died. Some of them could not hold their tears during the interviews. The author observed that it seemed the church took hands with the clergy family in laying the soul of the clergy to rest. The rejection and humiliating attitude apparently began immediately after the funeral. This negative attitude levelled against the clergy family had created a rift between the church and the family. It was evident throughout the interviews that other co-researchers were trying to downplay the gravity of their negative emotions through denial.

The memories of her late husband came flooding after the burial as she was told that the person who brought them together is gone. That contributed to her sobbing the whole night, particularly during the first few months of her widowhood. Against the traditional operation of disposing the clothes of the deceased after six or twelve months, Mrs. Sithethi has kept her husband's clothes intact. The fear of facing the uncertain future alone was radiant in their eyes.

Though the widows believed that their loved have gone to be with the Lord, loneliness, trauma and grief were apparent, and disappointment about the church was unbearable. This resulted in one of the potential co-researchers refusing to participate sighting the reason the she was very hurt based on how cruel the church was after the funeral.

 It was my observation that some of the participants have not got over their grief albeit their attempt to conceal their emotions was not evident. In some of the participants, a fresh wave of sorrow swept them during the interviews.

Deegan affirms this reaction by indicating that, "the recovery is not linear. The journey is not made up of a specific succession of stages or accomplishments. Furthermore, it does not follow a straight course", (Deegan 1994:155). As in the stages of grief alluded to in chapter three, recovery from trauma is not an event but a process.

An environment had to be created in which the co-researchers would feel

valued during the therapeutic process. This is done by evincing empathy and warmth.

6.2.5 Chapter Five

The chapter initially dealt with a report of in-depth data gathered from the co-researchers during the interviews and went further to analyze the data. The raw and living data had to be juxtaposed to the existing literature. It is worth noting that the concept of loneliness was consistent in almost all participants and it manifested after the funeral. Generally, scholars have identified the death of a spouse as one of major causes of loneliness. Social support buffers the effects of bereavement. There was a trend towards increased social isolation and emotional loneliness, which was exacerbated by removal of clergy spouses from the manse without allowing their grieving to finish.

The indication from other participant was that they feared losing their status in the church and society. During the interviews, it was evident that their fears were justified as in one incident a pastor told a clergy widow that her time was over and a new leadership had come in. It is utterances and attitudes like these that further entrenches clergy widows more in perpetual grief and loneliness and loss of self-esteem. It further deprives the bereaved of an opportunity of developing coping skills and delays the healing process. The theory of mental incongruity predicts that the presence of more favorable conditions, like more social support, reduces loneliness.

According to the theory of relational loneliness, the partner's death leads to a loss of identity, and thus increases emotional loneliness, and social support does not fully mitigate emotional loneliness following a loss. Studies show that relationships with others may be a source of incongruity when expectations of support fall short of actual support.

The church leadership practice of removing the clergy spouse from the manse is overtly viewed as a way of preparing for the incoming pastor. Though this practice in terms of the church policy remains one of the gray areas because there is no clear directive on how it should be administered. Guidelines to

indicate the period a clergy widow should spend in a manse mourning her husband. This unclear policy has subjected many clergy spouses to abuse by church leaders. It was discovered even the new pastors who come into the church do not care and some inflict more pain than what the clergy family has already experiencing.

After the funeral, the clergy widow is directed to take his/her kid/s and look for a place to stay. One of the most disturbing factors is when the announcement is made on the day of the funeral and the clergy spouse is told to prepare for her departure. It is very evident from the narratives that the clergy's' commitment and loyalty to church account for nothing after his death. To rub salt on the wound is when the extended family members also withdraw from the scene and the clergy widow is left at the mercy of God alone. The second and the sixth participants painfully echoed this experience. The clergy spouse is at this stage detached and insignificant in the church and is thrown into relational refugee status. As other participants have indicated that they asked themselves, how can they face the church after the whole ordeal? Such questions throw them more into a predicament rather than elevating their confidence and self-esteem.

After the funeral service, no follow up is done on how the new widow is doing. The good work the church did heading to the funeral is nullified by their actions after the funeral. Mostly they feel abandoned and betrayed by the church. Then they are overwhelmed with shame and humiliation. The deep sense of shame as articulated by Wimberly resonates also from the participants.

The first participant narrated that the church leadership informed her that they had buried their pastor, therefore she and her son needed to see himself through. Another participant also alluded to her experience where one pastor told a clergy widow that her time in the church was over. To compound the shame and pain, this was uttered during the sermon.

It is a pity that many clergy spouses die without their stories being told. These and many similar stories cause more anguish in the clergy spouse. Though the pain of losing the spouse may be similar to everyone but due to public expectations and the role the clergy spouse plays in the church it makes it a

unique experience. The pain and sorrow was written on many of their faces, in some even tears welled up as they narrated their stories. One of the challenges is the hostility that the clergy spouse is subjected to from the church and the in-laws. Pastor F.P. Nkwana said that even other clergy spouses did not visit the widow as colleagues.

He indicated that social and relational needs are not the only needs of the bereaved family. It was clear that most of the widows struggled financially particularly those who were unemployed. For many pastors getting a new shelter is always a challenge. The stipend the pastors get is far below the living standard hence it is difficult for them to secure a house.

This lack of personal shelter leaves the widow on the ledge after the death of a male clergy.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs, security and safety is one of the basic needs. After the death of the male clergy, the family, which was dependent on the manse as the sole home for the family, is left exposed. This is because a shelter provides a very essential means of protection, a feeling of worth and wellbeing. Without this necessity of a shelter, the will to survive is compromised.

It became clear to the author that the manner in which the clergy family is removed from the manse aggravates the grief that the clergy family is already experiencing. This is against the knowledge that finally the surviving clergy family should move out of the manse after the demise of the clergy.

It seemed as though each leadership used its own discretion in terms of the implementation of this principle of the removal of the clergy spouse. Hence, it is subject to abuse.

It is the researcher's view that clergy spouses who have been subject to removal from the manse immediately after the funeral and those whose removal was announced on the day of the burial have been left bitter and angry at the church. In many instances, there has been a breakdown in relations between the church leadership and the clergy spouse. From the interviews, it became known that after the funeral there isn't an amicable

relationship between the church and the clergy spouse. In the author's view, the break in relationship between clergy spouse and the church negatively affects the children though this is not conclusive, as no research has been done in that light.

6.3. CHURCH'S APPARENT FAILURE IN THE MINISTRY OF THE

BEREAVED

All the participants applauded the church for the support towards the burial of the clergy. The words mostly used by the participants can be summed up as: 'The church was there for me, and they prepared the funeral and conducted prayer services the whole week.'

The love the church reflected during the week building up to the burial weekend was phenomenal. There was general happiness and joy from the interviewees with how the church journeyed with them in time of their loss.

Things seemed to change immediately after the burial. The author was a program director at the funeral of one of the participants when one church leader speaking on behalf of church governing board stated that the clergy should start looking for an accommodation as they were preparing to call another pastor. This was confirmed during the interviews as one interviewee said that local church leadership told her that her time in the church was over as the person who brought them together was gone.

The third participants echoed similar utterances albeit not directed to her per se. It was one of her colleague in the ministry who was told by the incoming pastor that her time was over.

The author asked himself. "How many clergy spouses and children die bitter and angry with God and the church due to such ill-treatment?" Is there not a better way of dealing and caring for clergy spouses after God has called the male clergy to glory?

The author came to realize that there was an apparent neglect or failure by the church to care for the clergy who have in most cases given up their families in the service of God and the church. It was apparent that after the death of the male clergy, the value of the clergy family seemed to depreciate in the eyes of the church leadership. This inference results from the responses of

interviewees who expressed their satisfaction of the church's support in preparation for the funeral, but to be rejected immediately after the burial.

6.4 CREATING A MODEL OF CARING

The church needs a fresh approach to meet the needs of the troubled souls. The responses of the participants have revealed that the church has not done enough in the ministry of caring for the bereaved clergy family. Because of the lack of a systematic caring model, the clergy family has since been clouded with a sense of shame. Edward P. Wimberly defines shame as a negative self-evaluation resulting from pained interpersonal relationships. Shame involves the self and its worth and value, and is associated with not being loved and the hurt that results from feeling rejected and unloved.

The point of departure for this study was that the death of a male clergy disorientates and escalates pain to the grieving clergy spouse. It was apparent from the literature that grief is not an event but a process.

Losing one's spouse is generally traumatic and that trauma is escalated by all the societal and stringent cultural practices. Widowhood provides a myriad of economic, social and psychological challenges. The therapeutic model is proposed with an attempt to reinforce wellness of the clergy widow and mitigate the effects of the challenges of widowhood. Strobe M, Strobe W, & Shut H. have exposed that, "Loss of a spouse is one of the most serious threats to health, well-being, and productivity that most people encounter during their lives" (Strobe M.S, Strobe W, & Shut H, 2001 2001b).

The proposed model attempts to be a vehicle which when engaged it can be an instrument of providing the support system the clergy widow needs so dearly in times of grief. The support we intend to provide for our loved ones including the surviving clergy spouse requires us to understand how they express different coping mechanisms.   The model will address the following aspects: Emotional, spiritual, social and psychological.

6.4.1 Emotional Support

The interviews brought to light a lot of concealed information about the emotions of the clergy widows. According to my observation the pain, shock and trauma due to death of the spouse was still written all over their faces. Their situation took me back to Kubler Ross's statement, which says, "Death strikes indiscriminately. It cares not at all for the status, or position of the ones it chooses; everyone must die, whether rich or poor, famous or unknown", (Kubler Ross, 1975:5).

Emotional responses do not protect the widow from experiencing traumatic and negative emotions. Dealing with the grief of losing a partner is a daunting task. As indicated in chapter three and four, the loss of a spouse has an emotional impact. The emotions range from anger, to guilt and more.

The author proposes that in caring for the clergy widows, it would be imperative for the church to provide in-service training for caregivers. In most instances, the clergy is also not trained to care and support women who have lost their partners. Hence, the proposal is that a module on caring for those who lost their partners should be included in the theological training of pastors.

This will equip the pastors as they seek to provide in-service training to church leaders on how to emotionally care for the clergy widows in the local church.

The stories of the clergy widows are an indication of the plight and emotional journey of the clergy widows. The clergy widow has to deal not only with emotional turmoil of her own but also of her children's boiling emotions.

He acknowledges that social support does not guarantee holistic healing but is a component towards it.

Emotional support also means allowing the clergy widows to express their feelings without fear of being judged, labeled or prejudiced by other clergy widows.

The church leadership should understand the dynamics and reactions that the clergy widows experience in their journey of bereavement. When the church

has well equipped support groups or care givers, they can play a pivotal part with the grieving widow. Such groups present the clergy widow with an opportunity to narrate their feelings in a dignified milieu. The clergy spouse should be motivated to share their anger, uncertainty, and many other feelings. Studies indicate that the mortality rate is high amidst those who bottle their grief or have no one to tell their story to.

During this emotional journey, the clergy widows will be assisted to understand that life will never be the same again. Hence, emotional support will help the widows cope with unpleasant persistent memories. However, it is not all memories of the deceased that are harmful. Memories of a lost spouse may at times bring comfort. (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999) help us to understand the relationship between memories and emotions. The bereaved hold many affectively charged representations of the lost spouse and the spouse in interaction with the self.

 A priming of one of these memories activates emotions that are difficult to ignore. The church in journeying with the widow should create an atmosphere in which the bereaved person's memories are therapeutically taken care of. This will allow healing process to take over.

6.4.2 Spiritual Support

"Bereavement affects many areas of a person's life, including emotional well-being, self-concept, physical health, social relationships, involvement in leisure activities, and religious participations" (Lund & Caserta, 1998).

The author suggests that spiritual support will enable the bereaved to find positive meaning in a loss. A spiritual perspective of death and afterlife provides a platform for hope in death.

The presentation of God as the God, who takes away their loved ones, can portray the image that God is one who causes them to have pain. The study suggests that there should be open discussion on the topic of death in the church. Discussions on the topic will enable the widow to realize that the body is temporary while the soul is eternal. This will give hope of meeting our loved one beyond this earthly life.

Spiritual support by the church on the journey of the widows through grief

provides hope and restores meaning to life as one enters into a new life. This spiritual support also illuminates the love and faithfulness of God. Ultimately, the bereaved will start building her relationship with God again which is very fundamental to recovery. The author believes that God is a God of restoration. Therefore, the caregivers shall usher the bereaved back to God who alone is able to restore the broken heart and teach people to trust God.

The support affirms for the clergy widows that they are still worthy before God. As a result, the widows will flourish as they draw closer to God and people of God. Spiritual support motivates the widows to find their usefulness in the church again. I find it amazing that the widow Tabitha is raised from the dead because she was so useful to the community, they could not do without her (Acts 9:36-42). The author holds the view that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, brings comfort to the widows through the ministry of love by church. Eucharistic adoration is often the best way for the widow to come to the encounter with God. The widows often have more time and they should be encouraged to use it to come closer to God through prayer and subsequently be productive in the ministry of serving others.

Throughout the investigative study, the author realized that most co-researchers use their spirituality to cope with the challenges of widowhood and create positive adjustment to the loss of the spouse.

The author submits that the training of pastors should purposefully venture into producing the pastor that is capable of caring for various socio-spiritual conditions. As seen in the study that lack of capacity of the clergy, creates more damage in the body of Christ.

Studies have shown that the effects of traumatic loss depend greatly on whether those wounded can seek and find comfort, reassurance and safety with clergy or other caregivers.

The widows' strong connections with trust in the local church that others will also be there for them when needed, counteracts feeling of insecurity, helplessness and meaningfulness.

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Hence, the pastorate should be developed in a way of shepherding the clergy towards healing and spiritual restoration. Gerkin shepherding model is vital in enabling the clergy to journey with the widow and help her to find healing pastures.

6.4.3 Social Support

The prevalent notion among widows is that one of the most important but ignored aspect of losing a spouse is the change is ones' identity. People usually define themselves by the relationships they have or make with people. Marriage gives a woman a marital status amongst her peers. The loss of her husband means that the person she used to be identified with is no more. During bereavement services, people usually say that we cannot understand what a person has lost until we understand the relationship that was shared with the deceased. In many clergy families, the author has noticed that the clergy spouse is highly dependent on the clergy economically. Then when the male clergy dies, it becomes a complete loss to the surviving spouse because the main provider is no more. The clergy widows need to be encouraged to develop income-generating projects so that when the clergy pass on, they may not struggle economically.

The church has a responsibility to reaffirm that the clergy spouse still has a value and role to play in the church. Clergy spouse should form a support team for surviving clergy widows come closer to her for support person (Doesn't make sense.).

The clergy widow will heal quicker when she is accepted and is gradually allowed back to work in the worship service according to her gifting. Social support will allow the grieving widows to redefine themselves according to the new relations they have been helped to establish.

 As they are allowed to get involved in the ministry of the church, the self-esteem is rekindled. It is imperative to understand that the environment has a potential of altering a person's outlook of life and helps the bereaved person to make a constructive effort in building her own life.

The quality of support from the church given to the clergy widows will help them develop coping mechanism. The author submits that well-structured support teams be established in the local churches.

The support teams shall therapeutically and empathically listen to the plight of clergy widows. The majority of the core researchers expressed loneliness and depression.

These emotions shall be understood as the painful experiences.   Listening to their painful stories, will mean to them that there is someone who is willing to listen to their painful story chapter. Their listening to stories will help boost the widow's confidence. This further enables the widow not to internalize and magnify the pain but to vent it out and subsequently catalyze the healing rate.

The issue of accommodation remains one of the peculiar challenges that the clergy widows are faced with. Most clergy families reside in the parsonage and are without a place they can fully call 'home'.

It is unfortunate that some of the pastors cannot afford to purchase or build their own houses due to minimum income. As a result, when they die, the family is left in a manse at the mercy of the church governing board as observed in Mrs. Sithethi and Gloria's interviews. The study recommends that the church regulates the minimum salary of the clergy and encourages them to secure their private houses. The author recommends that after the burial of the male clergy, the local church leadership should engage the clergy widow in seeking a respectful way of her relocation. I believe that will bring dignity and respect not only on the widow but also on the clear? The researcher is of the opinion that this kind of transition will facilitate closure for the bereaved family. The community will realize that the church cares for her own and they will see the love of God being radiated through their care.

One of the striking worries of the clergy widows, particularly those who are unemployed relates to finances. Mostly they get bankrupt immediately after the death of the clergy, who is the breadwinner in the family. Severe loss of income affects even the children's academic performance.

The author believes that trusting the providence of God should not substitute guidance from the church and the other community members on economic viability.

The researcher suggests that the church should establish projects, which will help the widows to be economically affluent after bereavement. The researcher believes that the care of widows is to be holistic, i.e. socio-spiritual.

The author further submits the importance of associating with other spiritual leaders and clergy widows so as rebuild the faith in God. The social support alone does not suffice. The church, therefore, should have a platform in which clergy widows would share positive lessons learnt in their journey.

6.4.4 Psychological Support

Many church caregivers mostly ignore the fact that widows suffer from various psychological stressors. This resulted in having widows who are generally in a deplorable psychosocial state. The author would like to submit that the widows suffer from the sin of omission by both the church policy makers and church administrators.

Provision of psychological support will help the widow to cope and reduce her anxiety level. As the anxiety rate is reduced, the widow will start undergoing the healing process. It was indicated in chapter three of this research that grieving results in disorientation, disorganization, denial and disbelieve by widows. That has since been confirmed during the interviews.

The forth participant reported having learnt new skills, like installing electric bald? fixing door handle etc. These skills have resulted in positive changes in her life. Hence, this psychosocial reinforcement allows the bereaved to be authors of their own destiny.

The widows also identify their own hidden strengths and these strengths became the building blocks for their resilience. The clergy widows should not view widowhood as the end of the road but as a time to achieve goals that one had previously neglected while she was still in the comfort of her spouse.

6.5. RECCOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The author would like to submit his concluding convictions that he was content with the findings established in this journey of a quest for new knowledge. This

led him to arrive at this scientifically calculated research, which produced several possibilities for further research avenues. Gerkin helped him to enter into the space of the troubled souls and journey with them as a shepherd, a priest and voice to the voiceless.

This could not have been achieved without Wimberly's contribution, which helped the author to affirm self-worth in the participants and acknowledge them as God's image.

The theology of healing hinges on the narrative theology, which enabled the widows to tell their stories as they experienced them. The author observed that in their emptiness and loneliness, there is a much deeper cry and agony in the clergy family for the church and caregiver to rally behind the clergy widows.

As clergy, widows strive to find new meaning and relations; the journey seems rocky and long without the support of the family of faith and broader community. It is against this view that the author wishes to submit that the clergy widows should be encouraged to be part of the progressive women groups in the community, which share spiritual, and wellness projects.

The author highly recommends that the clergy widows should be capacitated with the skills to cope after the death of the clergy. The skills should range from spiritual understanding of death and manual skills of making financial income to sustain their families.

The researcher submits that the church should develop a system of integrating clergy widows back into the church activities and that will help them in their journey towards healing and reconciliation with the loss.

The identification with the feelings of the widows and vulnerability by the church leaders is vital. This implies, gradual and systematic participative programing should be developed to usher the widows into the church activities and help them to regain self-worth.

In this study, widows from different Pentecostal churches were interviewed with an objective of establishing various experiences. The author found that there was no vast difference amongst churches in their handling of clergy

widows. They most seem to care for widows in preparing for the funeral and tend to neglect them immediately after the burial of their (church) pastor.

John Kubeka in his doctoral thesis found that Pentecostal and Mainline Churches are almost similar in their handling of the widows. The author proposes the methodology of caring based on the participant's experiences which are partly shared by other scholars.

The author submits in this work that widowhood is a reality that requires a paradigm shift in the broader church. The mechanism created in this study has put the widow back on the pedestal of respect and self-worth.

This opens doors for widows to be accepted without prejudice or discrimination. In this way, the study appeals for a sensitive approach to pastoral care, which will engage, edify, and comfort clergy widows and at the same time lead them to the liberating view of death, which Christ Jesus conquered, on the Cross of Calvary.

6.6 RECCOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- The research has discovered that most clergy died due to ill health. What causes such a high rate of ill health to pastors and how can the clergy be assisted to keep themselves healthy?

- The study revealed that in some instances the in-laws contributed immensely in inflicting more pain in the widows. How then does the family betray and desert their own sister-in law and their brother's children?

ANNEXURE: A

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

1. Can you please share the circumstances under which your husband died?

   _____

2. How did you respond to the news of your husband's death?

   _____

3. What method was used in sharing about the death to the children/family members?

   _____

4. What came into your mind while you were preparing for the burial?

   _____

5. What was the role of the church during the preparation and after the burial?

   _____

6. What challenges did you have after the funeral?

   _____

7. How has been your family relationship with the church ever since then?

   _____

8. Through your experience, how can you, advice others who will go through similar experience?

ANNEXURE: B

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE RESEARCH INTERVIEWS (PASTOR)

1. For how long have you been a clergy?
_____

2. How many assemblies (churches) have you pastored?
_____

3. What can you say are the struggles of clergy spouse after the death of the male clergy?
_____

4. What is the role of the other pastors on the surviving clergy spouse?
_____

5. What is the responsibility of the church on clergy's family before and after the funeral?
_____

6. In your own experience as a clergy, what can be the advice to the clergy's family and local church leadership?
_____

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INFORMED CONSENT
FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Title of the Study:

The impact of death of a male clergy on the spouse: A pastoral challenge

Researcher:

Mhlabane Peter: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Cell number: 0835337555/ 0718947256

You are cordially invited to participate in an academic research study due to your experience and knowledge in the research area, namely *the impact of losing clergy spouse.* Each participant must receive, read, understand and sign this document *before* the start of the study. If a child is 7-17 years and is requested to partake in a research study, the parent/legal guardian must give consent. Children from 7-17 years are also required to sign an assent form.

- **Purpose of the study**: The purpose of the study is to create a model of caring for the troubled souls and to capacitate the local church leadership in order to assume a better way of dealing with clergy family after the death of the male clergy. The results of the study may be published in an academic journal. You will be provided with a summary of our findings on request. No participants' names will be used in the final publication.

- **Duration of the study**: The study will be conducted over a period of Three years and its projected date of completion is end of February 2017

- **Research procedures**: The humans will be the primary source of data. The interviews shall be conducted with semi-structured questions. The responses from participants will be analyzed. To secure the validity of the results of the interviews, the interview may be recorded.

- **What is expected of you**: The participant will voluntarily participate and

reserve the right to withdraw at any time. In case of any uncertainty, the participant may ask questions.

- **Your rights**: Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may stop participating at any time without stating any reasons and without any negative consequences. You, as participant, may contact the researcher at any time in order to clarify any issues pertaining to this research. The respondent as well as the researcher must each keep a copy of this signed document.
- **Confidentiality**: All information will be treated as confidential as possible and will be solely for academic purposes. The autonomy of the participants shall be respected. The researcher shall not share the information of the participants with any third party without prior permission from the participant. The actual name(s) and location of the participants shall be altered to protect the rights and privacy of the participants. The researcher, participant, supervisor and the university shall access the information. The information shall be stored securely by the university. The relevant data will be destroyed, should the participant choose to withdraw from participation.

WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

_____

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature of this research.

I understand that I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the research. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions.

Respondent: _____

Researcher_____

Date: _____

Contact number of the Researcher:

_____

VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT *(Only applicable if respondent cannot write)*
_____

I, the researcher, have read and have explained fully to the respondent, named

_____ . And his/her relatives, the letter of introduction.

The respondent indicated that he/she understands that he/she will be free to withdraw at any time.

Respondent: _____

Researcher: _____

Witness_____

Date_____

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