

**The emotional effects of early orphanhood and the
church's response in the context of Zimbabwe:
A pastoral approach**

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By

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation, which I hereby submit for the Master of Arts (Theology) (Practical Theology) at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not been previously been submitted by me for a degree at another University.

Signature: (Student) _____ Date: _____

Signature: (Supervisor) _____ Date: _____



Dedication

To my beloved husband Roy who prayed fervently and unceasingly for three years while I was struggling with grief and poor health while writing this dissertation. I also dedicate this work to my late sister Lucy Motsi who loved and served orphans.

Glory be to God, the source of life.



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While I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of all the above mentioned people, I accept full responsibility for any shortcomings in this research paper and would welcome any criticisms for its improvement to the glory of God.



Abstract

The SADC region has a high rate of children orphaned at an early age due to several factors which include the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Zimbabwean orphan population is estimated at 1.6 million children (Ntakazo 2011:1). An increasing number of orphans in Zimbabwe are under the care of elderly grandparents, and some have to fend for themselves. The breakdown of the extended family support system has caused orphans to be especially vulnerable.

Against this background this qualitative study examines, from a practical theological perspective, the emotional effects of having been orphaned at a very early age on people's later lives. The context of the study is Zimbabwe. Through "the multiple case studies design" (Leedy & Ormrod 2010:137) data were collected by means of narrative interviewing from three categories of participants who had been orphaned before the age of five. Two participants of primary school age, two of secondary school age and two young adults on a tertiary education level were interviewed. The primary theoretical framework for processing and interpreting the data was derived from Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development, supplemented by Kohlberg's theory of the stages of moral development (1981) and Fowler's theory of the stages of faith (1981). This study, located in human developmental studies and practical theology, focuses on the emotional effects of early orphanhood at different stages of life and the role of the faith community in caring for such people.

The study found that children orphaned before the age of five years experience intense psychological and emotional pain throughout the various developmental stages and that this pain is expressed in a variety of ways. The study concludes with



an exploration of how Scripture and the faith community can be utilised as potential sources of healing.

Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ART:	Antiretroviral Therapy
BEAM:	Basic Education Assistance Module
BNIM	Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method
FOST	Farm Orphan Support Trust
GOZ:	Government of Zimbabwe
HIV:	Human Immune Virus
NACZ:	National Aids Council of Zimbabwe
NGO:	Non Governmental Organization
OVC:	Orphans and other vulnerable children.
PINs	Particular Incident Narratives
SQUIN	Single Question aimed at Inducing Narrative
UN:	United Nations
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Education Fund
WHO:	World Health Organization
"O"Level	Fourth year of secondary school



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Chapter 1

Orphaned children in Zimbabwe

1.1 Introduction

The SADC region, which includes Zimbabwe, has a high rate of children orphaned at an early age due to several factors such as, among others, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and road traffic accidents (www.avert.org/aids). An increasing number of orphans in Zimbabwe are cared for by elderly grandparents, and many have to fend for themselves. The recent phenomenon of households headed by children, sometimes as young 10-12 years, is one of the most distressing consequences of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. In many instances the extended family support system has broken down. Children are especially vulnerable when the fabric of the extended family has been destroyed. Where there is no strong extended family system to come to the rescue, the loss of parents results in child-headed families or children being distributed among relatives.

Much of recent research on AIDS orphans and child-headed households emphasises their physical and social needs (see Matshalaga 2004: 67; Nugent & Masuku 2007:4). This study examines, from a pastoral perspective, the emotional effects of suffering and pain experienced by people who were orphaned before the age of five. The context of the study is Zimbabwe, though there will be similarities with the situation in other African countries. The role of spirituality and the faith community in the restoration of the lives of such orphans to full personhood will be explored in order to make a contribution to the field of Practical Theology in the area of Pastoral Care and Counselling.



The primary theoretical framework for processing and interpreting the data is derived from Erikson's (1950, 1959, 1964) theory of psychosocial development with a particular emphasis on stages four to six. The polarities of stage four (industry versus inferiority), stage five (identity versus role confusion) and stage 6 (intimacy versus isolation) cover primary school level, secondary school age and the stage of young adulthood. The participants in the study will be persons from these three categories who had lost their parents before the age of five. The theory of Erik Erikson will be supplemented by the developmental theories of Lawrence Kohlberg's (1966) theory of the stages of moral development and James Fowler's (1981, 1987) theory of the stages of faith.

Theologically the study reflects on the life of Jesus to contribute to the development of a holistic approach to the care of vulnerable children. According to Miles (2003:39), Jesus "was born a vulnerable child into a vulnerable family, part of a vulnerable community, and yet he grew to become everything God wanted him to be, assured of God's love for him". This perspective creates a rich platform for viewing the church as a healing community of love and care towards those who grow up as orphans.

The study was conducted in some Harare suburbs. The strategic choice of Harare arose from two considerations. Firstly, Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, is a cosmopolitan city in which all languages and nationalities of Zimbabwe are represented. People there come from all ten the provinces, making it the most representative location in the country. The participants of this study have roots in different parts of Zimbabwe but ended up Harare. This consideration enhances the common features in the findings.



Secondly, Harare is where I live, and hence it presents an opportunity to carry out this study with a greater level of convenience and affordability than the choice of other locations in the country. Greater accessibility allowed for a more in-depth study. My familiarity with the context is enhanced by my involvement with the National AIDS Counsel of Zimbabwe as a volunteer in the north-western suburbs of Harare from 1996 to 2012. My work focused on the situation of orphans in their communities. This study investigates the experiences of six respondents. Some months were spent to build a relationship of trust with them. This was done through visits and the assurance of confidentiality. They will remain anonymous in the study and will be indicated by means of pseudonyms.

The psychosocial effects of having been orphaned have been described by various scholars in various fields. The focus of this study is specifically on those who have sustained this loss at a particularly young age, namely before the age of five. The context of this study is Zimbabwe, a country with a substantial orphan population of whom a large number is Christian (about 80%). The study also examines the response of churches in Zimbabwe to this issue. The question is whether, and if so how, the faith community succeeds in functioning as a healing community for children who have lost both parents at an early age. The approach of the study is practical theological and the focus is on pastoral care.

Six respondents have been chosen for participation in this study. They are Harare based and were all orphaned before the age of five years. Two each are of primary school age, of secondary school age, and young adults who have received tertiary education. The two primary school children are aged between 6 and 12 years. The first, Musarurwa Tapiwa (interviewed while he was still in primary school) who was born on the 24th September 2003 in Harare. His rural home is in Hwedza in the Ruzane Village. His father died on 29 December 2003 when he was two months old.



His mother committed suicide on the 18 January 2004, three weeks after the death of his father. He has no recollection of what they looked like. He only knows them by the photos the family have shown him. Musarurwa currently lives with a paternal aunt and her husband in Harare. To him they are his parents and he bonded well with them. He calls his maternal aunt *tete* (Shona for “father’s sister”) and he calls the aunt’s husband *baba* (Shona for “father”, in this case used as cultural expression of respect rather than biological parenthood). He always knew that the aunt and uncle were not his biological parents. However, he knows he is loved by members of his extended family. Musarurwa’s elder sister was born in 1994 and lived in a foster home for a year with her brother before she went to boarding school. He misses this sister who now lives in South Africa with her husband. He has not seen her the past three years. She had gone to university in South Africa but did not finish her studies due to pregnancy. She now has a daughter, whom he has not yet met. He visualises himself as a veterinary surgeon in the future. He promised himself to work hard in order to attain his goal.

The second respondent in the first category is a girl named Zvikomborero Kachika, an orphan whose mother died in October 2008 as a result of political violence in Shamva (north of Harare). She attends one of the western suburban primary schools in Harare. Her mother was a secretary of women’s league of one of the opposition parties. She comes from a family of four children (two girls and two boys). After the death of her mother, the children were distributed among the mother’s relatives. Their own home had been burned down. This change affected her emotionally and she cried much during the early months after her mother’s death. When the father remarried, Zvikomborero and her siblings went to live with their father. The first-born girl was angry at the thought of her father remarrying and she eloped. During school holidays Zvikomborero visits one of her mother’s sisters, whom she refers to as “*mama*” (“mother”). Her life was filled with joy when her mother was alive. At present



she experiences problems, difficulties and emotional pain. Her dream is to become a school teacher and be independent.

The second category, secondary school age, consists of two adolescents who had lost both parents. Hazvineyi Marima who was born in Mrewa (north-east of Harare) in 1999. Her parents' both died in 2003 through AIDS-related conditions. She is the first-born, followed by female twins and the last-born is a boy. In her paternal extended family there are no surviving adults except for her aged grandmother who suffers from severe arthritis. The grandmother was the only adult left who could care for her and her siblings. Hazvineyi went to school at the age of seven in 2006. In 2009 she interrupted her school education in order to take care of her siblings when her grandmother fell ill. She had to assume the responsibilities of cooking and doing the laundry. She also took piece jobs (called *maricho* in Shona) in order to be able to provide food for the family. During weekends the siblings also took piece jobs to help. When the grandmother recovered Hazvineyi went back to school. However, she could not finish her "O" level for lack of money to pay the school fees. She went to Harare to live with her aunt (mother's sister) in the hope of being sent to an affordable government school. Instead, her aunt used her as a domestic worker. She also had to tend the aunt's new-born baby. At seventeen she asked her aunt to be released in order to be able to search for work. She found employment as a pre-school aide. After work she attends night school in order to acquire her "O" Level certificate. Her dream is to be a state-registered nurse. She wants to be able to take care of her brother and twin sisters and relieve the burden on her grandmother who also needs care.

The second respondent in the secondary school age category is Brian Mavhingire. He was born on the 17th of April 2000 at the Avenues Clinic in Harare. His mother was a nurse who never married the father. The father is not identified on the birth



certificate. Brian remembers one statement by his mother: *hauna baba* (you have no father). At the age of three and a half his mother died on 5 September 2003. This left him without any support. He has good memories of his mother taking him to Greenwood Park Church and nursery school. Brian was raised by his maternal grandmother until she too died in 2014. He has not yet come to terms with his grandmother's death. To him the grandmother was "everything I cherished in the world". He does not visualise a bright future for himself because there is no one to work hard for and no one to encourage him. To him life is meaningless; death has robbed him of his mother and grandmother. Brian is currently living alone in his mother's house. He lets out some rooms to tenants to enable him to raise funds for his upkeep and school fees.

The third category that of young adults, comprises two young people who have received tertiary education, Ropafadzo Musoni and Gwinyai Mandipei. Ropafadzo is a female aged twenty two. She was born on 7 September 1992. Her father died in 1996 due to a stress-related illness and her mother died of AIDS-related illness in August 1997. Ropafadzo was raised by her maternal grandmother whom she loved very much. The grandmother was her pillar of strength during the days of darkness when she lived in the rural area. She is sad that her grandmother died before she could fulfil the promises she had made to her, namely to be there for her when she grew up. After having completed her "O" Level with good results she went to live with her aunt (mother's brother's wife) in Harare. The aunt used her as a domestic labourer rather than sending her to school to complete her "A" Level education as was promised. She suffered much abuse in the home of the aunt and her husband and decided to go and live with her unemployed brother in Chinhoyi. There she was able to complete her "A" level education thanks to an American charity organisation. She was the top student in her class and could go to university on a scholarship. However, during her second year at university she dropped out because of the



emotional trauma she was subjected to by the representatives of the sponsors. Now she lives alone and is working as an administrator at a retail company. She is currently studying law with a distance-learning university. Her life regained meaning when she met a Christian couple she regards as her substitute “parents”. She has received counselling for the neglect, rejection, physical, verbal and sexual abuse she went through as a child and young adult. She believes that Christ is able to restore all the years “stolen” from her. She has learnt to understand the love of God due to the care she has received from the elderly Christian couple who embraced her when no one else cared for her. They are the only people who have shown her balanced motherly and fatherly love. She makes her decisions with them in mind because she wants them to remain a part of her life. The couple’s children have shown her love and acceptance in a way that was surprising to her, since she did not receive this kind of care from her own relatives. The couple’s eldest daughter also facilitated her current employment. Her financial status is currently improving. She visualises herself as a successful intellectual property lawyer and pastor. She wishes to care for her older siblings and younger sister and make a difference in the lives of other orphans. She would like to emulate her own counsellors’ life of supporting orphans.

Gwinyai, the second person in the third category, was born on 12th December 1991. His father died on 26th September 1996 and he remembers his father’s death with much pain even today. The death of his mother in 2008 came as a shock. He had gone to Botswana to work as a domestic worker to earn money. He found her already buried and this affected him badly because he failed to see his mother’s face for the last time. He became isolated and withdrawn. He cried all the time. In High School Gwinyai had financial problems, suffered the stigmatisation of the other children who knew that his mother had died of an AIDS related illness. He was greatly pained by statements such as *ndosaka amai vako vakafa nemukondombera* (that’s why your mother died of AIDS). After having completed his secondary



education, he left his parental home and started working as a gardener while attending the University of Zimbabwe. He eventually obtained a degree in psychology. He is currently working as at a rural school teacher in Mutoko (north-east of Harare). He teaches geography and English communication skills – not the participants for which he was trained. When his parents died the construction of their home in one of the suburbs had not yet been completed. He worked hard to finish the construction to fulfil his mother’s dream. This is where his two brothers are now living. Gwinyai visualises his future loaded with exciting happenings, for example building a beautiful two-storey house in a small town of Acturus (east of Harare). He is planning to marry his long-term friend who is a psychologist. He also shared about experiences of emotional pain during his parents’ birthdays and death days which bring sorrow and grief to his heart.

1.2 Explication of terminology

This section gives an explication of terms that recur in this study and that are essential for its understanding. The key concepts are: psychosocial support, orphanhood, emotional pain and suffering, grief, neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, child development, holistic, participation, bereavement, inner healing, vulnerability and pastoral care of hope. The terms are used as follows:

- **Psychosocial support**

Psychosocial support is the help children and young people are given to help them to cope with emotional trauma and stress. It is an ongoing process of meeting the physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual needs of children that are considered to be essential elements of meaningful and positive human development (see FOST 2005).

- **Orphanhood in Zimbabwean society**



According to Grollman (1995:16) and AVERT (www.avert.org) orphans are defined as children younger than fifteen years who have lost both parents. Being an orphan usually entails deprivation of support, loss of legal standing and becoming vulnerable to those who exploit the weak. An orphan is a child at risk, struggling to survive without the necessary means of nurture and support. In the Zimbabwean context orphanhood refers to children under the age of eighteen who have lost one or both parents and lack an extended family who could care for them (UNICEF 2004/2005:13). Such children may end up on the streets in cities where the odds of survival are against them. Most of these children have little hope of reaching adulthood or achieving much in life.

- **Emotional pain and suffering**

Emotional pain and a sense of abandonment are, among others, what orphans experience when they lose their primary caregivers (Grollman 1995:12). Often they are also separated from their siblings and have to go and live with different relatives in order to lighten the economic burden on their caregivers. Such displacement causes the suffering of having lost the place where and the people with whom they belonged (Haggai 1987:79). They suffer on account of negative changes in their life, such as neglect, exploitation, verbal and physical abuse, and the lack of access to basic necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, health and education (National Action Plan for orphans and Vulnerable Children, (NAP for OVC 2011:2). Suffering causes orphans to lead impoverishment lives since the quality of their lives is greatly reduced. Orphaned children who suffer intense emotional pain therefore feel neglected and unloved. This contributes to their lack of skills and the ability to deal effectively with emotional and social problems such as the following:



- **Grief**

Grief is a universal and mental process that is set in motion by bereavement. It is a process of self-healing and a way of recovering from loss.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with adequate nutrition, shelter, care and attention. Neglect can result in retarded or delayed development physically, intellectually and emotionally (Systemic Counselling Manual 2011:11).

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is withholding necessary warmth and affection. Lack of emotional nurturance of a child deprives child development and results in failure to thrive physically, emotionally and intellectually (Systemic Counselling Manual 11: 9).

- **Child development**

Development is a process of change in which a child is able to reach his or her spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social potential. The development of each of these human dimensions should be promoted simultaneously, through interaction with the environment. Development is a lifelong process.

- **Holistic**

“Holistic” refers to an approach which takes all aspects of human development into account simultaneously – spiritual, physical, mental, social and emotional.

- **Participation**

Participation is a process in which individuals, groups and organisation have the opportunity to become actively involved in a project or program of activity.



- **Bereavement**

Bereavement is the physical loss or deprivation of a person to whom one is attached.

- **Inner healing**

“Inner healing”, as understood by Kraft (1993:141), refers to the “deep-level healing” of the Holy Spirit which brings healing to the whole person. The power of Christ is brought to bear on healing the damage done to a person to its very roots. Inner healing focuses especially on the healing of memories. Tapscott (1976:37), on the other hand, understands “inner healing” as the healing of the inner person: the mind, the emotions, the painful memories and the dreams. The process of inner healing is aimed at setting the person free from resentment, rejection, abandonment, self pity, depression fear, sorrow, hatred, guilt, and feelings of inferiority, self-condemnation or a sense of worthlessness. It does so, among others, through prayer.

- **Vulnerability**

Children, whose human rights are violated due to a lack of sufficient legal and social protection, are extremely vulnerable. Orphaned children are often excluded from decision-making with regard to their own life and future. Though they are part of the community in which they live, their lives often lack then purpose and dignity taken for granted by other more fortunate members of the community (NAP 2011:11). This study focuses on specific problems experienced by orphaned individuals in the Zimbabwean context. This includes a disregard for their basic human rights, intense psychological suffering and a lack of care on all levels, namely physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual.

- **Pastoral care**

Pastoral care refers to the helping acts done by Christian believers in order to facilitate “the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled people” (Taylor



1983:30). A holistic approach to children's well-being is described by Wright et al (2003:20) as follows: "All dimensions of children's development must be nurtured in age appropriate ways, including their moral and spiritual development." In this study the insights of Wright et al (2003) with regard to child development, will be applied to orphaned children specifically, aiming at the transformation of their troubled lives. Biblical references to orphans and the way in which Jesus interacted with fatherless children can serve as a resource for reflecting on the emotional and spiritual well-being of people who had been orphaned early in life. The faith community has the responsibility to provide a supportive and caring "fictive family" for all people and children, whether or not they have a biological family. Those with an inordinately heavy burden need special support, encouragement and care.

- 'A'Level'

The sixth and final year of secondary school in preparation of tertiary education.

1.3 Research problem

This study investigates the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years and explores what the faith community's response could be to help children who suffer from depression, low self-esteem, anger, frustration and various negative behaviours that are manifestations of the psychosocial effects of emotional and psychological suffering.

1.4 Existing research and research gap

Existing research that is relevant to this study includes areas such as human development, education and faith development. In this regard the work of Erik Erikson (1950, 1959, and 1964) on psychosocial development, Lawrence Kohlberg



on moral development (1966) and James Fowler on faith development (Fowler 1981, 1987) will be utilised to form the theoretical framework of the study.

Given the topic of early orphanhood, the aspect of child vulnerability is of specific interest to this study. Significant charters that are relevant and will be utilised, include the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2009), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the Zimbabwe Children's Charter (2011). In Zimbabwe various social protection policies, legislative instruments and programmes are in place to ensure children's rights. One such program, which was to be implemented from 2011 to 2015, is the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP for OVC) programme (2011:18-24). The document focuses on the minimum quality care standards for orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. The work of Leighton (1996) and Murungu (1997, 2009) deal with policy matters on children and Murungu specifically focuses particularly on Zimbabwe.

Existing literature on intervention strategies is also relevant to the study. This includes the work of Olsen (1993), Drew et al (1998), Ardolino et al (2012), Grollman (1995), Sithole (2010), and Matshalaga (2004). The Government of Zimbabwe has developed national policies and laws to establish the legal infrastructure for the coordination of OVC programmes and services, for example the Child Protection Committee, which enhances the care and support for orphans. The Government also recognises traditional leaders' role in the care of orphans and the support programmes such as the *Zunde raMambo/Insimu yeNkosi* and *Dura raMambo / Isiphala seNkosi* ("the King's field and the King's granary" – people of the community work in the king's fields in order to stockpile food for orphans and other vulnerable people). The Government has also introduced the BEAM initiative which provides assistance with regard to tuition fees, school levies and examination fees.



The contribution of this study to the body of existing knowledge focuses on the effects of the emotional and psychological pain and suffering of those individuals who have been orphaned before the age of five. The effects of this early trauma on their later lives are examined in conjunction with the developmental stages in order to ascertain what problems are experienced during a particular life stage. The life stages investigated in this study include primary school age, secondary school age and young adulthood. Erikson (1950, 1959, 1964) Kohlberg (1966) and Fowler (1981, 1987) base their developmental theories on a presumed “normative” development. This begs the question how these theories could be applied to “non-normative” situations such as orphanhood or other forms of vulnerability which could destabilize the regular patterns of child development. This study focuses specifically on the effects of having been orphaned at a very early age before the child has been able to bond with parents to a significant degree. Early orphanhood will most likely have a different effect on children than if the loss should occur at a later age.

The practical theological approach of this study includes a holistic view on being human with a focus on the development of vulnerable children. Since spirituality is a significant aspect of humanity, a holistic approach will include this element. The study investigates the part that can be played by spirituality with regard to the well-being of orphans. This is illustrated by Jesus’ development from childhood and how he as an adult interacted with fatherless and vulnerable children. This biblical narrative will be utilized in the study as a resource for the development of the emotional and spiritual well-being of people who were orphaned early on in life. By highlighting issues of faith, spirituality and the faith community as healing resources this study utilises a pastoral care of hope (see Capps ([1995] 2001)).



Through the telling of their narratives children can be guided and equipped to deal with the denial, anger, fear, and other difficult emotions that arise when death tears apart their family system (Kübler-Ross & Kessler 2005:7). According to Brown (1999:9), “when death strikes, the parting is always painful, followed by grief and an almost overwhelming sense of deprivation is experienced”. In the grief process a person’s faith can play a significant role. This study will focus on the spiritual aspect of their lives as the six participants relate how they deal with the issues they face as a consequence of having been orphaned at an early ages.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the emotional effects later in life, of having been orphaned before the age of five years and explore in what ways the faith community and institutional church can respond to this phenomenon in order to support the people effectively. How the loss of parents affects the orphans’ behaviour, emotions, attitudes and their spirituality as they progress through life, will be the focus of the investigation. The study therefore aims to:

- develop an understanding of orphanhood with particular emphasis on the developmental consequences of children having been orphaned at an early age;
- investigate the potential of spirituality as a resource with regard to the well-being of the orphans;
- explore the potential supportive function of spirituality in the healing process;
- investigate how narratives can be utilised to facilitate orphans in their struggle with denial, anger, fear, and other difficult emotions;
- explore the potential for orphans to develop a strong sense of individual identity as children of God as their “adoptive Father” (Psalm 27:10);

- investigate the role that faith communities and the institutional church can play as a healing community in its response to the reality of large numbers of orphans in Zimbabwean society.

The study will focus on the following six objectives:

- to provide a framework for the understanding of orphanhood in general and specifically in the Zimbabwean context;
- to discuss models of human development in order to provide a framework for understanding the effects of the disruption of children's development when they lose their primary caregivers at an early age;
- to present the narratives of six respondents who have been orphaned before the age of five in order to gather empirical data;
- to identify and interpret the emotional effects evident from the narratives of the respondents through the lenses of developmental theories;
- to discuss the practical theological implications of the reality of early orphanhood, specifically in the context of Zimbabwe.

1.6 Methodology

A qualitative methodology is particularly suitable for an investigation of the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years. A qualitative methodology provides space for an appreciation of perceptions, feelings and opinions of participants (Mouton & Marias 1989:157). This investigation employs what Leedy and Ormrod (2010:137) call "the multiple case studies design". The choice of multiple cases leads to a richness of collaborative data. While in a typical case study the focus is on a single unit of investigation, the multiple case study approach elicits data from several participants of investigation. Therefore the narratives of six participants who have been selected in a purposeful manner (Borg



& Gall 1989:386) to fit the criterion of having been orphaned before the age of five and who represent different stages of development, will be presented. Supporting information is obtained from two focus groups: one consisting of young adults who had been orphaned at an early age and one consisting of care givers and two pastors who have experience of working with orphans.

Through a combination of purposive, convenience (see Leedy & Ormrod 2010:212), volunteer and key informant sampling (Strydom & Delpont 2011:394) the six individuals were selected. In order to gain a deeper insight into the situation of the orphans a focus group of orphaned young adults from Raffiki Girls Centre¹ was established. This institution was familiar to me, since I worked there previously. The authorities were willing to co-operate with the research project. The focus group of care-givers was also selected by purposive and convenience sampling. It consists of women from my neighbourhood who are all involved in caring for orphans of various ages. The two pastors were purposively chosen on the basis of their involvement with work among orphans.

Qualitative data was collected by means of narrative interviews with the research six participants. The interviews were done by me. As a trained counsellor, I could identify and deal with secondary trauma that could arise from the interviews. The qualitative data collected from these research participants was analysed using the interpretive framework provided by Erikson (1950, 1959, 1964) Kohlberg (1966) and Fowler (1981, 1987) in order to come to an in-depth understanding the emotional effects of early orphanhood on people later in their lives. This led to an exploration of the effectivity, efficiency and availability of the faith community for the provision of pastoral care and counselling for such orphans. The narratives of the six participants

¹This is a centre for empowering orphaned girls and is run by the Central Baptist Church in Harare.

formed the basis for reconstructing their past, constructing their present and visualizing their future.

1.7 Relevance of the study

Existing contemporary research on the phenomenon of orphaned children focuses mostly on AIDS orphans and child-headed households (UNICEF 2005). This study complements the exiting knowledge by contributing insights with regard to specifically the spiritual aspect. Though the term “spirituality” is used broadly, this study focuses on Christian spirituality and pastoral care within the context of Christian faith communities.

In Zimbabwe various social protection policies, legislative instruments and programmes are in place to ensure that children’s rights are protected against violation such as displacement by relatives of the extended family. Relevant policies and programmes include the following:

- the economic empowerment of older orphans to avoid developing in them a culture of entitlement;
- the coordination of programmes that bring orphans together in a social network;
- ensuring access to education for all children by ensuring that they are in possession of a registration certificate that facilitate their admission to schools;
- the provision of food and nutrition supplements at schools and churches;
- healthcare, including immunization and routine health checks;
- shelter and the protection of the children against being displaced from their home of origin by relatives;
- child participation in decisions about their welfare, which provides the opportunity to externalize the pain that resulted from a denial of their rights and needs;
- water and sanitation provided by the responsible authorities;



- Birth Registration (Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare 2008:4) as the right of every citizen.

In the ten service areas identified by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Public Service and Social Welfare (2008:4), aspects such as emotional pain and the healing potential of faith and spirituality are not included. This study aims to contribute to a more holistic approach that can facilitate orphans to understand themselves better, to stand up for themselves and to develop a strong individual identity over against the social stigmatization of being labelled and treated as “orphans”. The spiritual aspect emphasised by this study can contribute to the children finding a strong individual identity in God as their “adoptive Father” (Psalm 27:10 RSV).

Potential benefits to participants resulting from this study include insight into the psychosocial effects of having been orphaned at an early age and how this impact on people’s future lives. This insight can be useful not only to the persons themselves to better understand the problems they face, but also be useful to practitioners who assist in the healing process. When the psychological and emotional pain experienced by individuals has been uncovered, spirituality can be utilised as a resource in the healing process.

With regard to the broader society the results and findings of the study can contribute to a more constructive understanding of orphanhood. An awareness can be created that children who have lost their parents do not cease to be children. Society and faith communities can play a significant role in protecting children from harm and providing help for them to work through their loss, grief pain and suffering (physical, psychological and emotional) as orphans. The Zimbabwean Government, specifically the National Aids Council (NAC), has structured programmes in this regard.



1.8 Ethical aspects

Most ethical issues in research fall into one of seven categories: protection from harm, informed consent, debriefing participants, right to privacy, and deception of participants, actions and competence of researcher and release or publication of findings (see Strydom 2011; William 2006; McBurney 2001; Neuman 2000; Corey et al 1993). These ethical issues, as applied to this study, are elucidated briefly:

- **Protection from harm**

The harm that can befall participants could be physical, and/or emotional. The fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it should not harm participants in any way (see Strydom 2011:115; Babbie 2007:27). Participants should be protected by confidentiality. For this reason in this study the names of the participants have been changed. The participants chose pseudonyms that relate to their experience. One of the participants whose parent could be easily identified by the facts of the narrative, the choice was made to refer to the person simply as “a government employee”.

- **Informed consent**

Informed consent forms were completed by participants. This gave them the opportunity to choose whether or not they wished to participate in the study based on adequate information supplied to them concerning the nature and the potential risks involved in their participation (see Grinnel & Unrau 2008:37). Those above eighteen years of age filled in their own consent forms and substitute consent forms were filled out by guardians for those who are under age (see Appendix 5) (see Du Plooy 2000:109). The guardians provided the permission for the children in their care to participate in the study should the children themselves wish to do so. I provided adequate information on the goal of the study and how much time would be required

of them. This also applied to care-givers and members of the focus group (see Appendix 6). With this information the participants and guardians had sufficient knowledge to decide whether they would give their consent to participate in the study.

- **Review of sessions with participants**

Review sessions gave participants the opportunity to process the aftermath of the sessions. Questions could be posed with the aim of removing any misconceptions (see McBurney 2001:60). Through review, problems generated by the research experience could be addressed (see McBurney 2001:122). Debriefing sessions are ideal for completing the learning experience that began with agreeing to participate (see McBurney 2001:122). In this study debriefing took place individually and in the focus groups.

1.9 Chapter outline

In Chapter 2 models of human development are worked out to serve as a theoretical framework for the exploration of the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five. From a spiritual and theological perspective, the life of Jesus as a model of human development is explored for insights that can contribute to a practical theological and pastoral response to orphanhood.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the narrative interviews with the six participants who make up the multiple case studies. On each age level one is male and one female. The classification is based on educational levels: primary school level, secondary school age and young adults with tertiary education.

In Chapter 4 the data is processed and interpreted. The psychosocial vulnerability of orphaned children and their emotional pain and suffering are identified and explained.



A practical theological approach to and pastoral care with people who had been orphaned at a young ages are described in Chapter 5. The Bible and the church as resources for healing are explored. Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study.



Chapter 2

Models of human development

2.1 Introduction

This chapter creates a theoretical framework for the explanation of the emotional effects on people who were orphaned before the age of five. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1959) will be used as the basis. It will be supplemented with Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1981) and Fowler's theory of faith development (1981). From a theological perspective the life of Jesus will serve as exemplar of personal, moral and spiritual development. The integration of these theoretical perspectives will form a theoretical framework for explaining aspects such as the attitudes, emotions, behaviour and spiritual life of persons orphaned at an early age. The effects of the isolation that orphans often face, exacerbated by stigma, shame, abandonment, rejection and fear, will be explored, described and explained in order to ascertain what role spirituality and the care of the faith community and the institutional church can play in the process of healing. The aim is that a life of flourishing should become possible also for these children.

2.2 Erikson's theory of psychosocial development

Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development provides a broad framework from which to trace the development of the respondents in this study and therefore also the extent which loss of parents before the age of five affected their development and emotions. It also provides a framework for exploring the influence



of social relationships, in the absence of parents, on the development of the participants.

Erikson's eight stages of human psychosocial development are described as psychosocial crises or psychosocial modalities (Erikson 1959:51). Of importance to this study is Erikson's insight that each stage is characterized by a psychosocial crisis of conflicting forces and that a failed resolution of the crisis at any given stage will affect the subsequent psychosocial development of the individual (Erikson 1959:54). The theory of the stages will be utilised to explain the emotional pain experienced by participants. The developmental stages that are relevant to the focus of this study will now be briefly discussed.

2.2.1 The first three stages

Erikson explains the crises of the first three stages as a dialectic between (a) basic trust versus basic mistrust, (b) autonomy versus shame and doubt and (c) initiative versus guilt. These first three stages are critical in the life of a child because of their formative nature. The implications for this study of these first three stages will now be briefly elucidated.

According to Erikson (1959), the first stage, that of basic trust versus basic mistrust, occurs in infancy from newborn to the age of two. As the name of stage implies, the psychosocial crisis involved in this stage is whether to trust or revert to an attitude of mistrust. The child learns whether or not to regard the world as a trustworthy place. Trust develops when the infant's basic needs for food, safety and affection are met by the primary care-givers in a regular and dependable way. When the parents or other primary caregivers fail to meet these needs, or worse, if they are abusive, the infant develops a basic mistrust. In other words, the child will then come to believe



that the world is undependable. A possible implication of a child having been orphaned at this life stage is a failure to resolve the psychosocial crisis of this stage. This means that the child could lose hope and develop a mistrust of the world. Applying Erikson's insights also to spiritual development, practical theologian, James Fowler (1981:55) explains it as follows:

It is not too much to say that the child's first profound experiences of mutuality (or failure) in the first year of life provide a beginning ratio of trust to mistrust that funds his or her movement into the challenges of subsequent stages. Further, the quality of the child's first mutuality is likely to exert paradigmatic or patterning power in his or her ways of approaching future relationships. When the ratio of trust to mistrust is favourable there emerges the ego virtue or strength we call hope.

Against this theoretical framework, the study will examine whether there is evidence in the narratives of the six respondents that indicates that this particular developmental crisis has not been sufficiently resolved.

The psychosocial crisis of the second stage, ages two to three years, is that of autonomy versus shame and doubt. Toddlers' main task is to do things for themselves rather than always relying on others. As they explore the world, toddlers need the security that comes from the caring support, encouragement and patience of the parents or other primary care-givers in order to develop a sense of autonomy, for example, in feeding, washing or dressing themselves. The question that arises is how this affects a child who is orphaned at this toddler stage. The implication of Erikson's theory is that children who are not raised by a caring caregiver will be vulnerable and their emotional development can be compromised when they are exposed to ridicule and experience shame and self-doubt (see Fowler 1981:59). Some orphaned children may be brought up in an environment where those who look after them demand too much too soon, or refuse to let the children perform



tasks of which they are capable, or ridicule early attempts at self-sufficiency. Some orphans are obligated to perform adult chores and bear adult responsibilities before they are ready to do so. Under such circumstances, the implication of Erikson's theory is that the children may develop shame and doubt about their ability to handle problems, and therefore become reluctant to attempt new challenges.

In Erikson's third stage, the pre-school years from three to six years of age, the crisis is initiative versus guilt (Erikson 1959: 58-60). At this stage the children are very active. They plan and perform many tasks in order to master their environment and learn that some things are good whereas other activities cause them to feel guilty and unhappy about themselves. As they negotiate the many choices of growing independence, their conscience develops. If this crisis is not successfully resolved, they will have problems with values, norms and a moral compass later on in life. Here too, having been orphaned before the age of five can have negative implications for later stages of life. This study will examine the issue of guilt versus autonomy in the six chosen participants, namely whether their substitute care-givers were able and willing to encourage and support children's efforts, while also helping them make realistic and appropriate choices, or whether they discouraged the pursuit of independent activities or dismissed them as silly and bothersome. If the latter is the case, it can be inferred from Erikson's theory that the children could develop guilt feelings about their needs and desires and hence fail to develop the necessary initiative in life.

From an exploration of the first three stages of the child's development, therefore, it becomes clear that if the crises of earlier stages are not successfully resolved, problems can be expected to manifest later in life (Erikson 1959:58-60). This study now proceeds to focus mainly on stages four to six since they correspond with the



ages (primary school, secondary school and young adult after school) of the respondents in this study. These stages are:

- industry versus inferiority;
- identity versus role confusion;
- intimacy versus isolation.

2.2.2 Industry versus inferiority

The stage where the crisis is one of industry versus inferiority is that of children aged between five and twelve and who are generally attending primary school. Industry in this age group refers to purposeful or meaningful activity (Erikson 1959:87). The psychosocial crisis of this stage is that of either achieving purposeful or meaningful activity or developing a sense of inferiority. If children in this life stage are not under duress, they usually concentrate on work and the development of skills that would result in increasing self-esteem.

This study is concerned with children under duress, namely those who have been orphaned before the age of five years. Such children do not always have substitute care-givers who can encourage them and reinforce the initiative they take in order that they can develop confidence as they achieve their goals. Instead they often suffer ridicule, are punished for their efforts or are incapable of meeting the expectations of the substitute care-givers. Under these circumstances they can develop a sense of inferiority and low self-esteem. If they doubt their own abilities they often fail to reach their potential. If orphans who live in child-headed households fail to have the support they need in order to develop these skills, they could fail to resolve the crisis of this stage of development.



2.2.3 Identity versus role confusion

The stage identified by Erikson as the one in which the crisis of identity versus role confusion has to be resolved successfully is when children generally attend secondary school, which is adolescents aged from 13 to 18 years. The main question at this stage concerns their identity: who they are and where they are going. This is the stage in the development of a person where they, as adolescents, learn social roles. For Erikson (1959) identity formation in the adolescent stage is a complex process that can be affected by several factors. At this stage the adolescent's circle of significant others has both widened and diversified, including family members, teachers and peers. Since identity formation is about how one looks at oneself in the light of how others see one, the result can be like "reflected images in a house of distorting mirrors" (Fowler 1981:75). Those images may not fit together into a coherent whole, thus creating role diffusion if not role confusion. For the six participants of this study who were all orphaned before the age of five, this role confusion is exacerbated by the fact that the significant others include individuals who are not loving immediate family members but often indifferent and even hostile "carers". Role confusion is exacerbated by doubt about one's "value in the primary relationships of the family" (Fowler 1981:77). Given adolescents' strong concern with how they appear to others, trying to find a settled sense of identity amid such "reflected images in a house of distorting mirrors" is a significant psychological challenge.

To complicate the matter even further, identity formation, according to Erikson (1959), also includes an attempt to integrate a view of one's personal past with a vision of one's personal future. In this study I will explore what happens when one's past is filled with painful memories or damaged emotions. This is certainly an issue with which the six respondents in this study grapple, given the loss of their parents at



a very young age, and given the nature of “caring” they received up to the age of adolescence.

A third complicating factor in the process of identity formation is the many confusing and rapid changes occurring in adolescent’s physical body. The maturing of sexual organs, breaking of the voice in the boys, onset of menstruation in the girls or the occurrence of “wet dreams’ on the side of the boys are among the many factors affecting the psychosexual and psychosocial identity of the adolescent. The question is whether competent adults are available to accompany adolescents through these confusing changes. Those who come from stable and open-minded families have an advantage in this regard. The six respondents in this study, on the other hand, are at a disadvantage, having lost their parents at a young age.

To all the complexities of adolescence, a fourth can be added, namely that of role expectations (Erikson 1959). Adolescents experience increasing and often conflicting demands from society in terms of the roles they should fulfil and the way in which they should do it. Such roles also contribute to defining one’s identity. This study examines the extent to which the respondents have struggled to make a smooth transition from childhood to young adulthood on account of having been forced into adult roles prematurely. Adult responsibilities such as providing for daily needs such as shelter and food place a burden on adolescents for which they are not equipped. Role confusion is the consequence when an individual fails to establish a sense of identity within society and when the individual is not sure of who they are in society.

The successful negotiation of the dynamic of identity and role confusion results in what Erikson calls “fidelity” or the discovery of the authentic self based on the reconciliation between “the person one has come to be” and “the person society expects one to become” (Fowler 1981:83). Having been orphaned before the age of



five, as the respondents were, makes the failure to negotiate this identity crisis more likely. This would then result in role confusion – not seeing oneself clearly, not understanding the self and failing to relate positively to the environment. It is in this stage that some young people struggle to interact with others and to be affirmed and accepted. The six respondents in this study have mostly been transferred from one home to another. This is expressed in the Shona saying “*Nherera mwana wemunhu wese* (an orphan is everybody’s child because of being nobody’s child). This study will explore the extent to which this has contributed to role confusion.

2.2.4 Intimacy versus isolation – young adulthood

The last of Erikson’s stages that is particularly relevant to this study is young adulthood (ages 21-35 years) where the crisis is that of intimacy versus isolation. According to Erikson (1959:101), it is only after a good foundation of identity has been established in the previous stages that real intimacy is possible. Young adults who have successfully negotiated the crisis of intimacy versus isolation attain the ego virtue of true love which is the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships. On the other hand youth or young adults who are not sure of their identity shy away from interpersonal intimacy with its attendant danger of isolation, if not hostility. In other words “the counterpart of intimacy is distantiation: the readiness to repudiate, to isolate, and, if necessary, to destroy those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to one’s own” (Erikson 1959:101).

In the following chapters, the study examines the impact of having been orphaned before the age of five on the young adult respondents to whom this stage of Erikson’s applies. The aim is to ascertain to what extent they negotiate the “crises of intimacy versus isolation” successfully. According to Erikson the failure to negotiate previous stages exacerbates the danger of distantiation in young adults. The same principles would apply to the remaining two stages of adulthood in Erikson’s theory.



Though the last two stages fall outside the scope of this study they are included here briefly for the sake of completeness. Stage seven is that of generativity versus stagnation. Here the adults combine their personalities and energies in the production and care of the next generation or become absorbed in different forms of altruistic concerns leading to a form of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment. Erikson (1959:103) puts it as follows: “Individuals who do not develop generativity often begin to indulge themselves as if they were their own one and only child”.

Erikson’s stage eight places integrity over against despair (Erikson 1959:104). Integrity includes accepting that one is personally responsible for conducting one’s own life in human dignity and love, and a readiness to defend the dignity of one’s own lifestyle against all physical and economic threats. Those who fail to achieve integrity are likely to spend the remainder of their lives in despair, and a regret that they cannot start life all over again in order to find better meaning in life than the way they have lived.

Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development as explained above provides a broad framework from which to trace the development of the respondents in this study. From a critical point of view, however, a weakness of Erikson’s theory is that the exact mechanisms for resolving the crises and moving from one stage to another are not well articulated or developed. The theory does not elaborate on what types of experiences would be necessary in order to successfully resolve the crisis of a particular stage before moving on to the next stage. The broad brush strokes provided by the theory can be filled in by particular experiences. In the case of this study the focus is on experiences that can hinder the successful negotiation of a particular developmental crisis. The Erikson model which focuses on the psychosocial aspect of development is complemented for the purposes of this study



with Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development. The development of a moral compass or the lack thereof has consequences for children later in life.

2.3 Kohlberg's stages of moral development

Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) is best known for his theory of moral development which is based on his reflection on and extension of Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The central thrust of Kohlberg's theory is the claim that moral judgment and action have a rational core which involves a choice within a situation of moral dilemma. The cognitive foundation of his theory therefore complements the psychosocial theoretical foundations laid by Erikson. In combination they are useful for this investigation of the emotional effects of having been orphaned at an early age. Kohlberg claims a mainly cognitive foundation for moral judgments. However, it is not possible to divorce the cognitive and the affective aspects of moral reasoning. This can readily be appreciated from the fact that Kohlberg's interest in morality and moral education arose in part as a response to the Holocaust, an event so enormous that it could not fail to provoke a sense that grave injustice has been perpetrated, in many individuals and societies. This already presupposes the inseparability of the emotional and the rational dimensions of moral reasoning. Kohlberg studied moral reasoning by presenting respondents with moral dilemmas in order to test their principles regarding right and wrong behaviour. He concluded that people's development of moral standards pass through stages that can be categorised in terms of three moral levels, namely: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional, each of which is subdivided into two stages of moral judgement. This theory will now be briefly described and applied to the six participants in this study.

Level one, the pre-conventional level, is to be found at the ages 3 to 7 years. Kohlberg (1981) used the term "pre-conventional" in the sense that people of this age are preoccupied with the self and make egocentric decisions. Stage one of this



level is the obedience and punishment orientation. Children at this stage determine the rightness or wrongness of actions in terms of anticipated punishment or reward (Kohlberg 1981:17). Rules are seen as fixed and absolute. By obeying rules persons can expect a reward and can avoid punishment. The question for this study concerns an environment without fixed rules because of children being moved from carer to carer. This opens up the potential for emotional and moral confusion.

Stage two is termed “self-interest orientation” because, according to Kohlberg (1981:17), the basis of moral decision is “what is in it for me?” Getting what one wants requires giving something up in return for a reciprocal exchange. Typically a child in this stage might reason: “If I do what aunt wants me to do, she will reward me. Therefore I will do it. Kohlberg (1981:17) assumes a stable environment and does not take disruption and disorientation into account, as would be the case with individuals who lost their parents at a very young age. This study explores the implications of such disruption to the moral development of children at the pre-conventional level. The respondents most likely did not have much experience of the kind of reciprocity Kohlberg refers to. The study will therefore examine the potential for emotional and moral confusion in a socially unpredictable environment such as that to which the respondents have been participated.

Level 2 is the conventional level (Kohlberg 1981). This incorporates stage 3 (interpersonal accord and conformity driven) and stage 4 (authority and social order) are obedience driven (Fowler 1976:74). The conventional level of moral reciprocity is typically that of adolescents aged 13-18 years. Early adolescence is when young people must learn to maintain social order by doing their duty as prescribed by law or the rules that govern their roles. This includes, for instance, respect and gratitude, doing what a good friend should do, being a good daughter, son, good student (Kohlberg 1981:18). This then moves into stage four where authority, fixed rules, and



the social regulation of roles determine whether actions are deemed right or wrong. Moral standards at this level go beyond personal and interpersonal interests. The requirements and norms of the social system as a whole are taken into account.

In this study Kohlberg's conventional level will be applied to the narratives of respondents who are secondary school adolescents who were orphaned before the age of five. Given that, according to Kohlberg, the process of moral development occurs in the interaction of persons within the social conditions of their lives (see also Fowler 1981:49), this study will examine the extent to which the emotional condition of having been orphaned at an early age could affect the process of moral development. This can include, for example, the possibility of delayed development. Kohlberg is of the opinion that, an adolescent or even adult could be stuck in predominantly in stage two.

Kohlberg named level 3 the post-conventional level. This level includes stage 5 of moral development known as the social contract. This is a stage which recognizes that most social rules and laws are relative, but affirms that it is important to uphold them nonetheless. According to Kohlberg (1981:18) this is a social contract. An example of such a social contract is democratic thought and practice. Stage 6 is the universal ethical principle orientation whereby commitment to the principle of justice claims universal validity (Kohlberg 1981:18). This requires "moral imaginations informed enough and detached enough from one's own interests to accurately take the perspective of every person or group affected by a policy or action being considered" (Kohlberg 1981:19). Very few people attain this level. Examples of moral leaders of this calibre are Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Junior (Kohlberg 1981:27). However, concludes Kohlberg, "I maintain that stage six provides the most adequate and 'true' ... form of moral reasoning. I claim that both logically and



psychologically it is the end point toward which moral reasoning in its sequence of formal stages develops” (Kohlberg 1981: 27).

Kohlberg’s level 3 with its two stages raises questions as to the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five. One such question is to whether a person who has grown up in an emotionally destabilized situation of orphanhood could attain stage 5 of moral development and enter into a social contract. This question becomes even more critical if, as Kohlberg indicates, a person must first have successfully negotiated Erikson’s adolescent stage of identity crisis in order to be able to reach the social contract stage (Kohlberg 1981:18-19). Different people may reach different levels of moral thinking in their lives, with the possibility that some people may never reach the later, more abstract, stages. Stage six is extremely rare even under “normal” circumstances. Serious doubts may arise that a person who has had to overcome many hardships since earliest childhood may not easily reach this mature moral level.

Kohlberg’s universal ethical principle is rather narrowly based only on the development of a sense of justice while other aspects of morality such as compassion, caring, integrity and other interpersonal feelings which may play an important part in moral reasoning are omitted. In the application of moral development in subsequent chapters of this study, the Kohlberg perspective will be broadened.

2.4 Fowler’s stages of faith development

James Fowler (1981) built on the work of Piaget, Erikson and Kohlberg. His approach to human development emphasises the human aspect of faith, religiosity and spirituality. To Fowler faith is not a matter of religion or belief system, though



religion may demonstrate aspects of his understanding of faith. Fowler agrees with Tillich (1957) in the understanding of faith as an “ultimate concern” or that which gives purpose and goals to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions’. Fowler (1981:4-5) explains faith as “ultimate concern” over against “religion” as follows:

Faith may centre finally in our own ego or its extensions - work, prestige and recognition, power and influence, wealth. One’s ultimate concern may be invested in family, university, nation, or church. Love, sex and a loved partner might be the passionate centre of one’s ultimate concern. Ultimate concern is a much more powerful matter than claimed belief in a creed or a set of doctrinal propositions. Faith as a state of being ultimately concerned may or may not find its expression in institutional or cultic religious forms. Faith so understood is very serious business ... It shapes the way we invest our deepest loves and our most costly loyalties.

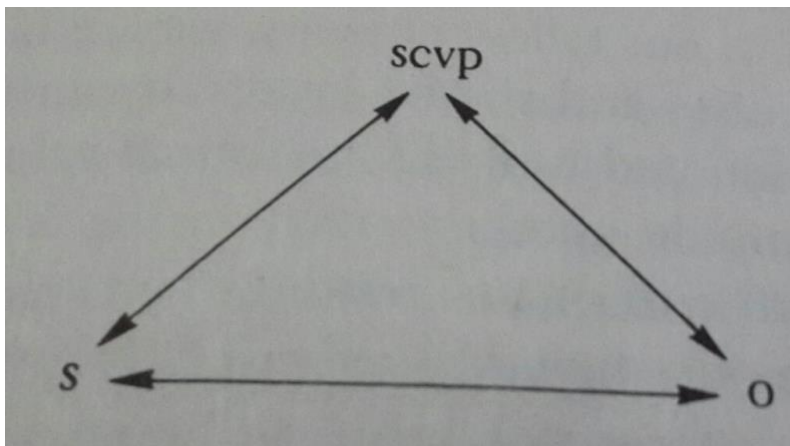
Faith, therefore, is about meaning making (Fowler 1976:3-5) and has to do with “making, maintenance and transformation of human meaning” (Burdett 1980:53, 3-5). This understanding of faith is relevant to this study. Firstly, faith is seen as a universal human concern which embraces all peoples everywhere, whether or not they are religious. Secondly, faith does not require that one should be old enough to understand and articulate a creed or basis of belief. Faith becomes relevant even to infants as it is grounded in experiences that begin with infancy. This has implications for the focus of the study on the emotional (and spiritual) effects of having been orphaned before the age of five. Fowler (1981:16) links faith to relationship as follows:

Our first experiences of faith and faithfulness begin with birth. We are received and welcomed with some degree of fidelity by those who care for us. By their



consistency in providing for needs, by their making a valued place for us in their lives, those who welcome us provide an initial experience of loyalty and dependability. And before we can use language, form concepts or even be said to be conscious, we begin to form our first rudimentary intuitions of what the world is like, of how it regards us and of whether we can be “at home” here.

As a person matures faith expresses itself along the lines of what Fowler (1981:17) calls the “covenantal pattern of faith as relational” which he illustrates which he illustrates as follows:



Fowler (1981:17) explains it as follows:

Along the base line of the triad we see the two-way flow between the self (s) and others (o) of love, mutual trust and loyalty that make selfhood possible. Above the base line, at the point of the triad, we see a representation of the family’s shared centres(s) of value and power (scvp). This is summarized by the fact that “Faith is a way in which people see themselves in relation to others against the background of shared meaning and purposes” (Fowler 1981:4). This perspective on faith development is particularly valuable for this study as it is not explained as only a psychological and cognitive matter but also as something affective and spiritual. It is on the basis of this



understanding of faith that Fowler's stages of faith form a useful theoretical framework for understanding the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five. The stages will now be discussed briefly.

The first stage is called "intuitive-projective faith" and is found at the age of two to six (Fowler 1981:121-134). Intuitive-projective faith is to be found in the fantasy-filled, imitative stage in which children can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith (Fowler 1981:133). This stage is the foundation on which the rest of one's life is built. In terms of this study, the critical question is what happens in the development of individuals who are orphaned at this very stage of "first self-awareness" (Fowler 1981:133). The study examines the consequences of the experience of deprivation (through the death of parents) and the possibly long-lasting effect of the treatment they received from substitute care-givers on the subsequent development of orphans.

The second stage of faith development is called mythic-literal faith (Fowler 1981:135-150). At this stage a person begins to take on for him- or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community. Beliefs are appropriated with literal interpretations, as are moral rules and attitudes (Fowler 1981:149). At this stage there is also almost an "excessive reliance upon reciprocity as a principle for constructing an ultimate environment". This study on the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five will have to examine the possibility of "an abasing sense of badness embraced because of mistreatment, neglect or the apparent disfavour of significant others" (Fowler 1981:150) who in this case are care-givers who may not be as close, loving and caring as the parents would have been.



The third stage is synthetic-conventional faith as can be found among adolescents and many adults (Fowler 1981:151-173). At this stage the person's experience of the world extends beyond the family to embrace diverse experiences that include work, peers, media and perhaps religion. One's faith must now be able to synthesize this diversity and provide a basis for one's identity. Fowler (1981: 172) describes it as follows:

It is a "conformist" stage in the sense that it is acutely tuned to the expectations and judgments of significant others and as yet does not have a sure enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective.

For children who were orphaned at an early age, the dangers or deficiencies of this stage can be magnified. A lack of confidence that could be the result of childhood deprivation and a poor upbringing can result in the expectations and evaluations of others being so compellingly internalized (and sacralized) that later autonomy of judgment and action can be jeopardized; or interpersonal betrayals can give rise either to nihilistic despair about a personal principle of ultimate being or to a compensatory intimacy with God unrelated to mundane relations (Fowler 1981:173).

Stage four is that of adulthood and is named Individuative-reflective faith (Fowler 1981:174-183). Some never reach this stage of faith and for others it emerges only in their 30s and 40s. At this stage the late adolescent or adult "must begin to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitment, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes" (Fowler1981:182). Furthermore, the individual at this stage must live with certain unavoidable tensions including individuality versus being defined by a group or group membership and self-fulfilment or self-actualization as a primary concern versus service to and being for others. The study will explore whether the



two respondents in the study who fall in this age-group have been able to achieve the Individuative-reflective stage with its “capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)”.

Stage five, conjunctive faith (Fowler 1981:184-198) and stage six, universalizing faith (Fowler 1981:199-211) are beyond the scope of this enquiry as they concern individuals who are past the ages of my research participants. The characteristic of conjunctive faith is that it concurs with other traditions than its own, expecting that truth has been disclosed and will disclose itself in those traditions in ways that may complement or correct its own” (Fowler 1981:186). The universalizing faith according to Fowler (1981:200-201) is attained by only very few people like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa who sacrifice their own well-being to that of their cause. Such people incarnate and actualize of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community (Fowler 1981:200).

In the following section, from a theological perspective, the life of Jesus is traced as an exemplar exceptional of human, moral and faith development. His life portrays somebody whose life was full of rejection and yet he conquered all odds. As will be clear from the exposition below, orphans will identify with him because his life shows the possibility of liberation against all odds.

2.5 Jesus and human development

Jesus is perhaps the most influential character in world history with a legacy that is still influencing millions of people so many centuries after his earthly life ended. His life can therefore be used as a platform for integrating perspectives covered in this chapter. In terms of the human development models covered in this chapter Jesus, by the time he died at age 33, had overcome the crises involved in every level in Erikson stages to reach the integrity level of stage seven. He had also attained the



universal ethical principle identified as Stage 6 in Kohlberg developmental scheme and the universalizing faith level of Fowler.

An explanation for achieving these highest attainments can be sought from two contrasting perspectives on the quest for the historical Jesus. The first perspective comes from the traditional Christian understanding of his upbringing as portrayed at face value in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. This perspective would explain Jesus' development in terms of the role played by the supportive primary family at the centre of which was his earthly father Joseph, and his mother Mary. The supportive nature of this family can well be described in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Within this family, physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualizing needs were met as evidenced by infancy and childhood narratives of Jesus' life. As a result of such supportive care, "Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). This perspective provides evidence of intellectual, physical, spiritual and social growth that can be experienced in a healthy family environment.

A contrasting, and for the purpose of this study more relevant perspective, looks at Jesus developing holistically despite vulnerability. Such a perspective is provided, for example, by Van Aarde (2001) in his book titled *Fatherless in Galilee*. Van Aarde marshal's evidence for the fatherlessness of Jesus. He points out that Joseph is not mentioned by Paul, by the gospel of Mark or the Gospel of Thomas. Joseph's role in the gospel narratives is minimal. In effect, Van Aarde argues, Jesus grew up a fatherless child. When viewed from the perspective of Van Aarde and like-minded New Testament scholars, Jesus grew up as a vulnerable child. Fatherlessness had severe consequences in his context. Van Aarde 2001:4 explains it as follows:

In antiquity, especially in first-century Galilee, fatherlessness meant trouble. Against the background of the marriage arrangements within the patriarchal



mind-set of Israelites in the Second Temple period, a fatherless Jesus would have been without social identity. He would have been excluded from being called a child of Abraham, that is, a child of God.

In the context of this study individuals orphaned at an early age could find in this Jesus someone with whom they can identify. Despite his vulnerability he claimed and trusted God as his father. He also went against the values of his time when he cared for fatherless, abandoned and downtrodden children in Palestine. Such a Jesus constitutes an inspiration to the many children in Zimbabwe and elsewhere who grow up fatherless. Jesus' life showed similar points of vulnerability to those who grow up as orphans. He was born a vulnerable child, into a vulnerable family which was part of a vulnerable community. Being born in a manger symbolized such vulnerability. This was exacerbated by Herod's threats, by living as a refugee in Egypt and being part of the "backward" Galilee community which stood in sharp contrast to the communities of Judea where the aristocracy lived. This in itself is a pointer to the role of the church in fostering a caring community of believers who are guided by Jesus as a model of human development.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1959) was used as the primary source for creating a theoretical framework for explaining the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five such a perspective. This was supplemented by Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1981) and Fowler's theory of faith development (1981). From a theological perspective the life of Jesus served as exemplar of personal, moral and spiritual development.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives will be used in subsequent chapters to explain the emotions and accompanying behaviours of persons orphaned at an early age. For example, the period before the age of five is when, according to



Erikson, the dynamics of trust versus mistrust are acutely at play. Any abuse, cruelty or neglect as a result of loss of parents can potentially destroy trust. This may in subsequent years manifest in isolation caused and exacerbated by stigma, shame, abandonment, rejection and fear. We have seen, however, that Jesus overcame the vulnerability of fatherlessness and developed holistically. This shows that being an orphan does not mean that people are not able to reach their God-given potential. On the one hand this provides a use qualification to Erikson's assertion that the failure to negotiate a crisis at any stage can inhibit a person's ability to negotiate the crises of subsequent stages. On the other hand this opens up the role of spirituality and the care of the faith community in the process of healing. As it was in the case of Jesus who found in God the father that he lacked on earth, a flourishing life should also become possible for children orphaned before the age of five years.

The following chapter presents the life-stories of the six participants. The stories were collected by means of the narrative interviewing method.



Chapter 3

Narrative interviews

3.1 Introduction

In exploring the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years in Zimbabwe Chapter 1 provided a brief biographical background of the six young people who participated in the study. Two of them, Musarurwa Tapiwa and Zvikomborero Kachika, are of primary school age, Hazvineyi Marima and Brian Mavhingire of secondary school age and Ropafadzo Musoni and Gwinyai Mandipei are busy with tertiary education. The names of the participant have been changed in order to protect their identity and ensure their privacy. The key research question of the study is about the emotional effects on the development of persons later on in life after having been orphaned before the age of five. This chapter presents multiple case histories, namely with that of six participants who were selected because of their representation of three developmental stages. All of them were all orphaned before the age of five and all are presently children, youth or young adults. The effects of an early loss of parents on people in later adulthood fall outside the scope of this study which is focused on the youth.

3.2 Methodology

The methodological approach of this chapter is that of the “Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM)”, developed by Tom Wengraf (2004). The reason for adopting this narrative interviewing approach is that it enables the participants to tell their own stories in their own words and from their own perspective. The method respects the participants as experts of their own life stories. The other advantage of the method is that problems are seen as separate from people. The problem does not



become the person's identity (see White 1987:148). Furthermore, the method yields as much primary data as possible. Participants can remember how it felt at the time through what Wengraf calls "Particular Incident Narratives" (PINs). In this approach open-ended questions are asked about events that happened in their lives, questions such as: "Tell me what you remember about how it all happened". Questions that ask about opinions and feelings are minimized as they can be either threatening for some people or may influence participants to see only what is socially acceptable or desirable rather than remain in touch with their authentic experiences.

Following the guidelines of Wengraf (2004), the participants were interviewed at least twice. In the first interview I asked a single open question: "Please tell me your life story, the events and experiences that have been important to you up till now." Such an open invitation is in line with what Wengraf calls a "Single Question aimed at Inducing Narrative" (SQUIN). The participants are encouraged to tell their own life story in their own words and for as long as they care to describe such experiences with minimal interruption from the interviewer. In the second session, I asked several questions that were all participant focused, and which followed the sequence of topics or events presented by the narrator in the first interview (see Daniel 2008:147). In this way the study brought up a description of the narrated stories by the participants identified in each group.

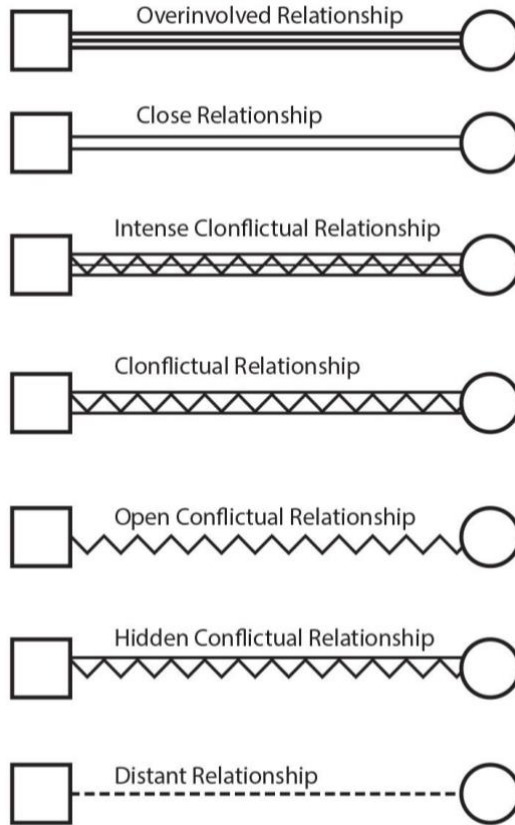


The BNIM as developed by Wengraf was supplemented with other approaches in order to enrich the data. Apart from the time spent observing and talking to the participants, data was also gathered in collaboration with their guardians and care-givers. Autobiographies and diaries of the older participants, namely the young adults who are busy with tertiary education were also incorporated to broaden and enrich the data gathered by means of interviewing. Written narratives, a tree with human figures that serve as illustration of one's life-story (Appendix 7) and the use of biblical scriptures also featured in data collection strategies. Ropafadzo, for example, made use of Scripture when relating her reaction to the diagnosis of HIV. This will be explained in greater depth later.

Of particular note in the case descriptions that follow is the use of genograms. In the process of narrative interviewing I constructed genograms that serve to provide a picture of the complexity of relationships in the families of origin of the six participants. The dynamics and what was happening in relationships are depicted by symbols adapted from McGoldrick and Green (1985:154-155). For each participant I mapped the family structure, summarized family information and described the complexity of relationships. The genograms symbols used are the following:

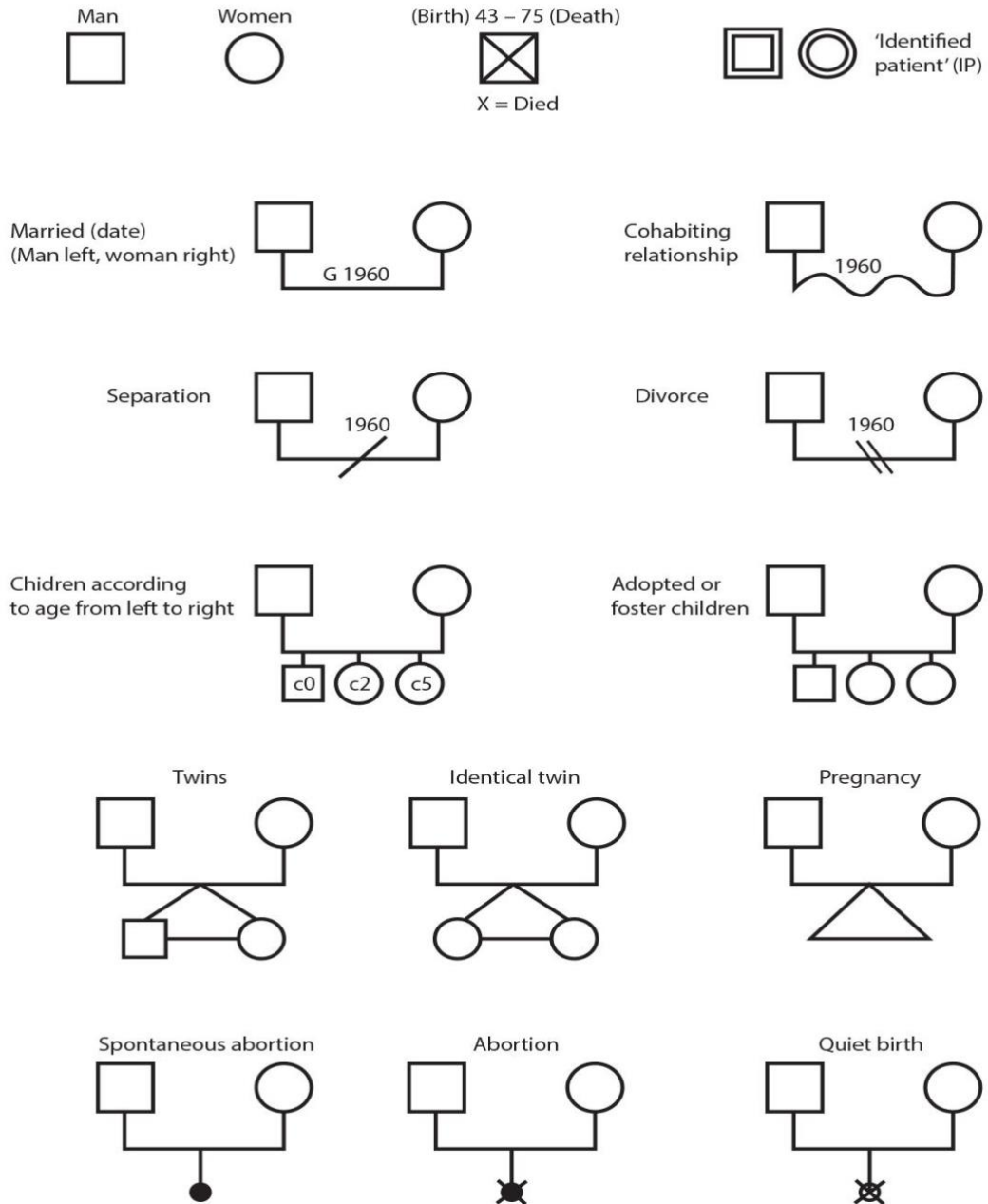


Genogram Key





Genogram Key



Adapted from McGoldrick and Green (1985)



3.3 Description of the six case studies

In the presentation of the narrative interviews that follow, the interviewer will be identified as “R”.

3.3.1 Primary school age

Musarurwa Tapiwa

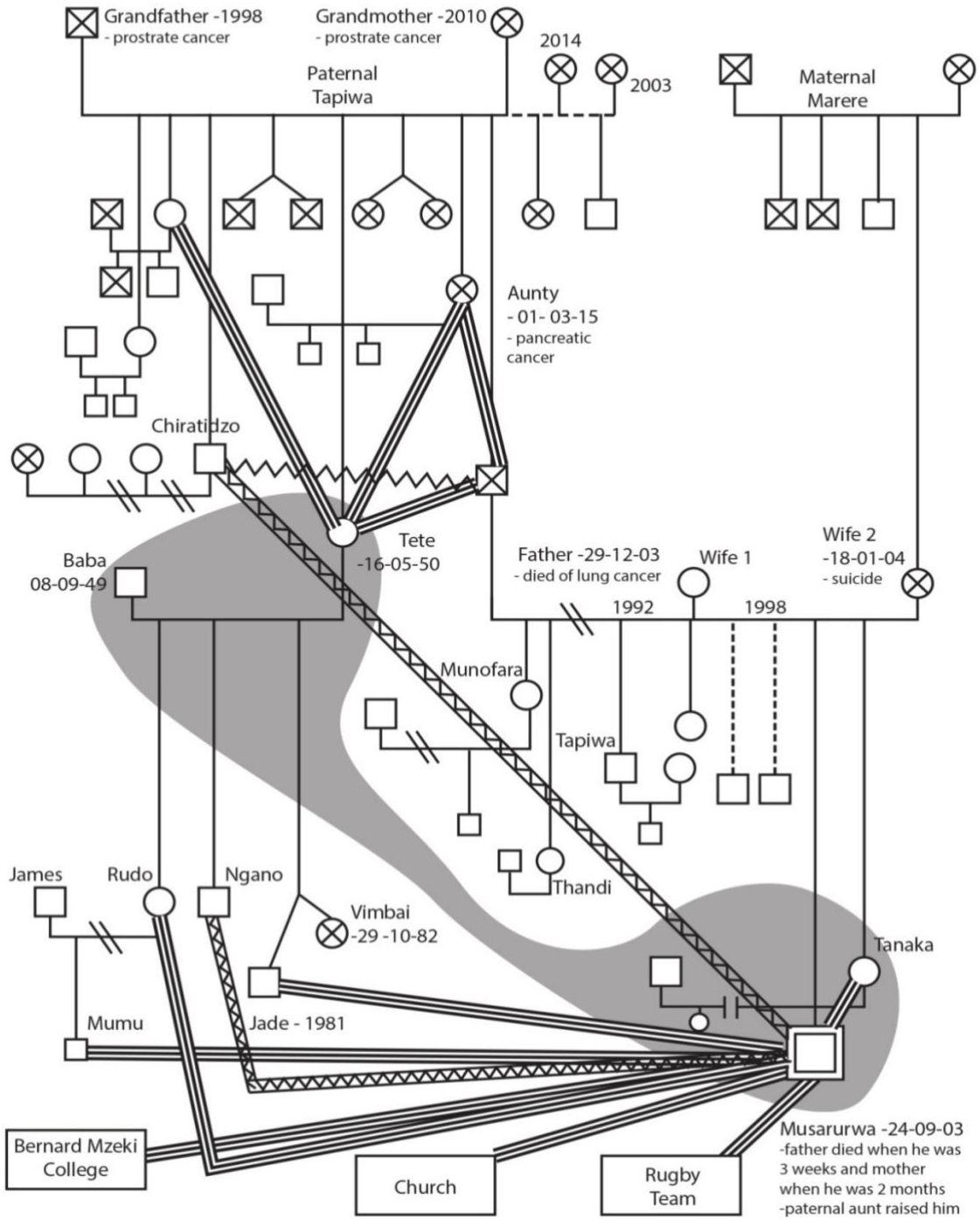
Musarurwa (male) was born on 24 September 2003 at Harare Hospital. His father died on the 29th of December 2003 (he was two months and some days). He said: “I do not know what my father looked like but, looking at photos, I see that he is like me. I am happy that my father died only after he could see me and hold me on his lap.” Having been held by his father for a few weeks before the father’s death was important to Musarurwa. This enabled him to relate to his father though he never knew him. It is painful for Musarurwa when he hears others relate how they spent time with their father over the weekend. He puts it as follows:

“I get so sad when I am asked to talk about weekend with dad because I do not have one. One thing which makes me sad is that when dad died my mom did not look after me because she killed herself [committed suicide]”. When asked questions of how and when she died, Musarurwa has adopted his sister’s evaluation of the mother: “You know my mom was a bad woman; she did not want to look after me. My sister told me that mom killed herself by drinking some stuff from a bottle. I am told she died sleeping with me on the bed. She died on 18 January 2004.”

The construction of Musarurwa’s genogram was done with the help of a paternal cousin. He was two months old when his father died and three months when his mother died.



Primary School Age Participant 1
Name: Musarurwa Tapiwa





When asked about his parents, Musarurwa replied: “I did not know them but I have seen photos’. My aunt and uncle are really my parents”. The following is a verbatim presentation of the rest of the interview:

R. When do you think of your mum and dad?

M. At school and at church in Sunday school when others talk of their parents. Each time I mentioned my *tete* (aunt) and baba others would laugh.

R. How do you feel when they laugh?

M. I feel angry and sad inside.

R. Who are the people you love to be with?

M. I love to spent time with Muzuva my nephew. I am two years older than him and we have grown together. He is my little brother.

R. Whom do you not like to be with?

M. My nephew Ngano, because when I was eight he pulled me out of my *tete*’s car. I fear him and I do not want to be alone with him. I do not like my father’s brother too.

R. Why?

M. I do not trust him and I do not feel safe. He does not care about me, why should I worry.

R. What is your wish?

M. Just to be shown the faces of my mother and father by God.

R. What do you want to be after high school?

M. I want to be a “Vet” and a priest in the Anglican Church.

When asked what the death of his mother meant to him he replied: “I am ashamed and angry that my mom killed herself to run away from looking after me and my sister. I am sad because at Sunday school we were told that people who kill themselves are children of Satan. I am sad because I will not be able to play with her



in heaven. Good people go to heaven and bad people stay in their graves and go to hell.”

Musarurwa was asked to share what else causes him to miss his father and mother and he replied as follows: “I was told that after the death of my mom, my father’s only brother did not take me to be his son. He actually flew to England to run away from me. The extended family members did not want to take me to their house. My niece who is a young woman of eighteen offered to care for me as a baby and I called her ‘mother’.” From time to time he would be moved to other relatives such as his paternal aunt and her husband whom he described as “my parents and they love me and I love them too. I grew up calling my uncle *Baba* (father) and my aunt *tete*. From when I started talking, my aunt would address me as *muzukuru* (nephew)”.

When asked about the effects of orphanhood, Musarurwa said “I refused to be labelled ‘orphan’ because I know I am loved and cared for. I have always had enough to eat, I dress well, and sleep well and to go to school.” Musarurwa has not been deprived of education, health care; development, nutrition and shelter as is often the case with orphaned children (see Afterwork 2013:24). The development of emotional intelligence has not been stunted, neither has his development of life skills such as communication, decision making and the ability to negotiate for his well-being, because he was not raised in conditions of deprivation even though he had lost both parents at an early age. When asked to say something about being an orphaned child and relatives, he had the following insight: “I am unlike the majority of orphans who live under bad conditions. All my needs are met. I eat breakfast before I go to school. I have packed snack for break time. I dress well every day. I am loved very much. I am thankful to have my *tete* and *baba*.”

According to Musarurwa’s narrative, the death of his parents does not affect him much: “I don’t know them, I only know my uncle and aunt. They are my parents



because I get all I want from them. I also think my mother killed herself because I was born. If she loved me, she should not have killed herself with poison. I am happy she did not kill me too.” His early childhood was filled with fun. He remembers it as follows: “I went to nursery school and my best friends were Daki and Muzuva. We played on the swings and in the water pond. *Tete* used to take her grandchildren to play with me. I was happy with my cousins. Muzuva is my best bud. I love him and he loves me too.”

During the final years of primary school Musarurwa’s his aunt and uncle noticed some behavioural problems. He began stealing money at home, only from his aunt’s handbag. When asked why he did it, his response was: “My aunt has lots of money all the time but does not give me pocket money. Instead she gives me packed lunch while my friends can buy things from the vendors. I also want to buy chips, sweets and lollipops for my friends. Sometimes I want to buy gifts for my friends.” Upon further investigation the reason for his behaviour became apparent. He was stealing to show that he was not a poverty-stricken orphan. He also wanted to be popular. He put it as follows: “I wanted my friends to see that I am from a rich family even though my parents had died.” Meanwhile his school work was also deteriorating. The headmaster sent a report home which read: “Musarurwa needs much help; his behaviour has changed and his school work has deteriorated. His teachers are not receiving his homework books, he is not taking part in sports and he has missed twelve days of schooling this term. His friends are a bad influence.”

According to Nugget and Masuku (2007:9), such behaviour is often part of how children who have lost their parents react to grief, because they are unable to articulate their sense of loss. Effects include poor school performance, disruptive behaviour and stealing in order to seek attention. Musarurwa gave the following reasons for not doing his homework: “Homework is hard and a lot. I have no one to help me. Others have their moms and dads to work with. *Tete* and *Baba* are very



busy with their work. I run away from sports because others laugh at me saying I am fat. I was stealing because I did not think that I would be found out.”

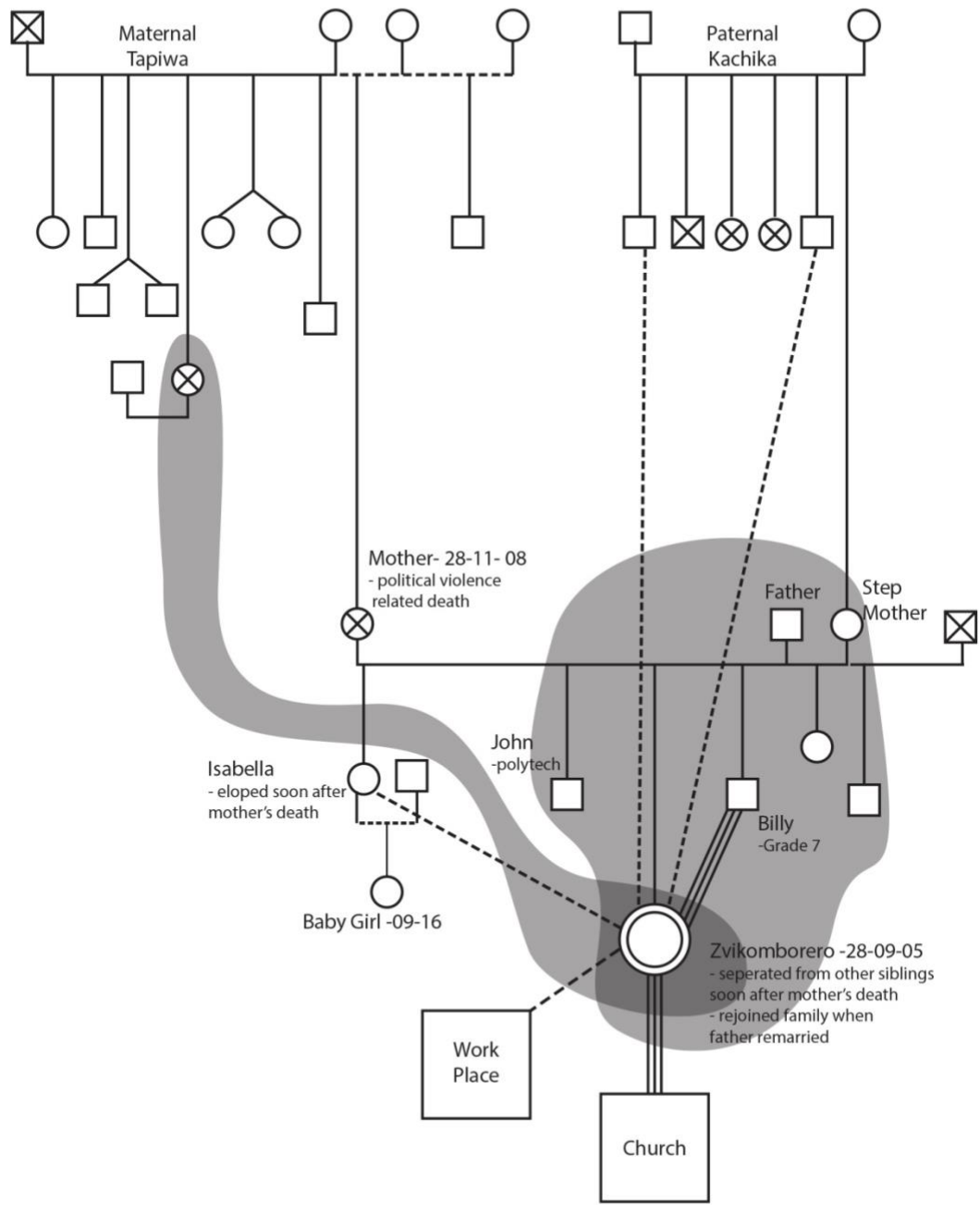
His aunt was shocked one day when Musarurwa asked if there was anything of his father that was left for him: “*Nhai tete pakagoverwa mbatya dzaDad vangu makandichengetereiwo. Tadzidza kuchikoro kuti pane chinopihwa vana chekugara nhaka.* (When you distributed my father’s belongings what did you keep for me. At school we learnt about inheriting clothes or other things).” He was told to go and ask his uncle (his father’s only older brother) because he was the one who had taken care of the belongings after the death of his brother. Fortunately, his aunt had kept his father’s old wallet. When he was given his father’s wallet he explained his feelings about it as follows: “I will treasure this wallet and keep it safe in my bedroom, in my cupboard.” After some time, his aunt and uncle went to school to enquire how he was doing. They were gratified to receive a good report from the headmaster and the class teacher. Musarurwa’s behaviour had changed for the better and his character improved. He said to them: “I am going to be good. I don’t want to be reported to the police station, I promise I am going to change”.

Zvikomborero Kachika

Zvikomborero, the second participant in the first category, was born on the 28th of September 2005 in Shamva (to the north-east of Harare). Her mother had died on 28 November 2008 as a result of political violence. She had just turned three and remembers her mother’s death with sorrow. She recalls losing two important things at once: her home and her mother. She helped me to construct her family genogram.



Primary School Age Participant 2
Name: Zvikomborero Kachika





It was difficult to work with Zvikomborero on the genogram, because she cried constantly. It took quite some time to obtain responses. When asked questions about her late mother she would answer: “I do not want to talk about it”. Then she would start crying again. Her personality is reserved and she is a sensitive person, especially when asked to talk about the death of her mother. Zvikomborero told the following narrative of her family: “I come from a family of four children of my mother. My big sister eloped after the death of my mother and now has a baby. My big brother is doing a course at Polytechnic but I have forgotten what it is all about. My baby brother is now ten years old.” When asked to say more about her sister she started crying and responded: “I have not seen her since she ran away. She made my life difficult because as a girl I had to cook for all of us and I wash clothes for my young brother and step-sister. I woke up at five to sweep the yard and clean the house before I prepared to go to school. I wish mum was there for me.”

Zvikomborero recalls the event soon after her mother’s funeral: “After the death of mum we were distributed among our maternal relatives because our home had been destroyed. My two brothers stayed with my dad and his sister. My big sister went with *amaiguru* (mother’s older sister) and I was taken by another *amaiguru* in Harare. I loved it at *maiguru*’s place because I was the youngest and was spoiled by my aunt.” When asked how she adjusted to the new environment, Zvikomborero replied: “*Amaiguru*’s children grew up in Australia and spoke English all the time and little Shona [the vernacular language]. It was hard for me to speak to them. As time went by, I learnt English at the pre-school to which *amaiguru* sent me. I had no friends because I wanted to be alone to avoid being laughed at when I spoke in broken English. In Shamva we only spoke Shona so this is why I struggled to communicate in English.” When asked why she preferred playing with older girls or being in the company of adult women, she replied: “They understand me better, they don’t laugh



at me. As for the married women, they remind me of my mother.” She then cried so much that she could not continue.

Zvikomborero is socially mature in some areas of life. The way in which she dresses is not consistent. Sometimes her clothes are conservative and too old for her age and at other times her clothing is young, but inappropriate. This is how she explains the fluctuation: “The long dresses are bought by my father’s fiancée who sometimes invites me to her church fellowship of the Branham Movement. Girls have to put on long dresses. The short dresses are bought by my sister from the second hand shops. I love putting them on when I visit Shamva to show my cousins how we dress in town.”

At first Zvikomborero was excited when her father remarried. The woman was a cousin of her mother’s. She was happy to be getting a “mum” in their household again. She moved from her *maiguru*’s place to her father’s household where she could again live with her brothers. However, the new situation was often problematic and painful. She relates it as follows: “The only good thing that happened to me was that I was reunited with my brothers. My sister had decided to elope, to run away from this new situation. I felt lonely because my stepmother did not allow friends to come and play with me. Even when I cried nobody noticed and I thought of my mother who had always been there for me. With her I could share all the happenings in the day in my life.”

She describes her daily routine as a nightmare of endless chores required by the stepmother. She narrates it as follows: “My day started at four in the morning when I had to light fire outside to boil water for bathing for everybody in the family. I would then prepare *sadza*, porridge and tea for the family. Before going to school I would



wash the dishes. After school each day when I got home I had to bath my baby half-sister before I prepared dinner. I had no time to play with other children because I was my stepmother's maid. I learnt to do adult work after my mother died. I do not know what it is like to be a child."

The situation of Zvikomborero who was not given the freedom to experience childhood and develop as other adolescents could, but was forced to take adult responsibilities prematurely, is what Nugget and Masuku (1998) term the "exploitation of a child". She was expected to work harder than other siblings because of her sex. Her father noticed her excessive crying and withdrawal from social activities. He saw that she was quiet and reserved. However, Zvikomborero did not receive much support from him. She puts it as follows: "I am fearful of my stepmother, and my father does not support me because he agrees with what his wife says." When asked what she wished for, she responded that she wished she were a bird called "Dendera" who could fly to faraway places. This is a reference to the following Shona folk story:

Dai ndiri shiri

If I were a bird

Ndaienda kuna mai vangu

I would fly to my mother

Kwandaichengetwa semwana

where I would be looked after as a child

Kwete samai vemba

not like a mother of the house.

Crying is her way of expressing deep feelings for which no words could be found, a release for pent-up emotions (see Smart 2003:204). Zvikomborero does not have a future vision, because of her difficult childhood. She asks: "What is my future? I don't have a future. I want to die and be with my mother. I don't think I will pass grade seven." In a letter to her deceased mother she wrote:



Amai vangu, (My mother), Ndiri kuchema zvandiri kunyora tsamba kwamuri Amai. Ndiri kutambura, uye handina rugare (I am crying as I write this letter to you. I am suffering and have no peace of mind). Amai I wish I was given time to play with other girls, and I wish I could eat three meals a day instead of one.

Dai muripo Amai ndisingaite mabasa akawanda zvakadai (I would not be doing the chores laid before me if you were there, Amai). Dai zvaibvira ndauya kwamuri iye nhasi kuti nhamo yangu ipere. Ndinorwadziwa Amai, makandisiyira nhamo (If possible I would like to come to you today so that problems surrounding me would end. I am in pain Amai because you left me to suffer).

Your daughter, Zvikomborero.

In summary, the narrative of Zvikomborero revealed the following:

- The death of her mother caused a constant feeling of pain and separation. he puts it as follows: *Ndinorwadziwa nokuti vakandisiyira nhamo (I am in pain because mum left me with many problems).*
- Being a girl-child causes her to have been burdened with adult responsibilities
- Death often causes the separation of siblings who have to go and live with various relatives.
- She associates with older women rather than with children of her own age.
- She is disappointed in her relationship with her stepmother.
- Vulnerable children are in danger of exploitation.
- She uses folk wisdom to deal with her troubled emotions.

3.3.2 Secondary school level

Hazvineyi

Hazvineyi, a participant of the next category, namely secondary school age, was born in 1999. Both parents died in the year when she turned four. She was raised by



her grandmother who was more than eighty years old at the time. When asked if she could remember what had happened to her parents, Hazvineyi replied: "I remember people gathering at our house on 15 April 2003 crying and one of my mother's sisters took me and sat with me. The body of my mum was covered by a white cloth on the *chikuva* (altar in the kitchen). My young sisters and brother sat with grandmother crying. In the same year, my father died on 30 November 2003. This was the end of our joy. I recall one of my uncles saying *Musatore vana ava vane mweya werufu. Anovatora hameno zvake* [Do not take any of these children into your families because they carry the spirit of death. Fate will befall anybody who takes them]. I kept the words in my head and heart. I am glad I am able to say them now to you."

Hazvineyi was asked to help to fill in the genogram which included the maternal and paternal extended family. Here follows a verbatim account of a part of the interview:

H: My maternal grandparents and paternal grandfather died before I was born. My mother and father died in the same year. My paternal grandmother cared for my siblings and me. We were all very young. My mother and father died in the same year. When I turned five, my grandmother taught me to do simple chores.

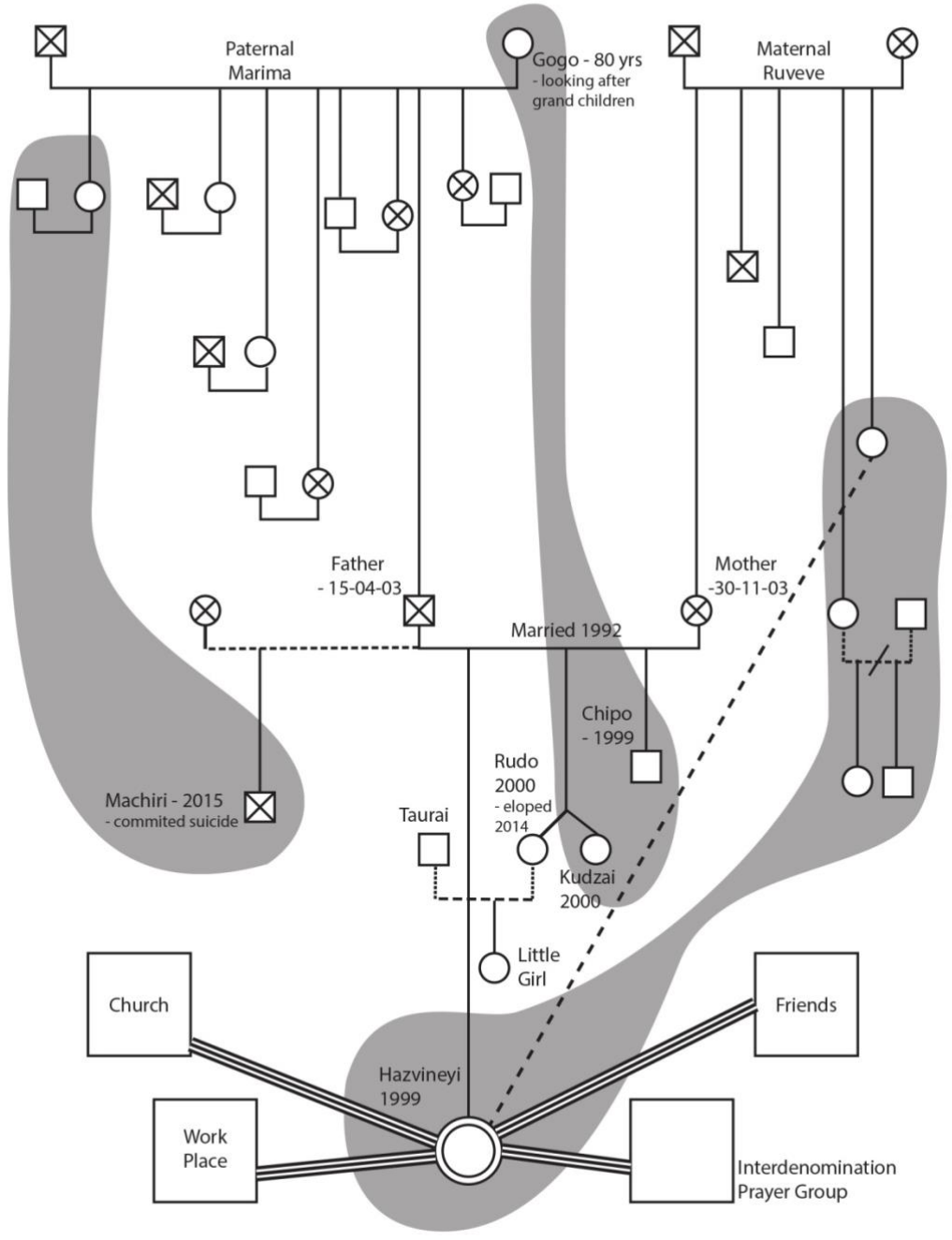
R: What do you remember your uncles doing to help grandmother on father's side.

H: I do not remember them helping granny. My uncle took Machiri (my stepbrother) to herd his cattle and goats. We were left with Gogo. It was sad to hear that Machiri hanged himself on a pole in the cattle kraal. It was to end a life of being abused verbally, physically and emotionally.

The genogram is as follows:



Secondary School Age Participant 1
Name: Hazvineyi Marima





During the December holidays after having completed three years of secondary education, Hazvineyi was invited by her mother's sister to come to Harare with the promise that she could attend a good government high school. The aunt did not keep her promise but rather used Hazvineyi as a domestic worker. Her aunt told her: "I have no money to waste; you must look after my children and do all household chores. You eat when we have all finished and you can only go to bed when the kitchen is clean." Hazvineyi never went back to her grandmother. Nothing had come of the promise of a better life in Harare and a good education. The interview continued as follows:

R. Tell me about your stay with your aunt and her boyfriend (they are not married)

H. The man does not like me and I am afraid of him too. We conflict a lot. He wants me to address him as "father" which I cannot. Initially my aunt treated me like her slave. I woke up at four in the morning to do housework and cook breakfast for her children.

R. You told me you are now working. How has that helped you?

H. Now I can help my granny with food and clothing for my siblings and her. I am able to pay fees for them to go to school. I have developed new friends who encourage me to be strong. I go to church where I learn more about God.

R. How do you visualize your future?

H. I am going to be great.

After the death of her parents, Hazvineyi and her siblings lived with her paternal grandmother. The grandmother's own children had all died. This meant that Hazvineyi had no one to turn to for help. Where most children begin their schooling at the age of six, she could only begin at the age of eight. "I only started grade one when I turned eight because grandma needed help with Chipu, my baby brother, who was only three months when mother died. Grandmother would tell me to miss



school twice or three times a week. It was not easy for grandmother to find money for school fees for the twins and so I, for eight years, I had to do *maricho* (piece jobs) in people's gardens and fields to get money to buy schoolbooks and food. Sometimes I would prefer to be given mealie-meal and vegetables." With regard to her many problems, Hazvineyi narrates: "My school work was poor. I missed lessons when grandmother fell ill and nobody could help us. Some people were afraid to come near us because our parents had died of *Shuramatongo* (Shona derisive term for AIDS) and so they were afraid to catch it from us. In the end I had to stop going to school totally and takes the responsibilities of cooking, laundry and taking care of my brothers and sisters."

With all the responsibilities on her shoulders, Hazvineyi became withdrawn. She describes her feelings as follows: "I feel sad being an orphan. *Handigoni kuseka, ndinogara ndakatsamwa nekufa kwevabereki. Vanhu vanotiseka, vanotitsvinyira kuti vabereki vakafa nemukondombera. Handigoni kutamba nevamwe nokuti ndini muchengeti waMbuya nevanun'una vangu. Ndinovenga zvandiri ini nevanun'una vangu. Kugara ndakawandirwa nebasa kunge mukadzi mukuru. Zvirinani kuti tinogara kuorphanage mbuya voenda kumachembere. Ko Mwari havanzwe kuchema kwangu here? Vabereki vangu ndinovenga kutisiya takaremerwa imi makazorora muguva.* (With all these things happening, I feel sad. I am no longer laughing that much as I would long ago. Now I get angry easily. People laugh at us and despise us saying our parents died of HIV and AIDS. I have no friends. I feel that I am only a child with a right to play, but I am locked up here. Maybe being in an orphanage would be better because I would not experience what I am going through. I wish God would hear my prayer, I hate my parents for dying before we grew up, leaving us in trouble while they are sleeping in their graves)."

In one of her journals she wrote the following letter which relates what she was going



through as a child who was denied basic children's rights because of her circumstances:

What is childhood? What has the death of both parents brought to my life? I do not know what it is to be a child because I have skipped childhood. I started to behave like a big girl from the age of six. I have failed to be like girls of my age because of adult responsibilities I have. The death of my parents has made me a slave in my community. Villagers call me for piece jobs and forget I am a child. I cannot concentrate in class because of my chores waiting for me when I get home. I feel so lonely even in the company of others around me. The deaths of my parents have left me without hope. Now that I have grown up, I am always dreaming of caring for my siblings and *Ambuya* (grandma). When the headmaster moves around checking those who have not paid their fees, I am always among those and sent home.

Due to poverty and the lack of adult caregivers, Hazvineyi could not proceed with her form four studies. The aunt took advantage of and exploited the orphan left in her care. She promised care and support, but did not provide it. She only served her own interests (Smart 2003:224). One day Hazvineyi told her aunt that she wanted to go and find employment in order to be able to send her grandmother and siblings money for school. She tells the story as follows: "I left home and walked from house to house. Finally I found a pre-school and spoke to the owner. She listened to my story, but there was no work at the school. The following day I returned to this pre-school and sat outside crying. I said to the owner: 'If you do not give me a job what will happen to my grandmother, sisters and brother?' She looked at me and called the senior teacher of the pre-school class and instructed her to show me how to clean toilets and floors. I started work that day."

Hazvineyi is enjoying her work and has made it possible for her siblings to go to school. With her financial contribution the grandmother can buy food for the family.



She is happy at her workplace but keeps to herself. She is afraid to disclose her troubles and worries. She has resumed her school education and studies in the evening. She describes it as follows:

Sometimes I sit back and think, look at me now! I am doing okay! I laugh, I cry and find a way to continue to live and remember who I am. In the first four years there were times when I wondered whether it would be possible. I now know it was right to hold out and hope that I could somehow face the future with or without my parents. I am also encouraged by the words of Psalm 23:1-6: 'The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake ... surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.'

Hazvineyi's past was filled with loneliness, hopelessness and anger at having to assume adult responsibilities prematurely. However, she no longer wants to dwell on the past and is now able to visualise a better future for herself and her siblings.

Brian Mavhingire

The second participant of secondary school age is a young man whose mother (the only parent he knew) died when he was three years old. He was then cared for by his paternal grandmother who had seen the death of all her children. In the narrative interview, the grandmother is referred to as *Gogo* or *Ambuya* (the Shona and Ndebele equivalents for "grandmother"). As we were constructing his genogram, a sense of heaviness could be felt. He was suppressing his tears.

On his mother's side, the grandparents and all eleven children had died. Brian could give no information regarding his paternal family. He put it as follows: "I do not have any knowledge of my dad because nobody told me about him. I was told that he is



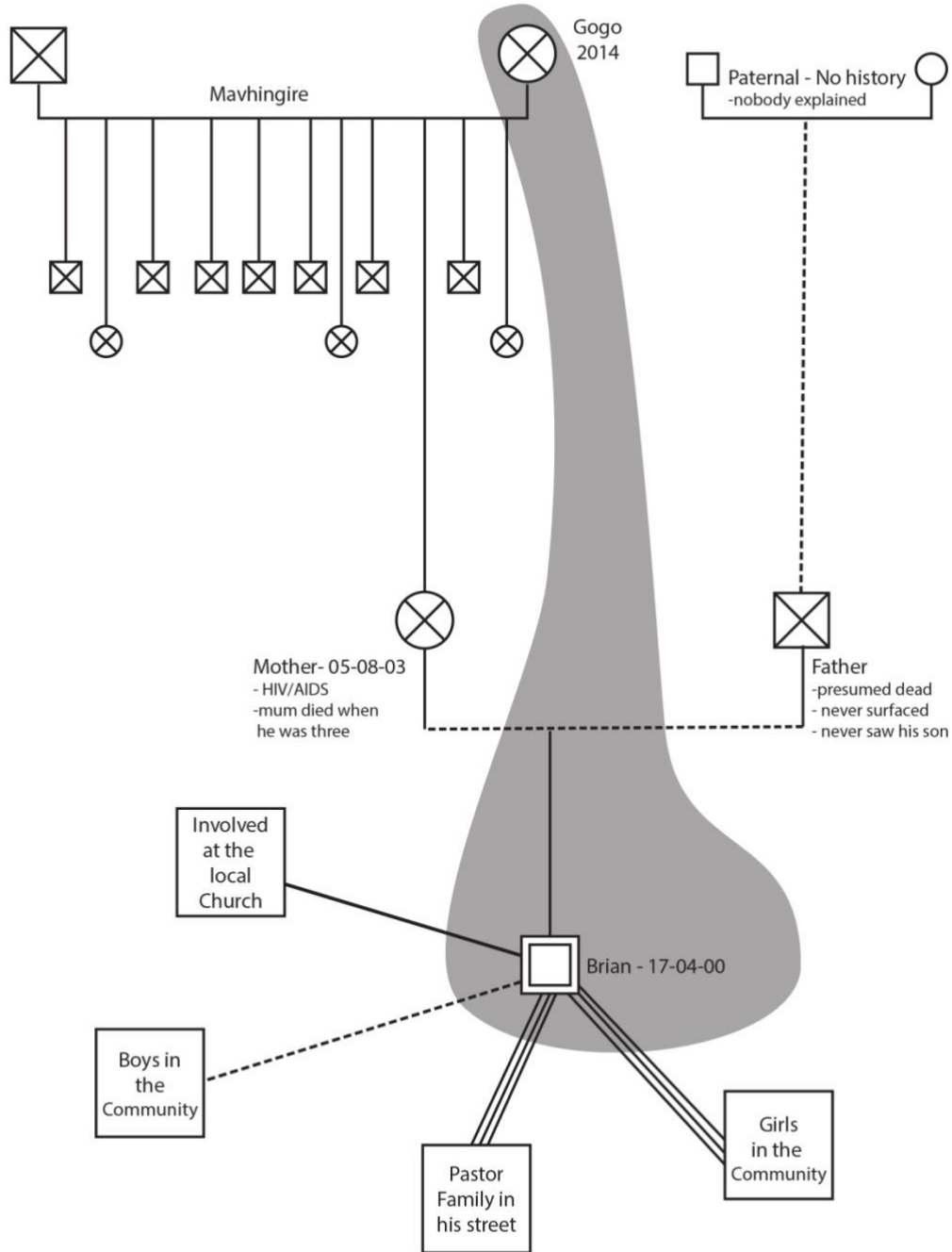
presumed dead. I have never met him. The whole issue has left me wondering who I am.” Another issue, which worried him, was why God allowed his grandmother to die before she told him about his father, where he came from and what he did. When asked about his early years he replied as follows: “I was born on 17 April 2000 and am told that my father disappeared before my birth. My mother died when I was three years old. I was not allowed to be present among the mourners. I was taken to gogo’s friend because they did not want me to be at the house with people crying. When I asked where mother was, nobody told me the truth. I was told she had gone to the hospital and was coming back. My father was presumed dead because nobody knew his whereabouts. I have fond memories of my gogo. I adore her, she was my everything.”

It was painful for him to relate the death of his *gogo*: “While watching television on 12 April 2014, *gogo* put her head back against the chair and closed her eyes. I thought she had just closed her eyes. But when I continued to talk, there was no response and shaking her did not help. I was terrified and called the neighbour who came and told me that my only *gogo* was dead. Then I began to cry and was angry with God because my friend was no more. It was difficult to say how I felt because my mind was full of anger, resentment, and fear of the future, sadness and disbelief. I cried, cried, and asked God why He had allowed it to happen. I could not express how I felt; I did not have any words and was silent for hours on end. Eventually I had to break the silence because there were things to be done.”

The genogram of his family is as follows:



Secondary School Age Participant 2
Name: Brian Mavhingire





Gogo's death had to be reported to the nearest police station and to her doctor. As a young person he had to seek help from others. He tells the story as follows:

The first person I thought of was the minister of religion at the Methodist Church where Granny and I worshipped for years. When he came, he guided me through decisions and arrangements which I had to make. He accompanied me to the police station to report the death and also to call our family doctor who had to certify that Gogo had died of heart attack. I also learnt that I had to register the death at the registry office for Birth, Marriage and Deaths since I was the only surviving next of kin. On the forms I had to put details of my gogo the dead person, to surrender the medical certificate stating the cause of the death. I also received the burial order which later after burial would allow me to get a death certificate. This was not easy for me because I had lost a friend, my mother, my granny. I was hoping she was going to witness my marriage later when I had found a girl. My mind was confused. With the help of the minister, Gogo was buried at the village.

After the funeral, Brian had to face the reality of life without close relatives. The genogram shows that he is the only surviving person. He experienced much pain and had emotional issues while living by himself in the Harare home of his deceased grandmother. He wrote the following in his journal:

My life is just challenging. It is hard to believe I had a good and normal life with my granny. Now I have no joy or pleasure. I am often hungry. I don't eat breakfast anymore, also no lunch. I am surviving (not thriving) on one meal a day like a street kid who eats once a day when someone buys them food. Socially I am not interested in interacting with people. I am afraid to be left again. Imagine how hard life is. At times I just sit and think of where I am now. I am suffering because my mum and Gogo did not want to disclose who my father was or where he came from. I have no parents, I will probably not have a good teenage life and I am suffering. All I can say is my life has changed.



3.3.3 Tertiary education age group

Ropafadzo Musoni

Ropafadzo was born 7th of September 1992 as the last of four children. Her mother divorced her father and married again. Ropafadzo, the youngest of the children, move from one place to another with her alcoholic mother. She is the participants in this study who has probably suffered and endured most. She has suffered from stress and depression, has endured much emotional suffering and has experienced prejudice and social exclusion. She had to receive counselling in order to enable her to cope with her circumstances.

Ropafadzo's father died in 1996 and her mother died the following year in December 1997. She remembers how their deaths affected her at an early age: "I was raised by my old grandmother who could no longer work to care for the four of us. After my father's death, my mother did not care for us because she immediately went off to live with a man she referred to as 'a friend'. Shortly thereafter my stepsister was born and then my mother died. I have only a distant relationship with my stepsister".

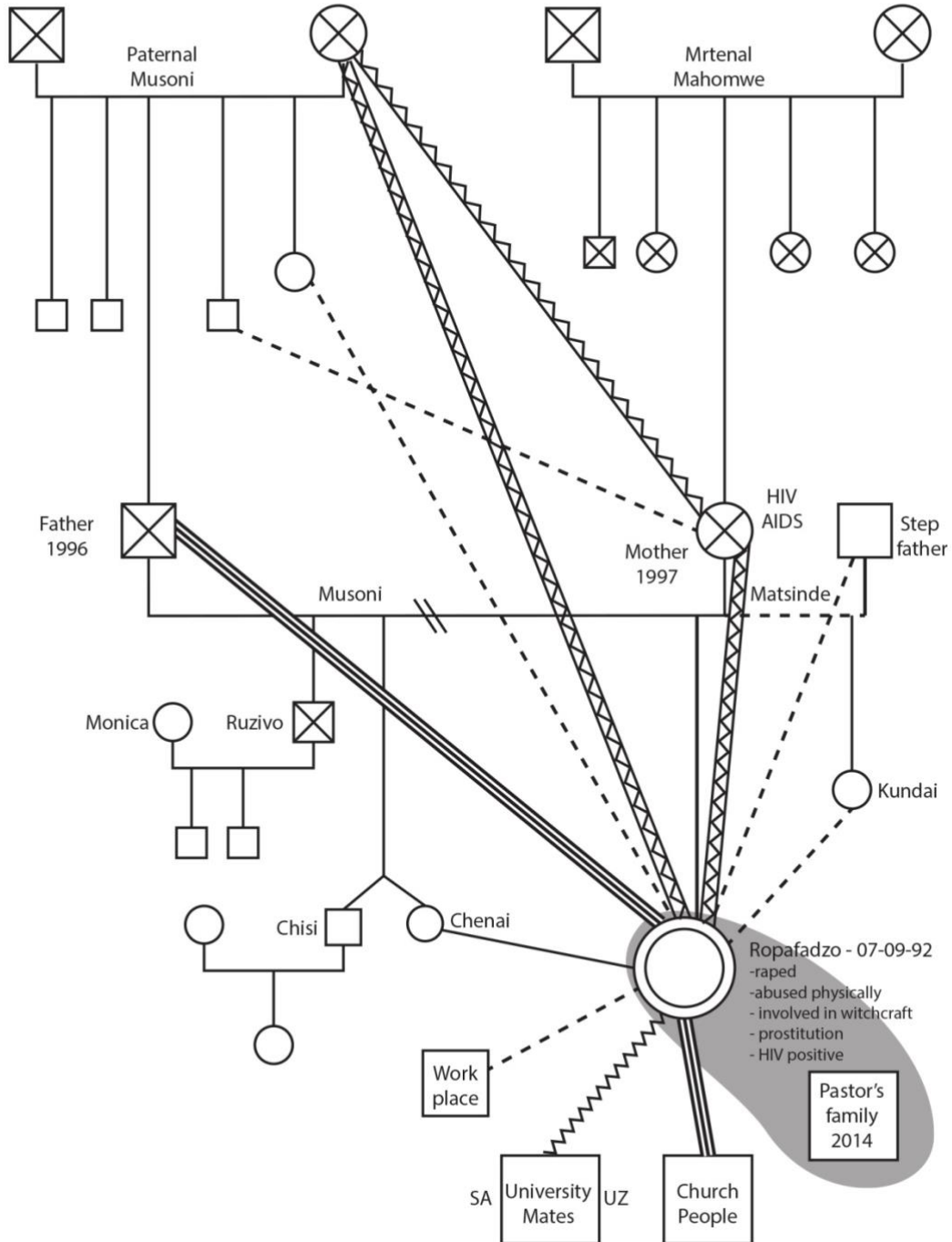
Ropafadzo recalls the difficulties at her grandmother's house, which were caused by her mother's sister:

My aunt used abusive language and was violent. She hated us and was opposed to our living with granny. When I was in grade five her son raped me. She beat me severely saying that I was responsible for it happening. If I told anyone, she would kill me. I was afraid and never told anybody. From that day, my nephew would rape me whenever he wanted. He used to harass me when we at home alone. I was miserable and looked forward to the day when I was going to be free.

Ropafadzo's genogram is as follows:



Tertiary Education Participant 1
Name: Ropafadzo Musoni





Ropofadzo tells the story of her further education and further sexual abuse:

A group of white Americans came to my rural home in Karoi in search of children for whom they wanted to sponsor high school education. As one of the learners who had passed grade seven with distinctions, I was chosen by the headmaster to be one of the children to receive the scholarship. It was a blessing for me because nobody was able to pay fees for me. I was transferred from the village to Karoi High School where I completed form one to four. During weekends I used to be picked from school by one of the American men to his house. One day he called me to his bedroom and asked me to play with his genitals. He said it made him feel good in his body. When I was in form three this man started to have sexual intercourse with, which continued for three years. Nobody knew what was happening to me. I thought it was a normal way of life.

At school, Ropafadzo did very well in her schoolwork and looked forward to leaving Karoi. She especially wanted to be away from the American:

I was so pleased when I finished my 'O' and 'A' levels. For 'A' I had fifteen points. My results made it possible for me to be selected for the President Robert Mugabe Scholarship for the University of Kwazulu in Pietermaritzburg. I took up law studies. The studies were going well, but life was difficult. Tuition fees were paid for, but board and lodging not. 'Once a victim, always a victim,' is how the saying goes. I told myself that I was not going to suffer financially to meet my day-to-day needs. I co-habited with a man who was fifteen years older than I am."

When the authorities found out about this, the consequences were that she was sent back to Zimbabwe and had to appear before the student disciplinary committee. After the disciplinary hearing she was released and was able to find work. However, she was fired after three months because of insubordination. When asked why she was fired, her response was as follows: "People are jealous of me because I am more intelligent and educated than they are. They were afraid that I would be promoted and take their positions".



Having lost her work Ropafadzo was homeless because she had no money for rent. A pastor and his wife took her in and were happy with her for a short time, after which her conflictual spirit appeared again. She was aggressive and did not accept being corrected. She left the pastor's home, returned to a life of prostitution and contracted HIV. She describes the emotional experience:

I felt like a person hanging on a branch of a tree which was going to break. My dreams of becoming an outstanding lawyer were shattered. I wished I had parents to guide me, pay my fees, and supply my needs. Then I would not have co-habited with a man in search of someone to support me. The whole university saga made me feel disappointed, embarrassed, disheartened, and emotionally drained. It caused me much pain. This was another loss in my life of losing. I had lost an opportunity to change my life.

Ropafadzo's experience confirms the following observation by Pfuri (2002:164): "Girls run away into the harsh environment of the streets, others often become victims of sex work ... in dire need of livelihood." This also ties in with what happened to her in Zimbabwe after she had left Kwazulu Natal. She relates it as follows: "After Kwazulu Natal I came back to Zimbabwe and had to face the disciplinary committee of the student board for the presidential scholarship. I had to answer questions based on the so-called crimes I had committed, which were:

- running away from university;
- co-habiting with an older man, rather than concentrating on her studies;
- verbally abusing superiors;
- refusing counselling;
- poor relationships with other students.



With regard to relationships, Ropafadzo has conflict with many people. She used to relate well with her brother Ruzivo who also died and with people at the church. All the older people in the immediate and extended family have died. There is nobody to give her some direction in life. Ropafadzo occasionally interacts with her stepfather and sister. On the maternal side there is no surviving relative. All her mother's siblings have died. During the interview, she expressed a fear of death. She describes the vulnerability of an orphan, but is also optimistic of the future:

The things I went through were the result of the breakdown of the family unit. There was nobody to protect me from rape, physical abuse, my involvement in witchcraft, prostitution and the list goes on. Inside me, I would cry, wishing to have my mother back. Yet being an orphan does not mean I am not able to realise my God-given potential.

Ropafadzo always used to be in conflict with people. She was never close to her own mother and grandmother. She did, however, have a very close relationship with her father and one brother. The relationships with another brother, her sister and stepfather were troubled. At work, she distanced herself from others because she did not want them to know who she was. At the University at Kwazulu Natal, she isolated herself as a means of protecting herself. She was constantly in conflict with colleagues. While praying with the pastor's family one day, Ropafadzo experienced the following:

My spirit needs to be released from the people who violated me when I was young. I realized as I grew older that I was involved in prostitution in order to get money for my upkeep. I feel unclean. They prayed for me and gave me scripture to read like Acts 11:9: "What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy" This was a great encouragement to me.



Ropafadzo began memorizing scriptures to help her overcome the grief of her lost life. A verse that particularly expressed how she felt was Psalm 31:10: “For my life is spent in sorrow, and my years with sighing, my strength fails because of my misery and my bones waste away” Some verses that helped her in her struggle with her sexuality were Proverbs 3:5-8: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. I will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones” and also Habakkuk 3:16: “I hear, and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones, my steps totter beneath me. I will wait quietly for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.” Memorizing scriptures enabled her to deal with grief, frustration and the loss of her health due to prostitution. She prayed to God to heal her of the disease because, “no one will marry me because of my HIV status”.

Her narrative shows that Ropafadzo needs to deal with her emotions through talking and sharing her feelings. Ropafadzo had many issues to deal with, especially on an emotional level, before she could come to know how she could be healed from the emotional scars. She expresses it as follows: “I need to make peace with my past, because I have recognized the importance of the past and the role it plays in my present”. Ropafadzo’s narrative is the longest of all the respondents’ stories, because of what she has gone through her journey of life.

Gwinyai Mandipei

Gwinyai, the second person in the third category, was born on the 12th of December 1991. His father died on 26 September 1996. He still remembers his father’s death with much pain. The extended family on both sides did not want to take responsibility for Gwinyai and his brother Nyasha. They were in conflict with Gwinyai over the

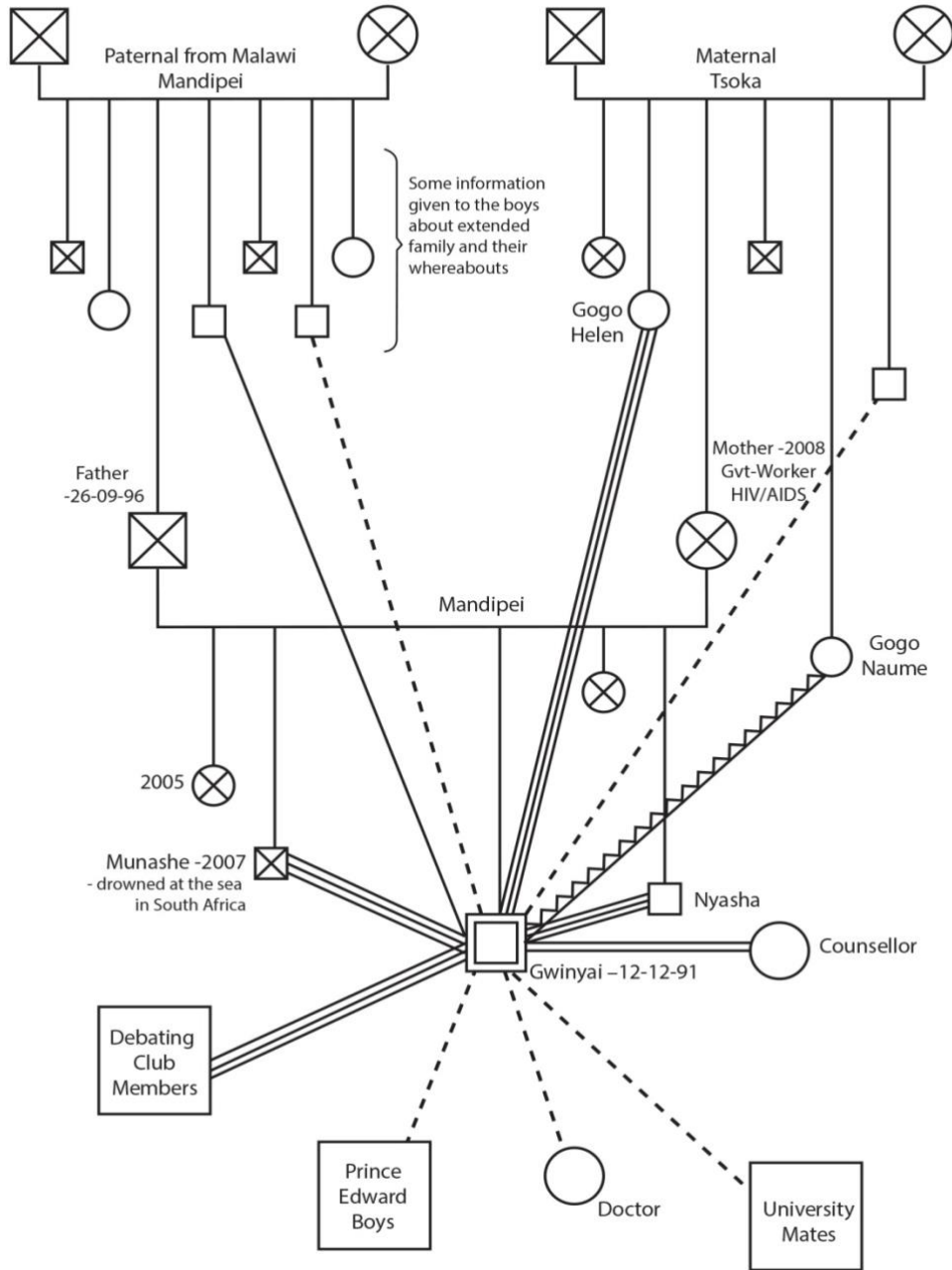


parents' property which they knew was bequeathed to the children. Gwinyai does not have a close relationship with family members on either side of the extended family because, as they were growing up, they lived in different countries with their mother who had a prominent position in the Zimbabwe administration. He tells the story of his father's death and thereafter as follows: "The death of my dad brought a great pain in my life. Remembering all he used to do for the family really hurts. He used to come home to the rural homestead for the holidays bringing with him everything a child could desire in life ... Those were the times when we used to go out, have dinner elsewhere and receive new clothes. Everything was okay in those days because he cushioned our lives with comfort and love. Since I was then very young, they used to call me dad's favourite.

Gwinyai's genogram is as follows:



Tertiary Education Participant 2
Name: Gwinyai Mandipei





The pain of having lost his father at such an early age is described by Gwinyai as follows:

The 26th of September 1996 marked a new and painful era in my life. Dad died. There was no more 'Dad this' and 'Dad that'. It was now only tears every day of my life. Christmas, Easter and Heroes holidays were never the same again. There was no more laughter, dances and special goodies for the holidays. Memories of the past brought tears rolling down my cheeks. I used to sit on one of his favourite chairs, wearing some of his favourite clothes, seeking the comfort, warmth and love I used to receive from him. It was hard to accept that he would never come back, but with time, I began to accept the situation.

The fact that Gwinyai and his siblings still had their mother gave them a degree of comfort and normalcy for a while longer. He describes it as follows:

Now it was a situation of looking at my mom as the only source of love left in my life. We carried on like that but family responsibilities began to change. As children, we accepted that mom needed our help since she could not make it on her own. Even though I am a boy my mom taught me how to use a sewing machine so most of our earnings came from sewing clothes. During the weekends, I helped my mom with the sewing.

Gwinyai continued to describe the challenges of those early primary school years when he was cared for by his mother after the death of the father: "During my primary school years, I faced challenges here and there. Our relatives caused some of the problems. My uncle who is a brother to my father took everything that my father worked for as punishment to my mother for refusing to be his wife. We were left with nothing."



Gwinyai did, however, manage to continue his education. He completed his school education and was able to go to university. He describes how this became possible: “With the help of PLAN International, I completed my ‘O’ and ‘A’ levels without any problem. My ‘A’ level results brought joy to my mother since I was the best student at my school. I was very happy as well because I proved wrong those who looked down upon me. They used to call me names, but my success proved that being an orphan was not the end of life.” Despite Gwinyai’s success up to “A” level, making the transition to tertiary education proved to be difficult:

Though passing the ‘A’ level was a great milestone in my life, it brought another challenge. During that time, my elder brother was still at school so there was no one to send me to college. My brother made a great sacrifice; he dropped out of school to find work in order to support me. The National Railways of Zimbabwe employed him. That is how I managed to start my degree programme at the University of Zimbabwe. With advice from my mother, I managed to adjust to campus life. I did not live like other students. I was not concerned with going out to the movies, or with fashionable clothes and other things students were interested in. I was just a simple person, focusing on my education and nothing else. The first semester ended well. During the vacation, I found a part-time job as a domestic worker for the Nyathi family to ease the financial burden on my brother. It was difficult to not be able to see my mother for long periods on end. At this time she was in ill health.

The illness and eventual death of his mother while he was at university exacerbated the pain. It was even worse than the pain he had experienced when his father died. He explains it as follows:

My mom’s illness started when I was in my second semester of my first year at UZ. She used to not disclose the severity of her pain because she worried that it might interfere with my education. I could sense that something was very wrong when we spoke on the phone, but there was nothing I could do because I was not financially able. It was only when I saw how much weight she had lost that I realized that she



was HIV positive. She had got it from my dad who was already gone. My prayer at that time that God grant her a few more years so that I could take care of her after I had completed my studies.

His employer Mrs Nyathi encouraged Gwinyai to go and search for work in Botswana because that would enable him to send more money to his sick mother in hospital. This seemed like a good solution until tragedy struck again. He relates the story as follows:

“I managed to buy everything needed to sustain the patient. But only one week before my planned return to Zimbabwe I received a phone call telling me that my mother had died. I travelled from Botswana to Zimbabwe in the hope of still being able to say goodbye to my dear mother. When I arrived she had already been buried. Though the people apologized, I could not accept this. When I saw where my mother had been buried, I cried. How could she be gone after all the promises I had made to her? I was doing everything for her sake. My mother died without having had the opportunity to enjoy the fruit of her labour. I was excelling in my studies hoping that she would be happy to see me graduate, working and settling down with my own family. But she could not answer my questions, because we were now in different worlds.

According to Gwinyai, painful as the loss of both parents was, it was not all loss. Mrs Nyathi had become a God-given substitute mother. He relates it as follows: “She was the solution to my situation as an orphan. She listened to my crying soul. She has all the qualities of a good mother. Her character and personality are just like my biological mother’s. She gave me all the support that I needed until I finished my degree programme. All I can say is that God will never take something away from you without replacing it with something.” In subsequent interviews the following realities that Gwinyai had to contend with in his life were identified:

- Denial: “I could not believe that my parents were victims of HIV/AIDS. It was



also so hard to accept their deaths.”

- Guilt-feelings: “I felt guilty that my mother had gone without any help from me. I felt guilty also because family funds were channelled towards my education. My mother could have lived longer with the little money that there was. However, I thanked her for her sacrifice and I promised to look after the family (my little brother).”
- Sadness and loss: “Everything we used to do (with the deceased parents) was no more”.
- Abandonment: “I felt abandoned because we were left without anyone to ‘really care for us. Remaining adults in my father’s family showed no concern for us. I felt vulnerable. But thanks to the house my mother left us in Harare we could escape the relatives who wanted to exert power over our lives.”
- Loss of trust: “The relatives deprived me the opportunity to say goodbye to my own mother. Yet they had promised to wait for me for the funeral, but did not. I will never trust anyone again”.
- Abuse by relatives: Completing primary school was difficult because of challenges caused by relatives, especially the two uncles (father’s brothers) who had taken everything that his mother and father had worked for. The uncle was only interested in the parents’ wealth, but not in also supporting the children. He took everything away including the pension and other funds. The house was left bare. Gwinyai describes it as follows: “We were left with nothing and led a life of poverty”. It was only the intervention of PLAN International that saved his academic career.

At a time of great hardship when he felt a deep sense of loss, Gwinyai wrote poems, the first entitled, “Who I Am”:



Who I Am

They do not know who I will be
For into the future they cannot see
Maybe a tycoon of the computer industry,
Or a pauper on the street with a poor CV
If I were the farmer, they would respect me
If I were, the latter more suffering would be with me
I can think as they do
What they imagine I have no clue
If they would respect me now I would love them
I would work hard and be their bright genius
They think money shows love from the heart
But truly, the actions they do show what they are
They do not know who I will be
Let's hope they won't regret who I will what I will do, be and see depends on
what happens today to me
Show me respect, take me more seriously
Am I not more than just jelly?
Show me love not your money
I am 14 not a dummy
You have struck fear into my belly
Who knows, I might do the same to your family.

Despite what Gwinyai went through, he is happy with his success and the tangible results of his hard work and determination. Gwinyai visualizes his future as one in which exciting things can happen. He is currently building a beautiful double storied house in the small town of Acturus (east of Harare). He is planning to marry his long-term friend who is a psychologist.



3.4 Summary

By means of narrative interviewing data was collected in order to provide insights regarding the research question of the emotional effects on the development of persons who have been orphaned under the age of five years. All the six participants were orphaned under the age of five and their narrative show how the early deprivation of parents affects the emotions of children and how they experience and interpret this early deprivation later in life at three different developmental stages.

This chapter employed the “Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) developed by Tom Wengraf (2004). This method enabled participants to tell their own story in their own words and from their own perspective. The use of genograms further facilitated the narrative. They served the purpose of summarizing family information and enabled the participants to articulate the complex relationships as they described their experiences of having been orphaned at an early age. The feelings tree or emotion tree (Appendices 7 with participant names) was also used to facilitate their description of their journey (childhood, adolescence and young adulthood).

The six research participants described in this chapter represent the stages of primary school level, secondary school age and the stage of young adulthood, in this case participants who were busy with tertiary education. The data gathered from the narrative interviewing shows that the traditional emphasis on caring for orphans in African communities is no longer as it used to be. Poverty, negligence and the lack of the support for care givers exacerbate the situation of orphaned children (UNICEF 2004-05:13). Four of the participants were forced by circumstances to fend for themselves, namely Hazvineyi, Brian, Gwinyai and Ropafadzo. Conflict, distant and broken relationships are depicted on the genograms of all the six participants. While



pursuing tertiary level education, the participants in that group had to fend for themselves with little or no support from adults. Gwinyai lived with his young brother and Ropafadzo had to rent a room, but struggled to find the money to do so.

In Chapter 4 the data will be processed and interpreted. The data collected from the narrative interviews will be brought into dialogue with the developmental theories of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler (see Chapter 2).



Chapter 4

Interpretation of results: The emotional effects of early orphanhood

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical perspectives of chapter two will be brought into dialogue with the results of the narrative interviews as presented in Chapter 3 to identify the emotional effects of having been orphaned at an early age. This chapter focuses on the emotional effects of early orphanhood on children of primary school age, children of secondary school age and young adults who are pursuing tertiary education respectively. Primarily perspectives from the developmental model of Erik Erikson will be applied. This will be supplemented with insights from the moral development model of Lawrence Kohlberg and the faith development model of James Fowler as were worked out in Chapter 2.

4.2 Children of primary school age

4.2.1 Perspectives from the Erikson model

This section will process the data with regard to the two participants of primary school age, Musarurwa and Zvikomborero, to examine the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five.

Focussing on the two children aged between five and twelve years who were orphaned before the age of five years leads to an examination of the operation of the psychosocial crisis of industry versus inferiority. Either the children are able to achieve purposeful or meaningful activity or they develop a sense of inferiority (see Erikson 1959). The question is how the event of early orphanhood affected the lives



of Musarurwa and Zvikomborero affected them: were they still capable of achieving purposeful and meaningful activities or did they failed to do so?

As an infant Musarurwa lost both parents in the course of 21 days. However, his paternal aunt and her husband became substitute care-givers who encouraged him to take initiative. He could again feel industrious and confident as he set out to achieve life goals. They succeeded in giving him a sense of belonging and provided for his safety needs. This boosted his self-esteem. However, the devastating loss he sustained at an early age did affect him negatively. He blames himself for his mother's death because he thinks she did not want him. The ridicule of other children in the extended family also contributes to a sense of inferiority and engenders feelings of anger, shame and abandonment.

In light of Erikson's insights, Musarurwa can be seen to present with purposeful or meaningful activity and traces of inferiority. Loving care-givers have helped him to achieve stable emotional and physical development which fosters meaningful activities (industry). On the other hand feelings of inferiority resulted in his schoolwork deteriorating while he sought popularity from significant others by stealing in order to give them gifts. At the same time the stigma surrounding his mother's death with consequent name calling from the neighbourhood has had quite an effect on him. This resulted in withdrawal from other children in the neighbourhood. He adapted better to boarding school because people there did not know of his past and stigmatize him.

In summary Musarurwa feels angry, stigmatized, discriminated against, sad and filled with pain when recalling the story of his mother's suicide. Yet, on the positive side, he also feels grateful to have been raised by people who love him and encouraged him to be purposeful and confident. They helped to kindle the flame of



hidden talent in him. His psychological crisis has been resolved, leaning towards industry rather than inferiority.

Zvikomborero, the second participant of primary school age, lost her mother in 2008 when she was only three years of age. This resulted in the separation of the siblings. While in the custody of her older mother's sister in Harare she had no contact with her father. In light of Erikson's theory it becomes evident that she leaned more toward inferiority rather than to industry than did Zvikomborero. The ridicule she experienced from her cousins because her inability to speak English eroded her self-confidence. This resulted in her withdrawal from social interaction with her age group, preferring to socialise with women of her mother's age with whom she felt more comfortable.

Zvikomborero's reunion with her siblings as a result of her father's remarriage only slightly improved her life situation. Her new lifestyle was that of a housemaid for the family and she was burdened with adult responsibilities. This caused her to long for her mother intensely and remember her with deep sorrow and sadness. She cried much. She knew that her mother would not have expected of her to do adult work. According to Erikson (1959:87), to acquire the confidence of "industry" would have required a feeling of competence in one's skills and abilities. Because Zvikomborero did not receive encouragement from her father or her stepmother she doubted her ability to be successful in life. Her sense of inferiority went hand in hand with low self-esteem. Her letter (see Chapter 3) shows the extent to which Zvikomborero has been crushed as a person. She had no opportunity to socialise with her peers because that was denied her by stepmother who expected her to work like an adult. There was nobody to protect her from abuse. In her journal she wrote a letter to her late mother in which she expressed her feelings. She described feelings of sorrow, sadness and loneliness. Her mother's death was extremely painful to her.



Although inferiority was predominant in Zvikomborero's life, she did develop a certain level of industry, which was largely the result of the work imposed on her. She was able to do it. However, had she also received encouragement and love rather than just tasks, she could have developed greater self-esteem that would have put her in a better position to reach her potential in life.

4.2.2 Perspectives from Kohlberg and Fowler's models

This study employs Kohlberg's cognitive development theory to complement the psychosocial theoretical foundations laid by Erikson. The two primary school level research participants, Musarurwa and Zvikomborero fall into Kohlberg's Level One, the *pre-conventional* level, where children aged 3-7 are preoccupied with the self and make egocentric decisions. Stage one of this level is the obedience and punishment orientation whereby children determine the rightness or wrongness of actions in terms of anticipated punishment or reward. Stage two is the "self-interest orientation" whereby moral decisions are based on "what is in it for me?" A comparison will now be made between Musarurwa and Zvikomborero who were both orphaned at a young age, but whose environment was different, which had a different effect on them. Musarurwa grew up in a relatively emotionally stable situation with fixed rules, whereas Zvikomborero's environment was unstable as she was moved from one caregiver to the next.

Musarurwa felt loved by his uncle and aunt and on that account refused to be labelled an orphan. His emotional well-being was not disrupted too severely; he was never uprooted. With him we see the operation of the stages one and two of Kohlberg's Level one. His stealing in order to please his peers at school was an egocentric decision. He did not realise what the consequences of his stealing would



be: "I did not know that *tete* (aunt) would find out". When that happened he received punishment from his uncle and aunt appropriate to his age group, namely stage one – the obedience and punishment orientation. Because of the consistent application of rules, obedience to fixed rules started to play a more prominent role in his decision making than pleasing his friends through petty thieving. In the same vein, Musarurwa demonstrated the operation of Kohlberg's stage two, the "self-interest orientation" where moral decisions are based on "what is in it for me?" Obedience earned for him the favour of the significant others in his life.

Zvikomborero, on the other hand, was uprooted and was sent to different homes. She was separated from her siblings and was sent from one school to another. As a result, Zvikomborero does not have friends of her age but prefers older women whom she thinks understand her better. She was therefore not able, as described in Kohlberg's developmental theory, to develop social relations with peers of her age. She experienced confusion because rules constantly changed. This led to a developmental disorientation. The "what is in it for me?" orientation of young children did not feature in Zvikomborero's life because there were no rewards for her, especially in the home of stepmother who exploited her. She did most of the house work and constantly feared punishment. Her school work deteriorated because she could not concentrate sufficiently on her studies.

Kohlberg's theory with its cognitive foundation deals with "the norm" and does not make provision for disrupted life circumstances, such as having been orphaned at a young age. Zvikomborero exhibits the emotional effects of moral confusion. She is constantly anxious because she does not have a moral foundation. There is no consistence in her life or reward for good behaviour and punishment for deviant behaviour. Moral confusion in her case goes hand in hand with emotional destabilization in a socially unpredictable environment.



The emotional relevance of Fowler's stages of faith to the lives of the participants of primary school age and who had been orphaned before the age of five years will now be explored. For Fowler (1981:4) faith, which is a universal concern, is a way of finding meaning in life through a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against the background of shared meaning and purpose. It is grounded in experiences that begin in infancy. This is why the experience of having been orphaned before the age of five is a significant variable.

Stage one of the development of faith, the "intuitive-projective faith" of ages two to six (Fowler 1981:121-134), is relevant for the consideration of the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five in terms of both Musarurwa and Zvikomborero. Fowler's developmental approach makes it possible to link faith and emotions, especially considering that the development of faith begins at birth. An infant can either experience loyalty and dependability, or the absence of it. Both Musarurwa and Zvikomborero experienced the loss of parents when they were orphaned before the age of five. The question is then what became of their faith development and what were the emotional ramifications of their life experiences.

Zvikomborero had a partial experience of the intuitive-projective faith. Both of her parents were alive during the first four years of her life. She had an opportunity to learn from her mother especially through stories of faith. At this fantasy-filled stage, she would have been "powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith" (Fowler 1981:133). This is reflected in her longing to be like a baby bird who can fly to its mother. These stories help her to connect herself with her late mother during times when she feels the pain and grief of her loss.



However, having been orphaned before the age of five compromised Zvikomborero's development of stage two – the mythic-literal faith (Fowler 1981:135-150) with its reliance upon reciprocity as a principle for constructing an ultimate environment (Fowler 1981:149). What she experienced instead was “an abasing sense of badness ... because of mistreatment, neglect or the apparent disfavor of significant others” (Fowler 1981:150). Her stepmother mistreated her and discriminated against her. The stepmother favoured the boys and made the female child into the slave of the family. The child had no experiences of excitement and fun. She only did house work. The consequent loss of faith in people who were supposed to care for her was accompanied by negative emotions.

Musarurwa illustrates that being orphaned at an early age does not automatically result in the negative emotions evident in Zvikomborero. Although he was orphaned at an even younger age than Zvikomborero, and although his was a loss of both parents, it is the quality of care by substitute parents that made the difference.

During the “intuitive-projective faith” of ages two to six Musarurwa was “permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith” (Fowler 1981:133) of his uncle and aunt who effectively served as substitute parents. They told him Bible stories which included that of how young David killed the giant called Goliath. Such stories and the lived example of his carers became foundational to the rest of his life. They gave him faith in both people and the human ability to conquer adversity. This made for a smooth transition to Fowler's second stage of faith development, the mythic-literal faith (Fowler 1981:135-150). At this stage Musarurwa internalised “the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his community” (Fowler 1981:149). The sense of shared meaning and purposes in a close, loving and caring environment enhanced his emotional stability.



Through the theoretical lenses provided by Erikson, Kohlberg and Fowler's theories, the pronounced psychosocial differences between Zvikomborero and Musarurwa, who had experienced a similar traumatic event, but in vastly different life circumstances, could be identified and explained. The quality of the care of children who have experienced a traumatic event and have sustained a significant loss, contributes to vast differences in the emotional effects of the same phenomenon.

The following section examines the emotional effects on children of the secondary school level who had been orphaned below the age of five.

4.3 Children of secondary school age

4.3.1 Perspectives from Erikson's model

According to Erikson (1959), the age of adolescence (13-18 years of age) is a dialectic of confusion and identity. In the light of what the narrative interviewing of Chapter 3 revealed, the complex process of identity formation of Hazvineyi and Brian, the participants of secondary school age, will now be interpreted. The extent to which their being orphaned before the age of five added to the role confusion that accompanies identity formation and how this in turn added to their emotional pain, will be explored.

Hazvineyi lost both parents in 1991. She was cared for by her grandmother. Later she went to live with her aunt (mother's sister) and the aunt's boyfriend. The way in which she was treated by them caused much emotional stress. She has painful memories of her step-brother's suicide. He had been verbally, physically and emotionally abused by an uncle who was supposed to care for him. Hazvineyi's circumstances predisposed her to role confusion and painful memories. Several



factors contributed to an identity crisis which Erikson (1959) depicts as “role confusion”.

Firstly, role confusion is exacerbated by doubt about one’s value in the primary relationships of the family. Hazvineyi’s concern was how she appeared to others in the family and to society at large. Following the death of both parents, Hazvineyi did not find in her care-givers the acceptance that would encourage a positive sense of identity. She was treated as a house maid, a position of low status in Zimbabwean society. Her sense of self-esteem was further affected when she was not enabled to attend school. The aunt’s words contributed to this: “I have no money to waste; you must look after my children as well as doing all household chores. You eat when we have all finished and you can only go to bed when the kitchen is clean”. Since Hazvineyi’s identity was shaped by how significant others viewed her and treated her, she inevitably deprecated her own worth and value as a human being.

Secondly, according to Erikson’s theory, Hazvineyi’s identity formation would have been negatively influenced by how difficult it would have been for her to integrate her view of her past with a vision of her future. Her past was filled with painful memories and damaged emotions following the death of her parents. She was devastated by the stigma and derision surrounding the death of her parents through HIV/AIDS. Her school work had to be delayed while she did piece jobs as a child in order to help her grandmother to survive. However, her determination to work for herself and her siblings, as well as her Christian faith, gave her hope of a bright future.

The third complicating factor in Hazvineyi’s process of identity formation is, in light of Erikson’s theory, the many confusing and rapid changes occurring in her physical body as an adolescent. These confusing changes required competent adults who were available to accompany her as she navigated through them. Here she suffered



a disadvantage, having lost her parents at a young age and having moved from a poor grandmother to an aunt whom she viewed as cruel and inconsiderate. According to her, she could only gather snippets of information from books, magazines or friends to help her understand the physical changes of her body. The result was the lack of an integrated and healthy view of her physical development.

The fourth factor identified by Erikson (1959), namely role expectations, contributed most to Hazvineyi's identity crisis. She experienced increasing and conflicting demands from society in terms of the roles she should fulfil and the way in which she should do it. Ever since the death of her parents, Hazvineyi was thrust into adult responsibility when she should have been experiencing the fun of childhood play. She therefore struggled to make a smooth transition from childhood to young adulthood on account of having been forced into adult roles prematurely. As an adolescent she was treated by her aunt as a housemaid. She was forced to call her aunt's boyfriend "father", which she greatly resented. Rather than being a student preparing for the future, she was preoccupied with the burden of providing for daily needs of her aged grandmother and siblings. These experiences led to a high degree of role confusion. She failed to establish a sense of identity within society and has never been sure of who she really is.

These experiences caused Hazvineyi's process of identity formation in light of how others saw her, to be like "reflected images in a house of distorting mirrors" (Fowler 1981:75). Those images do not fit together into a coherent whole, thus creating role diffusion if not role confusion. She has not been able to discover an authentic self based on the reconciliation between how she has come to be and the person society expects her to become (see Fowler 1981:83). In a diary entry she put it as follows: "The death of my parents has made me a slave in my community. Villagers call me for piece jobs and forget I am a child".



The story of Brian, the second secondary school age participant, shares certain similar features with that of Hazvineyi. He too grew up without both parents. His mother died in 1997 when he was only three years of age and his father, whom he never knew and who was never officially married to his mother, was long since presumed dead. Like Hazvineyi, his most positive post-orphanhood experience was the relationship with a loving grandmother from whom he lost when she died of a heart attack when he turned twenty. However, unlike Hazvineyi he never knew any siblings. He was only told about a brother who died before he was born. In this sense he experienced greater deprivation in his social formation than did Hazvineyi. By means of Erikson's (1959) dialectic of identity versus role confusion these two life stories will now be compared.

Firstly, role confusion is exacerbated by doubt about one's value in the primary relationships of the family. While for Hazvineyi there were at least some siblings who valued her, the same could not be said for Brian whose only meaningful relationship for 17 years since the death of his mother was with his grandmother. It is only this grandmother who described to him how he was perceived by others in the family. Though the grandmother gave Brian unconditional love and acceptance, her limitation was her lack of education, and hence her inability to appreciate his school work and encourage him in that regard. Not surprisingly, therefore, Brian perceived himself as having no one to please and no one to encourage him in the process of growing up. This limited his appreciation of himself as a worthwhile human being. His limited school achievement can most probably be attributable to his low self-esteem.

This leads to the second factor in Erikson's description of the development of people in this age-group, namely when identity formation is negatively influenced by the difficulty to integrate the view of one's personal past with a vision of one's personal



future. As was the case with Hazvineyi, Brian's past was also filled with painful memories and emotions following the death of his mother when he was only three years old. This situation, coupled with his poor academic performance later in life, could have largely destroyed Brian's hope of a positive personal future. However, it did not. He hopes to become an accomplished musician and actor. Brian's Christian faith gave him hope for a bright future. He is actively involved in church work and is inspired by messages of a God who cares for disadvantaged people and wants to uplift them as God did with the much disadvantaged Hebrew people. They were uplifted from the status of slaves and became a great nation.

A third complicating factor in Brian's process of identity formation is, according to Erikson's theory, the many confusing and rapid changes occurring in his physical body as an adolescent. As was the case with Hazvineyi, Brian lacked a competent and caring adult male to help him understand and accept these changes. Having no father and no siblings, Brian also only succeeded in gathering snippets of information from books, magazines and friends. Like Hazvineyi, the result was the lack of an integrated and healthy view of his physical development.

When it comes to role expectations (see Erikson 1959), Brian suffered greater disadvantages than Hazvineyi. According to Erikson, at this stage adolescents' circle of significant others should have both broadened and diversified. This widening circle would include not only family, but also teachers and peers. This was not the case with Brian, at least on the level of family. Whereas Hazvineyi experienced conflicting demands from care-givers, Brian's role definition was limited to the errands he had to do for his grandmother until her untimely death. There was no one to guide him on how to be a man in society. This, coupled with not having known his father, led him to say: "The whole issue has left me wondering about whom I am." Role confusion,



through a failure to establish a proper sense of identity within society, became a pronounced reality for Brian.

The emotional effects of having been orphaned at an early age for both Hazvineyi and Brian can be identified as the following. They have both struggled to make a smooth transition from childhood to young adulthood. The emotional pain of orphanhood was significant in both cases. In the case of Hazvineyi, in the narrative interview, she described feelings of sadness, getting angry easily and even “hating” her late parents for dying before she had reached adulthood. She resented them for having left her to deal with so many difficulties while they were resting in their graves. She is often antisocial, keeping to herself. She even wishes at times that she could rather live in an orphanage than with her relatives.

Brian also described feelings of sadness, anger, resentment and a fear of the future. Part of his resentment and anger are directed at God – why God allowed his grandmother to die before she told him about his father. He describes his emotions when grandmother died too, leaving him without a relative, as follows: “I cried, and cried, and asked God why He had allowed it to happen. I could not express how I felt; I did not have any words and went into a quiet mood for hours.” His experience contributed to his social isolation. He had no interest in interacting with other people socially. He seemed quite content to live by himself in his late mother’s house.

This section has illustrated some of the emotional effects on an adolescent child after having been orphaned before the age of five years.



4.3.2 Perspectives from Kohlberg and Fowler's model

Kohlberg's stages of moral development and Fowler's stages of faith will now be used as lenses to understand and interpret moral and faith development in children of secondary school age. Though Kohlberg's focus is on the *cognitive* foundations of moral reasoning and this study focuses on the *emotional* effects of having been orphaned at an early age, Kohlberg's theory is valuable since affect is inevitably accompanied and affected by the cognitive and together they affect the moral course a person chooses to take.

When taking part in this study the two participants of secondary school age, Hazvineyi and Brian, should have reached at least stage three of Kohlberg's second level of development, namely the *conventional* level (Kohlberg 1981:18). Stage three is driven by "interpersonal concordance or 'good boy-nice girl' orientation" (Kohlberg 1981:18). According to Kohlberg, good behaviour at this stage is "that which pleases and helps others and is approved by them" (Kohlberg 1981:18). However, both Hazvineyi and Brian, having been orphaned before the age of five years, grew up in an environment with no fixed rules. Both were moved from one care-giver to another. This created the potential for emotional and moral confusion since moral boundaries were not always clear. This insight is comparable to Erikson's concept of identity crisis and role confusion. Their interpersonal accord and conformity had become disrupted in early childhood when they experienced traumatic loss, the effects of which followed them into the developmental stage of adolescence.

Hazvineyi was separated from her siblings and her education was prematurely disrupted. She was reduced to the status of a domestic worker and was denied the opportunity of secondary school education. Brian had no experience of siblings and his grandmother, until her death, was his only adult role model. That they had been orphaned at an early age impacted negatively on them later in their life when they



reached secondary school age. At this stage they should have been learning how to conform to the social order by doing their duty as defined by rules governing their roles. This includes respect and gratitude, doing what "a good daughter", "a good student" is expected to do. Normally authority, fixed rules, and the social legal regulation of roles would at this stage be determining the final rightness or wrongness of actions. In their case, however, early orphanhood played a disruptive role in their moral development. According to Kohlberg's theory, moral development occurs in the interaction of persons with the social conditions of their lives. Such social conditions not only create a condition for the development of moral choices, but also for the accompanying emotional conditions of satisfaction and happiness, or the absence thereof. In this respect Kohlberg's insights are relevant to the focus of this study.

Fowler's stages of faith are relevant to the investigation of the emotional effects of early orphanhood at secondary school age. Fowler understands faith broadly in the Tillichian sense of a person's "ultimate concern" or that which gives "purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and action" (Fowler 1981:14). The relevance of Fowler's insights is that "ultimate concern" touches every aspect of a person's life, including emotions, will and intellect. Given the fact that faith, or ultimate concern, is also "a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against the background of shared meaning and purposes" (Fowler 1981:4) the question that arises is how the effects of early orphanhood have become manifest in the lives of Hazvineyi and Brian, and specifically in the secondary school age stage of their development.

In earlier stages of their development Hazvineyi and Brian's ultimate concern was family. The grandmother and the siblings gave meaning to Hazvineyi's life until she experienced the pain of separation from both and her position as an girl orphan



caused her to be exploited as a domestic worker by relatives who were supposed to care for her. Brian's social world was greatly diminished when his mother died. At the age of three only the grandmother was left to provide in his need to find meaning and an ultimate concern in life. Both these young people were deprived of the needed "reciprocity as a principle for constructing an ultimate environment" (Fowler 1981:149).

The developmental level that is relevant at secondary school age corresponds to Fowler's third stage of faith development, the synthetic-conventional faith experienced during adolescence. At this age young people's experience of the world, and therefore their meaning construction, should extend beyond the family to embrace diverse experiences that include work, peers, media and perhaps religion. At this stage they should be able to synthesize this diversity and construct a basis for identity. If faith plays a role in their life, it contributes to this process. At the same time this "conformist stage" is "acutely tuned to the expectations and judgments of significant others and as yet does not have a sure enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective" (Fowler 1981:172).

It is this phenomenon of being "acutely tuned to the expectations and judgments of significant others" that led to negative emotional effects on Hazvineyi and Brian on account of having been orphaned at an early age. For both the "significant others" were the grandmothers who could not supply the kind of emotional support needed by adolescents. What support they did get from the grandmothers also came to an end when the grandmothers died. The emotional support they would have received from peers at school was inconsistent because of the lack of a stable environment. Not surprisingly, therefore, deprivation of parents and a poor upbringing magnify the challenges that people at this stage of development generally face. Interpersonal



betrayal gave rise either to a combination of anger and frustration or to a compensatory intimacy with God unrelated to mundane relations (Fowler 1981:173).

The emotional effects identified and interpreted by means of Erikson's theory were discussed in further depth with the help of the perspectives of both Kohlberg and Fowler.

4.4 Young adults

4.4.1 Perspectives from Erikson's theory

According to Erikson (1959), the crisis to be resolved at stage six of human psychosocial development, namely at the young adult age of 21-35, is that of intimacy versus isolation. It is only after a foundation of identity has been established in the previous stage that real intimacy with the other sex or any other person is possible (Erikson 1959:101). The young adult who has successfully negotiated the crisis of intimacy versus isolation attains the ego virtue of true love which is the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships with other people. On the other hand, the young adult who is not sure of his or her identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy with its attendant danger of isolation if not hostility or distantiation. In light of these insights from Erikson's theory the emotional effect of early orphanhood on the lives of two young adult participants, Ropafadzo and Gwinyai, who embarked on tertiary education, will be explored.

Ropafadzo's early childhood consisted largely of verbal, physical and emotional abuse. Her parents who had already been divorced died in quick succession. After her father's death her alcoholic mother did not spend much time with her. After the death of her mother Ropafadzo was initially left in the care of her old paternal grandmother after which she was sent to boarding school where she was exposed



her to early sexual activity. From then on her life was characterised by sexual abuse which robbed her of any sense of human worth and dignity.

According to Erikson, people with a poor sense of self tend not to be able to commit to relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness and depression. Young adulthood, for Ropafadzo, was characterised by distantiation and hostility. She isolated herself as a way to protect herself from further hurt and pain. The ego virtue of true love which leads to the ability of forming lasting relationships was destroyed (Erikson 1959:101). In her desperation, and lacking parental guidance, she became caught up in prostitution and contracted the HIV virus. The emotional effects of her early orphanhood experience took the form of loneliness, depression, a critical attitude and insubordination to authority. These traits accompanied her into early adulthood. The abuse and verbal abuse she suffered as a young child led to her becoming an abusive adult. This further destroyed her ability to develop meaningful relationships with others.

On the positive side, Ropafadzo's spiritual life developed and she learnt that she could realise her God-given potential if she made the decision to become a follower of Jesus. In her bouts of isolation she memorized scriptures. This enabled her to manage her pain, grief, frustration and the loss of her health because of HIV. Scriptures, according to Ropafadzo, enabled her to work on her emotions, deal with the past and minimise the role the past plays in the present life. This issue will receive further attention in the following chapter.

The life of Gwinyai is explored by means of the insight of Erikson (1959:101) that the young adult who has successfully negotiated the crisis of intimacy versus isolation attains the ego virtue of true love which is the ability to form lasting, meaningful relationships with other people. The narrative of Gwinyai demonstrated how he failed



to negotiate this crisis of intimacy versus isolation. The death of his father complicated his relationships with members of the extended family. They tried to forcibly take his father's property which had been bequeathed to Gwinyai and his brother Nyasha. The uncle took everything that his father had worked for as "punishment" for his mother's refusal to become the uncle's wife. Abuse by relatives is a recurring theme in Gwinyai's narrative. Furthermore Gwinyai and his brother did not have a sufficiently stable environment in which to foster meaningful relationships either with extended family members or with friends. Due to their mother's work they lived in various countries and lost her when she died of AIDS. The result of this is that Gwinyai failed to negotiate the earlier crises of life as articulated by Erikson (1959), including the adolescent dialectic of confusion and identity. That then led to his failure to negotiate the crisis of intimacy versus isolation of young adulthood. What he experienced was in fact the counterpart of intimacy. His young adult life was characterised by distantiation or isolation (Erikson (1959:101). The feeling of having been abandoned was also quite pronounced in his narrative. He felt abandoned by his father's family who did not care for him and his brother.

The emotional effects of such distantiation were quite pronounced. Gwinyai felt vulnerable, unsafe and unable to trust. He stated flatly: "I will never trust anyone again". Fear of the unknown and a secret desire for revenge tended to dominate his later life as shown by the poem quoted in the previous chapter where he wrote: "You have struck fear into my belly; who knows, I might do the same to your family." His lack of self-esteem is a result of how he was treated by others. This is expressed in his poem as: "Show me respect, take me more seriously; am I not more than just jelly?"



The positive side of Gwinyai's life is his determination to work very hard in order to overcome the adversities caused by his past. Gwinyai worked as a domestic worker while he was educating himself. The results of such hard work are seen in his academic success. He is happy with his success and the tangible results of his hard work and determination. He therefore visualizes his future as one in which exciting things can happen and plans to get married. This is an indication that the distantiation and isolation of his youth did not destroy the possibility of building a meaningful relationship.

4.4.2 Perspectives from Kohlberg and Fowler's model

The emotional effects of early orphanhood on Ropafadzo and Gwinyai were explored by utilising Erikson's theoretical framework. This will now be complemented with Kohlberg's model of moral development and Fowler's model of faith development.

At the conventional moral level people conform to the expectations of family, their group and society. It is seen as valuable in its own right to obey rules and follow society's norms, even when there are no direct consequences of either obedience or disobedience (Kohlberg 1981:18). People who have reached this stage have gone beyond the need for individual approval characteristic of stage three. They show loyalty to the social order, supporting and justifying the social order and identifying with the people or group involved in the social order. At stage four of the conventional level which the two participants should have attained, according to the theory, there should be a "society maintaining orientation" whereby doing what is right consists of "doing one's duty, showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake" (Kohlberg 1981:18). Personal rights and desires are balanced against the more comprehensive interests and requirements of the social system as a whole. Such maintenance of the social order contributes to a



person's sense of identity. A deep sense of satisfaction can be the emotional side-benefit.

Ropafadzo and Gwinyai, having been orphaned before the age of five years, grew up in families which had no structured rules – a factor which disrupted their progress to stage four of Kohlberg's typology. Ropafadzo was not even able to fully attain stage three (the interpersonal accord conformity) due to experiences in early childhood that became baggage carried into adulthood. With a fragmented nuclear family and an aunt who did not protect her against the sexual abuse, Ropafadzo was denied the experience of "justice" on which Kohlberg's moral system rests (Kohlberg 1981:29-48). Not only did she suffer the disruption of her education, but her physical wellbeing was also affected. She had contracted the HIV virus. Her expulsion from the university for violating rules is an indication that she had not even significantly attained the level three "good girl" orientation. It is understandable that emotionally she felt disappointed, embarrassed and disheartened.

Gwinyai went through a trajectory similar to that of Ropafadzo, albeit less severely. Necessity forced him to work for his own upkeep early on in life. By doing so he was stimulated to growing to stage three of Kohlberg's typology, namely "interpersonal concordance or 'good boy' orientation" (Kohlberg 1981:18). Without approved moral behaviour he would not have been able to hold any job. In fact he was also being propelled into level four of moral thinking and behaviour by doing several duties in the home to help his mother when she fell ill. Gwinyai's mother died while he was working in Botswana to raise money for her medication and his tuition fees. Despite these advances his moral development was compromised due to a lack of adequate interaction with significant others.



Fowler's (1981) stages of faith will now be applied to the stories of Ropafadzo and Gwinyai. The emotional effects of their lives as they progressed through these stages as people who had been orphaned at an early age, will be identified. Fowler (1981:14) understands faith as that which gives "purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and action". It is a way of finding meaning in life through a person's way of seeing him- or herself in relation to others against the background of shared meaning and purposes. Faith is grounded in experiences that begin with infancy. This makes it possible to investigate the emotional effects of having been orphaned at a very early age.

The two research participants grew up experiencing what Fowler (1981:150) calls "an abasing sense of badness embraced because of mistreatment, neglect or the apparent disfavour of significant others" who in this case are those who had to care for them after the death of their parents. This affected stage three of the development of their faith, which is the synthetic-conventional faith that Fowler attributes to the adolescent stage of growth. At this stage the person's experience of the world should extend beyond the family to embrace diverse experiences that include work, peers, media and perhaps religion. One's faith must now be able to synthesize this diversity and provide a basis for one's identity (Fowler 1981: 172). The two participants lacked self-confidence because of childhood deprivation and a poor upbringing. This resulted in an impaired autonomy of judgment and action. The two respondents in this category therefore failed to achieve the individuative-reflective stage of faith with its "capacity for reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)" (Fowler 1981:182). This can be demonstrated by the stages of faith applied to in each of them.

During stage one of the development of faith, the "intuitive-projective faith" of ages two to six (Fowler 1981:121-134) both Ropafadzo and Gwinyai experienced a



deprivation of parental carers when they were orphaned at an age younger than five years. Following the death of her parents in early childhood Ropafadzo experienced with verbal, physical and emotional abuse. She also experienced relational distantiation. Gwinyai, too, grew up in an unsettled environment where meaningful relationships either with extended family members or with friends could not be fostered. Under these circumstances both Ropafadzo and Gwinyai's lives were severely disrupted as they were entering the intuitive-projective stage of faith development, which would have required that they be exposed to “examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith” (Fowler 1981:133). The same applied to stage two, the phase of mythic-literal faith which requires reciprocity in order to construct an ultimate environment (Fowler 1981:149). This stage requires “the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his community”. Such stories could have created a sense of shared meaning and purposes in a close, loving and caring environment. Because this is what the participants lacked, they lost faith in the people who were supposed to care for them.

At secondary school age the respondents should have reached Fowler's third stage of synthetic-conventional faith which is reached during adolescence. At this stage their meaning construction should have extend beyond the family to embrace diverse experiences that include work, peers, media and perhaps religion. Due to relational disruptions caused by having been orphaned before the age of five, they failed to synthesize this diversity and form a basis for their identity. However Ropafadzo, having been disillusioned by people, gradually succeeded in finding meaning in her life through the Christian faith to which she was introduced at boarding school. This enabled her to develop a relationship with God, who became a projection of the ideal father she never had. It is mythic-literal reliance on God that sustained her hope when she was diagnosed with the HIV virus. She quotes 2 Timothy 1:7 to express



her reliance on God: “For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self discipline.”

Gwinyai also got stuck in the mythic-literal stage of faith. He learnt much that was good from his mother whom he could also trust. Through his mother he knew about God and how to pray. The death of his mother was a life-shattering experience for him. He experienced emotional pain, bouts of guilt, sadness, abandonment, and vulnerability especially when he was deceived and deprived from burying his mother. His faith in humanity and in his own ability to excel was only partially restored through his relationship with Mrs Nyati who became a substitute mother for him. This relationship strengthened his faith and reliance on God. He therefore became very focused and succeeded in graduating from university.

4.5 Emotional effects of early orphanhood: Themes

From the experiences of the three groups of participants, some common themes on the emotional effects of early orphanhood can be identified. Firstly, most of the participants, at some point in their lives, experienced anger, bitterness, hatred and a lack of trust in the people who were supposed to care for them. They felt that their carers did not understand them. Some felt mistreated by substitute carers and others imagined that if their parents had not died prematurely they would not have been deprived of a good life. Those raised by stepmothers or aunts complained of being exploited to do house work. They worked long hours and were poorly fed (e.g. Zvikomborero and Hazvineyi). Some had to perform adult roles and were deprived of their childhood. Some could eat only after the guardians and their children had eaten, or were deprived of meals altogether. This causes the children to feel angry and bitter.



Secondly, the participants experienced neglect and abandonment which left them feeling helpless and without hope. In the case of Gwinyai this helplessness was epitomized by the way some members of the extended family took the father's property and left the mother and children destitute and in abject poverty. Desperation drove Ropafadzo to engage in risky sexual behaviour in order to try and survive. In desperation Zvikomborero cried for her mother almost every day.

Thirdly, in schools and colleges the participants suffered from poor concentration because they were constantly worrying about what would happen after school or college. They were worried about where their next meal was to come from and about tuition fees that were not paid. Some missed school because they had to work for survival. This was mostly the experiences of those who were cared for by grandparents or those in child-headed families. Some had to drop out of school completely.

Fourthly, teachers, relatives and their peers did not know how to deal with the children's loss. They were often stigmatized, which led to much emotional pain.

The effects of early orphanhood as depicted in the narrative interviewing chapter and analyzed in this chapter are best captured in an article entitled "Inward pain" in which Joni Eareckson Tada (2016) describes emotional pain and anguish and its effects as follows:

Which pain is worse, emotional or physical? Like you, I've faced both kinds: crushing physical pain with no position in which I can get comfortable; crushing heartache in which my head spins with grief, and I can't stop the tears. Physical pain is curious. You can almost distract yourself from it. Sometimes you can push physical pain right out of your thoughts by crowding your time and attention with other things. Even in



a wheelchair, I've devised clever ways to forget about my paralysis. Ah, but inside suffering, that's another matter. You can't put mental anguish or heartache behind you. Those hurts create an emptiness that refuses to be pushed or crowded out of your thoughts. It bites, gnaws, grinds away at your sanity.



Chapter 5

Practical theological perspectives on early orphanhood and the church

5.1 Introduction

The task of practical theology, namely to critically reflect on the praxis of the church in the world in the light of Scripture and Christian tradition is grounded in everyday human life in general, and in the life and work of the church in particular. It begins with “the lived experience of the contemporary Christian community as it strives to live faithfully in and for the world” (Swinton 2003:380). The relationship between theology and practice is mutual and the aim is that a genuine dialogue between the two can take place (Tidball1988:525). Practice informs theology and theology motivates practice.

From this practical theological point of departure this chapter first describes the social environment in which many orphans find themselves in Zimbabwe as lived experience. This lived experience is brought into dialogue with Scripture in order to develop a pastoral care of hope. The role of the church as a healing community and as a provider of both a supportive environment for orphans and a comprehensive pastoral and counselling will then be explored. The chapter concludes with guidelines as to how care-givers can provide holistic care to orphans in this particular context.

In this chapter insights from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and cultural studies will be utilized “in order to illuminate the meaning of the ‘living text’ of the Christian community” (Swinton 2003:381). Scripture will be



utilized as a source for theological discernment in order to and “contribute to the world’s becoming what God intends it to be” (Swinton 2003:381).

5.2 Orphans in the social context of Zimbabwe

This section discusses the social environment of specifically the Shona community of Zimbabwe. This general description of the environment will provide a broad picture of the context in which the majority of orphans in the country find themselves. The “social environment” includes all the relationships in and outside of the home that shape the lives of the orphans. The particular concern in this study is the significant others in the lives of the orphans, including relatives from both the maternal and paternal extended families. The description provided here pertains to the situation of orphans in this context in general, but with a particular focus on the research participants. Every human being is unique and so also the set of circumstances surrounding each individual. Every individual lives in and is formed by environmental and relational influences. The study describes general trends in order to provide a framework in which the particular can be understood.

The orphans in this environment are in most cases in the care of relatives rather than in institutions which, in this context, are scarce. The positive side of this situation is that orphans can still grow up in a family environment rather than in an impersonal institution. On the other hand, however, caregivers who are not biological parents, and who may be facing their own financial challenges in the poor economic environment that Zimbabwe has experienced since the mid-1990’s, are either unable or unwilling to give the orphans the kind of quality care described in North-American psychologist Abraham Maslow’s (1943, 1970) theory of the hierarchy of needs. According to Maslow, people are motivated by their desire to meet their human needs. Lower level needs have to be satisfied before a person is motivated to meet higher needs. He puts it as follows (Maslow 1943:375):



It is quite true that man lives by bread alone — when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled? At once other (and "higher") needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still "higher") needs emerge and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency.

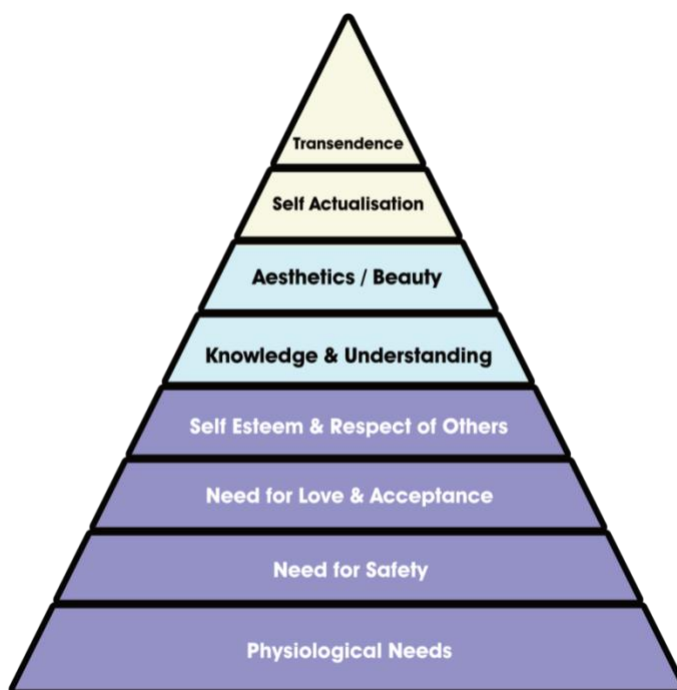


Fig. 5.1: Maslow's expanded hierachy of needs

In other words, a need motivates behaviour to meet that need only if needs at a lower level have been satisfied. Maslow (1970) classifies the first four needs as basic or deficiency needs. If these needs are not met individuals become uncomfortable (feel the deficiency or feel under threat physically, emotionally or psychologically) and are therefore driven to meet those needs. It is difficult to be motivated to meet higher needs if, for example, one is hungry (physiological need), is feeling unsafe



(safety need), is feeling rejected (love/belonging need) or does not feel worthy (esteem need). Maslow classifies the last four needs as “growth” or “being” needs. These needs promote growth and development rather than just filling a gap or deficiency. These being needs are never fully satisfied and will continue to motivate behaviour as long as the basic needs are met. Cognitive needs (for knowledge and understanding), aesthetic needs (the appreciation and search for beauty and form) and self-actualization needs (self-fulfilment through realizing personal potential) continue to characterize one’s growth. The same would apply to transcendence needs – spiritual needs and moral values which include helping others to achieve self-actualization.

Against this background, and with the aid of the Maslow hierarchy of needs, the social environment in which orphans in Zimbabwe live, are now described. With regard to their biological (survival) needs, it is evident from the stories of the research participants that some of the orphans live under conditions where their physiological or biological needs are inadequately met. In the absence of their parents they have been reduced to poverty, and do not have enough to eat and drink, are not always warm and are sometimes deprived of rest and sleep.

It was traditional in Shona culture that orphans were supported by the community by older persons. However, this traditional attitude to care is becoming increasingly rare. The responsibility for caring for orphans has become a major problem throughout Africa (see Maqoko and Dreyer 2007). In Zimbabwe, especially in Harare where the respondents live, poverty and unemployment have made it difficult for families and extended families to cope with the plight of orphans. Had the Zimbabwean government provided social grants, it could have brought some relief, but such grants do not exist. The consequence is that orphans are generally neglected. Neglect occurs when care-givers either are either not available to care



adequately for the children, or are present, but too pre-occupied with their own interests and affairs to become meaningfully involved in the care of children. If parents die, their homes are often taken from their children by families and communities. The children then either become homeless or are housed in insufficient accommodation. Often children who do not provide manual labour are not given food. They have to resort to tilling the land to grow maize or finding piece jobs in order to bring in the money necessary to buy food. This amounts to child labour. In such an environment of need, anxiety characterizes their existence. What is relevant to physiological or biological needs also applies to safety needs which pertain to security, stability and the need of a predictable, orderly world in which the unfamiliar is rare.

The following two needs in the Maslow hierarchy are social needs, namely the need of love and belonging. The results of the narrative interviews have shown that the social world of the orphans often lacks intimacy, friendship, trust and acceptance. This results in the children feeling lonely, isolated, often also depressed and withdrawn. Some relatives do not accept orphans into their families for various reasons, which include cultural fears. For example there is the fear of avenging spirits in the event of that child dying while in one's custody. Often the failure by the extended family to cope with responsibilities is due to financial constraints (Foster-Fishman et al 1998). Orphans who continually experience social rejection develop a poor self-concept. Some become bitter, anxious and isolated (see Chapter 4).

A related phenomenon is that of orphaned children being burdened with caring for their elderly grandparents. An example is Loveness, an orphan who since an early age had to care for her elderly blind grandmother. At fourteen years of age she toils on land that has not been ploughed, but just digs holes to sow seeds in what in Zimbabwe is called "zero tillage farming". Her crops do not yield much because of



the poor method of farming. She became a farmer by accident when she went to live with her grandmother after the death of her parents. She is in effect the grandmother's guardian. The traditional Shona value of care for orphans expressed in the proverb *Nherera mwana wemunhu wese* (an orphan is everybody's child) is lost because nobody cares any longer. Loveness has been robbed of a future and of her dreams by poverty and the lack of concern of the state and individuals for her welfare. These realities have severe consequences for children's development. Wright et al (2003:26) point out that children who experience neglect early on in life have to contend with many difficulties later on in life. They often lack the ability to develop close relationships with others; they often have difficulty setting limits for themselves because as a child they did not learn to do so. No one set limits for them. They often have difficulty developing a strong sense of self from which to relate effectively with others. The study has shown this to be the case also with children in Zimbabwe who have been orphaned at an early age.

The esteem needs of children are affected by the different types of discrimination they are participated to, as well as child labour, negligence, poverty, ill-treatment and abandonment. Moletsane (2004) points out that orphaned children are often discriminated against by the surviving members of the extended family. Parents who have died of HIV/AIDS are said to have brought shame to the community. For example, participant Hazvineyi who is of secondary school age put it as follows: "Some people were afraid to come near us because our parents died of 'shuramatongo' (Shona term for HIV/AIDS) so they were afraid to catch it from us." The struggle of many of these orphans to obtain birth certificates from the registry department cuts to the heart of both belonging and esteem needs of these children. According to Maslow's hierarchy being respected and valued by significant others is an important component of the development of esteem and self-respect. The failure to satisfy these needs of the orphans leads to feelings of inferiority.



The social environment of the orphans will now be described and brought into dialogue with Maslow's idea of *being needs*. The most pronounced growth need that is affected by the social environment is the cognitive need for knowledge and understanding. As the children struggle to meet their survival needs, educational needs tend to be sacrificed. Orphans often are deprived of an education when they must work from an early age to make a living. After having provided food and clothing for themselves and family members, little is left for education (see Chapter 3). Children who are deprived of rest, food and sleep, are not able to learn well. The fact that some children live alone or with elderly grandparents and with nobody to supervise their homework means that their school work is often neglected. The Zimbabwe Education Assistance Model (BEAM), an arm of government, is unable to sponsor a sufficient number of orphaned children financially because there are too many such children for the government to afford. The other challenge orphans face is displacement. They are often moved from one home to another, which also affects their studies.

According to Maslow's (1970) theory, if the higher needs are not met, it does not bode well for disadvantaged populations. His estimate of people who reach self-actualization is only two percent in the context of United States. When it comes to orphans with a disadvantaged background, this becomes even more pronounced. With basic needs threatened, their chance of meeting higher needs, for example aesthetic needs and achieving self-actualization becomes virtually impossible. For example, none of the orphans who participated in this study were ever taken to beautiful sites in the country that are visited by tourists, such as the Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park or the scenic Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe. Similarly affected are their self-actualization needs. They fail to make the most of their abilities or to realize their potential and become the best they can be.



I do not agree with Maslow's premise that transcendence needs cannot be met before lower needs are. In this regard I concur with Victor Frankl's criticism. Transcendence needs include looking beyond the self and having compassion and empathy for others. The extent to which orphans have cared for their brothers and sisters, and for their elderly grandparents defies the notion that transcendence needs can only be achieved once basic needs have been satisfied. Transcendence needs include relating to the divine. The Christian faith has provided strength and hope to orphans who might have otherwise lacked such hope (see Chapter 3). That has happened even when their lower needs according to Maslow's hierarchy were insufficiently met or not met at all.

From this description of the impact of the social environment in Zimbabwe on the orphans and the role of spirituality in their dire situation, insights from Scripture on orphanhood can contribute to the development of a holistic approach to pastoral care with orphans in this context.

5.3 Orphanhood in Scripture

The Bible portrays God as having a special concern for orphans. For this reason those who abuse orphans also offend God and are liable to encounter severe consequences. Other key concepts to be developed in this section include the need for orphans to be parented, how orphans deserve justice including protection of their inheritance, holistic care for orphans and the Bible as a healing source.

Firstly, the biblical portrayal of God's special care for the orphans will be examined. This special care arises from God's character which Flemming (2004:153) describes it as a unified personality with qualities such as goodness, truth, love, justice, holiness and wisdom. When it comes to orphans, the qualities of love and justice are



especially relevant. God has compassion for the weak and downtrodden. God is a “father to the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5) and “defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow” (Deuteronomy 10:18). These are qualities of God’s loving care. Scripture also attests to the justice of God toward orphans and other vulnerable members of society. Deuteronomy 10:17-18 articulates it as follows: “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. God executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.”

God expects people to act with a similar loving care and justice for orphans and other vulnerable members of society. The people of God should advocate for justice for the orphaned children. This would apply especially to those who have been orphaned at an early age, since they are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. James 1:17 describes actions that are the result of an authentic spirituality as follows: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world”. Acts of religion that are devoid of practical holistic care for the vulnerable are worthless. Isaiah 58:6-7 describes it as follows: “Is not this the fast that I choose: to lose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

The concerns voiced in Scripture correlate with some of the needs in the Maslow’s theory. These should be attended to as part of the special responsibility that God gave to God’s people in relationship to the care of orphans. The responsibilities towards orphans include the following:



- to defend their rights, to speak up for orphans as advocates (Prov 31:8-9);
- to feed and clothe them (Mt 25:42 – 43);
- to protect them from those who mistreat them (Isaiah1:17);
- to share resources with them (Lk 3:11);
- to find families for them (Ps 68:6).

Contrary to these injunctions, however, in biblical times and in contemporary societies, orphans are not always treated with the love and justice God requires. The narrative interviews have shown cases of rejection, neglect or dispossession which have worsened the situation of the orphans.

The second consideration touched upon in Scripture is about the consequences faced by those who abuse orphans and take advantage of them. Deuteronomy 27:19 puts it as follows: “Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.” Depriving children of a home and a sense of belonging to a family is a blatant form of injustice with regard to the vulnerable in society. That children’s place is in a family, is a strong biblical imperative. In family children receive guidance, discipline and training in godliness (Deut 6-9): “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

In families children should accept the authority of the parents: “Honour your father and your mother so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Ex 20:12). Jesus exemplified this value when, according to Luke 2:5, “he went down with them [his parents] and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them.”



Scripture warns parents against misusing their authority or treating children unjustly: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). The formation of a responsible adult begins in infancy and in the environment of a home. It is this family environment that also provides for children’s needs (1Tim 5:8): “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” People do not exist in isolation. Orphans who have to fend for themselves, like Ropafadzo, Gwinyai, Hazvineyi and Brian, are deprived of much of what should constitute a good childhood.

Scripture shows that God favours the poor and downtrodden members of society. In the Old Testament God uplifted a people who were slaves in Egypt, who were humiliated and treated harshly, but later became a great nation (Deut 26:5-9). In the New Testament Jesus is shown to associate with the lowly, uplifting them and giving them a dignity they did not previously have. From a spiritual perspective orphan children who suffered much and had no one to fend for them, can know that before God they are of great value and that their background does not have to define their future. This healing message should be mediated through the church which provides a pastoral care of hope.

5.4 Church and the pastoral care of hope

Pastoral care can be described as “helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed towards healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns” (Clebsch and Jaekle 1994:4). This description provides a useful framework for the discussion of the role of the church in providing a pastoral care of hope to orphaned children. Before the four categories of pastoral care identified in the description are applied to the topic of this study, clarification should be given with regard to the



agents and the recipients of pastoral care. Representative Christian persons do not have to be ordained ministers. The church is designated in 1 Corinthians 12:27 as “the body of Christ”. Therefore any Christian who cares for orphans in the name of Christ represents the body of Christ. The recipients of pastoral care are “troubled persons”. Chapters three and four of this study have shown the extent to which persons who had been orphaned at an early age have become troubled physically, emotionally and psychologically. They are in need of comprehensive pastoral care in all four the areas to which the description refers. This pastoral care should be provided by the faith community and will now be discussed.

Firstly, the faith community, bearers of the message of hope, can and should provide a *healing* ministry. Healing can be described as “a pastoral function that aims to overcome some impairment by restoring a person to wholeness and by leading him to advance beyond his previous condition” (Clebsch & Jaekle 1994:35). This healing includes the entire inner person – the mind, the emotions and memories. Persons who had been orphaned at an early age need release from emotions such as resentment, rejection, self-pity, depression, guilt, sorrow, hatred, inferiority, self-condemnation and a sense of worthlessness (Tapscott 1975, 1987). Rejection is one of the worst but most neglected emotional wounds from which many people suffer (Hammond 2007:8). This can be clearly seen in the lives of Zvikomborero, Hazvineyi, Brian, Ropafadzo and Gwinyai who experienced much emotional pain. The faith community can make use of healing forms of spiritual practices such as prayer, Scripture (see Adams 1970; Bobgan 1985) and counselling. Identification with the sufferings of Jesus Christ can bring a sense of connectedness to suffering orphans. The biblical narratives indicate clearly that those who suffer are never rejected, abandoned or denied by Jesus Christ. Through spiritual guidance the orphans who identify with Jesus can learn to overcome the effects of their deep-



seated pain through the power of God's love. With regard to inner healing, only divine love can heal the deeply wounded spirit, according to Kraft (1994:91).

The second category in Clebsch and Jaekle's the description of a pastoral care of hope is that of *sustaining* (Clebsch&Jaekle 1994:42-50). The pastoral function of sustaining "consists of helping a hurting person to endure and transcend a circumstance in which restoral to his former condition or recuperation from his malady is either impossible or so remote as to seem improbable" (Clebsch & Jaekle 1994:8-9). The orphans who participated in this study face the irreversible reality of the death of their parents. They can be sustained through "compassionate commiseration". They need support in order to be able to bear the burden that threatens to break their lives. These burdens include grief, sorrow, sickness, fear and loneliness. For Clebsch and Jaekle sustaining goes beyond enabling troubled people to bear their burden. It also aims to "achieve spiritual growth through endurance of unwanted or harmful or dangerous experiences" (Clebsch & Jaekle 1994:9).

The third pastoral care function according to Clebsch and Jaekle (1994:49-55) is that of *guiding*. This function aims at "assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and future state of the soul" (Taylor 1983:9). Guiding is an essential aspect of a pastoral care of hope because it enables the orphans to clarify their thinking and decide on the way forward in their various situations. For example, Gwinyai as a young adult needed guidance on how to repossess his and his sibling's inheritance which was taken from them by the extended family. Such guidance can be given through active listening and offering alternative strategies to evaluate.

Guiding is followed by reconciling which seeks to “re-establish broken relationships between man [sic!] and fellow man [sic!], and between man [sic!] and God” (Clebsch & Jaekle 1994:9). Along the same lines Taylor (1983:72) is of the opinion that reconciliation challenge people to face the weakness and guilt of their broken relationships and find restoration. This is applicable to the participants whose personal relationships had become twisted and torn through the hard words, actions and attitudes of people who were supposed to care for them. Both forgiveness and discipline are needed in the process of reconciliation. According to Crabb (1988), broken relationships between people involve the double reality of being sinned against (being a victim) and sinning against others (being a culprit). Each reality consists both of what is visible and what lies deep in the heart. This creates are four categories of problems depicted in Figure 5.2.

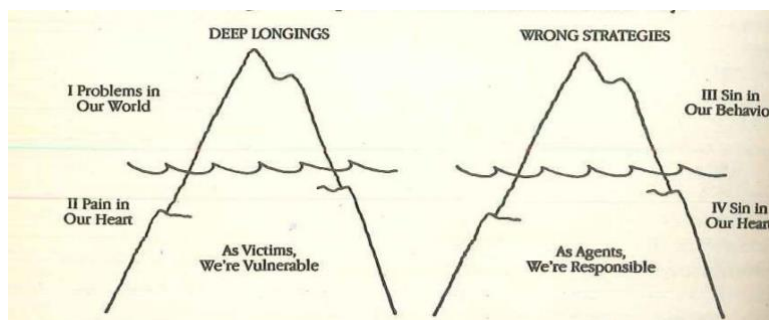


Fig. 5.2 Four categories of problems (Crab 1988:182)

In order to clarify the need for both forgiveness and discipline in the work of reconciliation the Crabb’s model will be applied to the situation of Ropafadzo (Chapters 3 and 4). Her area one consists of problems such having been moved from place to place, social exclusion, physical, verbal and sexual abuse. This generated area two – pain in the heart consisting of stress and depression for which she needed counselling. In areas one and two she was indeed a vulnerable victim. In areas four and five she was also a responsible agent who could not blame all her misfortunes on ill-treatment by others. She developed resentment and hatred (area



three) and was rebellious. She perpetrated various misdemeanours which led to her expulsion from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (area four). In her situation, therefore, reconciliation had to involve both forgiving the many abusers as well as accepting discipline for her own self-abuse and for abusing others in her world.

The faith community has a crucial role to play in providing a pastoral care of hope. It is through pastoral care that orphans are encouraged to make sense of their experiences through talking to somebody (see Maqoko and Dreyer 2007:729). Through the encouragement and love of people of faith orphaned children can be guided to find spiritual meaning in their own lives and advance beyond the hopelessness of their condition.

After having considered the role of individual believers and care-givers in providing a pastoral care of hope, the role of the church as an agent of healing for orphans will now be explored. This includes a discussion on how the church can build a supportive environment for orphans, particularly those who have been orphaned before the age of five and are particularly vulnerable. The examples of two Baptist Union of Zimbabwe churches in serving as healing communities and in providing a caring ministry of comprehensive pastoral care and counselling will be discussed.

5.5 The role of the church

5.5.1 A healing community

The faith community has the calling to be a supportive and caring family for people of all walks of life, including orphaned children. It should be a healing community. According to Maqoko and Dreyer (2007:729) healing for orphaned children starts where people denounce the stigma associated with orphanhood and provides love,



care and support. For Clinebell (1966:44) the faith community is called to be a catalyst for healing and a redemptive process. The faith community as body of Christ should be an effective healing witness for children who suffer the emotional and psychosocial effects of having been orphaned before the age of five. The faith community's love, acceptance and support can be a powerful healing force. In providing this, the attitude of the faith community differs from that of people who adhere to culture ideas and practices that exclude, stigmatize and blame children (orphans) for the behaviour of parents which is judged by people to be unacceptable.

5.5.2 A supportive environment

Given the often dire situation of orphans in their cultural environment, it is imperative that the faith community provide a supportive environment, especially to those who have been deprived of love or whose ability to love has been crippled by their social environment. Following Maslow's (1943) framework, in setting out to construct such an environment, the faith community should find ways of complementing the role of the family in meeting both the basic and the higher order needs of children. Where a positive, loving family environment is wholly absent, the faith community is the only hope for children to experience such love and support. In this sense the faith community becomes a "fictive family".

With regard to the importance of physiological needs the story of Hazvineyi is pertinent. She was used as a servant and nurse maid in her aunt's home. She was only given left-overs to eat after everybody else had eaten and was malnourished as a result. Because of the labour expected of her, she did not get sufficient sleep since she had to finish her chores before she could go to bed. In this case the church family should have intervened and found a loving foster home for her. With regard to safety needs, four of the participants had to take care for themselves. Ropafadzo



was never safe. She was raped from an early age. Gwinyai felt abandoned. The church should pick up on such cases of abuse and neglect in its midst and find ways to provide safety and support for these children. Apart from finding a suitable home for orphaned children, the church can also ensure that education is accessible to all children.

The church can play an even more prominent role when it comes to the emotional and psychological needs of love/belonging as well as esteem needs. Orphans can learn of true self-giving love if this is modelled by the members of the church. According to Nathangeni (2005:30), the church is challenged to see orphans as God would see them, namely as people who are significant because they have been created in the image of God. In this way Gwinyai, Ropafadzo and Hazvineyi's esteem needs could have been met and they could have developed confidence in who they are and what they do. With the faith community believing in them and encouraging them, they could learn to believe in their own abilities and achieve their potential. An example is Ropafadzo who later gained greater self-esteem through a church family who took care for her for a period of time. This fostered hope, purpose, competence, love, fidelity, care and wisdom in her. As she developed respect for herself, she could also learn to respect others and adjust her abusive behaviour accordingly.

With regard to the need for self-actualization, the orphans should be encouraged and motivated to reach their full potential at each stage of their human development. Through the support of the faith community Gwinyai overcame the adversities of the past, was successful at university and became a psychologist. Another important contribution of the church should be education and creating a supportive environment for orphans in the face of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. This will ensure



that the children of parents who have died of the disease are not marginalized and stigmatized by their peers or other members of society.

The implementation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be greatly facilitated when the church takes on the role of advocacy for orphans and trains its members with regard to the meaning and implementation of children's rights. The investigation has shown that orphans who are placed with families, are sometimes at risk of abuse or molestation. According to the African Charter, to which the Zimbabwe government is a signatory, every child has the right to a name and nationality from birth, the right to belong to a family and enjoy care, basic shelter, health care services, and the protection from exploitation through labour and other forms of maltreatment, neglect, abuse and degradation. Many orphans including the participants in this study have had their rights grossly violated. The narratives of the participants have demonstrated the ignorance and disregard of people, including the church, when it comes to the values and wisdom represented by the African Charter.

When the needs of the orphans are considered, it is understandable that the church may not have the means to directly intervene in the lives of the all the orphan children in order to provide like food or shelter, either directly or through its members. However, the church can be a supportive environment. It should educate its members in general and the orphaned children in particular as to a life in God's grace. Through education, the members of the faith community can come to the realisation that they have a Christian mandate and possess many resources to care for orphans. The orphans themselves can learn that they are valuable human being in the eyes of God and the community. They should know that they can and should pursue ways in to achieve self-actualization in life.



Two Baptist Union of Zimbabwe churches in Harare have risen to the challenge of providing education for and about orphans. The first example is the Central Baptist Church which has established the Rafikki Girls Centre which cares for orphaned girls from different churches through a programme which allows them to choose a vocational skills training course. The church has found sponsors who pay the girls' study fees. Church members are encouraged to provide accommodation for the girls in their homes. This has enabled these children and adolescents to live in a home with parents and to participate in the family routine. From Rafikki Girls Centre there are some significant success stories. One of the girls who graduated there now works for an airline company as a flight attendant. A group of girls began catering businesses, and yet others have established an interior decorating business. Two of them have opened their own pre-school. Others have begun a bakery and another group is producing clothing ranges and school uniforms. These orphaned girls have been empowered through education and training to contribute to society as well as to their faith communities.

The second example is Westgate Haven, a house for orphaned girls from pre-school to tertiary education age, run by Calvary Baptist Church. The church provides the means for these girls to complete their primary, secondary and tertiary education. Some have graduated from university and have gained employment. The key motivating Scripture for the Calvary Baptist Church is James 1:27: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this; to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

5.5.3 Comprehensive pastoral care and counselling

There is a need for the church to train counsellors who can guide orphaned children through the bereavement process and other psychosocial traumas they will



experience. Counsellors can assist the orphans to express feelings that are often deeply buried or repressed. Trained counsellors engage in responsive listening, thereby communicating respect and love to the orphans. This need for counsellors for children necessitates a training programme and for churches to have pastoral care and counselling departments. These programmes and departments can assist orphans in the following ways:

- dealing with grief and bereavement in the face of the loss of parents and grandparents, especially when the loss is sustained at an early age;
- facilitating the expression of emotions by using various techniques;
- facilitating the remembering of good times and equipping them to accepting and work effectively difficult times;
- facilitating them to tell their stories and come to an understanding of what is happening to them.

Having explored possibilities for faith communities to function as a provider of a pastoral care of hope, I conclude by considering the role of care-givers in providing holistic care for orphans.

5.6 Caregivers and holistic care

The role of caregivers is to provide holistic care for orphans in the place of the parents who can no longer do so. Their understanding and application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs can help care-givers to ensure that their care of orphans is comprehensive enough. Such care-givers can be found in institutions, such as the Westgate Haven run by the Calvary Baptist Church, or can be foster parents who provide a home environment for orphans. A biblical example of such care is Mordecai who raised Esther, who was later called by God to save her nation (Esther 1-10).



In the course of this investigation several female caregivers who are looking after orphaned relatives, were interviewed. They generally lamented their lack of parenting skills and expressed their feeling of inadequacy in their caring for the orphans. They found the relationships with the orphans rather complicated. On the one hand the orphans were angry and resentful, feeling that the care was inadequate and fell short of what their own parents would have given them. On the other hand care-givers felt angry towards the orphans, often experiencing them as ungrateful and unappreciative of the sacrifices they were making for them. This suggests a need for intervention and supporting for care-givers by the church. This can be done in the following ways:

- Care-givers need training in order to understand child development and the emotional effects the loss of parents have on children, especially if that loss occurred at an early age.
- Care-givers need training in interpersonal communication.
- Care-givers need training in counselling skills. In this way they will be able to help children understand their feelings, and develop emotional awareness and coping skills.

5.7 Summary

From a practical theological approach, this chapter has demonstrated that orphans, as people created in the image of God, should be able to live lives filled with hope and encouragement. The loving and caring nature of God should be reflected by the people who care for orphan children, be they family, foster parents, individual care-givers or the faith community. In order to structure an effective model of care both the Maslow hierarchy of needs and the pastoral functions articulated by Clebsch and



Jaekle (1994:4) were utilized. In the following chapter the findings of the study and some recommendations will be presented.



Chapter 6

Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the material presented in the study from a pastoral perspective, and highlights the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years in the Zimbabwean context. The study explored these emotional effects through various human developmental stages as articulated primarily by Erikson (1959), supplemented by insights from Kohlberg (1981) and Fowler (1981). The case study narratives of six participants who had been orphaned before the age of five years were presented and interpreted. Two of the participants were of primary school age, two were of secondary school age and two were young adults pursuing tertiary education. Scripture and the faith community were explored as potential sources of healing.

The study made use of a narrative interviewing approach because that method enabled the participants to tell their own stories on the emotional effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years. The emotional effects of early orphanhood highlighted in the study result from an environment which includes discrimination against them at home, in school, in church and in their communities.

Because orphanhood is a phenomenon of all ages from ancient times until today, how Scripture addresses it, was perused. It became clear that God sees the plight of orphans and expects of God's people to care for them. The findings and recommendations to be given in this chapter will be followed by a personal reflection on the research journey.



The Zimbabwean orphan population is estimated at 1.6 million children (Ntakazo 2011:1). Among them are those who were orphaned before the age of five, which is the focus of this study. The psychological and faith developmental theories of Erikson, Kohlberg and Fowler formed the theoretical framework for the explanation of the emotional effects of having been orphaned at an early age. The context of this study is Zimbabwe. From the narratives, behaviour arising from the emotional effects of early orphanhood, is highlighted. Commonalities can be seen in three areas: (a) what orphans experience in this specific environment, (b) the emotional effects of such experiences, and (c) the behaviour triggered by such experiences and emotions.

In the Zimbabwean Shona environment the consequences of having been orphaned at an early age had the following consequences for the participants:

- After the death of their parents the children lost the closeness and connectedness of growing up together as siblings because they were separated and grew up in different households.
- After the death of parents, older children were often left with the responsibility of caring for other siblings.
- The orphaned children generally lived in poverty and were used for labour in order for them to secure basic needs for daily life. They were generally denied time to play and rest and mostly had nowhere to turn for social support.
- Often parents did not leave a will to safeguard their children's inheritance. This resulted in relatives taking possession of their land and property.
- Poor educational performance was generally the consequence of their situation of poverty and deprivation. Children were often not able to pay school fees and BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Module) could not always assist since the



number of orphans who need financial support are too large for the organisation to cope with. This and the lack of uniforms and other necessities resulted in a rather erratic school attendance.

The experiences of the children who were orphaned before the age of five had an profound effect on their lives. The participants expressed it as follows:

- they experienced feelings of separation and abandonment at times and sometimes felt anxious and fretful, though they tried their utmost to disguise their emotions;
- they felt sorrow, loneliness, sadness, isolation and powerlessness;
- depression, which is often associated with the stress and loss, was a common experience;
- low self-esteem is a common thread running through the narratives of the participants, due to their interaction at school with children with parents and who are well provided for, which triggered feelings of inferiority resulting in low self-esteem;
- frustration often gave way to anger as participants wondered what they had done to deserve their life; anger was often directed at the deceased parents because the children felt left let down;
- emotional stress was caused by the way in which relatives spoke of their deceased parents.

The feelings of anger, resentment, sadness, shame, abandonment and fear experienced by orphaned children often go hand in hand with negative behaviour, which in turn causes an escalation of their problems and results in a negative spiral that is difficult to escape. Because human beings are holistic by nature, emotions



and behaviour are in constant interaction. Examples of negative behaviour due to the identified emotions are:

- *stealing*, as was the case with Musarurwa who wanted to pretend to his friends that he was also from a well-to-do background;
- *prostitution*, such as was the case with Ropafadzo who engaged in this behaviour for the purposes of survival;
- *missing school*, including lessons and sporting events due to financial deprivation;
- *disruptive behaviour*, as found with some participants, was probably a way of seeking attention through achieving some “nuisance” value;
- *social isolation*, as was exhibited by Hazvineyi and Zvikomborero whose reserved personality responded to the situation by withdrawal from social activities and preferring to interact with adults rather than with girls of her own age; she also cried most of the time.

However, painful circumstances and emotions do not always result in negative behaviour. Some participants, despite having been orphaned before the age of five, have demonstrated resilience and are an example of how human beings can be the agent of their own upliftment and the upliftment of their loved ones, rather than remaining the victim of circumstances.

Hazvineyi demonstrated an attitude of caring for her siblings. Brian had the courage to deal with his grandmother’s death, make the funeral arrangements and take care of the administration. Gwinyai’s determination to succeed, characteristic also of other participants, was shown by her working as a domestic worker in order to pay her university fees. Ropafadzo was able to apply herself to her studies, and achieved



good O-level and A-level results. These examples of the pastoral care of hope are considered below.

6.2 Pastoral care of hope

The study considered the task of practical theology as a dialogue between theology and practice. The relationship is that of practice informing theology and theology motivating practice. From this link Clebsch and Jaekle (1994:4) see this pastoral care of hope in “helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed towards healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns” (Clebsch and Jaekle 1994:4). Individuals orphaned before the age of five are in need of the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling ministry. The faith community has a crucial role to play in providing such a pastoral care of hope. The church as a healing community is called to be a supportive and caring family for orphans and other vulnerable individuals. Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs provides a useful framework for identifying the areas of needs for orphans that should be addressed by the church.

An example of how this theory motivates practice can be seen in how two Baptist Union of Zimbabwe churches in Harare have risen to the challenge of providing education for and about orphans. The Central Baptist Church established the Rafikki Girls Centre which cares for orphaned girls from different churches through a programme which allows them to choose a vocational skills training course. The Calvary Baptist Church has created a home called Westgate Haven to provide a means for orphaned girls to complete their primary, secondary and tertiary education. This study points out the need for a comprehensive pastoral care and counselling training programme to be provided by the church. The holistic aim is that orphans will be treated justly and will have the support of the church in advocating



for and defending their human dignity. The orphans, as all people, should be treated with respect. Because they have suffered the pain of death and loss, orphans need special physical, emotional and psychological support.

The study has shown that there is a need to empower the extended family system to develop comprehensive care and support for orphans and vulnerable children in the community. The extended family should revisit the long eroded culture of caring for orphans according to the African traditional way, so as to counteract the growing phenomenon of orphans being left to their own devices.

It is, however, evident that many families in Zimbabwe, for various reasons which include poverty and the decimation of many working class members of society through the HIV/AIDS pandemic, have become too dysfunctional to provide homes for orphans. The role of society at large in providing care to orphans must therefore be emphasized. This should include programmes of foster homes and adoption. For this it is necessary that the fear of adopting children who are not from the own family be demystified. In the Zimbabwean cultural context the idea of *ngozi* is the belief that ancestral spirits belonging to the family of the adopted child will be angered by the adoption and may seek to avenge the “theft” of the child. As long as this idea is alive and well, many orphans in Zimbabwe will not find good foster homes.

The role of the church in caring for orphans from the foundation of a pastoral care of hope has been worked out in this study. The church should play a leading role in raising public awareness and educating people on the Christian imperative of dignity, respect, love, and care for all and especially the most vulnerable in the community. That would include orphans and in particular those who become vulnerable at a very early age. That makes them doubly vulnerable. Appropriate training of teachers, caregivers and pastors on caring for orphans is necessary.



The task of caring for orphans should be extended beyond the faith community and be taken up by the government as well. In this regard further research in fields such as political studies, sociology, social work and others as necessary in order to inform policy making by the government.

6.3 Reflection on the research journey

I was prompted to undertake this study because of the many orphaned children in my extended family as well my husband's family. I saw firsthand the destructive behaviour by one of my nephews who was orphaned at the age of two months. At first I under-estimated the challenges and heartache his behaviour was to cause me. This prompted me to explore the emotional effects of early orphanhood and also to explore the church's response to the plight of orphans. I took the different human, moral, and spiritual developmental stages of my participants into account in the study.

The most difficult and complex part of my journey was when participants shared their stories. I discovered during the interviewing sessions how fresh the wounds of grief still were and my questions often opened up those wounds again. There was much weeping during the interviews. I had to remain strong during the narrations and would often only break down after the sessions.

Interviewing the six participants gave me the opportunity to engage with them and create the opportunity for their voices to be heard. In the process I obtained a better understanding of how orphans think and feel. All the participants were appreciative of the opportunity to tell their stories and as they did so they could express their grief in a safe and understanding environment. That proved to be cathartic for them.



In this study the six participants rather than the caregivers, were my primary focus. Subsequent studies can explore related areas and contribute further to the welfare of orphans.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 Interview guide for individuals

Introduction

My name is Mrs Sylvia Musasiwa, a student of the University of Pretoria and also a trained counsellor. I am doing a study on those who have been orphaned from before the age of five years. The aim is to find out how people like you have been affected by this condition. As a result of the study some recommendations will be made on how the church can be of assistance to people like you. Your participation will greatly help to achieve the best results. Whatever you say will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are therefore requested to give honest answers. Your name will not be published anywhere. You are also allowed to withdraw from the process if you feel too uncomfortable and no one will punish you for such withdrawal.

- How old were you when your parent(s) died?
- How many sisters and brothers do you have?
- Do you live together?
- How did the death of your parent(s) affect your relationship with your siblings?
- How were you guided and disciplined by your guardian/caregiver?
- Tell me about the person who values you now?
- As a child/young adult do you feel protected?
- How did the death of your parent(s) affect your well-being?

Please describe the various feelings you have gone through at different stages as an orphan.

- What is your view of God and what does he mean to you as an orphan?
- Has the church done enough to help you in your different stages of development?
- Visualise your future: how do you see yourself later in life?





Appendix 2 Interview guide for control group

Introduction

My name is Mrs Sylvia Musasiwa, a student of the University of Pretoria and also a trained counsellor. I am doing a study on those who have been orphaned from before the age of five years. The aim is to find out how orphans have been affected by this condition. As a result of the study some recommendations will be made on how the church can be of assistance to them. Your participation will greatly help to achieve the best results. Whatever you say will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are therefore requested to give honest answers. Your name will not be published anywhere. You are also allowed to withdraw from the process if you feel too uncomfortable and no one will punish you for such withdrawal.

- Do you have friends who are orphans?
- What difference in attitude and behaviour do you find between your friends who are orphaned?
- How are you guided by your parents?
- Tell me about the person who values you now?
- As a child / young adult do you feel protected?
- If you did not have parents how do you think your life might be changed?
- Please describe the various feelings you have gone through at different stages of your life? (This question is for secondary and tertiary participants).
- What is your view of God and what does he mean to you as an individual? (this question is for secondary and tertiary participants).

Has the church done enough to help orphans in their different stages of development? (for secondary and tertiary participants to explain).

- What help would you like orphans to get from the church?
- Visualise your future: how do you see yourself later in life?



Appendix 3: Focus group discussions guide

Introduction

My name is Mrs Sylvia Musasiwa, a student of the University of Pretoria and also a trained counsellor. I am doing a study on those who have been orphaned from before the age of five years. The aim is to find out how people like you have been affected by this condition. As a result of the study some recommendations will be made on how the church can be of assistance to people like you. Your participation will greatly help to achieve the best results. Whatever you say will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are therefore requested to give honest answers. Your name will not be published anywhere. You are also allowed to withdraw from the process if you feel too uncomfortable and no one will punish you for such withdrawal.

- After the death of your parents were you able to live together with your siblings or were you split among relatives?
- How did the death of your parent(s) affect your relationship with your siblings?
- How were you guided and disciplined by your guardian/caregiver?
- As a child/young adult do you feel protected?
- How did the death of your parent(s) affect your well-being?

Please describe the various feelings you have gone through at different stages as an orphan.

- What is your view of God and what does he mean to you as an orphan?
- Has the church done enough to help you in your different stages of development? Please explain.
- Visualise your future. Using a time ladder how do you see your future? Start from 2013 to 2020.



Appendix 4: Care-giver interview discussions guide

Introduction

My name is Mrs Sylvia Musasiwa, a student of the University of Pretoria and also a trained counsellor. I am doing a study on those who have been orphaned from before the age of five years. The aim is to find out how orphans have been affected by this condition. As a result of the study some recommendations will be made on how the church can be of assistance to orphans. Your participation will greatly help to achieve the best results. Whatever you say will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are therefore requested to give honest answers. Your name will not be published anywhere. You are also allowed to withdraw from the process if you feel too uncomfortable and no one will punish you for such withdrawal.

- In what capacity are you looking after orphans? (Institutional care giver? Relative? Pastor?)
- What psychosocial effects have you observed in children who have been orphaned before the age of five years?
- Has the church done enough to help orphans in your different stages of development? Please explain.
- How would you describe the orphan's attitudes towards?
 - life
 - yourself
 - other children.
- What suggestions can you give to others who are looking after orphans?
- Do you see a clear distinction between an orphaned child with one parent and one with both parents deceased?

Appendix 5: Research consent form for individual participants/guardians

Topic: The emotional effects of early orphanhood and the church's response in the context of Zimbabwe: A pastoral Approach

My name is Sylvia Chirevesayi Musasiwa, an MA (Theology) Practical Theology student of University of Pretoria (Student Number: U 13378271)

I am doing a research on the above topic and I am requesting you to kindly participate in this research, or give permission to your minor child to do so.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the psychosocial effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years in Zimbabwe and the church's response. This will have several benefits, including the benefit of creating better understanding for people with this background, and the possibility of society creating interventions that will enable the children to be given better and more holistic treatment as they grow up.

In terms of procedures of the study, the participants will be interviewed at least once in a way that facilitates an understanding of their situation. No risk is anticipated arising from participation in this study apart from the time taken on the interview(s) and the possibility of arousing painful memories from the past. Debriefing counselling will be available to participants after the study.

Participation in this study is voluntary, with participants having the right to withdraw from the study anytime without negative consequences. Confidentiality is assured, with the information disclosed being used only for research purposes without the



names of participants being disclosed to anyone. Participants have the freedom to disclose personal information to the extent they feel comfortable.

Should you have any questions you can contact me on the following numbers: 04 304565 (Home), 04 303302 (Work) or 0772367597 (mobile).

As a sign of informed consent kindly sign two of these consent letters: one for the researcher and one for yourself to keep for your records.

Researcher's Signature: Date:

Name of Guardian Signature of Guardian...

Participant's Name:..... Participants's signature

Participant's date of birth: Age:.....Date:



Appendix 6: Research consent form: Focus group participation

Theology Faculty

Topic: The emotional effects of early orphanhood and the church's response in the context of Zimbabwe: A pastoral Approach

My name is Sylvia Chirevesayi Musasiwa, an MA (Theology) Practical Theology student of University of Pretoria (Student Number: U 13378271)

I am doing a research on the above topic and I am requesting you to kindly participate in this research, or give permission to your minor child to do so.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the psychosocial effects of having been orphaned before the age of five years in Zimbabwe and the church's response. This will have several benefits, including the benefit of creating better understanding of people with this background, and the possibility of society creating interventions that will enable the children to be given better and more holistic treatment as they grow up.

In terms of procedures of the study, the participants will be requested to take part in Focus group discussion twice in a way that facilitates an understanding of their situation. No risk is anticipated arising from participation in this study apart from the time taken on the focus group discussions and the possibility of arousing painful memories from the past. Debriefing counselling will be available to participants after the study.



Group Leader: Sylvia Musasiwa

Dates: i)..... Time _____ to _____
 ii) Time _____ to _____

Participation in this study is voluntary, with participants having the right to withdraw from the study anytime without negative consequences. Confidentiality is assured, with the information disclosed being used only for research purposes without the names of participants being disclosed to anyone. Participants have the freedom to disclose personal information to the extent they feel comfortable.

Should you have any questions you can contact me on the following numbers: 04 304565 (Home), 04 303302 (Work) or 0772367597 (mobile).

As a sign of informed consent kindly sign two of these consent letters: one for the researcher and one for you to keep for your records.

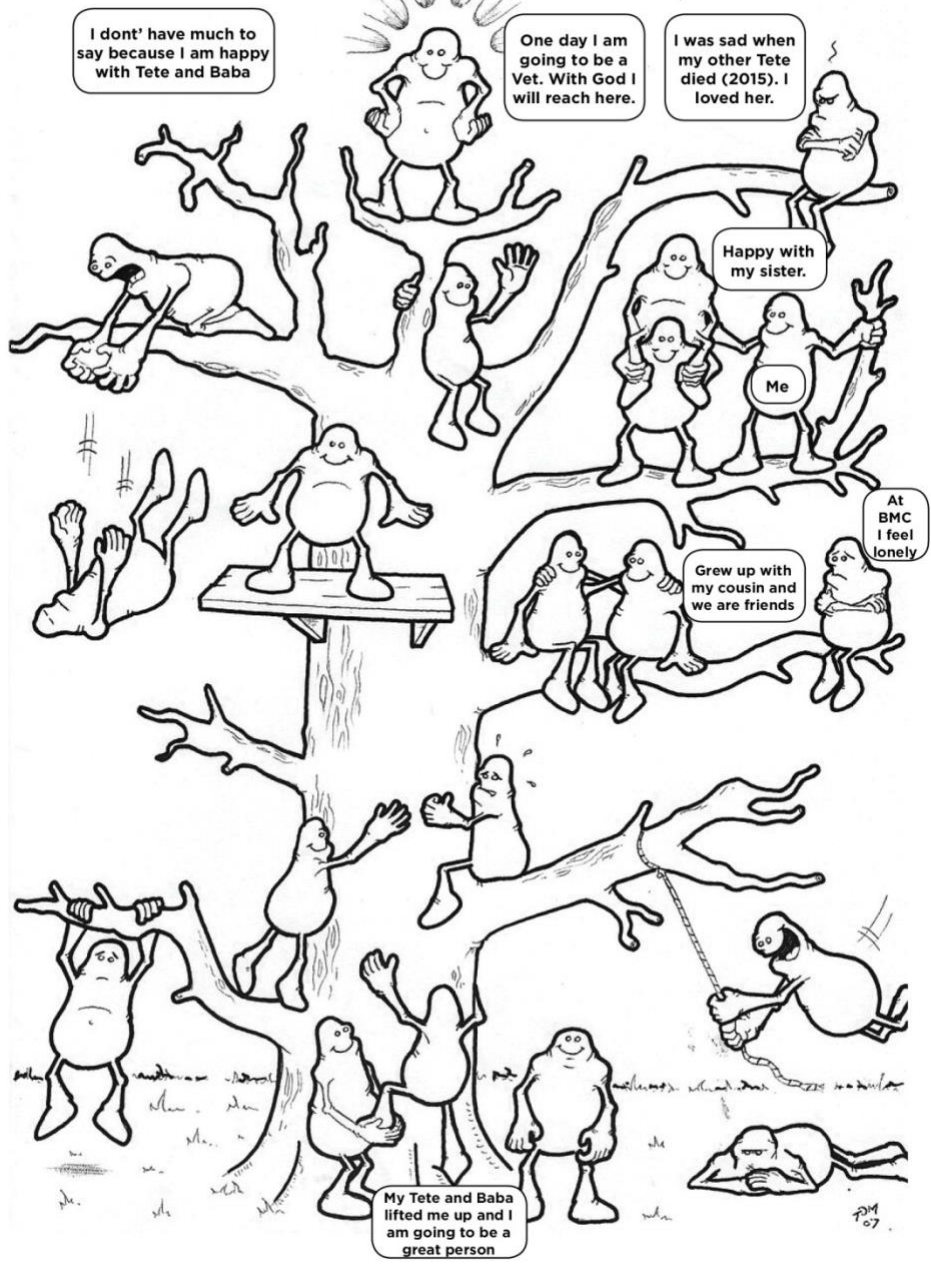
Researcher’s Signature: Date:
 Name of Guardian Signature of Guardian: Date.....
 Participant’s Name Signature of Participant Date.....
 Date of Birth: Age:.....



Appendix 7: Emotional Trees

(Originally designed by Wilson 2017)

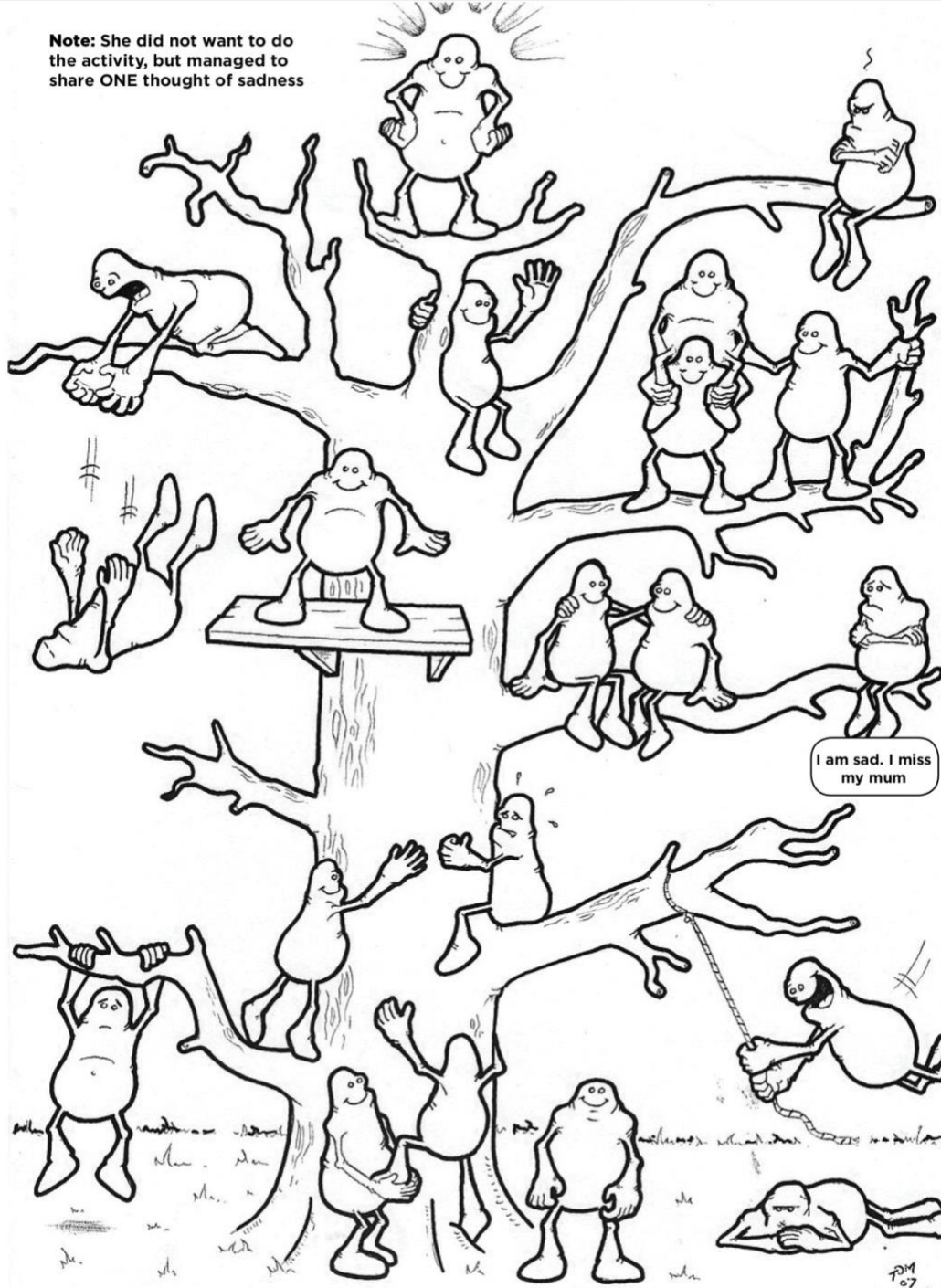
Musarurwa Tapiwa - Primary School Age Participant 1 – Appendix 1a





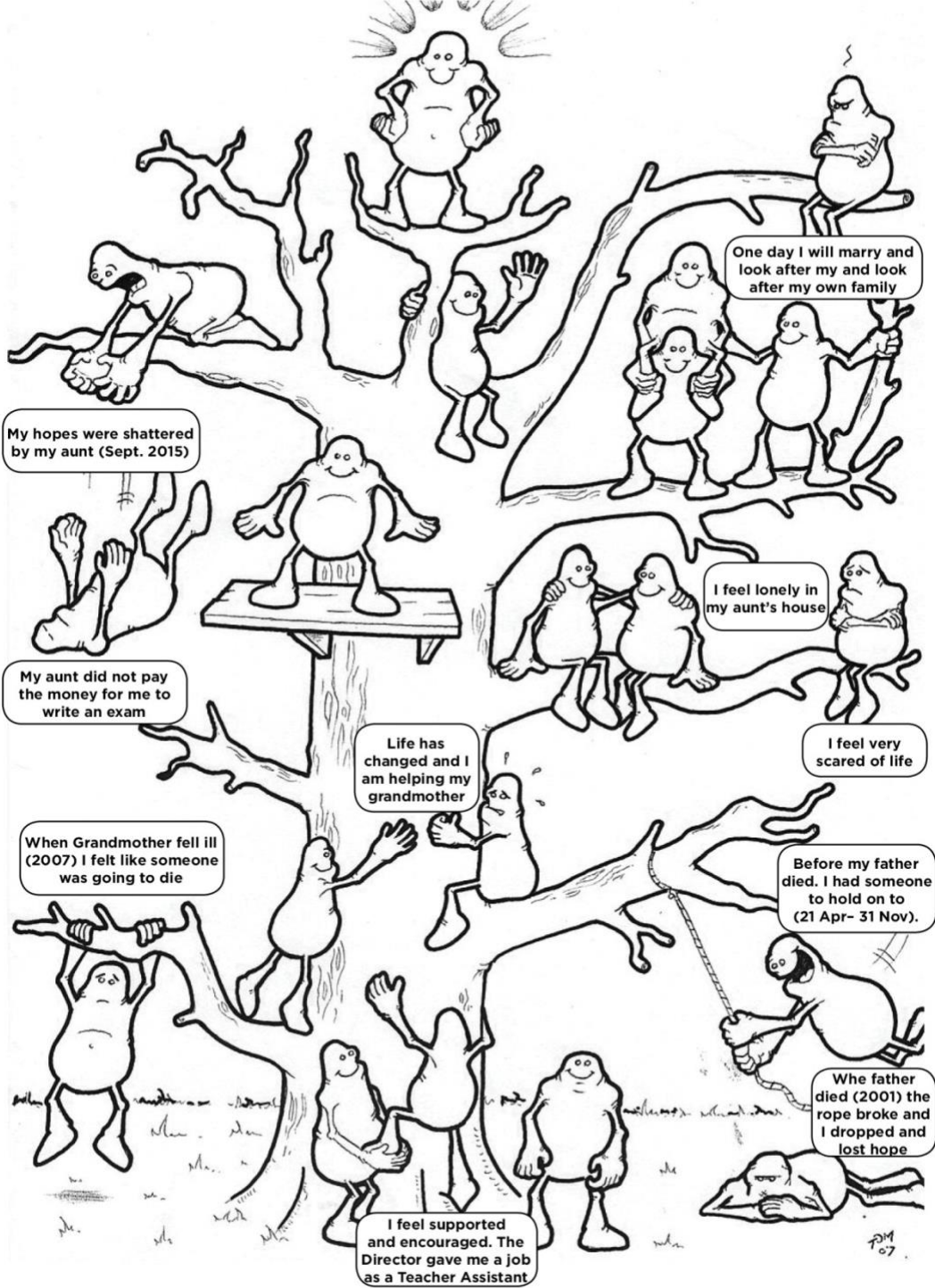
Zvikomborero - Primary School Age Participant 2 – Appendix 1b

Note: She did not want to do the activity, but managed to share ONE thought of sadness



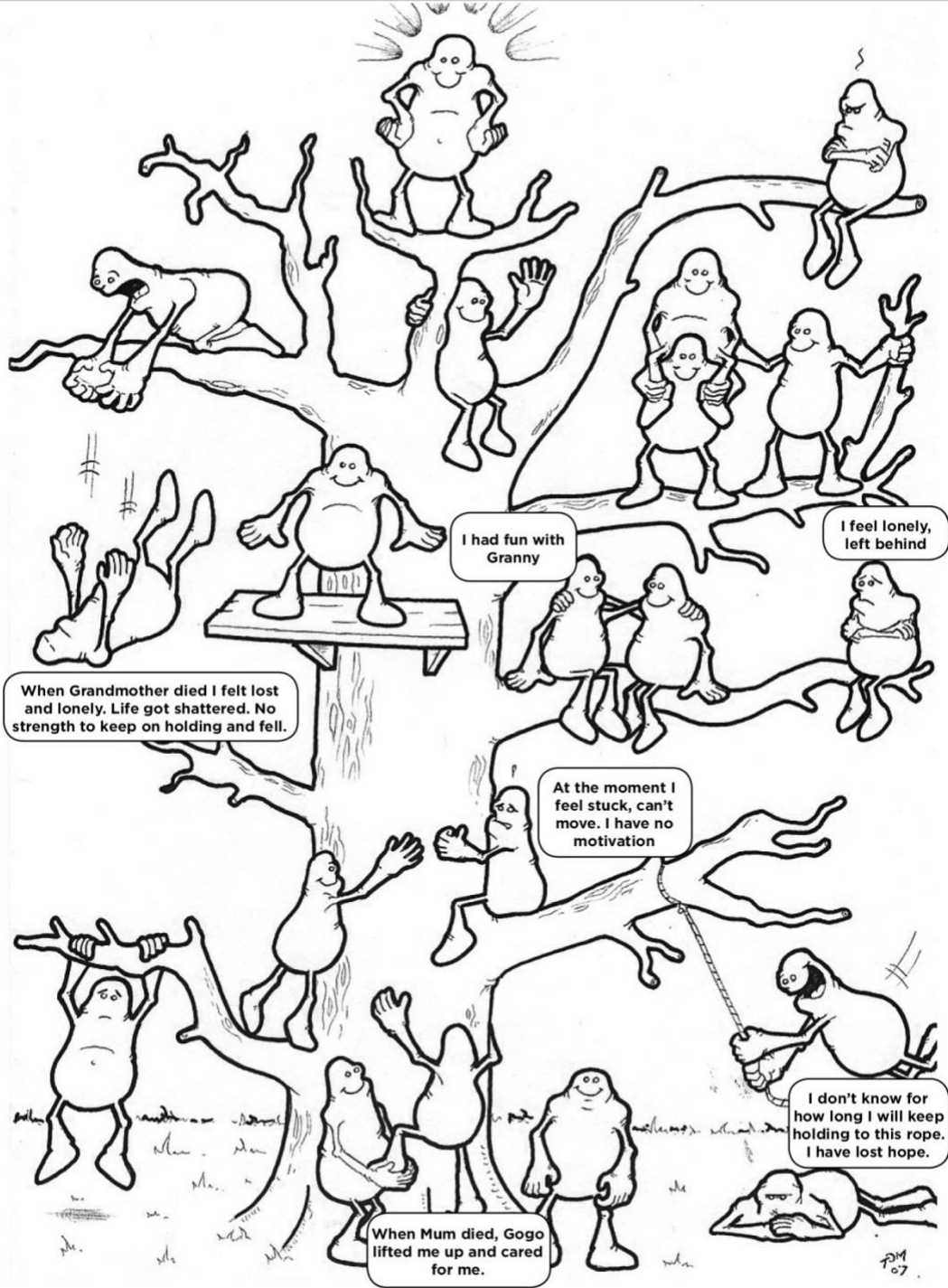


Hazvinei - Secondary School Age Participant 1 - Appendix 2a



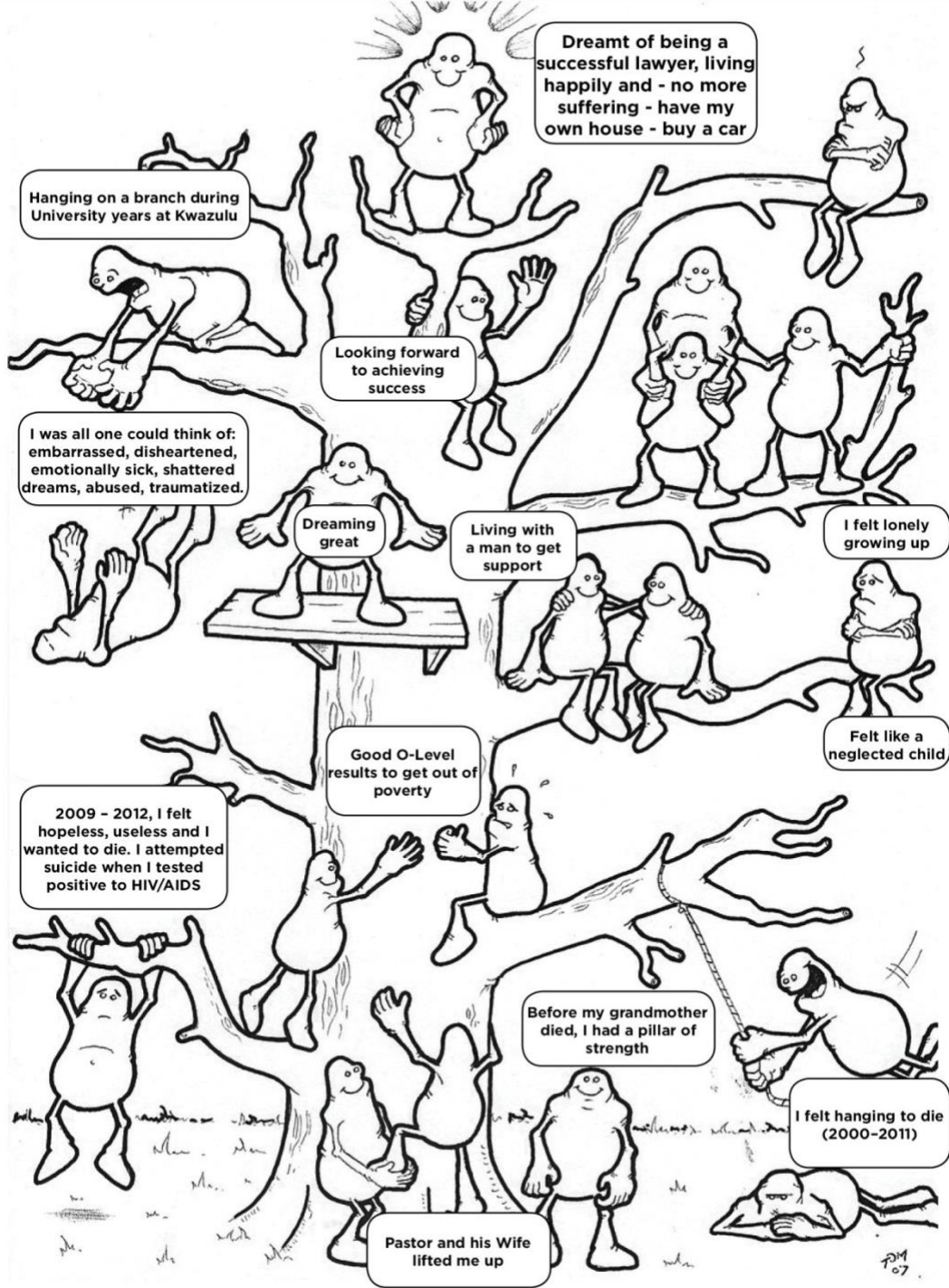


Brian Mavhingei - Secondary School Age Participant 2 - Appendix 2b





Ropafadzo Musoni - Tertiary Education Participant 1 – Appendix 3a





Gwinyai Mandipei - Tertiary Education Participant 2 - Appendix 3b

